



Annual Report

2024-2025

Healthier Futures
Through

Recreation

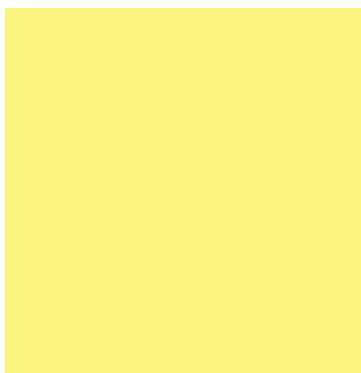
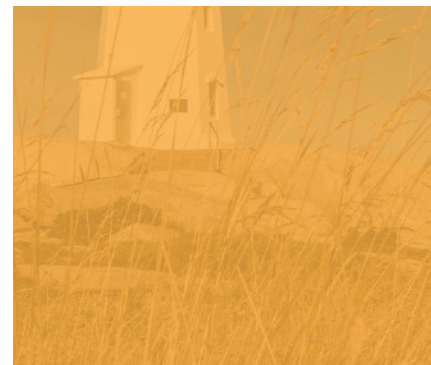
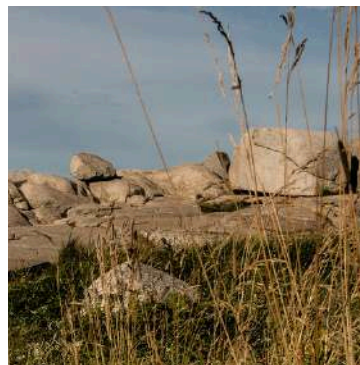


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RECREATION NOVA SCOTIA

INTRODUCTION

Recreation Nova Scotia (RNS) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active, healthy lifestyles and communities in Nova Scotia. RNS exists to lead, inspire and support Nova Scotians toward healthier futures through recreational experiences. Established in 1998, RNS is a central resource agency for recreation industry members and interested parties. RNS provides leadership, training, and support to help meet national, provincial and local priorities. Through a diverse network of partners and extensive programs and services, RNS actively advocates accessibility and inclusiveness to recreation. RNS has a strong membership, which includes community leaders, practitioners, students, academics, elected officials, and voluntary sector organizations across Nova Scotia who are the direct providers of recreation and related opportunities at the community level.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- Champion, promote and advocate for recreation as an essential element in building healthy, caring and vibrant communities;
- Facilitate the education and development of recreation professionals & volunteers;
- Promote connectivity between recreation sector professionals, influencers and beneficiaries.

MISSION STATEMENT

Recreation Nova Scotia inspires and supports a diverse and comprehensive network of partners committed to addressing the recreation needs of all Nova Scotians by providing leadership and a strong provincial voice.





MORE ABOUT US

RNS Staff 2024-2025

Graham Mounsey,	Executive Director
Jillian Anderson,	Financial Coordinator
Alan MacKeigan,	Education Coordinator
Robyn Morris,	Digital Media & Communications Manager
Fawn Logan-Young,	Equity & Anti-Racism Coordinator
Lisa Fedoruk,	PRO & Membership Coordinator
Kerri Jack,	Inclusion & Accessibility Coordinator

RNS Board 2024-2025

Brendon Smithson, Director of Regional Recreation Services for HRM - **President**
 Rachel Bedingfield, Independent Consultant, Acadia University - **Past President**
 Chris Atwood, Executive Director, CBDC Blue Water - **Vice President of Financing**
 Clare Steele, Active Communities Coordinator, Pictou County - **Vice President of Monitoring**
 Wallace Bernard - Mi'kmaw Physical Activity Leadership - **Recording Officer**

Directors:

Laura Jacobs, Manager of Recreation Services for the Town of Kentville
 Tissy Bolivar, Program Coordinator for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
 Christena Curry, Manager of Parks, Recreation, & Youth, Millbrook First Nation
 Ruth-Ellen Jackson, Northwood Volunteer Coordinator & Recreation Lead
 Olivia Walker - Student Director, Nova Scotia Community College

Ex-officio:

Jason Hansford-Smith, CCTH
 Graham Mounsey, Executive Director, Recreation Nova Scotia

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I sit down to reflect on this past year with Recreation Nova Scotia, I'm struck by the sheer energy, heart, and momentum that define our community. This wasn't just a year of programs and numbers—it was a year of people. Of passion. Of purpose.

We saw our Group Memberships more than triple. That's not just growth—it's a signal. A signal that more communities are choosing to come together under the banner of recreation, recognizing its power to heal, connect, and inspire. Whether through a local park, a youth program, or a community event, recreation continues to be the thread that weaves resilience into the fabric of Nova Scotia.

