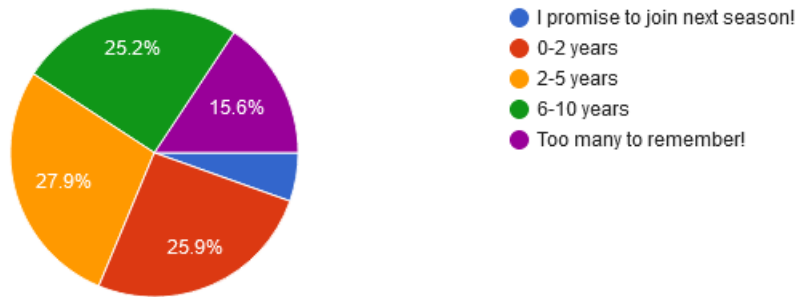




Summary of June 2023 Survey: 147 respondents

(* = Mandatory question. Response rates to non-mandatory questions are noted.)

How long have you been a Mat-Su Ski Club Member*?



In what season do you use the trails*?

75% report using the trails year-round.

27% report using the trails only in winter.

0.7% (1 person) reports using the trails in “Any season except winter”.

We asked if you would support four particular improvements on the trails*:

More lighting at GPRA, more signage on the trails, more tree removal and brushing, more events and activities. (Respondents could check multiple options and/or answer with a 5th option “Other” ideas – note that the survey enforced choosing at least one option from the five.)

It turns out that none of the four suggested improvement options are very popular.

Only 29% of you want more lights at GPRA.

Only 22% of you want more signs.

Only 17% of you want more tree removal and brushing.

Only 17% of you indicated wanting more events and activities, although comments elsewhere in the survey indicate a desire for more community events and tours.

Of those who put forth other ideas for trail improvement; the most common were:

Nine of you said you want more trails, mostly of the easy and mixed-use type.

Several respondents want more trails for dogs.

Several respondents want less dogs, or for dog owners to act more responsibly.

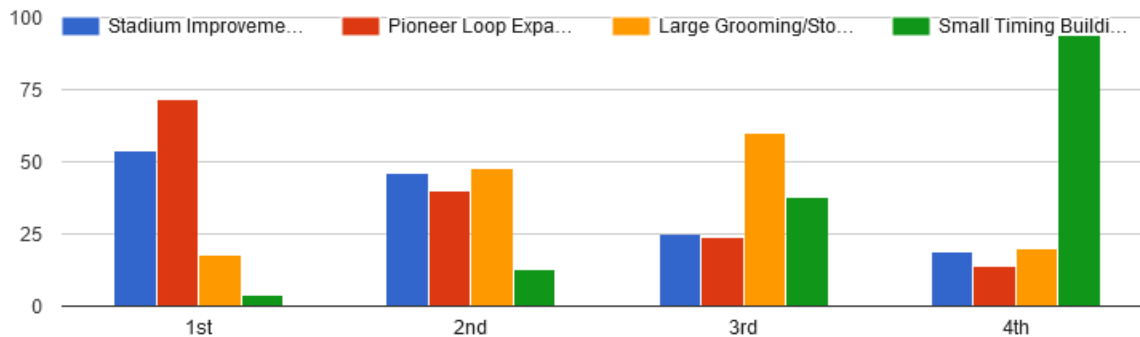
Two respondents want better quality classic tracks.



Future Development and Priorities: We presented you with a short list of the Board of Director’s infrastructure priorities at GPRA*:

Pioneer Loop Expansion, Stadium Improvements, Large Grooming/ Storage Building, and a Small timing/storage building.

This is how you ranked those four specific choices.



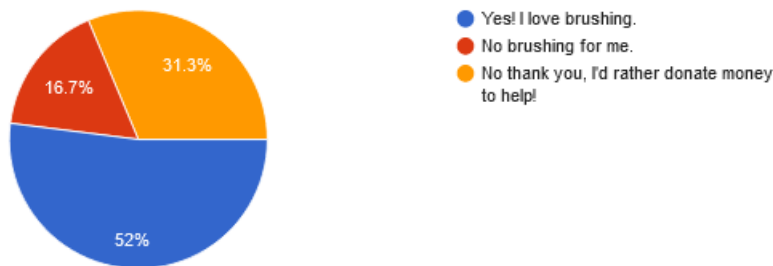
As you probably know, Stadium Improvements are underway now. It is possible that we will also install the small timing building this summer, financing for that is mostly in place, but permission from the Borough is pending.

