

# Warmer winters may melt away our sports identity

Charles Hodgson hopes his children and grandchildren can continue to enjoy cross-country skiing in Gatineau Park for years to come, but a new report by the University of Waterloo suggests it may be too warm for the winter sport to be feasible in the nation's capital.

According to the report, Ottawa's winter temperatures are expected to rise 8.5 degrees by the 2050s and 12.5 degrees by the 2080s, giving the future of winter outdoor sports an air of uncertainty.

"I am not going to be doing my skiing in those years, but my kids and maybe my grandchildren, I would like to think they could, but it doesn't look like that," said Hodgson, who sits on the steering committee for Ecology Ottawa.

"One of the biggest threats to the park is climate change, because the species are going to be shifting."

Hodgson has been a Gatineau Park advocate for years, running a website called Guide Gatineau that reports on news that affects

the Park.

He is hosting a panel discussion this Wednesday on The Future of Snow and Skiing in a Warming World with former Olympians, ski-hill owners, park managers and environmental scientists to talk about how our identity is thawing daily.

"If we think that we have the same identity our parents or our grandparents had, we are fooling ourselves," added Hodgson.

"Obviously we can change our identities and people will, but there are some

pretty serious consequences, more so for people in other parts of the world than for us."

Joining the panel is 2006 cross-country skiing Olympic silver medallist Sara Renner and Canadian slalom champion Patrick Biggs, as well as Camp Fortune owner Bob Sudermann and mountain-environments scientist Dr. Stephan Gruber.

The panel takes place at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

TREVOR GREENWAY/METRO



Charles Hodgson enjoys an afternoon ski in Gatineau Park. He is hosting a panel discussion on how global warming will affect the region's winter sports. CONTRIBUTED