



Side Hill Croncher Newsletter

JANUARY 17, 2011

Visit our Website for the latest news, trail conditions and schedule of events:

www.sidehillcronchers.com

THINK SNOW!

**UPCOMING EVENTS
AT THE HUT :**

Jan 22nd - Polaris Day

**Jan 23rd - Safety
Checks**

Feb 4&5 - Yamaha

**Feb 12 - Tri-Valley
Poker Run**

Feb 19 - Artic CAT

**Please check the
website
for any changes or
cancellations**

Now that we have kicked off the season with a fairly good snow covering, we have had a few inquiries about our Grooming efforts so I thought this would be a good time to explain a few things to some of our club members who may not understand what the Grooming process is all about. First and foremost, our groomers are all volunteers. They do not get paid for the long hours of work they do and probably deserve a lot more recognition than they get.

The groomers that we currently have volunteer to do this because they all ride the trails themselves and realize the value of a well groomed trail. Before the groomer goes out for a run, the operators do a safety check to make sure everything is in working order. They make sure the lights all work, they check the oil, the tracks and the nuts and bolts to make sure they are tight, and of course there is a warm-up period once the groomer is started. The average check takes about ½ hour, and is important to ensure the safety of our drivers. It takes time (about 10 hours) to groom the full length of Side Hill Croncher trails and speed is generally not an option if you want to do the job right. The optimum grooming speed is somewhere between 6 to 8 miles per hour depending on conditions and the type of snow they are dealing with. If the trails are groomed too fast the snow will not have enough time to be processed effectively and the result will be a poorer quality trail that will not stand up to traffic which in turn will require more frequent grooming. Grooming light fluffy snow verses wet heavy snow, may require different speeds in order for the snow to set properly. Traveling at a higher rate of speed also consumes more fuel and adds unnecessary wear and tear on the machine.

In addition, the groomers need to know a little bit about the hydraulic system which operates certain functions to raise and lower the rear wheel assemblies and packing pan. They also need to know enough about the machine to do maintenance should something malfunction along the way. In the course of any trip they may encounter trees down along the trail that would require them to get out to remove. Occasionally, the groomer may get stuck in a snow drift or go slightly off the trail due to poor visibility. Going up an icy hill can be a big problem and they may end up backing down. Not an easy task with a machine that weighs close to 5,500 lbs is 15 feet long, 7.3 feet wide with tracks that are 16.1 feet long. In addition to that, it is pulling a drag (trailer) that is about 20 feet long. The groomer holds 50 gallons of fuel (most of which gets consumed each time we do the full 64 mile run.) And we all know what fuel costs these days

We do a lot of the grooming at night for several reasons. One being that the temperatures are generally colder and the snow will set up harder, producing a better quality trail. It is also safer at night because the groomer operator is able to see the lights of oncoming snowmobile traffic, and in return the snowmobilers are able to easily see the strobe lights of the groomer. The downside to this is that most of these guys have already worked a full day on their real jobs. This may look like a power trip but it is hours of bumpy riding, and when the ride is all over, they have to fill in log books and do some basic maintenance before they can go home.

We have a great group of people who volunteer to do this job but we could always use more to share the workload. When people are available we will split the route between two people so the hours aren't so long, but unfortunately we don't always have people available. If you are interested in helping out please let us know. You can contact our Groomer Master Brett Sanderson 802-228-8728