Expansion of the Pioneer Loop and construction of a large grooming equipment building are farther-down-the-road projects that will require significant fund raising.

Not included in the priority list in this question is building a spur Nordic trail connecting the new parking lot to the Pioneer Loop. Such a trail would intersect the Pioneer Loop near the chess table. Without this trail, skiers parking in the new lot will need to walk about 150 yards uphill on a pedestrian path to reach the existing Nordic trails. We want to build this Nordic link, but we need the Borough’s help on this one because of a major creek crossing and the current location of the equestrian trail.



We are considering building the Pioneer Loop Extension in two phases, the first as a relatively quick and easy Flattop style trail, then later, with some buckets of money and heavy equipment, a full, wide trail. Would you volunteer to help brush a Flattop style skijoring/ski trail on the Pioneer Extension*?



This is a great response! We need a champion to take this bit in their teeth and lead the effort!

How to best pursue our mission of promoting Nordic skiing, specifically, what should be the balance between racing events and efforts to serve the non-racing public?

99 of you responded to this question, with many thoughtful comments.

2 of you called out 20% as an appropriate amount of race events; 14 respondents said the mix should be 30% to 40% racing events; 24 respondents say the mix should be 50/50 or thereabouts. Of the non-numerical commenters, a few see little use for racers and races, but most respondents seemed to recognize a useful connection between the Club's involvement with Nordic racing and the Club's Nordic trail development for schlubs and families, in so many ways, sponsorship, earnings, enthusiasm, etc.

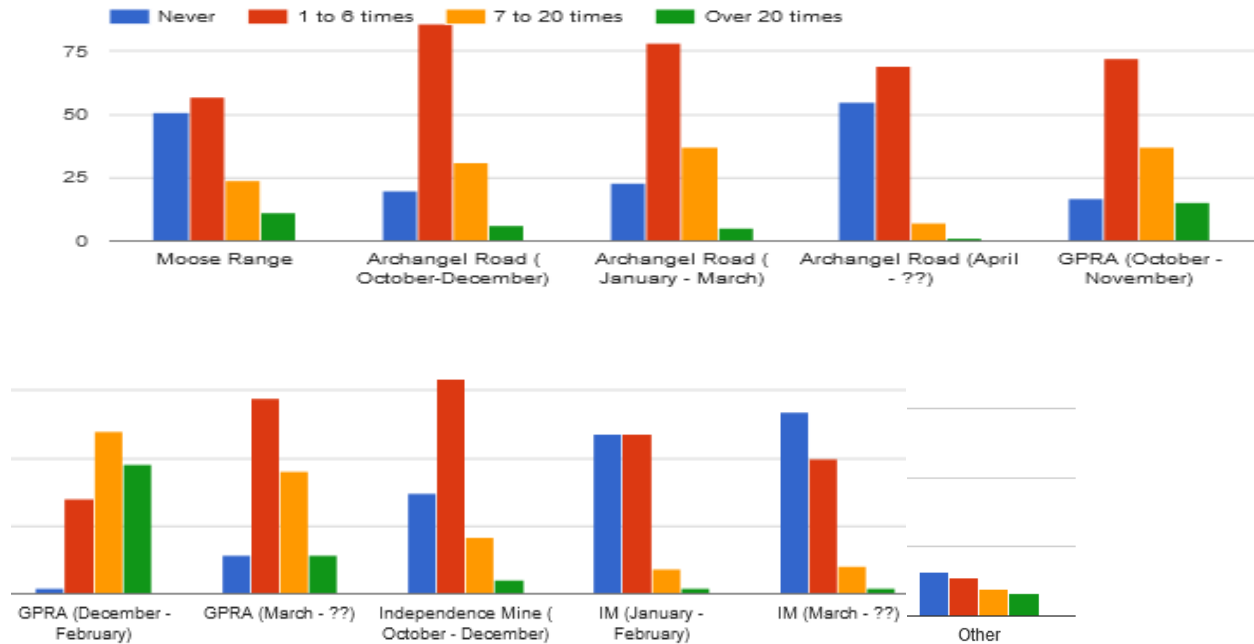
How do you feel about the number of race events that were held at GPRA this season? Examples: Icicle Double, Besh Cup, Finisher Series, etc.

