

1973-2023 Wostawea Time Capsule Story

“The Day We Groomed Woolastook”

Story shared by Rob Hughes

Years ago one of our regular Sunday Ski Tours took place at Woolastook Park. As this is just down the hill from my place, I usually led it. Grooming was unheard of and we just skied on trails we broke ourselves or followed snowmobile trails. Sometimes we did some trail prep using snowshoes to flatten a route for skiing. Our usual tour involved climbing up the back hill through the woods to Mountain Road – a natural spot for a break – and then downhill again, returning by some different trails.

Then one year someone said, “Why not groom the trails for the Woolastook tour?” We found out soon enough, but meanwhile the Hadleys had a home-made track setter and the snowmobile to pull it. So Eric drove his Subaru Forester plus trailer with the snowmobile round to my place and borrowed our car for the weekend – ours, a very well “run in” and beloved Volvo 240, having no trailer hitch.

Neighbour and fellow Wostawean Alex Whaley helped me with the grooming. On the Saturday it was a seasonable –20 degrees C and the snowmobile would not start. It eventually fired up after I poured some hot tea on what I hoped was the fuel pump. Then the whole rig would not go under the park gate (we thought beforehand surely it would) so we had to heave the gates off their hinges to get in. We groomed away the afternoon.

Next morning, guess what? Snowfall warning. A small but undeterred crowd showed up (consisting mainly of those already mentioned) and we skied around fast, trying to beat the storm. By the time we got back all those lovely tracks were buried, but we had a memorable tour. This took place sometime in the early 1990s. As far as I know it was the only time grooming was done at Woolastook!