We celebrated nine incredible award recipients whose work reminded us what leadership looks like when it's rooted in compassion and creativity. We remembered Robin Norrie, whose legacy of advocacy and friendship will forever guide our steps. And we welcomed new voices—students, volunteers, and professionals—who are shaping the future of our sector with fresh ideas and bold vision.

This year, we leaned into the hard work of inclusion. Through the Anti-Racism Charter, mental health training, and disability inclusion guidelines, we're not just talking about equity—we're building it. We're listening more deeply, showing up more intentionally, and creating spaces where everyone belongs.

We also looked outward. From CPRA's Day on the Hill to the Atlantic Recreation & Facilities Conference, we stood shoulder to shoulder with national partners to champion recreation as a cornerstone of healthy, vibrant communities. And we looked inward, forming new board committees to ensure our own house reflects the values we hold dear.

What excites me most is what lies ahead. The Recreation Leadership Training Project, the upcoming ARFC in Halifax, and our continued work in youth employment and community advocacy are just the beginning. We're not just responding to change—we're shaping it.

To every staff member - Alan, Fawn, Graham, Jill, Kerri, Lisa, and Robyn: thank you. To every member, partner, and volunteer: thank you. Thank you for believing in the power of recreation. For showing up. For dreaming big. Together, we're not just building programs—we're building a movement.

With gratitude and hope,

**Brendon Smithson, President,
Recreation Nova Scotia**

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Coming into the Executive Director role at RNS in June 2024 sparked a period of learning and growth that continues to be deeply rewarding for me.

Although not new to the organisation, I have been able to listen and hear from the sector in a different way, and feel even more grateful to work in a sector filled with such dedication, creativity and generosity.

Over the past year, RNS has continued to evolve and grow as a provincial voice and connector. Our Annual Conference, this year hosted in partnership with the Highland Region in Antigonish, always makes for such a special event for bringing people together to learn, reconnect, and celebrate. Crucially, it also presented another opportunity to hear from members and partners about recreation priorities in their communities and the role RNS can play in supporting them. These conversations shape how we work at RNS and help us move forward with purpose to adapt and modify how we provide services, run events and host resources to meet these emerging needs.

We're acutely aware of and commit to making space for these conversations more often and in new ways. We know our sector is continuing to evolve. Through opportunities such as CPRA's Day on the Hill, and the development of the new National Framework for Recreation in Canada, we're hearing that that evolution of the role of recreation extends beyond Nova Scotia and we need to continue to elevate the

message of just how vital this sector is. It's something those in it every day know and feel, but our role is to champion this message and illustrate the impact of this sector.

I want to extend a huge thank you to all the RNS Staff and Board and others around me for their support as I've settled into this role. And to all those working, volunteering, supporting recreation in Nova Scotia, thank you for all the work you do to make communities healthier, more connected, more vibrant and more fun!

I look forward to continuing to learn alongside and work collectively to strengthen recreation across the province.

**Graham Mounsey, Executive Director
Recreation Nova Scotia**

RNS FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR APRIL 1, 2024 – MARCH 31, 2025

RNS engaged MNP to independently audit the financials for the year ending March 31, 2025. The auditors provided a clean audit opinion.

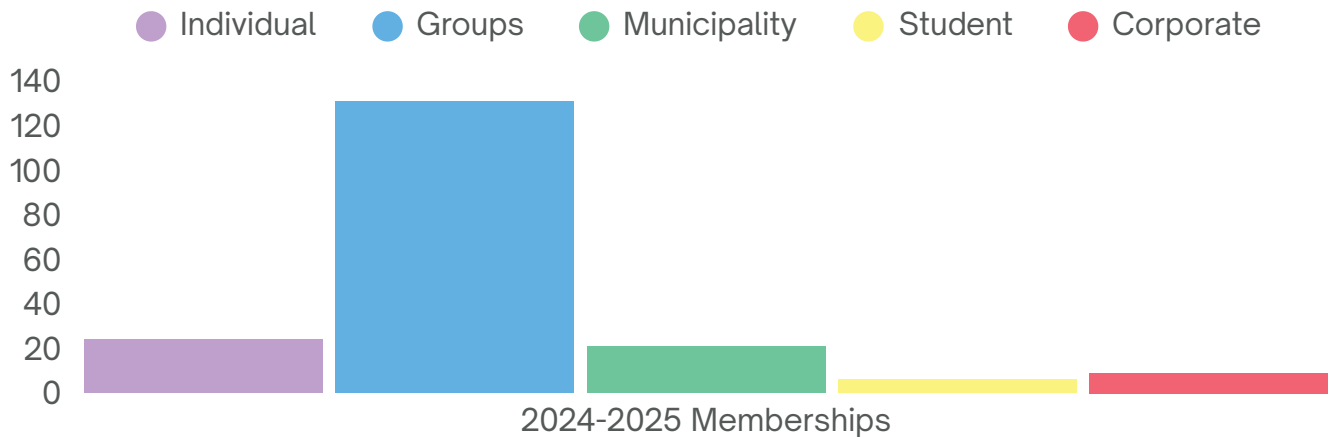
The detailed Audited Financial Statements can be found on [our website](#).

