



Greetings,

We hope this letter finds all of you in good health and ready for some skiing or snowshoeing. Thank you all for your past support, as without it we could not provide the skiing and snowshoeing opportunity in this area that we all can enjoy.

Last season was a good year with the first packing and rolling of the trails in mid November and grooming in mid December. We groomed 21 days last season and a big thanks to: Tom Bennet, Rod Obermiller, and Matt Davis for all their hard work keeping the trails in good shape.

We did not have any major equipment issues last season although the SkiDoo Skandic wouldn't shut off until it has run for about an hour. The Yamaha Viking would not start when we were going to take it on the mountain this fall. We got the Yamaha fixed but have decided not to fix the Skandic at this time as it runs fine.

The modifications I made last year to the blade groomer worked very well. It has a compaction belt that smoothes and puts the corduroy on the snow, but ahead of that is a 6 way adjustable blade. It operates like a blade on a road grader to flatten and level the snow.

We have also applied for another grant for an 84" wide Ginzu groomer and another 4 stroke snowmobile. If we get the grant we will use the new snowmobile at the Cutler trails where we are still using one of the old double tracks at that location. We will be purchasing the Ginzu groomer even if we don't get the grant as we have the funds to do so. This groomer will do a much better job making a flat smooth trail than the old Ginzu. These grants we have applied for and received are through the Recreational Trails Grant Program administered through the State of Wyoming and require a minimum 20% match. By the time you read this we should know if we are successful or not.

We only had one trail work day this year and we worked on the trail between junctions B and C on the main trail going to the hut. We had a good crew of volunteers show up and we dug out the side hill area of the trail by hand and removed several stumps that were in the trail. I could see a huge difference when we packed the trail for the first time this year. We also cut and stacked some firewood for the hut and will be hauling it up with the snowmobiles and sleds. We could use some help if anyone enjoys splitting firewood. Next year I would like to clear the logging roads some more as all those cute little pines along side of the roads are encroaching on the trails and need to be thinned back again. Dead Horse, Cat Walk and Fido's Fairway at Cutler all need thinned again. There are currently some large bridge timbers at the E junction. We will be moving them to the B junction bridge sometime this winter. Last winter we moved some in to the bridge by the hut. We skidded them in from the Big Goose Ranger Station and if that wasn't a real rodeo! The plan is to replace all of the log bridges that are slowly rotting away.

The chili feed was a success again with about 55 in attendance and a smaller group for the hot dog roast at Cutler. This years date for the chili feed is January 29 so not to conflict with the Pole Creek Challenge Ski Race above Buffalo. The date for the hot dog roast to be decided later.

There has been a change in our volunteer agreement we operate under with the Forest Service. They can no longer pay the \$20.00 a day to groomers but we will still get re-imbursed for fuel for the snowmobiles and a mileage allowance for travel. We also will have the option to use a Forest Service vehicle from their office to the trails and back. We will continue to be covered under the Forest Service for personal liability. We are fortunate to have a great group of people here at the Tongue Ranger District Office to work with. All costs incurred for the equipment, maintenance, repair and grant matches are that of the club and its generous supporters. The club currently owns and maintains (just major items) four trailers, four snowmobiles and six grooming implements to maintain the two trail systems.

The Forest Service is going forward with the Johnson Creek Vegetation Management Project. The plans are to include some new loops for the Cutler Trails. They have also been clearing some meadows on the mountain from encroaching conifers. This summer they cleared some meadows on the Deadhorse trail up from junction C. It looks a little junky now with the downed trees but it really opened the meadows up. It is back to what it looked like about 30 years ago. They also sheeted the out house at the hut in metal and plan to do the same to the hut as critters are eating the wood siding.

We changed our website last season to www.blackmountainnordic.com Melissa Butcher helped get the site built and Tenley Spear has been helping with the maintenance of it. Thanks to both ladies as they did not charge us for their work. Check it out if you haven't, it looks nice. I post the trail updates so if you don't get the weekly trail updates because of a spam filter or whatever, you can go the website and get the same info just a slightly less colorful version.

As use of the trails increase we all need to be aware of other people on the trails. There is a trail etiquette page on the website and we will have signs posted on the trails. These are standard "rules of the road" for everyone's safety.

Attached is the membership renewal form. If you have changed your email in the last year and want to receive the weekly trail updates please fill it in. Your membership dollars has made it possible for us to maintain the trails we all enjoy. If you have skied Sibley for over 10 years you know the improvement in the trail system and the creation of the Cutler Trails. Our yearly membership is the same price it is for one adult day pass to ski at Bohart Ranch or Lone Mountain Ranch in Montana and about the cost to ski two days at Casper or West Yellowstone.

Thank you for your support.
Happy Trails and Happy Holidays.
Curt Schwamb



