

National Ski Patrol

Strategic Plan 2020

8.31.15

The National Ski Patrol's board of directors, division directors, and office staff dedicate this *Strategic Plan 2020* to the vision of NSP founder Charles Minot "Minnie" Dole and the commitment to service and sacrifice of every patroller that has worn the NSP jacket. This commitment is worthy of the very best efforts of NSP's leadership, and that is what we have strived to do with this plan for the future.

From time to time, even the best organizations can drift from their mission or lose sight of where they need to go. This strategic plan is a statement that NSP has not forgotten we exist to help keep people safe, and that we are clear on our destination: to constantly improve our service to patrollers and to the organizations that use their services.

This strategic plan represents three months of work by the NSP board, division directors, and the national staff, with input from resort managers, individual patrollers, and industry leaders.

The full board, all division directors, national staff, and select industry leaders engaged in hour-long one-on-one interviews with an outside consultant with deep experience in the snow sports industry.

The responses from those in-depth interviews, a targeted survey, plus broader feedback were distilled into a summary memorandum of their views on the future of patrolling, the challenges and opportunities facing NSP over the next 5-10 years, and what we must do to address that future to better serve our members and principal customers.

These insights and ideas were used by a team of 15 NSP board members, division directors, and senior staff to develop a specific strategic plan for the next five years.

The goal was to create a strategic North Star to guide NSP over the next five years in supporting its patroller members and in fulfilling its historic mission of helping keep people safe.

That is why the first component of this strategic plan is a restatement of NSP's historic mission and the ethos of its founder and legend, "Minnie" Dole.

Mission

*To help keep people safe
on the mountain and during other outdoor activities*

This Mission Statement outline our shared purpose for becoming patrollers. Based on this, we assessed what lies ahead for NSP and the individual patroller. While we anticipate many changes in the next five years, we focused on just a handful of strategic challenges and opportunities that we felt were most important for the organization to address.

The most significant trend facing patrollers and the ski industry is the consolidation of resorts and the movement to all-season activity. We concluded that if we approached the future with a focus on the needs of resorts and our other principal customers, as well as a "heads-up" approach to the new multi-season need for more patrollers, both of these trends could prove beneficial to NSP and its patroller members.

Another challenge was the need to know more about patrollers, particularly in the areas of recruitment and retention, as the baby boom generation of patrollers begins to retire and the need to recruit their replacements continues to challenge some patrols.

Lastly, NSP has been developing a new IT system to meet these challenges with new member data and by significantly enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of all of our programs.

The Future Challenges and Opportunities

Externally: As ski resorts consolidate and expand to all seasons, we are challenged to meet their changing needs.

Internally: We are challenged by a lack of data and analysis important to patroller recruitment and retention, but our plans for an improved IT environment address that issue and present many other opportunities.

Given the major strategic challenges and opportunities facing us in the next five years, the strategic planning team described a "future state" for NSP in the year 2020 – in essence a destination we believe NSP must reach if we are to faithfully fulfill our historic mission of helping protect people in the outdoors. This future state will serve as our North Star, to guide us in serving our members and customers.

Vision 2020

Our curriculum-based programs achieved the level of an industry leader, like OEC. We met the changing needs of our principal customers and reached a point of financial, staffing, and systems stability.

This vision statement stakes out an ambitious future for NSP in which it will raise the level of effectiveness of all of its curriculum-based programs, which are Outdoor Emergency Care, Outdoor Emergency Transportation, Avalanche, Mountain Travel and Rescue, Nordic, and Instructor Development, to respond aggressively to better understand and meet our principal customers' changing needs. It will also put the national organization on a stronger financial, staffing, and systems footing.

This vision for the future is exciting, but requires a realistic and practical plan to get there. Before beginning our journey to that destination, we identified a handful of objectives that are essential to getting there, our Strategic Objectives.