130 responded to this question. 78% of those said that it was just the right amount of ski races. 9% felt there were too many races. 13% want more races.



How many times per year do you NORDIC SKI at:

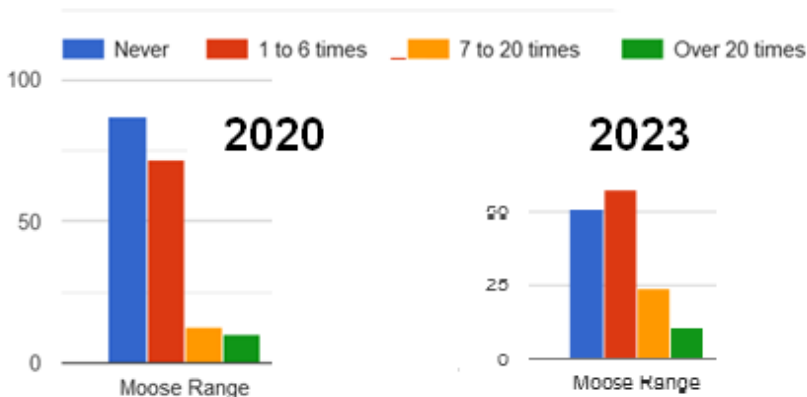
All but a few of you answered this question. These are your answers:



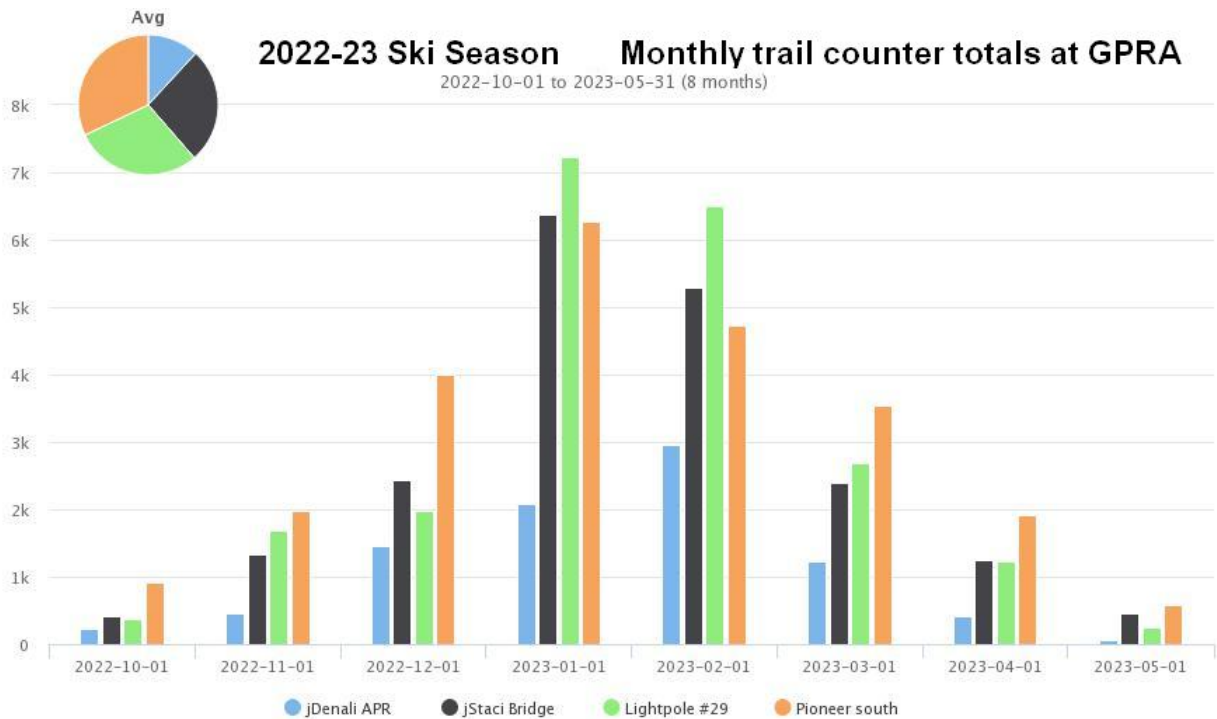
Only 32 of you reported skiing even once a winter at “Other” (i.e., a non Mat-Su Ski Club trail). And only 18 of you reported Nordic skiing more than 6 times a year at “Other.” Those numbers seem low.

