

Larch Hills Nordic Society

Information about our Trails, Tracksetters & Tracksetting Equipment



About 125K of trails on the Larch Hills are maintained by Larch Hills Nordic Society (LHNS) and the Shuswap Outdoors Club under a 10 year Agreement with the Ministry of Forests & Range issued to LHNS in 2003. 43K of trails are machine trackset; 82K of trails are not machine trackset. Most of the 125K ski trails on the Larch Hills, both trackset and non-trackset, were originally constructed as logging trails. See Tammy Thielman's article in the December 2002 LHNS Newsletter on the Newsletters webpage. Also see the list of trail names, trail ratings and trail distances on the Maps webpage.

We are very fortunate to have a dedicated and talented team of Volunteer Tracksetters who are out most days of the week when grooming is needed: Brian, Blaine, Ron, Verne, Don, Bruce and David. They do a great job of operating the LHNS's tracksetting equipment: packing and grooming the snow and setting tracks. As well Dave, our volunteer mechanic, does much of our maintenance. Blaine Carson is the dedicated Coordinator of our Volunteer Tracksetters.



The LHNS Tracksetting Team

L to R: Ron, Dave, Brian, Don, Bruce, Dave and Verne (photo by Blaine Carson)

Retired people who are interested in Tracksetting should contact one of the Tracksetters to go along for a ride to see if they might be interested. Some mechanical interest is necessary along with the ability to work in a team environment. Being a cross country skier is a necessity along with having a flexible schedule. The time commitment is a minimum of one day a week during the ski season.

Current Larch Hills Ski Trails conditions are listed on LHNS website's Home Page.

Here's a description of the equipment the LHNS owns that our Tracksetters use to "work their magic": to transform our Shuswap snow into those great tracks on which we love to glide and grunt along through old growth forests, over enchanting bogs and past conifer plantations.

"The Big Red One":



The majority of LHNS Tracksetting is done with a 2002 Pisten Bully PB 200 purchased in the Fall of 2005. It had logged 4375 hours when we bought it. It's a full size machine so we set a 17.5' wide footprint with 2 classic tracks and a skating surface in the middle. Advantages of this unit over the narrower PB 130 include a significant saving in time, fuel and maintenance. The PB 200 requires only one pass to set tracks and the skate lane compared to the PB 130 which required two passes. Larch Hill skiers reported that the PB200 in its first season of operation provides a far superior skiing experience for classic and skating compared to the PB130.

The PB 200 replaced our 20 year old/+7000 hours Pisten Bully 130 which we bought (7 years old) in 1992. Normally we expect to log about 250-275 hours on the PB 200 each season. LHNS plans to replace the PB 200 in 2016 after 10 years or about 2500 hours of use.

“The Pentti Mobile”



“The Little Red One” packs snow early in the season and serves as a back up for tracksetting. Our dear friend, the late Pentti Vakeva, used to run this machine regularly on our trails with his friend Ole Hansen. We’ve nicked named it after Pentti. Back in the 50’s the Pentti Mobile used to work on the Athabasca Glacier at the Columbia Icefields. If you see the Pentti Mobile pluggin’ along with a big black roller behind it the Tracksetters are packing snow to prepare for the Big Red One to set tracks and skating paths. The Roller was made by Bruce.

“The Scandic Snowmobile”



This machine is light, fast, wide-tracked and strong. If there’s a medical emergency this machine, combined with the first aid toboggans spotted on the ski trails, is our ambulance on snow. It’s used for a variety of jobs including lighter packing, tracksetting of narrow trails and support for Club Events. The Scandic will tow a stair tread to pack snow or a Bachler to set a single track or a big wooden sled to haul lanterns in boxes for the Lantern Ski or supplies for the course crews at the Loppet. November 2006

“Fresh Tracks” on Larch Lake Loop – let’s go skiing! Thanks to our Tracksetters!