These Strategic Objectives represent what we must achieve, above all else, and what NSP leadership must focus on if we are to succeed in making our vision a reality. Under these objectives, we can detail the programs and tactics necessary to achieve them.

Accordingly, we will improve the quality of NSP's programs and use new technologies and teaching methods to make them easier to learn and apply in the field.

We will also work more closely with our principal customers, the resorts and other outdoor activity providers, to better understand their needs and increase the value of NSP patrollers in meeting those needs.

Most important, we must unite our many constituencies -- patroller members, customers, financial partners, volunteers, and employees -- around our common cause of helping keep people safe.

To unite our extended family and keep them informed, we need to do a better job of telling the NSP patroller story, the commitment to service, the personal sacrifice, the camaraderie, and the values we all share.

Lastly, we must continue to refine the systems, people, and processes to make the national office capable of providing our patrollers and volunteer leadership, at all levels of NSP, with the support that they so need.

Strategic Objectives

- *Make all of our curriculum-based programs current, accessible, and easier to learn.*
- *Enhance NSP value to our principle customers.*
- *Increase NSP brand awareness and depth of meaning among our key constituencies.*
- *Establish a new IT platform and support its smooth operation throughout the organization.*
- *Continue to protect the independence of the OEC Program.*

While NSP will work on literally dozens of other issues, these objectives are the strategic essentials we must focus on to successfully meet our challenges and capitalize on the opportunities that lie ahead.

The Strategic Objectives can be thought of as a road map that will help guide everything that NSP leadership and staff do to ensure the continued relevancy of the organization. Each specific objective will require a different focus to ensure that the organization is staying on point.

To help with the needs of the curriculum-based programs, which are Outdoor Emergency Care, Outdoor Emergency Transportation, Avalanche, Mountain Travel and Rescue, Nordic, and Instructor Development, the NSP will collect data on who uses the programs, what programs the ski areas need, use the best practices of learning management systems, and use the latest technology to teach courses and programs.

The ski areas are NSP's principle customers. To enhance our value and relevancy to the areas, NSP will increase its outreach, engagement, and data collection with ski area management to meet the ever-changing needs of the ski area partners.

The NSP brand is represented by many things. This includes not only the shield logo, the white cross, the yellow cross, and the different colors, but the perception of the NSP among our ski area partners and the public we serve, as well as its representation in the media. NSP will be proactive with its communications and the story it tells to make sure the brand itself is enhanced and well-represented by marketing and communication presentations about the value patrollers bring to resorts, especially in a broader context about the need for volunteerism at ski resorts. NSP will also make sure its marketing partnerships drive awareness about the brand.

The IT platform is currently undergoing revision to ensure members have access to accurate data about their education, their awards, and other items that enhance the NSP brand. Further, the overhaul of the IT platform will include the development of a new, streamlined NSP website that will provide a better customer experience with greater efficiency and ease of use.

The last strategic objective will involve protecting the independence of the OEC Program from regulation, and ensuring that it is still the "gold standard" in outdoor care, and strengthen the recognition of OEC as a program that meets emergency medical responder requirements and that can be used for participation in the Federal Medical Reserve Corps.

With the completion of the guiding strategic components of *Strategic Plan 2020*, the board and division directors have turned the plan over to the national staff to determine what initiatives and tactics (*Key Initiatives*) are required to achieve our Strategic Objectives.

Under each of the Strategic Objectives, the staff will develop new initiatives and revise existing ones to ensure that they represent the most effective and efficient ways to achieve those objectives, including a means of measuring progress on each. Measurement is essential to enable national leadership to effectively guide the organization in the months ahead.

These Key Initiatives detail the "how to" part of this strategic planning process, and they drive the annual operating plans which the NSP board reviews on a regular basis.

Most important, this plan is designed to ensure that NSP honors its historic heritage of Minnie Dole and mountain rescue by providing our patrollers of today and the future with the training and tools to deliver faithfully on our mission to help keep people safe.