

April 30, 2003
Hillside Trails Safety and Grading Improvements

NSAA Summer Work Proposal: The NSAA proposes to fully fund the planning and implementation of safety, grading, and restoration improvements to the Hillside Trail system. NSAA plans to accomplish the work through employees and volunteers. NSAA intends to actively inform the public with trail signage and public process.

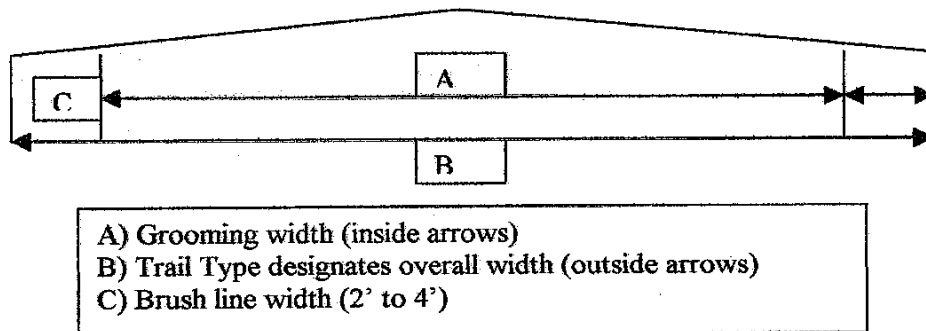
Scope of Work: To identify and undertake improvement projects, which will upgrade the safety of intersections, trail alignment, and improve trail surfaces to maintain a safe and enjoyable experience for all trail users.

Conditions: The Hillside Trail system has developed over the last thirty years like a true Alaskan homestead. More and more people are using the trails every year. As noted from a study presented a few years ago by NSAA, these trails get more skier-day use than any other trails in Anchorage.

Over the years the trails have gone through many changes in alignment and modifications. The results have created many inconsistencies. Of the seven distinct loops, all differ in character and widths and have an array of dysfunctional and dangerous intersections. Along many sections of trails there are choke points and intersections with blind corners with potentially dangerous conflicts.

During periods of high use (weekends and afternoons) the main trails are congested, and exceed their safe functional capacity. Users need areas with space to stand aside moving traffic. Intersections need to have clear visibility and obvious direction and flow. The trails need to be maintainable with good shape and surface. Many of the trails were built for the classic technique. The trails were narrow, had less use and slower user speeds. Summer activities continue to increase with runners, hikers and mountain bikers. With the increasing popularity of skate skiing, trails now need to accommodate for dual disciplines. Throughout the trail system, the trail cross-section in many locations has eroded into a cupped or dished shape. This is undesirable for maintenance and long-term durability.

Trail Surface Treatment: A tremendous obstacle to overcome is the lack of available native soil to help rebuild eroded trail sections. Following grading improvements, the proposal includes manufacturing topsoil by blending organics and disposed fill imported from current M.O.A. projects, such as the Abbott Loop Ball Field. (NSAA continues to look for available sources.) The installation of the manufactured topsoil along with grass seed mix would be used to restore trail surfaces. This has been an economical and successful technique utilized by NSAA at Kincaid and by other agencies. NSAA proposes to simultaneously upgrade trail surfaces throughout the Hillside system for the duration of the summer.



Ski Trail Classifications and Characteristics:

Type 1 – a high volume ski trail because it is lighted, well maintained and has easy access to parking/school/chalet. The desired width for dual discipline skiing is 16' (groomable) / 20' (overall) with a flat to slightly crowned profile. Surface should ideally be smooth and cleared of debris and rocks to allow for machine grooming in low snow conditions. In the non-snow season hikers, runners and bikers heavily use it because of accessibility and high quality.

Type 2 – Medium volume ski trail because it is unlit and/or technically more difficult. It could also be a connector or cut-off to a type 1 trail. The desired width for dual discipline skiing is 14' / 18' with a flat to slightly crowned profile. Surface should ideally be smooth and cleared of debris and rocks to allow for machine grooming in low snow conditions. In the non-snow season hikers, runners and bikers heavily use it because of accessibility and high quality.

