

## 2006/2007 Season XC Ski Trail Year End Grooming Report



RASC Volunteer Ski Trail Grooming started this season on November 11, 2006 and concluded on March 12, 2007. During that time, a team of 7 volunteer groomers performed trail grooming on approximately 4.5K of trails at the Quarry Hill Nature Center. A 2.25K loop was also groomed on the fields of Schmidt Park on an experimental basis. Grooming highlights are summarized below.

	<b>Quarry Hill</b>	<b>Schmidt Park</b>
Number of Ski Days	58	49
Number of Days Groomed	33	13
Estimated Volunteer Grooming Hours	118	26
Snowmobile Mileage - Miles/Km	316/510	110/177
Fuel Used – Gas/Oil in gallons	90/1.3	31/0.5

Grooming operations were conducted without incident throughout the season, i.e. there were no occurrences of equipment damage, personal injury, or any other unexpected events. The new grooming equipment performed well. The most amazing results came from YTS Ginzu Groomer's ability to renovate an icy trail back to an ideal combed skiing surface in one pass. Packing and grooming for skate skiing took approximately 2.5 hours per outing. Setting a classic track took an additional 2.5 hours. Current trail conditions and grooming plans were made available at: [http://www.rasc-mn.org/nordic/rasc\\_grooming.html](http://www.rasc-mn.org/nordic/rasc_grooming.html) throughout the ski season.

The following major observations are summarized below for each trail.

### Quarry Hill Observations:

1. Ski Trail use was much heavier than expected by RASC. Users consisted of a fairly even distribution of skate and classic skiers spanning all ability levels from novice to advanced.
2. Setting a classic track is highly desirable even with a thin trail base due to the large number of classic skiers. We need to explore further options to set tracks in low snow conditions as our present track setter requires a minimum 3" packed base before it can be used.
3. When deeper snow arrived, snowshoe users created a third lane beside the ski trail thus demonstrating that a skate lane, classic track, and snow shoe lane can co-exist quite nicely.
4. The bike paths and shoulders provided a great base for both skate and classic trails after temperatures dropped below freezing. Their level surface allowed them to be used with a minimum of 1-2 inches of packed snow.
5. Adjustments are needed to a few areas on the current woods trail to adjust grade, width and smoothness.
6. The park's sheltered valley provided an excellent venue for skiing, especially on cold, windy days.

### Schmidt Park Observations:

1. Trail use was light to moderate however those that used it seemed to return consistently. This most likely was due in part to limited publicity.
2. Two ski trail markers placed along Overland Drive next to the ski trail virtually eliminated snowmobile traffic on the park's field. Sleds for the most part respected the trail and stayed along the road.
3. The open field is somewhat exposed to the wind and prone to drifting in windy dry snow conditions.
4. This experiment of grooming Schmidt Park appeared to validate that if a site is groomed in NW Rochester, skiers will come.

Our thanks are extended to the following volunteer groomers: Dave Greymont, Brennan Kelly, John Resman, Jeff Robertson, Greg Rowley, Bruce Walk, and Henry Walker.

We're looking forward to grooming next season. We'll be researching better equipment and methods to pack large snowfalls as well as options for setting classic tracks with minimal snow. We will also work with the Park and Recreation Department to understand their preferences for grooming on the northwest side of town with the hope of continuing to offer this service next season.

Bruce Walk - March 16, 2007