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	657,447	567,168
Accounts receivable	45,817	36,397
Term deposits	202,242	193,643
Prepaid expenses & deposits	-	6,034
	906,202	797,208
Capital assets	696	1,159
	906,202	798,367
LIABILITIES		
Current		
Accounts payable & accruals	82,846	79,704
Deferred contributions	382,315	317,374
	465,161	397,078
Commitments		
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	213,955	173,254
Internally restricted	1,895	2,844
Externally restricted	225,191	225,191
	441,041	401,289
	906, 202	798,367



MEMBERSHIP

From 2023-2024 into 2024-2025, RNS saw membership numbers slightly reduce in the Municipal and Individual categories. We saw a slight uptick in Corporate/Business and Student members and a considerable increase in Group Memberships, going from 40 groups in 2023-2024 up to 129 in 2024-2025.



21 Municipal
Members

6
students

24
Individual
Members

131
Groups

9
Corporate

AWARDS

The annual RNS Awards pay tribute to exceptional individuals, organizations, and communities that, through their programs, events, projects, and passion, have made outstanding contributions to building healthier communities and enhancing the quality of life for Nova Scotians through recreation.

9 awards were presented at the Awards Banquet as part of the 2024 RNS Conference in Antigonish:

- Bluenose Achievement Award: Avon Sport and Social Community
- Mayflower Community Cooperation Award: Cross Country Nova Scotia Ski Ambassadors
- Connecting People with Nature Award: Town of Kentville, Parks and Recreation
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Access (EDIA) Award: Town of Kentville, Neighbourhood Outreach Program Coordinator
- High Five Nova Scotia Champion: Amherst Little League
- Event/Program Excellence Award: Alnaas Community and Youth Development Association
- Heart of Recreation Award: W.E.B.S. Creative Closet
- Professional Achievement Award: Marlene Melanson
- Honourary Lifetime Member Award: Robin Norrie

Thank you to the Awards Adjudication Committee, comprised of a mix of RNS staff, Board representatives and community volunteers:

- Lisa Fedoruk - RNS Provincial Rec. Organization and Membership Coordinator (Chair)
- Clare Steele - RNS Board Rep
- Emma Clarke - Regional Physical Activity Consultant, Cape Breton
- Kelsey MacLennan - Community Volunteer
- Robyn Morris - RNS Digital Media & Communications Manager
- Alan MacKeigan - RNS Education Coordinator

A special thanks goes to Friends United, who generously donated the art prints from local First Nations artists that were framed and presented to all award winners.



Remembering Robin Norrie

In early 2025, we were deeply saddened to lose a dear friend, colleague and advocate. Robin is remembered as a constant champion of our sector's power and potential, working for almost 40 years at all three levels of government as well as NSCC. Robin was last year's Honourary Lifetime Membership recipient. In her acceptance speech, she spoke of the many relationships she had made through her career, reflecting with joy and gratitude. We will continue to remember Robin's strength and friendship and work to honour the legacy she has left for us.



EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

ANTI-RACISM CHARTER IN RECREATION

Organizations continued to advance their work in anti-racism in recreation, utilizing the Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation. In 2024-2025, a further nine organizations officially signed the Anti-Racism Charter. This included municipalities, villages, and community organizations, adding to the growing list of almost 40 organizations that have taken this important step in anti-racism in recreation.

RNS conducted Spring Check-Ins, connecting with signatories to gather feedback and summarize in a progress report. This, in part, led to the development of the Anti-Racism Summit – to be held May 2025 via a \$10,000 grant from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Additionally, RNS continued to maintain a presence at various events and conferences to speak to the importance of this work and the role of recreation in supporting inclusive and anti-racist communities, including with the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Community College, and the Atlantic Recreation & Facilities Conference.



