



ANNUAL REPORT

July 2025 – June 2026

Vision

Inspiring people to challenge themselves outside

Creating memories that shape their lifestyle and the community



Host world-class events

Be good stewards of the American Birkebeiner Trail and associated trails

Promote healthy, active outdoor lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities

Mission

Values

Bring joy

Integrity

Be a team player

Everything can be improved

Value diversity

Lead by example

G.S.D

Dear Birkie Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, one word stands above all others: community.

The Birkie is more than a race. It is a year-round lifestyle that inspires us to get outside, challenge ourselves, and connect with others through movement and adventure. Whether you're training to move up a wave, working toward your first Korte finish, logging miles on the Trek Trails, hiking to the top of the Kawabaming Tower, or simply enjoying a walk on the Birkie Trail, it is the lifestyle, friendships, and sense of community that makes Birkie Fever all that it is! At the Birkie, we are committed to growing that impact every year by welcoming more people into the outdoor community, enhancing experiences, and strengthening the connections that make this place so special.

One of the highlights continues to be the growth and energy surrounding Mt. Telemark Village, recently named Wisconsin's Outdoor Recreation Destination of the Year by the Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism. With over 130,000 visitors last year, folks came to ride a bike, take a hike, walk a dog, throw a disc, snowshoe, enjoy a ski, participate in an event, or just take in some fresh air. What was once just a vision has become a vibrant gathering place for outdoor enthusiasts from across the region and beyond. Thank you for being part of this incredible community and helping make the Birkie what it is.

Our event calendar brought together thousands of participants across a wide variety of activities. From trail running and mountain biking, to skiing, adaptive programming, youth development initiatives, and community events, the Birkie continues to create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to challenge themselves, pursue personal goals, and experience the joy of the outdoors....and while weather challenges tested us leading into Birkie Week 2026, the dedication of our staff, volunteers, sponsors, local communities, and countless supporters made it possible to deliver another memorable Birkie Week experience.

Continued....



The Birkie community includes local leaders, volunteers, race chiefs, staff, board members, sponsors, business partners, residents, participants, spectators, friends, and families. It includes those who ski 50 kilometers through the forests of northern Wisconsin, those who tackle miles of singletrack during the Epic, those who run the hills of Mt. Telemark Village, and those who stand for hours cheering on loved ones at the finish line. It includes the volunteers who welcome participants before sunrise, staff who work year-round behind the scenes, and the supporters who make every outdoor experience we aim to enable possible.

And as I consider what next, I believe the key to a sustainable future will be partnerships. It takes a village to create experiences that inspire healthy lifestyles, lifelong friendships, and unforgettable memories. While the work we do to provide outdoor experiences is broad, we know that we can't do it alone. Whether it's lodging and food, or shopping and time exploring the area, building strong partnerships that will facilitate outdoor experiences are critical.

Together, we know that when people unite around a shared purpose, extraordinary things can happen.

Thank you for your continued support, your passion, and your commitment to the Birkie lifestyle.

We look forward to seeing you on the trails, at the events, and in the Northwoods in the year ahead!

