

Black Jack Grooming Standard

Updated January 2021

Preamble

We pride ourselves on having a quality groomed trail system. This is thanks to our skillful and dedicated groomers as well as our up-to-date grooming equipment. Black Jack is in the enviable position of owning two almost identical Pistenbully Edge snowcats. The operation of the snowcats and their maintenance constitute the lion's share of the club's budget. A typical 5-hour grooming day with a snowcat costs an estimated \$600. (This includes wages, fuel, regular and major maintenance).

Grooming Strategy

- The following trails will be given priority and kept in good skiing condition: Gibbards, Neptune Creek, East and West Biathlon Loop, Iron Sights, Biathlon Connector, Boomer, Rawhide, Jeldness, Fisher / Tim's Trail, Golden Queen, Gold Hill. Of those, the lower trails get the highest priority because of popularity and usage. They require regular grooming to maintain good conditions.
- If the forecast predicts stable weather we will groom the less popular trails. These trails do not see as much traffic and last several days without re-grooming as long as there is no new snow.
- Typically grooming with the snowcat is from 2 to 8 am from Wednesday to Sunday. On Monday and Tuesday grooming is done by volunteers; timing is at their discretion.
- On snowy days we will delay grooming and limit it to the most popular lower trails. When it snows during the day on Tuesdays and Thursday we will attempt to groom in the afternoon to have trails ski-able for SDP practice.
- December first is the earliest we will groom Neptune Creek Trail (partly on the Neptune Creek Forest Service Road) or use it to bring up grooming equipment. We will exclusively use the Biathlon Connector Trail instead so as not to interfere with the access to the backcountry during hunting season.

Ginzu grooming

The single (classic) trails (Aqueduct, the Reservoir, Tall Timbers etc) can only be groomed with the snowmobile and ginzu (or track pan). These trails are almost exclusively groomed by volunteers.

In certain snow conditions, particularly in early and late season, ginzu grooming is the best or only option for the other trails as well.

Another reason to use the ginzu is to save money: a day grooming with snowmobile costs a fraction of the cost of snowcat grooming. Also, not all volunteer groomers are trained to operate the snowcats.

You can make a difference

Please don't ski directly behind the groomer. By doing so, the (skate) skier punches deep ruts into the trails. It is not a safe practice and distracts the snowcat operator. Preferably avoid trails that are freshly groomed. Depending on the condition, it might take a minimum of one hour for the snow to set. Once set up, the trails can handle extensive use with minimal deterioration. Refer to the online grooming report for actual grooming times.

Preserve the classic tracks by herringboning and skate skiing away from the classic tracks.

Note when encountering a groomer on the trails, one has to move outside of the groomed path and into the undisturbed snow. This can be challenging depending on the height of the snow bank. Please take your time: the cat operator will give you ample time to step out of the way. (Another option is to turn back and ski to the next intersection.)