10 CONFERENCE SPONSORS

Thank you to all who supported as part of the 2024 Conference Committee: Marlene Melanson, Craig Murray, Cindy Fraser, Rae Gunn, Meaghan MacNeil, Clare Steele, Veronica Deno, Eric Lumsden, RNS staff: Robyn Morris, Graham Mounsey, Alan MacKeigan, Lisa Fedoruk, and Kerri Jack.



**92
BANQUET
ATTENDEES**

**76
PRE-
CONFERENCE
ATTENDEES**

**21
INDIVIDUALS
WITH
SUBSIDIES**



RECREATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH (R4MH)

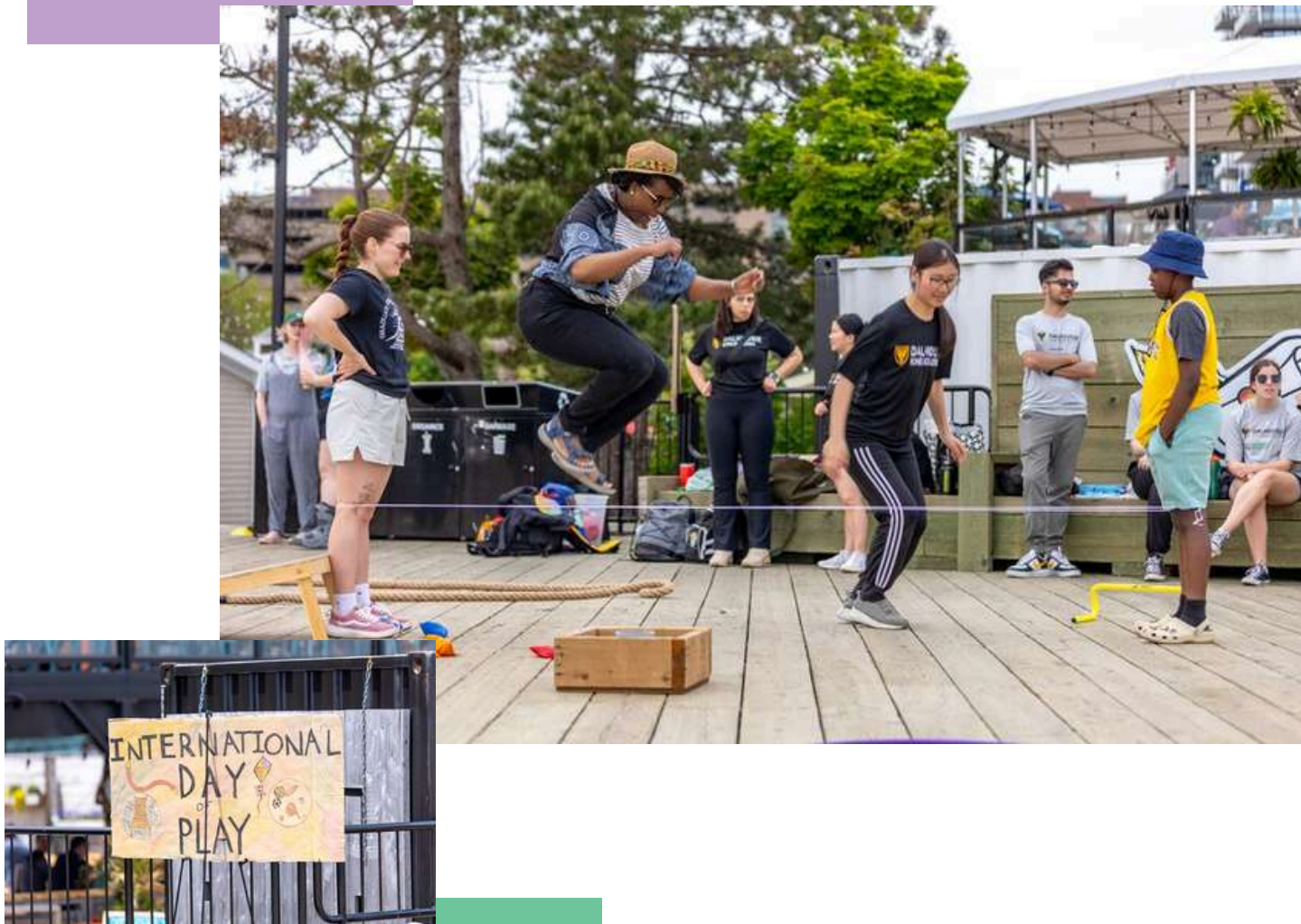
The Recreation for Mental Health Training offers guidelines and actions that help recreation practitioners make their programs and spaces more accessible to people experiencing mental health challenges. The training also features the R4MH Game – a fun, interactive learning tool that helps better understand the barriers and supports for individuals with mental health challenges.

