



Ski Trail Grooming in Provincial Parks

In Manitoba provincial parks, winter is a season worth celebrating. Cross-country skiing is an excellent way to get some fresh air and exercise in the great outdoors. On groomed trails sheltered by thick forests, even the coldest day can become a memorable outing.

In 12 provincial parks across Manitoba you will find groomed trails for classic cross-country, skate and even downhill skiing. Skijoring and kick-sledding are also welcomed on select trails at Birds Hill, Spruce Woods and Whiteshell provincial parks.

Park staff take a lot of pride in the condition of the trails they groom and maintain. Many are skiers themselves and want the best trails for all park visitors to enjoy. Grooming typically takes place once a week in provincial parks, typically mid to end of the week, depending on the location and other commitments on park staff. Grooming later in the week ensures the trails are in the best shape for peak use during the weekends.

It's important to note that in addition to trail grooming, the winter park staff do have other many other responsibilities including snow clearing on roads and parking lots, garbage collection and maintaining buildings, washrooms and other infrastructure.

Even though park staff strives to keep the trails in best shape possible, sometimes Mother Nature doesn't oblige. This season the extreme cold temperatures have affected grooming efforts as the cold is too hard on equipment and it is not safe for staff to be exposed to the cold for extended periods of time. There have also been some major snowfalls on Thursdays and Fridays, degrading trail conditions on the weekends. In addition, strong winds have also been an issue this winter, causing major drifting and blowing in track sets. When a major snowfall occurs, the priority for staff is clearing roads and parking lots so visitors can get in and out of our parks safely. Once that is complete, staff do their best to re-groom the trails.

In an effort to help you plan a winter adventure in provincial parks, the trail reporting system has been improved. Each week, parks report on their snow conditions and when the trails were last groomed. Be sure to check recent weather conditions and forecasts to determine if trails may have degraded since the report was posted. The trail reports also list phone numbers for each park, so it's easy to call for local updated conditions anytime.

Trail Condition Reports are updated weekly on Thursdays and can be accessed from manitobaparks.com. The website also has links to provincial parks and places to download trail maps.

Whether you go for an hour or stay for a weekend, cross-country skiing is an invigorating and enjoyable winter activity. Get outdoors and visit our parks this month because throughout the month of February there is free park entry in provincial parks.

Park Interpreters also offer guided skiing and snowshoeing as well as other family fun learning experiences throughout the winter in Birds Hill, Spruce Woods and Whiteshell provincial parks. For more information on upcoming winter programs, visit manitobaparks.com call 204-945-4375 or email ParkInterpretation@gov.mb.ca.

For more information, please contact:

Sloan Cathcart, Head of Interpretation
Parks & Protected Spaces Branch
Box 52, 200 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3W3
204-945-4375
Sloan.Cathcart@gov.mb.ca

