

Trail Bits for Fall 2018

Pete Friedlieb

It was a windy Fall afternoon when I ran into Boomer checking on some downed trees at the Sugar Hills trailhead. I fear the poor boy's hearing must be getting nearly as bad as mine, as he runs a chainsaw half the day! As I was walking away, I remembered an upcoming event, near and dear to all our hearts. "Boomer," I say. "Tomorrow we should get together and brainstorm on the swap." The swap was still a few weeks away but it doesn't hurt to plan. He looked at me a little funny but then gave me a thumbs up. So, next day he comes over and is covered with grime and mud. "Jeez Boomer," I say. "You're a mess, whaddya been up to?" "Well, I've been checking the culverts inside and out, we might need one or two new ones," he said. "They've got be workin' if we're gonna drain the swamp." Now it was my turn to be a little puzzled. Then it came to me—with all the talk of draining swamps nowadays, he naturally thought I'd said "swamp" not "swap." Well, as it turned out the swamp at Sugar was pretty good except for needing just a little tweaking. Reminded me of another place East of us where the swamp didn't actually need much draining either. Yet they thought they needed to. And now it's a real mess!

Your board, however, certainly wasn't drained of energy when we met a couple times this fall to try to figure things out. And we all tried to loudly project our voices. Here's what we came up with:

Ski Swap-Was held in December and was very successful, meaning that lots of folks learned about the Club and area trails and quite a few came away with terrific deals on used equipment.

Sugar Hills Equipment Storage/Public Space-Fully constructed and looks terrific with project completion by Edwards-LaPlant Construction. Randy Zupan, Boomer, Mike Lentz and a cast of others were key in decision-making and organizing volunteers to keep the cost down. All the equipment has been moved over and the public warming space looks great. The paneling for that space and all the rest of the wood were donated by John Rajala and Boundary Companies. A kiosk, road sign, outdoor toilet as well as some trail improvement projects are anticipated for next year. Sara Thompson of the County Land Department has been extremely helpful in moving this project forward.

Amen Trails-Some logging has been considered for this area. Tom Nelson and

Lynn Moratzka have had good communication with the County Land Department and no activity is planned at this time.

Suomi Hills/Joyce Estate-Extensive improvements to the Joyce Estate trail have been made with many yards of gravel hauled in to fill in washouts and otherwise improve the trail. Ken Hansen, Recreation Director Chippewa Forest, attended our recent meeting and updated us on management plans. Our Club has been nominated by the Chippewa National Forest leadership to receive a National Volunteer Award.

Mt. Itasca-This has the best skiing around, with cold weather allowing for manmade snow to be pushed out and create a tracked trail as well as a skate lane. Our other trails are marginal at best.

There was more, there's always more, but sometimes less is more.

Happy Holidays,

Pete