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RNS ran four workshops in early 2025 in Portapique, Antigonish, Sydney, and Bridgewater. We welcomed a total of 71 participants from organizations such as YMCAs, recreation facilities, seniors' recreation programs, family resource centres, students, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.

BOARD COMMITTEES

In early 2025, the RNS Board developed several committees to help support the organization's work in several key areas: Education, Membership Services, Government Relations, Anti-Racism, Finance, and HR. Chaired by board members and supported by staff, these committees will go on to have participation from RNS members to help shape direction at the board level.



SECTORAL PRIORITIES

RNS are proud to work alongside partners locally, provincially and nationally to support recreation in Nova Scotia. These collaborations across sectors ensure RNS are positioned to represent the voices of our members and benefit from new trends, practices and policies.

NATIONAL BODIES

- Canadian Parks & Recreation Association (CPRA)
- Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD)

COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- Framework Leadership Team – CPRA
- Government Relations Committee – CPRA
- Nova Scotia Women in Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation Community of Practice
- Municipal Guide to Promising and Best Practices for Disability Inclusion for Recreation and Physical Activity
- Nova Scotia Anti-Racism in Sport & Recreation
- Atlantic Recreation & Facilities Conference Planning Committee
- Nova Scotia International Day of Play Committee
- Dalhousie Recreation Management Program Advisory Committee
- Provincial Recreation Organization Assessment Tool Committee



CPRA DAY ON THE HILL

In November 2024, Graham Mounsey (Executive Director) and Rachel Bedingfield (RNS CPRA Board Rep) travelled to Ottawa to join with colleagues from across Canada. As part of a group with representatives from all 13 Provincial and Territorial members, Graham and Rachel met with several MPs and other federal policymakers to discuss the important role recreation and parks play in building healthy, vibrant, and resilient communities.

The key messages were aligned with CPRA's Pre-Budget Submission:

1. Invest significantly in renovating and retrofitting Canada's aging stock of community recreation and parks infrastructure
2. Invest \$500M over five years in an Active Canada Fund for increasing physical activity
3. Invest \$4M annually in CPRA-administered wage subsidy programs – addressing aquatic labour shortages and Green Jobs and Youth Employment Experience programs

MINISTER MEETING WITH CCTH

In February 2025, RNS President, Past-President, and Executive Director met with Minister Ritcey, the new Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage.

The meeting provided an opportunity to share the landscape of recreation in Nova Scotia and the importance of this sector in supporting key provincial priorities such as preventative health, economic development and employment, and overall, more vibrant and resilient communities fostering quality of life. We provided three recommendations including investment in training development, youth employment opportunities and action on improving community use of schools.





INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLAY 2024

June 11, 2024, marked the first ever UN International Day of Play (IDOP). To mark this occasion, RNS partnered with a group of organizations and individuals all passionate about promoting play in all facets be it for fostering resilience, supporting healthy childhood development, connection with nature, or building social connectivity.

The group led a loose parts play event in partnership with Dalhousie University providing free play opportunities on the Halifax Waterfront. Promotional materials for local IDOP events were distributed with recreation and education partners making the day their own. In Halifax Central Library, a film screening took place on June 11th to mark the day with public screenings of two short films focused on highlighting the benefits of outdoor play.

JUNE IS PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH IN NOVA SCOTIA

June is Parks & Recreation Month (JPRM) in Nova Scotia – a time to recognize and celebrate recreation's tremendous contributions to our health, well-being and quality of life. JPRM ran from June 1 to June 30, 2024, with the theme "Summer Starts Now," highlighting what recreation means to us. We aimed to highlight all aspects of recreation, recognizing that it's more than just what you do; it's a feeling.

We also hosted a contest for an RNS swag bag. We asked our audience on social media to submit pictures in the comments of what recreation means to them. This contest received 22 comments, two shares, and eight likes on Facebook, with the winner announced on July 2, 2024.

TAKE THE ROOF OFF WINTER (TTROW)

This year, TTROW ran from February 3 to March 20, 2025, and looked a little different. As RNS and Healthy Tomorrow Foundation defined their audiences further, we switched our strategy to a more municipal approach. We encouraged Municipalities, recreation departments, and professionals to get involved through a toolkit created for them, which included digital assets for use.

