



Greetings,

I hope this letter finds all of you in good health and ready to do some skiing and snowshoeing.

The Big Horn Mountains is a great area for outdoor recreation and the Sibley / Cutler Ski and Snowshoe Trails offer some fine areas to enjoy winter. Ten years ago we formed the Black Mountain Nordic Club and thanks to all of you we have a solid group of supporters to help keep the trails maintained for all to enjoy. When we started this organization, we really scrambled for support. The first year we applied for and received a grant for two (then) 20 year old snowmobiles, a used trailer that we enclosed and a groomer. That is what we used for both trail systems for the next several years. The trails back then were much narrower and the grooming wasn't as good as we are doing today. We now have three enclosed trailers, (one factory built) and a trailer for the port-a-potty at Cutler, four utility snowmobiles, (still have the two old ones) and six grooming implements. (Two I have built and four are built by Yellowstone Track Systems). All of this and the maintenance required to keep the equipment operating is directly due to your support. Also, none of this would be possible if not for people that volunteer their time to groom the trails. Tom Bennet, Matt Davis, Rod Obermiller, Clint Mosely, and Steve Baribeau all donated their time last season to turning sometimes more than enough snowfall into beautiful corduroy and classic tracks to glide on.

We operate under a volunteer agreement with the US forest Service for the trail work at Sibley and Cutler. This includes reimbursement for our fuel and oil expense and mileage if we drive our own vehicle up the mountain to groom. Last year they gave us the option to use a Forest Service truck that will carry four people instead of driving our own vehicle. We have taken advantage of this as it saves wear and tear on our personal vehicles. If you see a white FS truck at one of the ski trails we are probably on the trails grooming. We are very lucky to have a great group of people at our local Forest Service office to work with.

Once summer arrived on the mountain, about the end of June, it was time to get the trailers down and everything put into storage. Just a few months later in October, we gathered it all at my house for service and repair, and took it all back up. What a short summer! There have not been any catastrophic repairs, but there is always a fair amount of time and expense in keeping everything working.

We had several work days on the trails this fall. The Forest Service reconstructed two bridges at junctions B and H. We skidded the timbers in the past two years with the snowmobiles at the end of the grooming season. The decking was brought in on four-wheelers this summer when the construction took place. The timbers are huge treated timbers and will probably outlast all of us. Mike Trout and I assisted 8 FS employees in the construction and they are impressive. The bridge at the hut has been moved upstream about 75' due to stream bank erosion under the old bridge. Since the trail no longer goes right by the hut we are grooming a round-a-bout in front of

the hut for the junction. There are several other bridges that are in need of replacing and there are plans to replace at least two more this next summer. The second work day we did general clearing and cleaning of the trails plus shoring up the bridge across Prune Creek above the hut on the Prune Creek Loop. We also cleared back some of the ever encroaching dog hair (lodge pole pines) on the road sections of the Dead Horse Loop.

As I write this we have already started packing the trails. The first weekend of October, the mountain received a large snow storm. This was good for our snowpack but it was a nightmare for us that do the trail work. Hundreds of the before mentioned lodge pole pines got bent over and broken and buried in subsequent snow storms. This season we are tracking our volunteer hours and at this point we have over 50 man hours clearing and rolling Dead Horse, Prune Creek and Cutler.

We had our fall meeting and all the current officers and board members were retained for another two year term. Curt Schwamb - President; Julie Davidson - Vice President; Linda Schwamb – Secretary; Pete Mohseni - Treasurer; and Claudia Schaeffer, Mike Trout, Robert Nickens and Steve Baribeau - Board Members. We also decided to apply for a grant for a new snowmobile. We are presently using one of the old Alpines at Cutler and a new, second machine there would be a big help. We decided on January 28, 2012 for the chili feed at the warming hut.

If you are renewing or are joining for the first time, and would like to receive the trail grooming updates and news, please provide your email address. We bought a new computer this summer and have tried our best to get all the club members emails set up, but we may have missed a few. I am currently getting back about 15 undeliverable emails so I know a few addresses have changed. I also post the trail reports to the website but it lacks some of the color commentary!
<http://blackmountainnordic.com/>

Once again I would like to thank you all for your past support and generous donations.

Happy Trails,
Curt Schwamb, President

