

2009/2010 Season XC Ski Trail Year End Grooming Report



RASC Volunteer Ski Trail Grooming started this season on December 9, 2009 with a heavy snowfall and concluded on March 9, 2010. This ski season was one of the most consistent we've had in many years. We were able to establish a deep, solid base early in the season and made it through the rain and warm weather at Christmas time without major problems. Conditions throughout the season were typically good to excellent. The season wound down quickly due to warm temperatures starting in early March with the trails going to slush around March 10. Our team of 12 volunteer groomers again performed flawlessly, grooming approximately 10km of trails at the Quarry Hill Nature Center and 10 km of trails at Essex Park. Grooming highlights are summarized below.

	Quarry Hill	Essex Park
Number of Ski Days	91	91
Number of Grooming Outings	44	45
Estimated Volunteer Grooming Hours	154	157.5
Snowmobile Mileage – Miles/KM	746.7/1202.4	687/1106.3

We're very fortunate that all equipment at both locations performed well without any significant equipment failures. We did have 2 maintenance issues to handle at the end of the season. Fuel gauge problems and an ignition system failure drove ~\$500 in snowmobile repairs. We continue to have minor problems with the groomer electrical connectors. We will change these this summer to a heavy duty commercial trailer hookup.

We added a 5' scarifier to our grooming fleet. This was manufactured for us with the gracious help of Sebastien Richer (Richer Metal – Dodge Center). This eliminates the need to shift the scarifiers between Quarry Hill and Eastwood Golf Course. We also added a sign board with maps and trail guidelines at Essex Park.

Equipment upgrades for this coming year should focus on adding weight to the front of the snowmobiles to improve steering, and adding a simple system to help groomers determine knife and track setter depth to achieve better consistency.

Trail conditions and grooming plans for all Rochester area ski trails were made available to area skiers at: http://www.rasc-mn.org/nordic/rasc_grooming.html throughout the ski season. We thank Dave Brudwick of the Rochester Park and Recreation Department, and Tom Eckdahl and Kevin Crilly of the Olmsted County Parks Department for taking time to provide trail information to us.

Observations for this season:

1. Ski trail use was consistently high all season long at both trails.
2. Snow fence was used at Essex Park in select areas to control drifting with excellent results.
3. The new prairie grass in the south section of Essex Park worked extremely well to control drifting and shelter the trail base from sun and wind.
4. Evergreen boughs were used to mark trails in the open fields. This was a significant help in identifying the trail base and being able to build it up throughout the season. The boughs also helped skiers see the trails edges in low light conditions. .

Our sincere thanks go to the following volunteer groomers: Eric Counselman, Dave Greymont, Matt Hawkins, Brennan Kelly, Joey Keillor, John Resman, Jeff Robertson, Greg Rowley, Al Schmidt, Bruce Walk, Henry Walker, and Andy Wood.

The snowfall and temperatures really cooperated this year to give us a great XC ski season. We look forward to grooming both trail systems again next winter.

Bruce Walk – April 30, 2010