

## **Director of Trails, Report for AGM**

**Oct. 15 2023 by Phil Mullins**

### ***Summary of 22/23 season***

We had a very productive season this year with 152 days of grooming and skiing, meaning the machines traveled 8818 kms overall. The new dog trail connection and brushing on some overgrown trails is almost complete and we will be ready for another great season.

### ***Director's Efforts of Note***

- Trails Committee. We met in November, February, and May and also worked via email. They reviewed and provided significant advice on trail projects including paved trails, brushing needs, and other smaller issues, resulting in recommendations to club managers and board members.
- Trails. We consolidated updates to trail directions and network. I recommend not changing these for a while to allow members to get used to the trail patterns and discover new options available, and to identify and resolve any persistent issues.
- Maps. We updated Nordic, singletrack, and snowshoe trail maps. These were designed, purchased and posted around the trail networks. Thanks to Sparkgeo for their significant assistance.
- Report and Engagement. Assisted with information and engagement on the Paved Trail project, which followed the club's receipt of ~\$900,000.00 in grant funding. Thanks to Kevin Petersen for all his work. The club is engaged in trail design for the proposed Phase 1 route with sport and technical experts, member outreach/info, and is receiving oral and written feedback from members.
- Tenure expansion application. The club has developed an application to expand our License of Occupation on Crown land by 84 ha in response to the possible and eventual loss of trails and/or access to 120 ha of private land in our tenure. The Trails Director assisted with communications with the Cranbrook Hill Greenway Society generally, as well as specifically related to the Club's application. A specific trail project has not yet been proposed.
- Brushing. Mechanically brushed significant lengths of trail on a new dog detour (encroaching gravel mining), lower Northern Lights, Chutes and Inner 5, and Sawmill if possible. This should be annual work.
- Limbing. Explored the extant and possible cost of a limbing project on Sawmill to reduce snow interception – it would need to be either single large project with funding, or a multi-year effort to catch up and then maintain the opening.

### ***Notes on Grooming Capacity & Expectations***

Training for grooming – our Trails Manager, Peter Hoffmann, was asked to assist, ride along, and learn at the Juniors World Cup in Whistler. This was an excellent training and mentorship opportunity, as well as affirmation of the quality of our grooming and approaches we use.

Grooming expectations. Although it fluctuates year-to-year and throughout the season, CNSC grooming and snow is exceptionally good, far better than many clubs and even world-class events. We'd like to ask members to have reasonable expectations regarding grooming, recognize our exceptional conditions, and understand that we live with and adapt to the realities of weather. The grooming team monitors conditions and makes careful decisions to enable the longest season and best conditions for members.

Grooming capacity. Last season we reached the limits of our capacity to groom at the intensity we had been. That intensity of grooming is costly in money (fuel), labour (salary), staff satisfaction (burnout), and opportunity cost (not available to devote attention to other aspects of job, or groom other trails). Moreover, grooming too often and/or skiing on freshly groomed trails wastes money and time. Good conditions will last longer if trails are allowed to set up before being skied.

Summer trail maintenance on singletrack trails is becoming an issue. We now appear to have very significant spring/summer/fall usage (data on this would be helpful) and more integrated adoption of singletrack trails into the club. This is excellent. We rely exclusively on volunteers, and face significant challenges getting enough volunteers to regularly help with maintenance.

### ***Looking Forward***

- Clarify club bylaws, project classifications, and processes.
- Allow Nordic trail network, directionality etc. to stay as-is for a few seasons to work out the kinks, allow members and staff to get used to it.
- We are hiring more staff (training a new groomer) to increase capacity and reduce burnout. Expect a more scheduled and strategic approach to grooming to make it as efficient as possible.
- Board approval of the paved trail project design, and start construction; develop management approaches/plans/signage etc. for use.
- Work with singletrack trail builders/users to re-route trails given paved trail.
- If the club is successful in its tenure application and wants to develop a trail, a project will need to proceed following club policies.
- Consider having the Trails Manager working through spring/summer/fall, recognizing our progress towards becoming a year-round recreational facility.
- Trails user survey – Phil is open to assisting the club with a survey in the '23/'24 season.
- Consider revisiting the conversation and options about summer trail usage informed by the results of the trails user survey, and consider collecting other data to inform the issue and management approaches/responses.