

Snowmaking 2011

As you may know, if you skied at Lapham this last winter – the manmade snow was critically important to providing skiing opportunities. For the first time ever all snow was completed being made before the Christmas holidays. Another first time event involved a significant meltdown of the natural snow between Christmas and New Years.

Because of the meltdown, the only skiing available was on the manmade snow from roughly December 30th to January 14, 2011. It was quite a sight to see the how many skiers used the 1.5 kilometers of trail covered with manmade snow. Some likened it to speed skating while doing multiple laps to get a nice ski in. With the help of snowmaking there were 100 days of skiing at Lapham Peak in 2010-11.

While mother nature helped promote the importance of snowmaking this year – a string of days with cold temps for making the snow followed up 2 weeks later with a string of warm days to melt the natural snow – there was also some great progress made prior to the 2010-11 ski season as a result of monetary donations.

- Additional pipeline was buried in the ground to the north end of the warm-up loop. This made for more efficient snowmaking efforts and shortened the time needed to cover the trail.
- Expansion of the Nordic playground
- Extension of manmade snow loop up the former “tail end” hill and down magic carpet ride.

During the summer of 2011 the Friends –

- Purchased 5 more used snow guns that are compatible with the current pumping system. This an important purchase as it will ensure that there are always at least 6 snow guns operating at all times that snow is being made. This should reduce the time needed to cover the 1.5 K loop.
- Purchased a used snowcat with a tiller. Previously the manmade snow piles were spread using a 40 yr old snow cat that came from a downhill ski club in Potawatomi State Park. This snow cat has proven unreliable and at times delayed the spreading of the manmade snow. Having a reliable snow cat is a critically important piece of the snowmaking puzzle. It is hoped that the additional machine will be more reliable. The fact that it has a tiller is a bonus and will help maintain quality ski conditions on the manmade snow loop. Both purchases were made from Cascade Mountain downhill ski area.
- There was also a small trail reroute completed to improve the manmade loop in the vicinity of Summerstage hill.

The goal for the 2011-12 ski season is to continue improving the efficiency of the snowmaking operation so that snow can be made in a shorter period of time to ensure skiing can be available at the earliest possible date.

Following the upcoming snow season, there is still more to be done to expand and improve the snowmaking system. The most immediate priorities include –

- Extend pipeline and electricity for the snow guns up the magic carpet ride hill
- Acquire fan style snow guns that can make snow in warmer temperatures
- Extend pipeline and electricity beyond the summer stage turnoff and ultimately loop around to the magic carpet ride hill.

As you probably are aware – none of these things can happen without volunteer support and contributions. We appreciate past support and hope that interest in the project will continue in the future.

Submitted by

Paul Sandgren and the
Snowmaking Committee