Your responses seem to indicate an increase in popularity of the Moose Range since the last survey in 2020 – there is a big drop in the proportion of you reporting that they never ski at the Moose Range.

How many times a year do you NORDIC SKI at:



The question of seasonal change in skiing frequency is also illuminated by the 4 trail counters we have at GPRA. The trail counter clicks are on the vertical axis of the graph below. The numbers cannot be used as a simple count of skier visits, because a single skier might go by several counters, or the same counter several times, or no counters at all during a single visit. But they do give a good overall rough sense of seasonal Nordic trail use patterns at GPRA.

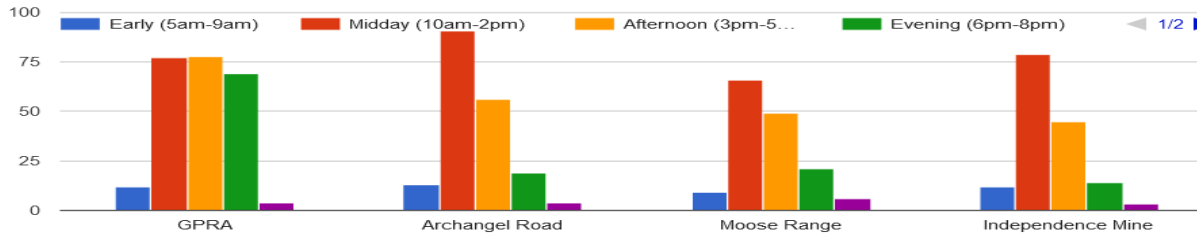


What time of the day do you use the trails?

We recognize that we accidentally left 3 high-use hours of the day out of the possible answers, oops. 141 respondents answered this question for GPRa; 126 for Archangel; 93 for the Moose Range; and 106 for Independence Mine. Only 3 skiers report never using GPRa in this question. (The short purple bars are 9pm to 5am.)

What time of day do use the trails?

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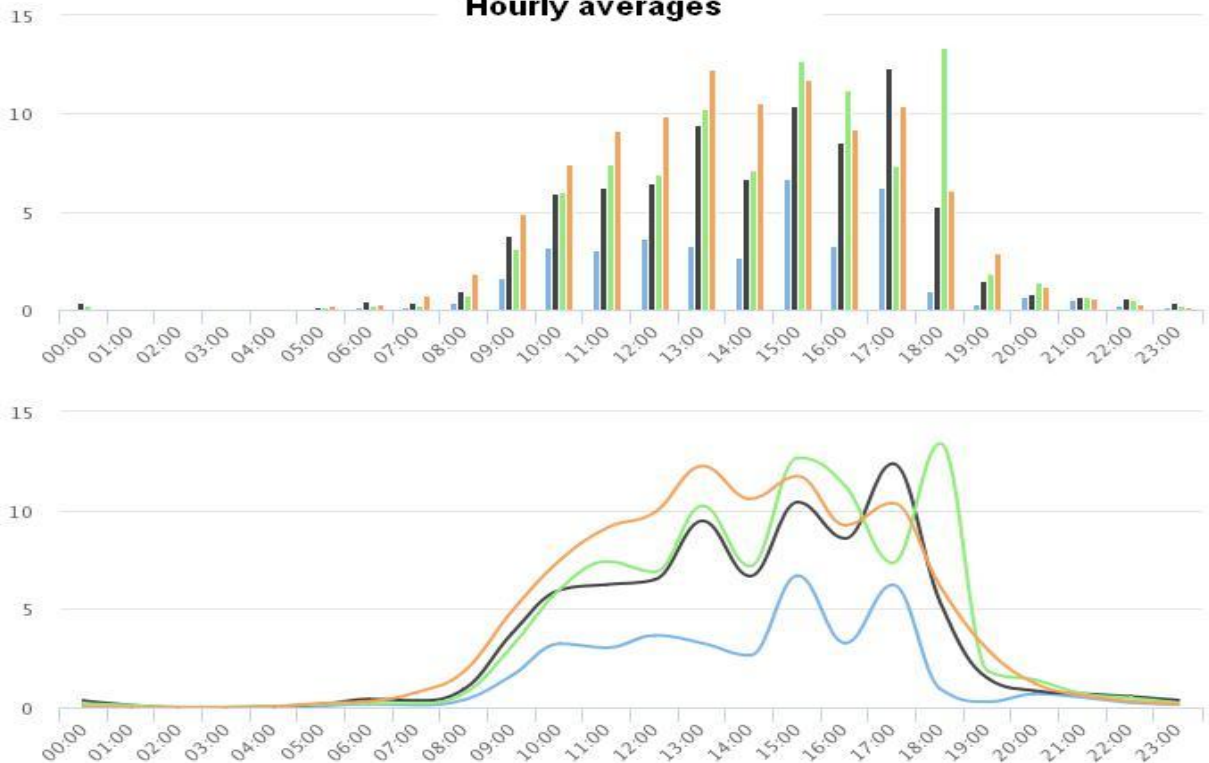