We also encouraged the public to participate in winter events taking place in their communities. For content on social media, we tied TTROW to the Activate Your Neighbourhood Tactical Guide.



GREEN JOBS

JRNS is a proud partner and member of CPRA, the national voice for recreation and parks in Canada. CPRA's mission to champion the vital role that the recreation and parks sector makes towards creating healthy, vibrant and resilient communities across Canada. As part of CPRA's commitment to share resources, foster collaboration, and empower communities across Canada, the extremely successful Green Jobs program returned for 2024.

GREEN JOBS IN NOVA SCOTIA - BY NUMBER

- 8 youth employed
- \$34,959 invested in Nova Scotia
- 4,016 hours worked by youth in green jobs
- 50% of participants faced barriers to employment
- 13% of participants were from equity-deserving groups

MUNICIPAL GUIDELINES FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION

RNS was a proud supporter of the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability's development of the Municipal Guide to Promising and Best Practices for Disability Inclusion in Recreation and Physical Activity. The guide will provide how-to practices for staff at all levels in municipal recreation departments to ensure people with disabilities are included in community programs and activities. Over 2024-25, RNS promoted and recruited participation in three focus groups that took place for people with disabilities, caregivers, and municipal recreation staff. Staff supported the collection of examples of best practices throughout Nova Scotia, which will be included in the guidelines. Projects from Shelburne and Truro will be featured in the first three guidelines. Kerri Jack, Inclusion & Accessibility Coordinator, fed into the draft guidelines via the project's consensus panel and supporting a two-day working meeting to develop the guidelines in Ottawa in September 2024.

To celebrate National Day for Persons with a Disability on December 3rd, 2024, RNS partnered with ALACD and hosted a Lunch and Learn where 20+ people joined to learn more about the Municipal Guidelines Project.

EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM (ELPS)

RNS and Dalhousie University partnered to evaluate equipment loan programs in Nova Scotia. A survey for equipment loan program managers was developed by Dr. Karen Gallant and Kerri Jack at RNS. The survey was hosted online from February to March 2025. There were 46 unique responses collected through the survey. Together, Karen and Kerri plan to share the data collected as opportunities arise and by request. The data will also be used to determine how RNS can continue to support programs moving forward.

COMMUNICATIONS

HIGHLIGHTS

Communication tactics remain successful in the 2024-2025 year. We continue to send monthly newsletters and e-bulletins as needed and post frequently on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Additionally, our website and the Rec Room continue to be updated assets for new information to direct people towards.

Newsletters/Emails

Newsletters and e-bulletins for the 2024-2025 year have an average open rate of 57% (an increase from last year) and a low bounce rate, indicating that people are receiving, opening, and reading them. We also had 15 individuals unsubscribe from our newsletter - a decrease from last year.

Our strategy shifted this year to focus more on what the RNS team is doing to advocate for recreation across the province while still supporting our partners.

129 new contacts vs 212 last year's new contact (total of 848 current contacts)

Social Media

- 485 new followers vs 760 last year's new followers (total of 7,000+ followers across three platforms)
- 4.28% total post engagement rate vs 3.30% last year.

Website

15K active users, average engagement 1min45sec, top pages were Employment opportunities, RNS Annual Conference, and the Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation.

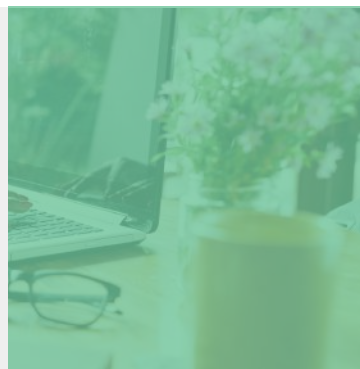


**57%
OPEN EMAILS**



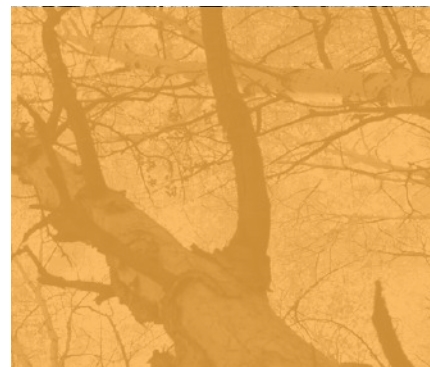
**129
NEW
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**485 NEW FOLLOWERS
4.28% ENGAGEMENT RATE**





Healthier Futures Through Recreation



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