

2008/2009 XC Ski Trail Year End Grooming Report



Four Seasons trail grooming started this season on December 2, 2008 and concluded on April 12, 2009. Snowfall was reasonably early and serious skiing began immediately once grooming commenced. Snowfall was consistent throughout most of the winter with only a few dry spells. Maximum snow compaction occurred in mid-March with all areas of the trail measuring a snow base of 25 inches. Snow depth in the woods maxed out around 4 feet at that same time. Although we did receive some rain it did not hamper the ski season significantly.

	Lodge System	Marathon
Number of Ski Days	132	15 est.
Number of Grooming Days (Gil/Gerry)	60	10
Number of Grooming Days (Others)	13	4
Grooming Days TOTAL	73	14
Estimated Volunteer Grooming Hours G&G (others)	283 (52)	98 (20)
Snowmobile Mileage Town Polaris (S/F)		
Snowmobile Mileage Ski Trax Skandic (S/F)		

The 4 Season's system was groomed for skate and classic throughout the season with only short periods of time when conditions did not allow for a classic track. The Marathon trail was groomed for classic only. Icy conditions were generally the cause for being unable to set the track, as the setters were unable to break through the 1st layer of ice and would just skim over the surface. This year the classic track was moved slightly toward the center of the trail to keep skiers away from the branches on the sides of the trail and this seemed to work better. The new daily rental program helped increase trail traffic considerably as more and more people tried out skis. Trail traffic from visitors increased significantly due to an increased awareness of the new lodge resulting from articles in local and national publications.

Equipment issues continued this season with the Ski Trax Skandic needing major drive shaft parts replaced during January. This sled was down for over two weeks and 10th Mountain graciously lent us an older Skandic that sufficed. The Polaris continued to exhibit major problems all winter long with multiple breakdowns that resulted in over two weeks of downtime. The roller/compactor broke early in the season and was repaired by the end of the season and used sparingly. This year the new four-foot tenderizer drag was used more often and somewhat replaced the 8-foot snow groomer drag, which still does not have a cutter bar. Upgrading the current grooming equipment in order to reduce man-hours and allow for more consistent work is a must.

The following **observations** are summarized below for each trail.

Lodge Trail:

1. Ski trail use increased and remained high all season long.
2. Considering the smaller equipment used to groom, conditions were very good all season long.

3. Trail expansion opportunities within the Lodge system are numerous, however, will depend on additional grooming equipment being added.
4. Consideration should be given to adding a snow fence to minimize the drifting on the return trail near the start area.
5. New signs need to be added near the trail entrance to divert walkers and snowshoers off of the ski trail.

Marathon Trail:

1. Trail use was very light with few skiers venturing out on the trail due to its technical nature and distance from the lodge.
2. Grooming was almost unmanageable with significant drifting in many locations along with several long steep uphill and technical downhill sections.
3. Trail width was narrow in several places with the larger drags barely passing.
4. Long descents would have required multiple passes to ensure a wide area for skiers to snowplow – this was difficult to maintain due to the length of the course and inability to turn the machines to make a second pass.

Special thanks goes out to the Madawaska Recreation Department for all of their support and timely assistance throughout the season. Also, Gil Roy and Gerry Roy, our principle groomers must be thanked for all of their hard work. In addition, weekend groomers Colin and Cole Jandreau, and Mark Dionne should be thanked. Phil Caron was helpful with his machine early in the season to help pack the Marathon trail, as was Jacques Lizotte, Yvon Levesque and Doug Cyr. With all of the grooming that needs to be done, it would be important to begin training others to help out. It was an enjoyable and favorable ski season and with a little rest over the summer we'll be ready for next year!