The 4 GPRa trail counters help answer this question too, in the graphs below.

2022-23 Ski season trail counters at GPRa

2022-10-01 to 2023-05-28

Hourly averages

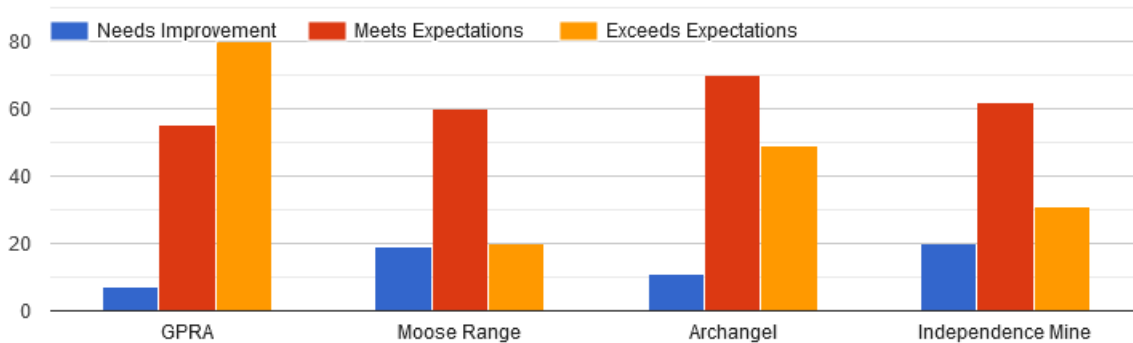


Site Name	Average	Median	STDV	Min	Max
jDenali APR	1.6	0.5	2.0	0.0	6.7
jStaci Bridge	3.7	1.2	3.9	0.1	12.4
Lightpole #29	3.8	1.1	4.5	0.0	13.4
Pioneer south	4.5	2.4	4.5	0.0	12.2



How are we doing with our grooming at the following locations?

140 of you answered this question.

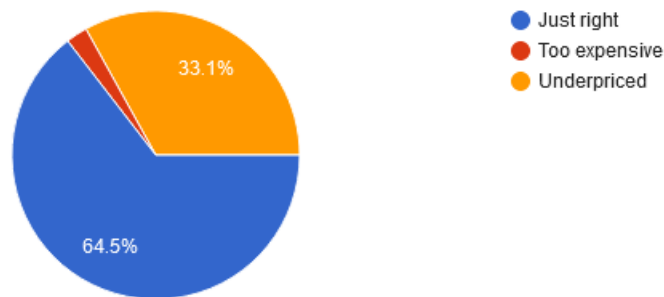


Do you feel there is room for expansion of Junior Nordics?

Ninety of you answered this question. Only two answered no, and two said they don't know. The other 86 of you supported the idea if there are enough coaches, trail space, and parking at GPRA to support it.

Speaking of Junior Nordics, do you feel like the \$100 fee for the 8 week season is:

126 of you answered this question.



Our groomers are still 100% volunteer. Would you be willing to pay a higher membership fee to support a stipend for groomers*?

79% of respondents checked "yes", 10% checked "no".

