

## **DRXC Grooming Policy**

### **A. Policy**

1. The purpose of grooming is to provide DRXC club members with the best possible track for classic and/or skate skiing, depending on the trail.
2. Ideally, the frequency of grooming is set by trail conditions. Grooming is typically done when the trails have deteriorated through heavy use, after major snowfalls, and before scheduled or special events. If no other restrictions apply, grooming is done just before the weekend (when the trails see their heaviest use) and within 24 hours of the end of a heavy snowfall.
3. Grooming priority is given to the most heavily used trails that do not require a lot of snow to cover terrain irregularities. These include D, R, X, M, K, the section of S leading to The Top and the section of H descending from The Top. The remaining sections of S and H, as well as C and B, are less heavily used, require good snow conditions, and have a lower priority.
4. The DRXC chief groomer organizes grooming activities, deciding when, how and where to set the track and who should do it. The Chief Groomer maintains a blog, accessible from the DRXC website, indicating when the trails were last groomed and their current condition.
5. The groomers will position the track to accommodate both diagonal stride and skating on those trails where both techniques are possible. The track will avoid sharp turns and make full use of the trail width, especially on hills.
6. The President, the Jackrabbit Technical Coordinator, the Adult Lesson Instructors and the Mackenzie Nordic Ski Coach may approach the Chief Groomer with special grooming requests. These requests are given high priority because of the high public profile of the associated activities, and because participants in the activities have paid fees in excess of those charged regular club members. Grooming in the first part of February will be carried out with the requirements of the Silver Spoon Ski Fest in mind.
7. Ongoing trail improvements will focus on upgrades (for example, removing or burying rocks or stumps) that allow grooming to proceed earlier in the year and with less snow cover. The need to groom irregular trails with little snow cover will be kept in mind when new grooming equipment is purchased.
8. Club members may raise grooming issues with the President, who will resolve the issues with the help of the Chief Groomer.
9. Groomer safety will be taken into account in all grooming decisions.

## **B. Practical Limits to Grooming**

The policy regarding frequency of grooming (Clause A.2 above) is the ideal and cannot always be followed. In practice, the decision on whether or not to groom is affected by a number of factors, including availability of groomers, weather conditions and trail conditions. This is further complicated by the fact that the DRXC trails are sited on irregular terrain with many bumps and dips that have to be covered before grooming can be done. The bottom line is always the answer to the question, “Will grooming improve skiing conditions for an appreciable length of time?” Beyond that, grooming may be impossible for various reasons. The following are examples of considerations that affect the decision on whether or not to groom:

- Grooming early in the season is possible only with adequate snow cover and only when the wet parts of the trails will hold the snow. With minimal first snow, groomers only pack the trail to preserve the snow and to help wet patches freeze or start the formation of a snow bridge. Three or four snowfalls are normally required to fill the dips and bridge the bumps.
- Snow requires time to set up after it is worked (a minimum of two hours in ideal conditions). Best and fastest results are obtained with falling temperatures. It is normally not possible to groom new snow for good skiing on the same day that the snow falls.
- Wet snow is ungroomable since putting any weight on wet snow produces instant ice that is basically permanent until it thaws. Moreover, snowmobile cooling systems are not designed to deal with air temperatures above the thaw point.
- Grooming is not beneficial in the midst of a snowfall and is normally delayed until conditions stabilize. Rolling may be advisable during falling snow if a heavy snowfall is expected.
- Grooming when the air temperature is near or above freezing creates very crusty snow that is a hazard to ski on. Following a thaw, grooming must be delayed until there is no water in the snow, even well under the surface.
- Grooming will not be attempted on icy trails. Grooming ice or hard frozen snow accomplishes nothing useful and is very damaging to the grooming machinery.
- Grooming is ineffective following a rainstorm and subsequent freeze-up. The saturated snow freezes very hard, unlike snow in the bush that has never been compacted and is still similar to new-fallen snow.
- Grooming is not beneficial when new snow on a dirty track is thin.
- Grooming will not be carried out when conditions are such that the grooming equipment could be damaged.
- Grooming is usually not carried out on weekends so as not to detract from the time when most skiers use the trails. The ideal time for grooming is the evening, which provides optimal conditions and time for the snow to set up. Evenings are more hazardous for grooming personnel, so late afternoon is the normal choice. It may take two or three

afternoons to groom the entire trail system in difficult circumstances, such as extensive windfalls.

- Grooming could be limited by groomer fatigue during extended periods of heavy snowfall or during long winters.

These limitations mean that grooming may not always be carried out as often as skiers would like. When conditions are marginal, every attempt will be made to decide in favour of grooming. When grooming the entire trail system is not possible, consideration will be given to grooming parts of it (the hydro-line, the abbreviated M-loop, and so on). Compromises will have to be made on a day-to-day basis, sometimes resulting in delayed grooming or grooming under less than optimum conditions.

### **C. How Individual DRXC Members Can Help**

1. Volunteer for grooming duties, or suggest someone who might be willing.
2. Help clean up the trail after wind or snow storms. If you are among the first skiers out on the trail after such storms, please remove fallen branches from the entire trail width if within your capabilities. Small folding saws that can be carried in a backpack are useful in this regard. The grooming crew are much more effective when they can concentrate on grooming itself and not on time-consuming manual cleanup that can be done by anybody.
3. Volunteer for trail maintenance, particularly improving the trail base. Smoother, obstacle-free trails leads to better, faster and more relaxed grooming, as well as less wear on the equipment.

### **D. Disclaimer**

Members are always responsible for their own safety. The quality of the track may be variable and skiers should ski under control at all times so they are able to take appropriate action if they encounter a bad patch of trail. The existence of a set track or any other ski track on any trail is no indication by any DRXC member or DRXC groomer that conditions are safe for skiing or any other activity.