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SNOWMOBILE GROOMING REPORT

This year the trail systems were rather unique, with 275 combined miles of trail. Please see Tables 1, 2, and 3 for trail information. The total amount of snowmobile trail miles groomed during the 1982-83 season was 1,992. A breakdown of that mileage is found in Table 4.

The grooming season started on December 13, with the hiring of our operator. We had two days of pre-season maintenance, and started trail grooming on December 15. Grooming was done for a total of 60 days, closing on March 25. There were no major breakdowns or repairs, only minor repairs and scheduled maintenance. Please see Tables 5 and 6 for a comparison breakdown of grooming by month, and season summary for 1980-81, 1981-82, and 1982-83 respectively.

Cost per mile of groomed trail is one of the most significant statistics we can look at. It can be used as a comparable figure to evaluate the program. Our cost per mile has remained relatively stable since the inception of the program. Table 7 is a three-year comparison of program costs.

With the 1982-83 season completed, we saw a rise in costs, miles groomed, and use. A brief summary of visitation counts is in Table 8.

Counter data reflects a considerable increase in use over the past years, with expansion the main factor for the 60% increase. This year we groomed three new areas, Skyland Trail located at Marias Pass, Baldy Mountain, and Purcell Loop in the Libby Area.

For the first time in this area we initiated a shuttle program using the DMC 3300 to groom outlying areas. The success of that program was measurable; however, operations and travel costs were major limiting factors. The groomer is over nine feet wide. This restricts night and weekend travel, and forced us to make extra overnight accommodations. Next year we will seek to streamline the program by requesting a groomer that has a width of nine feet or less which could be trailered and pulled by a 3/4 ton pickup.

Considering all aspects, the 1982-83 snowgrooming season ran smoothly. Each year we receive helpful hints from clubs and snowcatters, and this year was no exception. We will be working throughout the off season with clubs and individuals to improve our program for next year.

*John Pichard*

Table 1. Snowmobile trails

Trail	Miles	Location
Skyland Trail	28	Flathead County
Graves Creek	20	Lincoln County
Purcell Ridge	53	Lincoln County
Keller Ridge	32	Lincoln County
Crane Mountain	12	Flathead County
Canyon Creek	60	Flathead County
Olney	56	Flathead County
Trumble Creek	4	Flathead County
TOTAL	275	

Table 2. Ownership

Ownership	Trail Miles
National Forest	215
State Forest	56
Private	4

Table 3. Location

Counties	Trail Miles
Flathead	170
Lincoln	105

Table 4. Breakdown by project and trail of miles groomed

Project	Trail	Groomed Miles
6865 (Flathead County)	Canyon Creek	850
	Olney	636
	Trumble Creek	64
	Crane Mountain	24
		<u>1,574</u>
6853 (Libby)	Purcell Ridge	109
	Keller Creek	77
		<u>186</u>
6852 (Cutbank)	Skyland	175
6864 (Fortine)	Graves Creek	47

Table 5. 1982-83 Grooming by Month

Month	Miles Groomed	Hours	Gallons Fuel	Gallons/Mile	Grooming Speed
December	316	58	224	1.41	5.4 mph
January	638	152	501	1.27	4.1 mph
February	587	122	416	1.41	4.8 mph
March	451	97	328	1.37	4.6 mph
TOTAL	1,992	429	1,469	1.35	4.64 mph

Table 6. Season Summary for 1980-81, 1981-82, and 1982-83

Season	Days Groomed	Miles/Day	Grooming Speed	Gal/mile Fuel Cons.	Miles Groomed
80-81	36	41.1	6.46 mph	1.46	1,480
81-82	48	34.1	5.00	1.29	1,641
82-83	60	33.2	4.64	1.35	1,992

Table 7. Three-year cost comparison\*

Grooming Season	Miles Groomed	Total Budget Admin. & Operation	Cost/Mile
1980-81	1,480	\$ 39,109**	\$ 26.42**
1981-82	1,641	15,457	9.41
1982-83	1,992	19,040	9.55

\*All figures include machine insurance, depreciation, and program administration costs

\*\*This figure includes initial machine down payment of \$17,808. Actual costs that year were \$7.93 per mile.

Table 8. Visitation counts, 1982-83

Trailhead	Total* Snowmobiles	Days Counted	Snowmobiles Per day	Season Length	Projected Count
Skyland	1,994.5	89	22.4	120	2,288
Olney	894.	67	13.3	120	1,596
Canyon Creek	606.5	67	9.1	120	1,092
Trumbell Ck.	687.	62	11.1	120	1,332
Baldy Mtn.	612.	40	15.3	120	1,836
Lost Johnny**	180.	35	5.1	120	612
TOTAL	5,376	406	13.24		9,800

\*Actual count

\*\*Remained ungroomed this year