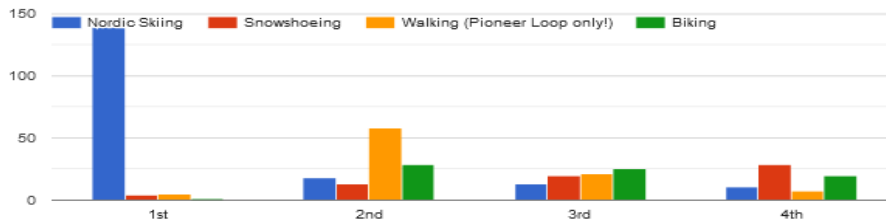


Rank your order of winter use on the trails at our venues:

The primary use at all venues is overwhelmingly skiing, although the Moose Range stands out for a relatively high proportion of respondents that primarily use it for biking. Note the widely different count of respondents (on the y axis) for the various venues.

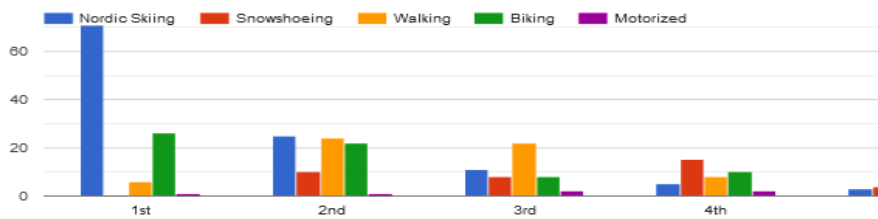
Rank your order of winter use on the trails at GPRA:

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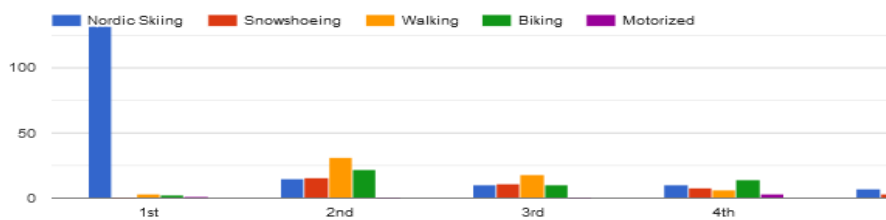
Rank your order of winter use on the trails at Moose Range:

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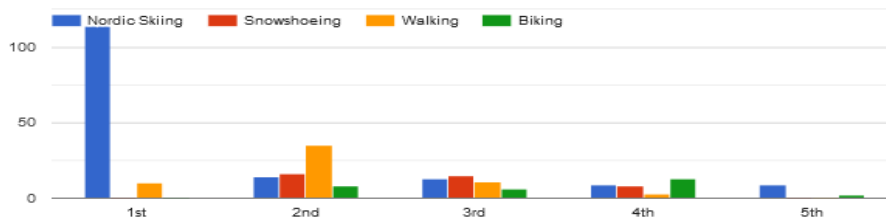
Rank your order of winter use on the trails at Archangel Road:

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Rank your order of winter use on the trails at Independence Mine:

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How important to you is knowing the trail conditions before you go skiing*?

58% of folks said it is important and would be willing to drive a little further if it's better.
42% said it is somewhat important.
3% said it is not important. And 4% will only ski on corduroy.
(A few people chose multiple answers)

How do you hear about activities/events/trail conditions from the Mat-Su Ski Club*?

6 choices were offered in a check-all-that-apply format, along with the opportunity to write in an answer. (There is a lot in a single question here; we can't tell from the answers how you use these sources for just trail condition reports.)

62% of you checked the Mat-Su Ski Club website.

51% of you checked the Mat-Su Ski Club newsletter.

48% of you checked Nordic Pulse.

38% of you checked the Mat-Su Ski Club Facebook page.

26% of you checked Snowio.

9% of you checked the Mat-Su Ski Club Instagram page.

6% wrote in "friends" or similar.

Written in by 1 person each are: "MSB trail report" "JN text" "email" "the phone recording not reliable!" and "Really appreciate not having to go to social media to find out about trail conditions."

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

83 people answered. Mostly thanks, along with some good ideas and some requests.

Below is a consideration of your comments and suggestions with our responses:

- **Trails:** More than anything else – you want more trails. Specifically trails that are more family than race oriented. A desire for point to point trails, versus hamster-wheel trails was expressed.

