

Friends of Valley Spur Milestones for 2023/2024

While last year's snowfall was considerably less than normal, Valley Spur was able to keep the trails groomed and open from early January until late March. Last year's day passes totaled 1,000, well below our average. There were 92 season memberships, which was slightly below normal. Sponsorship money from local business last year, totaled \$5,800. Despite the lower income, by cutting costs, we were able to breakeven for the year. We hope to increase pass sales by promoting our snow conditions and grooming on social media.

We are very proud of the following items that were completed during the last year:

- The Capital Campaign for new grooming equipment raised \$176,311 from our community of skiers and supporters.
- Grants were received totalling \$110,116. (USDA Small Business Grant - \$99,950 and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewas Indians Grant -\$10,165)
- A new Kubota tractor with tracks, brush mower and Mueller snow tiller were purchased with these funds.
- We formed a partnership with the Munising Bay Trail Network. Since 2007 the Friends of Valley Spur operated under the Noquemanon Trail Network out of Marquette County. The new partnership puts all Alger County Silent Sports under a local umbrella.
- We are currently working on an updated agreement with the US Forest Service to continue operating Valley Spur under a Special Use Permit.

We appreciate the many businesses that wrote letters of support for our efforts at Valley Spur. These letters noted that the ski trails bring in skiers from many areas outside of Munising, and help our economy in the winter months especially for motels, restaurants and shopping.

The Friends of Valley Spur are responsible for all funding to keep the trails open. We can do this only with the trail fees, donations, sponsorships and grants we receive. We receive no monetary support from the Forest Service. All equipment for grooming is owned by the Friends of Valley Spur. We have one paid employee who grooms our trails. All other work at Valley Spur is done by very dedicated volunteers. There are approximately 50 volunteers averaging 1,600 volunteer hours each year. These volunteers staff and clean the lodge, assist with grooming, run the events, clear the trails, ensure that the lodge has plenty of wood to keep it warm, shovel snow, serve as committee members, act as ambassadors to Munising and the surrounding area, and take care of any other operating needs. We were disappointed that we had to cancel the Taste & Glide this past winter due the trails not being up to our standards for that day, however, we plan on sponsoring the Taste & Glide this year.

Ongoing programs at Valley Spur:

- Lodge open daily from 10 am to 4pm.
- Free skiing and equipment use for those 18 and under.
- