



Greetings,

I hope this letter finds you all in good health and ready to get out on the snow.

The past season was a wild one to say the least. It started out with an 18"-24" dump of snow the first weekend of October that bent hundreds of the small pines along the trail over and froze them into a layer of crust. It took three weekends of work to get the trails cleared but the up side was we had a great base to start the grooming season with. Snow wise we had a good snow year until summer hit on the first of March and things came to a quick end. We groomed the trails 24 times and spent 355 volunteer hours for the season. It was also our most expensive season we have had thus far, as we had more equipment issues and a couple mishaps that cost the club quite a bit.

I could write a short novel on all the work done this summer but here is the short story: It started in March as we drug in bridge materials for two replacement bridges with the snowmobiles. We had a group of AmeriCorps workers that spent a day clearing and a church group that built the two bridges. We widened the main trail to the hut, removed a bunch of large rocks and moved some dirt above the lake in the narrow area along Prune Creek. There was also general clearing on all the trails as that is an annual chore. The Forest service marked a new loop at Cutler and we got it cut and marked this fall. It is on the north end so instead of an out and back on the old road you can now make a loop. From the top of the hill it runs to the west of the present trail connecting at the small loop at the north end. When the Forest Service gets the new maps showing the change we will have it on the website. It is a really nice trail that meanders through the woods with gentle hills.

This past spring we received a generous donation of a used Skidoo Skandic by Mike and Karen Powers that we have fixed up and plan to use at the Cutler Trail. It needed some TLC and modifications to get it ready for grooming but I think it is going to be a good addition to our grooming fleet. This summer we also spent a lot of time repairing and modifying the equipment to make the job of grooming easier. The people that groom the trails are doing it without any compensation and it is not easy work, so anything we can do to make their job go smoother is better for all of us. We need to keep them happy. No groomers, no ski trails. Thanks guys for your work!

The club sold our old Ginzu groomer and tracksetter that we purchased in 2002 as we were not using it since we bought the new larger Ginzu. We used those funds to buy a new tracksetter for the new Ginzu. It is a better unit and should make for better classic

tracks. We also bought a second roller/compactor for Sibley. It will greatly help packing the trails on the days there are 4+ inches of new snowfall, as the more new snow that the trails receive the more laps with the equipment it takes to get the trails in good shape. All total with all the repairs, maintenance parts, upgrades and equipment purchases, we spent about \$4,000 more last season than we took in, in dues and donations. The Forest Service reimburses us for our fuel for the snowmobiles and provides us with a truck to drive to the trails when grooming so that helps out a lot. Fuel cost alone last season was well over \$1,000. Speaking of the Forest Service, we are very fortunate to have a great group of people in the Tongue District office to deal with. Many people that use the trails think that the Forest Service does the grooming, maybe in part because we use one of their pickups for transportation when grooming. Since this is not the case please spread the word on how the trails are maintained so we can get all the support possible from our fellow trail users. Also trail etiquette is important as we are getting more trail users

We had a booth at the last Third Thursday this summer and it went well. Kennon Signs donated a really nice banner for our booth to give us better exposure.

There has been discussion for many years about utilizing the ski trails for bike trails in the summer. Many people already bike them but there is a movement to try and organize an IMBA chapter here to help with the trail building and marking trails for bikes. If you are interested contact Back Country Bicycles as they are having a meeting December 6th, contact them for more info.

Boy was I surprised this summer when I drove down to the parking lot at the lake. They moved the spa! I'm pretty sure I am not alone in looking forward to the nice warm sunny bathroom at the lake after leaving the cold, windy parking lot and trudging up the hill. It is now on the other side of the parking lot, in the shade. This will call for a change in how we groom the trail in that area but we will wait until we have snow to see what works best.

If you are a paying member you should be getting the weekly trail updates on grooming and trails conditions. Please keep your email address current on the membership form if you wish to receive these. I also post them to the website. There are links to weather, road conditions, and lots of ski related info on there as well. <http://blackmountainnordic.com/>

There are a lot of people that have helped out with various aspects of the club and there are too many to list but a big Thank You to all! Also a huge Thank You to everyone that supports the club with your dues and donations, you are the life blood that keeps us going.

Happy Trails,
Curt Schwamb
President

