



THE TEAM

The Working Committee for this Run for Life – Sumanik Ridge pilot is loaded with diverse skills and expertise, a connected network and includes but is not limited to: trail builders, organizational developers, community builders, stewards of the land and people, designers, educators, and most importantly people who VISION.



JOHN CARSON

IDEAS GUY

John Carson is one of those innovators with all the usual qualities: imagination, the ‘gut-knowledge’, flexibility, playfulness, persistence and curiosity. The thing that makes John stand out is what he does with people: he collects good people and good people make for good work. John is one the founding members of Run For Life Inc. At first glance he may look like a life-long runner and competitor but stay around for a social and it will be clear how John taps into his running community to serve the larger good with a grander purpose toward active, thriving communities. John has convinced several un-expectant people to push their limits and jump into a lake under 4 feet of ice, run an ultra trail race, dig a compost hole in the red Rift Valley dirt or drink Mursik from a calabash – only because they were brave enough to spend a few minutes alone with him! For John, it’s about hanging out with cool people and doing cool stuff. The best question to ask John is: How did you break your hand this summer?

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SANDRA MACDOUGALL

TROUBLE MAKER, MOSTLY

Sandra started running as many do: in elementary school, she followed in the steps of her older sister and joined the Oromocto Legion Track Club. That set her off on a lifetime of running, strength training and competition. Sandra is a registered Professional Engineer and spends her days building roads in the Yukon. She is working to advance a Social Enterprise model within Run for Life’s business plan and is keen on impact focus investments and measurement. Along with a few other trouble makers, she is working to raise the profile of Social Enterprise in the Yukon. Sandra is a Yukon trail lollier but when the call comes, brings her shoes to the red trails in the Great Rift Valley, Kenya, to explore the trails surrounding our Endelevu Adventure center. The best question to ask her is: where do you like to run?

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GARY BAILIE

IN HIS WORDS: ROCK N' ROLL INDIAN

Born and raised in Whitehorse, Gary has always been an active member of the community to say the least. At a young age, Gary learned how to cross country ski from Father Mouchet in the T.E.S.T. program and went on to ski with the Yukon Ski Team for 10 years, competing at a national level. He was named Les Espoirs during his junior years and trained and raced with the National Ski Team. Skiing became a way of life through which he grew a love and passion for gliding silently through the forest. Over 20 years ago, Gary founded the Kwanlin Koyotes Ski Club teaching children of his fellow Kwanlin Dün First Nation community. The program has been such a success that it's inspired people around the world to start similar programs. Gary's exceptional community work has won him a Governor General's Meritorious Award, the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers and the Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee Medal. It's this kind of dedication that makes him a positive member of this team and community. Gary's experience building, grooming and skiing trails paired with his knowledge and respect for the land on which he brings people together makes him an asset to this unique community trails project.

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JOSEF DE GRAFF

RECOGNIZABLE TRAIL WIZARD

With 17 years of experience, Josef de Graff is a trail visionary and landscape architect who advises clients on project management, consultation, trail design and bike park construction processes. Before starting Joe Bike, Trails by Design, Josef worked with Singletrack to Success on Montana Mountain as a trail builder on the traditional lands of Carcross Tagish First Nation. After graduating from Capilano University he was the lead trail designer and builder for the City of Whitehorse. Josef currently owns and operates Joe Bike, Trails by Design managing trail development projects and helps clients in creating sustainable trail solutions and features. Notable projects include: Blown Away on Mount MacIntyre, AK-DNR Trail, Carcross, Hammarstrand Trail, Dawson City and the Dream Trail on Grey Mountain, Whitehorse, Yukon.