- Ben and the Birkie Team



Agenda

2026 ABSF Annual Meeting

WELCOME

–

Louise Droessler, Development Director

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

–

Paul Eckerline, ABSF President

BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

–

Paul Eckerline, ABSF President

YEAR IN REVIEW

–

Ben Popp, Executive Director

FINANCIAL REVIEW

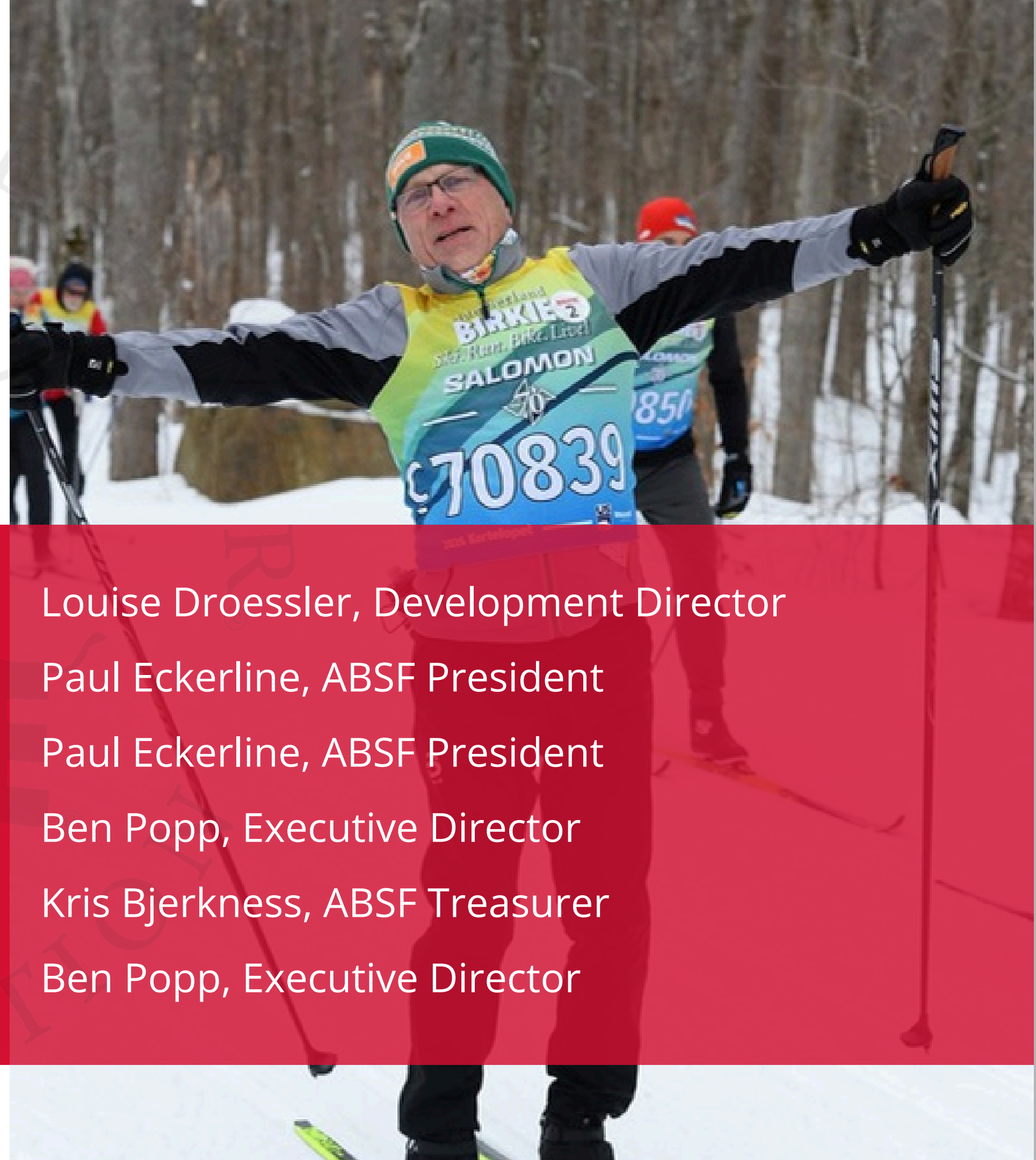
–

Kris Bjerkness, ABSF Treasurer

ABSF 5 Year Strategic Plan

–

Ben Popp, Executive Director





Paul Eckerline

Board President

BIRKIE
PRESIDENT'S REMARKS
FOUNDATION

2026 ABSF

Board Election Results



AARON MOCK



BILL BROWN



KATHIE PAUTSCH



MICK ENDERSBE



Ben Popp

Executive Director

YEAR IN REVIEW

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SHELLIE MILFORD Award

Nancy & Bill
Bauer
Recipient



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR Award

Dan Clark

Recipient



Birkie Volunteers

- 10,899 volunteer hours
- 2,823 volunteer shifts
- 1,851 individual volunteers
- 64 Race Chiefs
- \$18,199 paid to volunteer groups!



Events & Programs

- 17,137 participants
- Partnerships with New Moon, Hayward Fitness Fanatics and LCO Schools
- 153 Nordic Kids Youth!



Birkie Ventures

"This is the most fun part of my day!"

