

Winter 2020-21 Season Recap

Season Highs

- Annual membership numbers are up 15% from the 2019/2020 season, to 554!
- Swedetown Trails Club received \$23,263.47 through the 2020 Portage Health Foundation Giving Tuesday program. These funds will be used for winter and summer trail improvements, as well as a land purchase.
- A new Super Drag, built by Royale Mfg. in Kearsarge, was purchased this winter. This drag will enable the groomers to keep the ski trails spruced up during low-snowfall periods. Funding came from the 2019 PHF Giving Tuesday donations, as well as a large match from Calumet Township.
- A new high-resolution webcam was installed near the main trailhead.
- The 2021 Great Bear Chase was a huge success, with many pandemic-related changes taking place for the safety of both racers and volunteers. In-person numbers were capped at 550 this year, but a free virtual option was also available, for those who preferred not to travel or race in person.

Season Lows

- 2020-21 was a low snow winter, with a late start and an early end. First grooming day: 12/1/2020. First day of Husky grooming: 1/24/2021. Last grooming day: 4/1/2021.
- A major equipment failure on the Husky resulted in some costly repairs and reduced grooming for a week.
- With the COVID-19 pandemic still in full swing, the upstairs of the chalet was closed for the season, and downstairs use had to be limited to only a few people at a time, with masks required.

Winter Trail Etiquette in Soft Snow

Many people want to use the trails when the weather is nice, but using the soft trails can damage them or make them treacherous for other paying users. Please remember the following safety-related rules before proceeding to the trails:

1. Walking is not allowed on the snow-covered ski trails. If you want to go for a walk, please use the MUT loops, located off Woodland Road. For snowshoeing, please use the snowshoe trails or the MUT loops.
 - **Footprints damage the groomed ski trail, which the club spends thousands of dollars each winter to maintain. If you walk on the ski trails in warm conditions, the divots freeze into the snow, which can lead to serious injuries to skiers.**
2. Dogs are not permitted on the snow-covered ski trails. Once again, the MUT loops are for this purpose. Dogs are also allowed on the snowshoe trail located at the M203 trailhead.
3. Snow bikes are permitted on the designated snow bike trails only. The only exception to this is on Tuesdays after 6:00 pm, and then only if the ski trails are firm.
4. In soft conditions, skate skiers need to pay attention to the ruts they are leaving behind them. If your ruts are 1" or deeper in the snow, please leave and come back when it is firmer. The ruts make the conditions dangerous for other skiers once the snow refreezes. Also, ruts opposite to the posted trail direction make the downhills even more dangerous!
5. Please do not ski too soon after the groomer has been through! They give us the best snow conditions possible, but skiing before the snow has a chance to set up just spoils the surface for everyone else. Please choose alternate routes and allow 20-30 minutes for the trails to set up.

2021 Summer Look Ahead

General Projects: Highlights (To volunteer, contact info@swedetowntrails.org)

- Improvements to chalet bathrooms
- New website design
- Extensive invasive plant eradication on the trails, specifically glossy buckthorn



Winter Trail Plans (To volunteer, contact chughes@mtu.edu)

Many projects are on the docket for the summer work season, including:

- Fix the off-camber hill on Birch, the improvement most requested by skiers
- Fix the two sharp corners on Valley, increasing the radius of the curves
- Add lights to dark sections of the lighted ski loops
- Add hills to Powderhouse, our “most difficult” trail



Summer Trail Plans (To volunteer, contact swedetownelf@gmail.com)

The numerous singletrack trail plans for this summer include:

- Fix low spots on the trails
- Add a short spur from the Spruce Street Trailhead to the Fawn Chase Trail
- Use the mini-excavator to add a flow style trail that parallels Burly Trail
- Update McGunn Creek Trail, using the mini-excavator
- Place maps for the double-track trails for those who like wider, flatter trails,
- Install a new bicycle repair station with tire pump: We appreciate Calumet Township's help in covering part of the cost of the repair station. Keep watching for improvements at the trails.



Spring Trails

The trails are open. Run, ride, or walk with caution, as some areas are still damp. As with the rules above regarding soft snow conditions, wet, muddy singletrack is also easily damaged. Please avoid riding soft trail, and try to preserve the beautiful trails for all to share.

- A morning Spring Trail Work Session for all members is planned for May 15th, 9:00 am to noon, with May 22nd as a backup. The plan is to get the trails in top shape and ready for our Experience the Keweenaw ride on May 29th at 5:00 pm, which is the Saturday of Memorial Weekend.
- We do have some orphan trails this year that need adopting, so if you are interested in helping for 2021, please contact swedetownelf@gmail.com. We are planning a monthly work morning at the trails on the following dates: June 26th, July 10th, Aug 7th, and Sept 18th.
- August 21st is our annual mountain bike race, the Great Deer Chase. Visit greatdeerchase.org for more information on our 10-, 15-, and 30-mile races and to sign up.

Thank you for supporting the Swedetown Trails! Thank you to all who made donations over the past year, whether through Giving Tuesday, the pay pipes at the chalet, the U.S. mail, online, or through volunteer labor. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

For general volunteer opportunity queries, please email us at info@swedetowntrails.org.