

Wasi trails struggling with trespassers



By JENNIFER HAMILTON-MCCHARLES, The Nugget
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Skiers and those enjoying a walk on their snowshoes are welcome at the Wasi Ski Trails, but trucks and All Terrain Vehicles can stay parked in the parking lot.

If the lack of snow wasn't enough to contend with, volunteers are spending time fixing the damage done to ski trails by motorized vehicles.

"ATVS do the most damage. They love to dig deep and create big ruts," said Kerry Somerville, president of the Wasi Cross Country Ski Club.

"It takes a lot of snow to fill in an eight to 12 inch rut. That type of damage can put us behind two or three weeks."

Somerville said sometime this month volunteers noticed the evidence of a pickup truck being used on the trail system. The truck was driven around the blue trail, about a two or three kilometre loop, and caused some damage.

"The motorist even ran over our no trespassing sign," Somerville said Sunday.

This isn't the first time the club has had issues with motorized vehicles using the trail system.

"It's been an ongoing issue for the last five to 10 years," Somerville said, adding the damage is usually done by ATVs and snowmachines.

"Most people are good, but we always seem to get one or two people who think they can ride the trails because they are located on Crown land."

Wasi Ski Club is located off Lake Nosbonsing Road between Callander and Astorville and offers 30-kilometres of trails.

Somerville said people think the trails are on Crown land, but in fact the club pays to lease the land from the Ministry of Natural Resources from Nov. 1 to April 15.

"After that it goes back to Crown land," she said.

Last year the club extended a few of its shorter trails and put a warm-up shack near the red ski trail and snowshoe trail.

The mild weather is also not helping the situation.

Somerville said this time last year the trails were fully open and being enjoyed by skiers.

"Skiing isn't really good right now. We were open last weekend. We even delayed going down south for Christmas so we could ski but once the rain came we left."

The club has 300 members and sees on average 500 to 600 day skiers per season.

Groups from Halton and Sudbury also travel for the weekend to enjoy the trails.

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