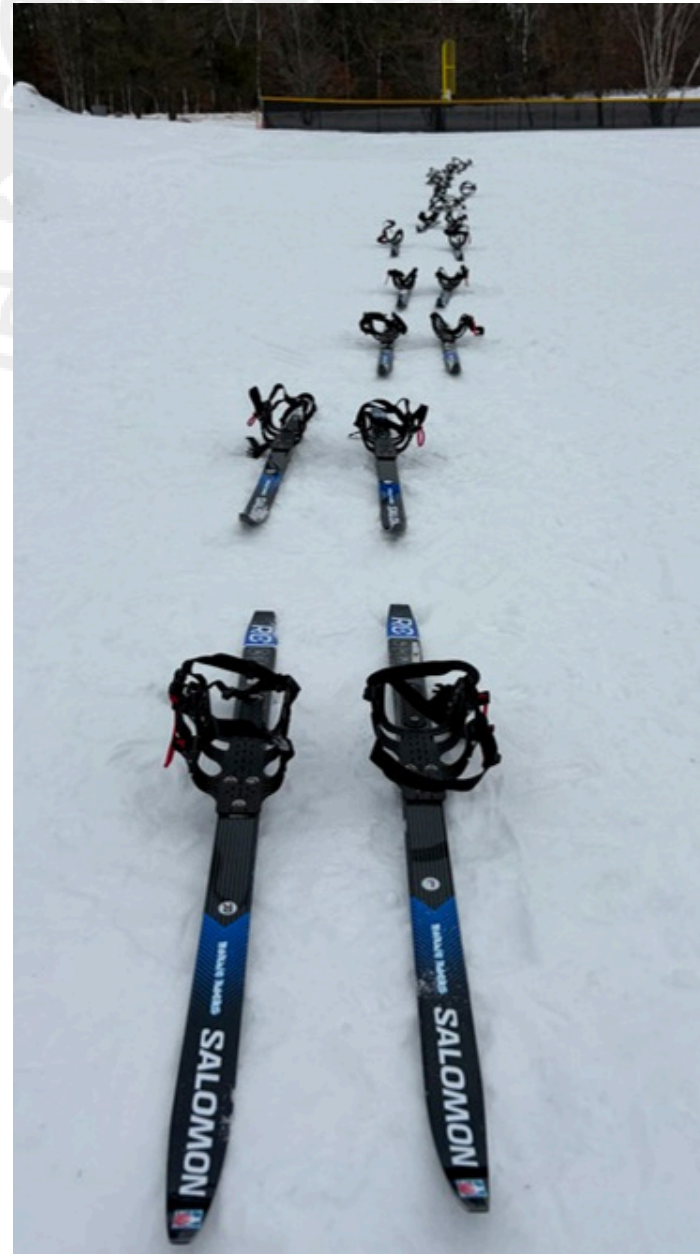


- Story Book Trail winter and summer
- New Nordic Rocks Skis!
- Partnerships with the Lac Courte Oreilles School District Learn to Ski grades 3-5

BIRKIE[®] ONE

"My dad is so proud of me for skiing!"

"Can we ski next year too!?"



"What?! Aren't you coming back next week?"



Junior Nationals

- 415 youth athletes
- 7 days of racing & events
- \$1.77M economic impact in the Cable & Hayward area



Trails & Facilities

- 144,239 daily users across all trailheads
- 57% from Mt. Telemark Village
- 24% at OO
- Tricky Tracking interpretive signs
- Disc Golf Course and Snowshoe Trail
- Partnership with CAMBA for bike trail maintenance





Destination of the Year



Birkie Impact

Annual Economic Impact

- \$63.4M economic value of both visitor & ABSF spending
- 440 regional jobs supported
- \$20.4M in wages, salaries, benefits

25-26 Community Impact

- Health survey under way
- Local Medical Services \$64,603
- Local Law Enforcement \$119,442
- Hayward High School \$35,000
- \$18,199 paid to volunteer groups
- \$1.7M operations expense for Trails and Facilities



Financial Report

It is our pleasure to present the annual financial report for the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF) for fiscal year ended June 30, 2026.

The ABSF ended the year with a surplus (Net Income) of \$706K, supported by strong unrestricted donor giving and continued event growth. Total Assets grew 12% (\$1.6M), driven primarily by fixed-asset additions related to Mt. Telemark Village (MTV) and a substantial increase in current assets.

This reflects continued capital investment in facilities, trails, and snowmaking as the MTV build-out progresses. Total Liabilities increased 26%, reflecting debt structured to align with donor contributions over time. Net Assets grew 7.1% to \$10.6M.

Total revenue declined \$455K, driven by lower restricted contributions as MTV fundraising wound down and giving shifted from restricted to unrestricted, offset by growth in general donations, grants, and sponsorships. Event revenue rose \$102K and held at roughly half of total revenue — underscoring that race fees fund the events themselves while the broader mission is sustained through philanthropy, sponsorship, and community support. Total expenses rose 3.5% as costs shifted toward Trails (+\$146K) and Facilities (+\$145K) with more capital assets coming into service.

Looking ahead, as the ABSF shifts fully to operating its new assets, future revenue growth will focus on event expansion, new events, increased facility use, and new programs and projects that optimize the use of its assets. Planned donor giving remains a high priority and underpins the organization's efforts to fulfill its mission.

Kris Bjerkness, ABSF Treasurer | Mike Brown, ABSF CFO

Accounting policies: Financial statements are prepared on the accrual basis under GAAP for not-for-profits; capital assets are recorded at cost or donated fair value, capitalized above \$5K, and depreciated straight-line.

