2010/2011 Season XC Ski Trail Year End Grooming Report

Rochester Active Sports Club

RASC Volunteer Ski Trail Grooming started this season on December 4, 2010 and concluded on March 10, 2011. The season started out with several deep snowfalls in December to give us a solid base to work with the rest of the season. There was only one warm time this winter that we closed the trails briefly to help keep them good the rest of the year. We only had one major snow event during the 2011 portion of the season but we received enough small snowfalls to keep the trails in good to excellent condition most of the time. The last ski of the season was March 17, 2011. The team of 13 volunteer groomers did an excellent job of grooming the 10km of trails at Quarry Hill Nature Center and the 10km of trails at Essex Park.

	Quarry Hill	**Essex Park**
Number of Ski Days	103	103
Number of Grooming Outings	46	52
Estimated Volunteer Grooming Hours	161	182
Snowmobile Mileage – Miles/KM	632.3/1017.6	955/1536.9

It was a very busy start to the season with several deep snowfalls that required lots of hours pre-packing and digging out from getting stuck. Due to those experiences we decided it was time to add rollers to the list of grooming equipment to help make it easier on the volunteers. Two YTS 66" rollers were purchased. There was only one snowfall after the rollers arrived that required them, but we were able to leave a combed surface in a fraction of the time normally spent dealing with deep snow.

Equipment upgrades for the season consisted of adding an LED flood light was added to the back of the 550 rather than then halogen light we've used in the past. The LED light reduced the load on the electrical system. The light isn't as bright as the previous light but it worked well enough. Weight was also added to the front of the V800 which made a noticeable improvement in steering performance. Fifty pounds of weight was spread between two sections of fire hose then wedged into the front corners of the engine compartment.

The 550 snowmobile had several problems this year. Just before Christmas the oil line to the left cylinder melted resulting in a burned piston. It was repaired and back in service January 3, but we spent several weeks tracking down the source of air in the lines. Then at the end of February the dipstick was chewed up in the transmission, ending the season for grooming at Quarry Hill.

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 Parks 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 from the season:

1. Ski trail use continues to increase and be consistent all season long.
2. The extra snow fence along 55th St at Essex helped keep snow on that corner.
3. The wider corner on the inner loop of the 55th St field and the new connector trail south of the sledding hill at Essex Park were very good improvements to the flow of the trails.
4. The redone field trail at Quarry Hill skied nicely with some more variation to it. As the prairie grasses fill in around it, the snow should stay on the trail better and avoid drifting.

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

The snowfall and temperatures really helped make this another great XC ski season. The RASC volunteers look forward to grooming both trails systems again next winter.

April 10, 2011