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PATTI BALSILLIE

FACILITATOR AND SAILOR

Patti has worked tirelessly to support innovation throughout Northern Canada. She is recognized nationally and internationally for her expertise in the development of sustainable rural and remote tourism initiatives and corporate governance. When a large conversation needs to happen, Patti can ease that process. She is a Director at Destination Canada and founded Patti Balsillie Management Consulting Inc. In keeping with Canada's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Patti designed an engagement model with non-traditional partners in tourism and collaboration across communities. The model is based in community dialogue about how well-being is sustained, impacted or advanced because of the visitor economy. Early partners include Tourism Saskatoon, Ryerson's Institute for Hospitality and Tourism Research. Patti brings thoughtfulness about community wellbeing to the trail projects. The best question to ask Patti is: why do you love to bike?

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MARSHAL JOHNSON

THE RELENTLESS OPTIMIST

Marshal's many summers out on the land with Netsilingmiut family and Elders have provided strong personal experiences for the intersection of culture, land rights and health making him super pumped to contribute to this project. He has Nêhiyaw (Cree), African American and European ancestry and grew up in Amiskwaciwâskahikan, Treaty 6 (Edmonton, Alberta) with his Mother, Grandmother and Sister. Throughout his life, he was very fortunate to have a Mother who always prioritized spending time with Elders and Marshal continues to strive to use and respect all of the knowledge and stories that have been passed to him – this project is one of those ways! Over the last decade Marshal has worked for First Nations across the country, established new Indigenous Health programs in Medicine at UBC, developed land-based education programs and currently hangs with the awesome team at First Nations Health Programs, Whitehorse General Hospital.

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KATE HOLBROOK-SMITH

DESIGN GURU

Kate has a Masters Degree in Architecture from the University of Waterloo and currently lives in North Vancouver. As part of her thesis, Kate developed the term environmental intimacy, which describes how architecture and design can magnify the perception of our natural surroundings. Since graduating, Kate continues to pursue designs that elevate people and place while gaining expertise in mass timber construction. As an avid trail runner, when not working, Kate can be found zigzagging her way up the local trails and literally chasing waterfalls.

[Thesis – Mediations of Shattered Water](#)

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ANNE SEWELL

PATH FINDER

Anne received her Master of Architecture from the University of Waterloo and focused her research on nonformal learning networks in remote Kenya. She recognizes the importance and value of local knowledge, culture and traditional forms of knowledge exchange and how it strengthens design projects. Passionate about sustainability and exploring the world's remote wilderness, Anne is particularly interested in off-grid architecture. Based in Vancouver, she can be found swimming laps in the bay with the seals, camping in the backcountry or escaping to the coast to improve her surfing when she's not in the office expanding her knowledge of mass timber.

[Thesis – Mud and Cell Phones: Nonformal Learning Networks in Rural Kenya](#)

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DOMINIC BRADFORD

MONTESSORI INSTIGATOR

Dominic Bradford comes to the trail project from an elementary educational background and focus. He is the lead teacher at Yukon Montessori School and has 25 years of teaching experience where he tries to get students connected to as many real life experiences and projects as possible. He holds a BA from McGill and a M Ed in Montessori Education from Loyola Maryland. In his off-time he likes to race, run and ski in the Whitehorse area and try and keep up with his own children. He has lived and worked in Asia, Africa, Canada and the US and is always interested in walking down a path that connects his ideas and passions with others.

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EMILY MACHT

EDUCATOR AND TRAIL AFICIONADO

After ten years of teaching elementary school in Whitehorse, Emily struck out on her own to work in the archival field (sounds dull...it isn't) with Yukon First Nations. She somehow manages to get out onto the land in the course of her work, which brings relevancy and meaning to the documentary history she cares for. A lover of long-distance walking routes, she has covered thousands of kilometres on foot in Italy, France, and Spain, witnessing first-hand the positive social effects of multi-generational and multi-cultural shared use of trails and routes. Paddling makes her want to take a nap, so she uses her feet, skis, or her one true love of her steel frame Marinoni to bushwhack, bike, skate, run, or ski all over the Yukon, land of her heart.