Type 3 – Low volume trails due to technical difficulty, classic-only designation or rough trail condition. Width is generally 10' / 14' to allow for snow cat grooming but still keep the intimate trail feel. In the non-snow season, some hikers, runners and bikers may prefer it to the wide smooth trails because of the intimate feel and rough surface.

Multi-Use all Seasons - This type of trail allows all types of foot, ski, dog, bike and possibly horse traffic in the snow season. If it is groomed for skiing, it could be classified and maintained as a type 1, 2, or 3 trails.

Work Sites by Priority

Safety Improvements

1. **Junior Nordic Loop Type 1**
 - 1.1 Hillside intersection (Conversation Corner)
 - Flow and safety improvements

- Radius enlargement
 - Grading and restoration
- 1.2 Tour of Anchorage Intersection
- Flow and safety improvements

2. Hillside Loop Type 1

- 2.1 Trail capacity, grading and restoration improvements (entire loop)
- 16 / 20' width where possible (the current trail width is 14'; some places are as narrow as 12'; to the extent that the terrain allows, this will be widened to 16' groomable width and 20' overall)

- 2.2 Coaches Cut-Off Intersections Type 2
- Intersection flow and safety improvements
 - Trail grading and restoration

- 2.3 Abbot Parking Lot by-pass and Intersections Type 2
- Intersection flow and safety improvements
 - Trail grading and restoration
 - Install 2 lights

- 2.4 Abbot Parking Lot Access Loop Type 2
- Line of site improvements (brushing inside corner and widening west side of corner entrance)
 - Flow and safety improvements
 - Trail grading and restoration improvements

- 2.5 Bog trail Type 3
- Trail alignment improvements
 - Grading and restoration

3 Besh Loop Type 1

- 3.1 Jan's Intersection Safety Improvements
- Widen trail as it enters intersection from Hillside Loop
 - Radius work at Besh entrance
- 3.2 Ann's Alley and Intersections Type 3
- Flow and safety improvements
 - Grading and trail restoration
- 3.3 Hilltop Nordic Access Parking Area
- Flow and safety improvements (brush and re-grade inside corner)
 - By-pass grading and capacity improvements
- 3.4 Gas Line Intersections
- Flow and Safety Improvements
 - Grading and restoration

3.5 Big Bummer Corner (light pole problem)

- Safety and alignment improvements
- Grading and restoration
- Possibly move pole across trail, install J-box

3.6 Wally's Intersection and Old Besh Trail

- Flow and Safety improvements
- Old Besh flow and grading improvements (accommodate 2 way traffic)
- Use existing contour bench for free ride merge into Wally's Way

4 Richter's BLM Ridge Loop Type 3**4.1 Besh intersection (summer 2003)**

- Flow and Safety improvements
- Grading and restoration
- Possibly realign the entry off Besh loop for safety improvements

4.2 Richter BLM Ridge Intersection (summer 2003)

- Flow and Safety improvements (widen the inside corner and clear brush)

4.3 BLM Ridge Loop (possibly in summer 2004)

- Safety improvements
- Grading and restoration

4.4 Richter Loop (possibly in summer 2004)

- Safety improvements
- Grading and restoration

5 Double Bubble Type 2**5.1 Safety and Grading Improvements****5.2 Double Bubble mid-trail gas line connection****6 Spencer Loop Type 2****6.1 Gas Line intersection**

- Flow and safety improvements – Merge downhill into gas line; retain current alignment for races only

6.2 Restore grade from Campbell Creek bridge to top of rise (possibly summer 2004)**6.3 Widen the trail in "The Wall" section - this is necessary for safety during grooming (possibly summer 2004).****7 Service/Randy's Loop Type 1 (Project was previously approved; it will be installed in summer 2003)****1.3 Install 22ea. light posts; run underground conduit.****1.4 Brush existing trail at toe of slope north of Service start/finish area****1.5 Re-grade steep hill corner****1.6 Topsoil trail surface and seed**