Fernie hosts Teck Kootenay Cup for the first time

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With months of preparation and after being open for only three years, the Elk Valley Nordic Centre hosted the Teck Kootenay Cup on Saturday, Feb. 13.

"Being our first race, this is a huge success," said Megan Lohmann. "The numbers were almost exactly what we were hoping to get."

Ninety-two racers found their way onto the Nordic Centre trails for the race, some of them travelling from other provinces and states to take part. There were some notable local finishes in the cup. The 3 to 4-year old category was exclusively Fernie kids, and the top three places in the Bantam girls category were Fernie Nordic Society racers, as were the top three in Midget Boys. In the Masters women's category, the top five places were taken by racers from the Nordic Society.

Organizers had some concern about the quality of the snow on the trails since rain had fallen on them for much of the previous night. They were able to get the groomer out on the trails first thing in the morning, however, and volunteers were out to work on the trails before and during the race. "It actually worked out," said Lohmann. "there were just a couple of areas that needed fine tuning."

The course itself is a challenging one, and Lohmann reports getting feedback from some skiers saying that "it was certainly the hilliest course that they've skied or raced." It's expected that the Elk Valley Nordic Centre will see the Kootenay Cup return to town again next year.

The race was made possible by the core committee of 8 and the approximately 40 total volunteers who worked to organize it, as well as contributions from Teck, which make the cup possible. "They [Teck] really put a lot into the sport of cross-country skiing in BC, and really make all the cup series in the province happen," said Lohmann.

Shane Bryson photo

Tove Pashowski of Fernie Nordic Society won first place in the Masters Womens category of the Teck Kootenay Cup on Saturday