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KELLY PROUDFOOT

SHE'S AN EVENT ROCKSTAR

It all started the summer of 1998 when Kelly gave out high fives and smiles with a pack full of Cool from Nestea. Her career has unfolded to include incredible teams, exciting brands and cross-country inspirational tours. Years later, Kelly experiences the same loyalty, passion and accountability with each project she's been immersed in. Kelly's specialties include development, advancement, events and entertainment management, marketing, sponsorship, communications, strategy, fundraising, promotions and project management.

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MAURA SULLIVAN

TEACHER WITH MORAL REASON

I first met John Carson in High School, as we were both members of the Tri-City Track Club in the Kitchener-Waterloo region in Ontario. John and I were both strongly influenced by the philosophy and life lessons taught to us by our renowned running coach Pete Grinsberg who always emphasised the power of relationships, the importance of perseverance and the transformative possibilities that are created via creative thinking. John and I have stayed connected over the years through running, hiking, outdoor adventures, skiing and our involvement in various social justice issues. Currently, I spend most of my time being the Team Leader and Teacher at the Individual Learning Centre (ILC), an alternative High School in Whitehorse, Yukon serving disenfranchised youth. My partner and I are also working hard to cultivate moral reasoning, cultural understanding and global awareness in our four growing children. I feel compelled to join John on this project, knowing that whatever he initiates is in the spirit of social equality, outdoor adventure and physical fitness. I am looking forward to working with such a qualified and inspiring team.

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VINCENT LAROCHELLE

LEGAL EAGLE

Vincent is known as the Legal Eagle for his sharp eye and legal expertise. He is an avid trail runner, skier, climber, mountaineer, and paddler. Favorite drink: old fashioned.

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PETER MATHER

PHOTOJOURNALIST

Peter Mather is a freelance photojournalist from Northern Canada whose work is focused on environmental photography of wildlife and First Nations people. He is known for his storytelling imagery and remote camera photography. Currently Peter is working on a long-form story on North America's most elusive predator – The Wolverine. He is a fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers and is represented by National Geographic Creative and Minden Pictures.

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RAPHAËLLE COURATIN

GUIDE AND EDUCATOR

Raphaëlle Couratin is a certified ski and hiking guide from Vercors, Alps, France. She likes to go on skis to cross the far north spaces with her sled dogs. After 15 years of coaching in the mountains, she entered the Vercors Territorial Park as a ranger to help maintain and create new trails and to promote and protect biodiversity. In 2014, a trip with her partner took her to the Yukon and she decided to settle in 2016. Canadian by birth, she quickly integrated, passing her Canadian certifications (Canadian Ski Coach and Wilderness Advanced First Aid) to coach at the Whitehorse Cross Country Ski Club and now the Kwanlin Coyote Ski Club. Passionate towards teaching kids life skills and connecting with the environment, she also assists teaching French at the Elementary Yukon Montessori School. In January 2020, she started her business Yu'Ski Expeditions to offer off-track cross country ski lessons and overnight ski-pulk tours in the Yukon. In summers, she offers kid's French Immersion outdoor camps through Yu'Speak French Immersion Outdoors she created the same year. With her experience, she wants to bring support to the trail project which is close to her house and favourite playground at Fish Lake!

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PATTI FLATHER

PLAYWRIGHT

Patti Flather is an award-winning writer, theatre artist and cultural producer who has shared theatre stories across Northern Canada. She loves collaborations and the sparks that fly between artists, communities, and cultures. Patti is passionate about story – everyone's stories – and how we build human connections sharing our unique histories, adventures, and dreams. A co-founder and past artistic director of Gwaandak Theatre, Patti helped lead innovative intercultural theatre creation projects honouring storytellers and the lands they travel on, including vuntutstories.ca with Vuntut Gwitchin Government. Patti has an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC. A recipient of the Borealis Prize for Yukon literary contribution, she's currently part of a visionary Indigenous performing arts legacy project. Her first fiction collection is due out in 2021. She's on the board of Yukon Words and edits the Playwrights Guild of Canada Women's Caucus newsletter. Originally from North Vancouver, B.C., she has called the Yukon home for three decades. She loves to be outdoors to hike, bike and ski, although not as quickly as some of the other team members!

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