We have plans to expand the Pioneer Loop to the east by about 3 to 7 kilometers. The difficulty level of future Nordic trails in this area is largely controlled by whether the Borough will allow Nordic trails in the relatively flat ground east of the Carle Wagon Road Trail.

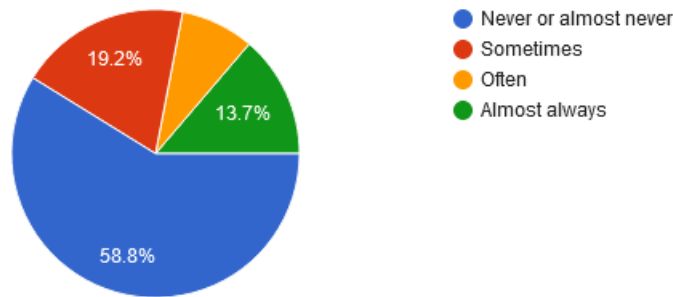
Point to point trails require trailheads at each end. Currently point to point skiing can be done between trailheads on either side of the Moose Range, or between the Mountain Streams and GPRA trailheads.

- **Dogs:** Your comments show that there are strong feelings on the subject. There were many unfavorable comments about dogs as trail hazards and poop machines. And many comments asking for more places for dogs on the Nordic trails.

Our 2020 survey showed that a minority, but still a fair proportion of members, like to ski with their dogs.

Do you choose where to ski because you can bring a dog?

182 responses



The Pioneer loop at GPRA, the Archangel Road trail, the Independence Mine trails, and the Moose Range all currently provide groomed Nordic trails where dogs are allowed. Of those, Archangel and the Moose Range are probably the best skijoring locations, with caveats – Moose Range trails are narrow and often quite textured by various users, and Archangel can be crowded and isn't even a loop.

- **Signage:** Some of you expressed a desire for more signs. Less than half of the people who want more signs explained what kind of signs and which venue they should be at. That's our mistake. Those who did explain: mostly about trail etiquette - not walking in the classic tracks, asking skiers to slow down on multi-direction trails like the Pioneer loop, and dog owner responsibilities; also more signage at Independence that highlight fast downhills or turns; there were also requests for trail marking signage on the Moose Range trails; and to add some QR code signs for ease of leaving donations.

We hear your concerns about trail etiquette – it's a communication and cooperation challenge that we are working on.

Unfortunately, signs do not survive in the Moose Range, it's just how it is. An alternative to navigation signs is to use the free Moose Range map and phone



map software available on our website – it will show you the trails and your location on the trail.

We do already have QR codes for donations on signs at the GPRA, Independence, and Archangel trailheads – we will try to make them more obvious.

- **Appreciation:** Many comments expressed sincere gratitude for the groomed trails, programs, events, and communication. Your joy was shared by many!
- **Grooming at Independence Mine:** There were several comments about the grooming, classic tracks, and corners not being up to par.

Regrettably, our grooming equipment for Independence broke down near the start of the winter, preventing us from grooming there for most of the season. The Hatcher Pass Snow Riders stepped up and groomed Nordic trails at Independence in midwinter; but since they are not familiar with Nordic skiing, the grooming had some unusually sharp turns and and limited/shallow classic tracks. A big shoutout to Hatcher Pass Snow Riders for their help. We will strive to do better next season.

- **Chalet at GPRA:** Some of you wonder why the Chalet isn't more available for public use.

Mat-Su Ski Club has no control over the Chalet. The Chalet belongs to the Borough and is leased to and managed by a private for-profit operator. The link to their booking site and info is here <https://governmentpeakchalet.com/>

- **Sledding hill:** Some of you wonder about the status of the sledding area.

This is another part of GPRA that we do not oversee. The Mat-Su Borough (MSB) controls the sledding hill. The sledding hill is being modified for safety as part of the new parking lot construction, so hopefully it is good to go for next winter. Please reach out to MSB Parks Department for future sledding hill plans.

- **Paid groomers:** As a practical matter, we are probably some way off from moving to paid groomers. Most of our current groomers are not interested in being paid. Every season is different, but typically we groom 500 hours a season at GPRA and another 300 hours combined at Archangel and Independence Mine. Raising money to pay a \$25/hr wage for grooming at those three locations would require raising all memberships by \$60 year.

