



**June 27, 2022, for immediate release, WASKESIU LAKE, SK** – The Waskesiu Foundation and the Waskesiu Recreation Association are pleased to announce that grand openings of the Johnny Bower Sport Court, the Reel Rave International Film Festival Picnic Shelter, and Stanley Thompson Lawn Bowling Green will take place Thursday, June 30 at the recreation grounds in Waskesiu.

The Johnny Bower Sport Court will be dedicated in recognition of Johnny's athletic ability, his contributions to sports and to the Waskesiu community. From humble beginnings in Prince Albert, Johnny Bower rose to be a star goaltender for the Toronto Maple Leafs. Famous for his trademark poke check, he won four Stanley Cups, many awards, and is one of the NHL's 100 Greatest Players. During the 1950s, Johnny enjoyed being the assistant golf pro at the Waskesiu Golf Course, a cottage owner, a partner in a restaurant and a hotel, but he was most well known in Waskesiu as the owner of what he called his "hamburger joint" – the Johnny Bower Coffee Shop – located in the building now home to LA Outfitters.

Members of the Bower family will be in attendance, and a free floor hockey activity will take place on the sport court following the event, where members of the public are invited to try to score a goal on a member of the Johnny Bower family. The picnic shelter, sponsored by the Reel Rave International Film Festival – an annual event in Waskesiu on the second weekend in September – will also celebrate its grand opening that day. A community BBQ hosted by a local business, The Shack at Waskesiu, will take place at the picnic shelter on the recreation grounds. Included for sale will be the Bower "Big Boy" burger that Johnny featured at his hamburger joint in the 1950's, which included two patties, cheese, pickle, lettuce, and onions.

The Johnny Bower Sport Court features a wide range of activities including floor hockey, basketball, volleyball, futsal/soccer, and dodgeball. "Recreation is such an important part of the Waskesiu experience. We're thrilled to offer these and so many other recreational opportunities for families, friends, and visitors to take part in," says Gary Bender, President of the [Waskesiu Recreation Association](#). "It's an incredible chance for residents and visitors of all ages to connect, be active and enjoy the great outdoors. Waskesiu is such a special place and we're so happy to continue providing these types of amenities for all to enjoy."

Following the community BBQ will be a grand opening celebration for the Stanley Thompson Lawn Bowling Green, also located on the recreation grounds. The lawn bowling green will be dedicated in honour of the famous designer of the Waskesiu Golf Course, Stanley Thompson, whose mastery of turf management was called upon in 1948 when the lawn bowling green was first constructed in Waskesiu. A lawn bowling demonstration and the opportunity for the public to participate at no cost will take place after the dedication.

The Johnny Bower Sport Court, picnic shelter and Stanley Thompson Lawn Bowling Green received significant support from donors, individuals, businesses, volunteers, project partners and the local community. "None of this would be possible without the incredible support of donors," says Derwin Arnstead, Chair of the [Waskesiu Foundation](#). "Special thanks to Parks Canada for prepping the groundwork at the project sites, PrairiesCan for their funding towards the lawn bowling refurbishment, the Hesje family for their support of the lawn bowling green, the Reel Rave International Film Festival for



sponsoring the picnic shelter, and the Johnny Bower Foundation for their support of the commemorative sign. Teamwork makes the dream work.”

### **Project Partners**

The [Waskesiu Foundation](#) and [Waskesiu Recreation Association](#) have a successful history of partnering together to build, renew, and refresh recreation facilities in the Waskesiu community. In 2021, the Johnny Bower Sport Court, shuffleboard court, and picnic shelter were opened to the public while outdoor giant chess & checkers, table tennis, and a children’s ninja park were added throughout the summer season. These amenities complement the ever-popular [Little Al’s Mini Golf](#)– a fantastic nature-themed mini golf course that reflects the unique character of Waskesiu and Prince Albert National Park. Little Al’s Mini Golf opened in July of 2018.

The Waskesiu Foundation is a registered charity supporting recreational, social, cultural, and environmental activities that enhance the Waskesiu experience. The Waskesiu Recreation Association is a non-profit organization responsible for maintaining and improving many of Waskesiu’s recreation facilities and activities, and also leads, or assists with, several of the prominent events that make Waskesiu a popular destination for so many.

– 30 –

### **Schedule**

#### **Thursday, June 30, 2022 | Grand Openings**

Recreation grounds | 1500 Montreal Drive | Waskesiu Lake

**11:00 am** Grand Opening of the Johnny Bower Sport Court & Reel Rave Picnic Shelter

**12:00 pm** Community BBQ (at the picnic shelter hosted by The Shack at Waskesiu)

**1:00 pm** Grand Opening of the Stanley Thompson Lawn Bowling Green

For more information:

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