

## **Eb's Trails – into the future**

For those who were not at the spring general meeting here is an update on the plans for Eb's Trails maintenance and grooming.

At the Spring General Meeting there was strong support for an improved maintenance / grooming plan:

To ease the load on volunteers and to continue to upgrade the quality of the ski trails, the club has initiated a project to purchase more appropriate equipment to maintain Eb's Trails, through all seasons, and to store this equipment adjacent to the system. The projected cost is approximately \$33,000. The club has committed to funding a substantial portion of this expense from club coffers (\$20,000), the rest to come from donations and sponsorships.

### Rationale:

The loading, transportation to and from the trailhead, and unloading back in the city (occasionally at three different locations) is taking a toll on volunteers who do the work. Snow conditions in a forest vary considerably which put many different demands on the grooming routines and equipment required. Depending on what equipment is going to be used, and where in the city it is located, it can take an hour and a half or more just to gather up the trailer and load equipment. That is before the one hour drive to the trailhead. After grooming, the equipment has to go back on the trailer, an hour back to the city and an hour and a half or more to unload and get everything back where it will be used next. The time spent loading, unloading and transporting the equipment can be greater than the time spent grooming the 50+ km of trails. This is an enormous commitment for the volunteers grooming the trails. Often the choice of equipment to use comes down to that which is easiest to transport, rather than the most suitable for the existing conditions, so the resulting quality of grooming suffers. When conditions are right and all goes well the tracksetting can turn out great. When conditions are more difficult the equipment we currently use can easily be overwhelmed by heavy snowfalls and result in it getting stuck or simply not being able to tow the grooming equipment through heavy snow. Getting "unstuck" can take half an hour or so of hard work and messes up the track in the process.

### The equipment selected is:

- Yamaha Rhino UTV with Tatou tracks for winter trail grooming and wheels for summer / fall trail work and mower towing.
- Compaction drag (to move, level and compact snow to form a smooth firm base at the beginning of the season and after heavy snowfalls)
- Tidd Tech G2 trail groomer (used to further level the snow, replace worn-out tracks and press in the ski tracks in one pass)
- A Swisher 44 " Roughcut Tow Mower for fall trail mowing.
- A "Sea Can" storage container for year-round equipment storage adjacent to the trails

The Rhino UTV has been purchased and has already been put to good use for trail maintenance (watch for further information on this subject)

Fundraising status:

The club has been pursuing donation / sponsorship funding and has applied for funding to a few large companies with no success to date. This process is ongoing. Towns and municipalities near the trail have also been contacted for support.

In addition to corporate sponsorship we are also looking to you, our membership, for donations. To support this project please send donations to the Ski Club P.O. Box 2062 Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3S7 (indicate that it is for the Eb's Trail equipment fund) or contact:

Randy Chapman  
Co-director, Eb's Trail System  
Phone: 306-242-7520  
Email: chapr@sasktel.net

Or to submit a donation and receive a tax receipt, please send a cheque to: *Saskatchewan Trails Association, #242 918 Albert Street, Regina, S4R 2P7*. Be sure to indicate that it is for the Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club Eb's Trail equipment fund.

We are hoping to have much of this plan in place for the coming season but it all depends on obtaining the necessary funding. The immediate priority is the tow mower for fall trail mowing. We are most grateful to the members who have donated to date. Donations in any amount will help us achieve our objective.

Members who may have connections with any organization that may get involved with major sponsorship or members who would like to get involved with the pursuit of corporate funding please also get in touch with Randy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this request and here's to wishing you great skiing this winter.