



Greetings,

Thank you all for your past support. Last season was a banner snow year and with your support, the trails were great! We had a lot of snow in early October and grooming started on November 23rd. We groomed a total of 24 times ending on April 11th with an estimated 300+hours of volunteer time spent. In late spring we undertook a limbing project on the Dead Horse and Tie Hack trails to clear the encroaching branches. With the deep snow pack last winter, it was becoming a problem.

Last year the club applied for a grant to lease an ATV with tracks and a plow. We received word this spring that we were awarded the grant. We have been fortunate, as this is the fourth grant we have received through the State Trails Program and with changes in the program, it may be our last. The first three were to purchase equipment, but with changing rules in their program, equipment purchase is no longer an option. Leasing is now the only option and the club will own the ATV at the end of the lease period. As with past grants, this lease has a minimum 20% match. So with your continuing support we are able to obtain better equipment to maintain the trails. As of this writing we have used the ATV twice and it is going to be an invaluable tool for grooming and trail work.

This summer the club purchased a newer enclosed v-nose trailer to house the Cutler equipment. The trailer we had been using was a homemade unit that we acquired in 2002. The old trailer was 12" off the ground and had swing open doors. When the snow gets 4-5 feet deep like last year, getting into the trailer became a real problem. The new trailer is 2 feet off the ground and has ramp doors, so it will be much easier for the people that groom.

This fall, the Forest Service gave us permission to take equipment on the trails. For the past thirty some years, we have been trying to remove rocks and stumps, and trying to level the trails with hand tools. Even though we made improvements, no major changes occurred to the existing trails. First we rented a small dozer and came down the west side of the Dead Horse trail to the meadow and flattened some of the off camber areas and removed some rocks and stumps. We then rented a small excavator and went up the main trail from the lake, past junction B. Again we removed rocks, stumps and leveled and widened the trail. There are still a few rocks that are too big to move, but we made some huge improvements. We did more in two weekends with this equipment, than we have in the last thirty years with hand tools. We did so with a very reasonable cost to the club. With having just packed all the trails, we can see a huge improvement in the areas that we worked on. I

would like to thank all the volunteers that participated in the trail work days. Also, all the other people that have helped with club activities this past year.

Next summer the goal is to finish the main trail to the hut and tackle the Prune Creek loop. Prune Creek gets a lot of two way traffic and with all the hills and corners it really needs to be improved. All these improvements will make our trails safer, wider, flatter and easier to groom and ski. Next summer if we get this project started we will be having more work days. Even though the excavator does a good job of moving dirt and rocks the trail still needs some hand work to smooth it out. This fall we really crammed the work into a short time since the weather held out, but next summer I hope to spread out the work days so we have more time to get it completed.

Last winter I built a prototype drag. It was pretty crude, but we could tell with some work, it could be a good unit. A drag makes the trail smoother and flatter, taking out irregularities in the trail. They are hard to pull but with the new ATV it shouldn't be an issue. I would like to have one drag for both Sibley and Cutler. We also made some modifications to our equipment this summer to help make grooming easier as well as resolving quite a few maintenance issues on the equipment.

We groom and maintain the Cutler and Sibley trails under a special use permit with the US Forest Service. They provide us a vehicle to drive for grooming and reimburse us for the fuel we use. All other costs are bore by the club which includes all equipment, maintenance, and incidental items. Without your support we cannot continue to have well maintained trails for all to enjoy.

Happy Trails,
Curt Schwamb
President