Balance Sheet	25-26	% to PY
Current Assets	\$1,733,457	166.0%
Fixed Assets	\$12,891,127	4.9%
Other Assets	\$349,785	0.1%
Total Assets	\$14,974,370	12.0%
Current Liabilities	\$2,060,954	10.1%
LongTerm Liability	\$2,279,216	44.9%
Total Liabilities	\$4,340,171	26.0%
Net Assets	\$10,634,199	7.1%
Total Liab. & Equity	\$14,974,370	12.0%

Capital Expense	
Events	\$2,284
Trails & Facilities	\$579,942
Snowmaking	\$22,970
Telemark	\$634,401
Total Capital Expense	\$1,239,398

Statement of Activity	25-26	% to PY
Revenue		
Events	\$2,851,815	3.7%
Don/Grant/Spon	\$1,870,730	45.9%
Restricted	\$744,286	(62.4%)
Other	\$336,218	36.3%
Total Revenue	\$5,803,050	(7.3%)
Expense		
Admin	\$665,819	(2.8%)
Event Op	\$2,193,994	(2.6%)
Facilities	\$757,996	23.7%
Marketing	\$241,893	(6.9%)
Dev & Sponsor	\$278,201	9.7%
Sport Dev	\$37,545	(56.9%)
Trail	\$921,974	18.7%
Total Expense	\$5,097,422	3.5%

Endowment Report

Endowment Funds ensure a sustainable financial future for the ABSF through the stewardship of long term investments and strategic funding requests. FEAB is a great avenue for supporting the future of the Birkie with a legacy gift!



ENDOWMENT FOR THE
**AMERICAN
BIRKEBEINER**

TARGETED LEGACY FUNDS

- **TOTAL ASSETS:** \$2,026,281 = 24% GROWTH
- **TOTAL REVENUE:** \$476,021 = 13% GROWTH
- **\$51,928 paid to ABSF in grants and operations costs**

- Priority (General) Fund
- Forerunner Fund
- Bidwell Engebretson Tusen Takk Volunteer Support Fund
- Pierce Lampman Trail Fund
- Schwartz-Miller Scholarship Fund
- Tony Wise Museum Steve Gordon Legacy Fund



5 Year Strategic Plan

THE GOAL:

To enable 250,000 life-shaping outdoor experiences a year by 2030

Future Vision

The American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF) is positioned to become a global leader in providing active, outdoor recreational experiences through our events, programs, and daily use lifestyle strategies. We see the ABSF further enhancing our role as a key promoter and enabler of healthy, outdoor lifestyles, of environmental sustainability, and far-reaching community engagement. The Foundation seeks to continue its legacy of excellence while expanding its impact and ensuring the Foundation and lifestyle thrive for generations to come.



Future Vision

WE ENVISION AN ABSF THAT...

- Hosts a year-round series of premier events that generate experiences to enrich and shape people's lives.
- Works to maximize all ABSF infrastructure investments to enable daily outdoor experiences for a variety of users - beginners, proficient athletes, students, community members, and visitors - through programs, partnerships, and daily-use activities and offerings.
- Grows to become an influential leader in championing environmental stewardship and environmentally friendly recreation practices. By leading through example, the ABSF can teach and influence users to responsibly interact with nature and to become positive advocates for the environment. (The Birkie Blue Zone)
- Is financially secure, where operations are profitable, and where the Endowment (and/or other sustainable revenue streams) support 30% of the operating budget.
- Further hones our brand identity, positioning, messaging, and voice. By consistently applying the brand strategy guidelines in daily operations, the ABSF will continue to reinforce and build a strong brand that resonates with its target audiences and fosters user loyalty.
- Uses its defined operational strategies and vision to create a guide or handbook on best practices for operating a premier active outdoor brand.
- Strategically explores, grows, diversifies, and solidifies key local, regional, national, and international partnerships that align with the Birkie brand. Shoot for the moon!
- Further grows the acknowledgment, importance, training, and role of Race Chief and volunteers as key supplemental extensions of the Birkie staff.
- Explores expanding the Birkie brand to keep it growing and relevant. What is the essence of the brand we must not lose? Expanding Birkie Fever to more and more people is strategically important to ensure the ABSF's role as a global leader?
- Examines the viability of the ABSF in playing a role in outdoor education with the establishment of a fully immersive charter school located at MTV. Does this align with ABSF's vision, mission, and strategic goals? Would this strengthen or detract from the greater Birkie brand, ABSF events, activities, and programs?



Organizational Success

Transactional vs Relational
Interactions

Partnership-driven engagement

- Total user growth 250,000
- Participation growth accompanied by a sustainable business
- Membership and donor growth- both in numbers and dollars
- Conversion rates from daily users into events participants and vice versa

Department Goals



THANK YOU!

for joining us this afternoon

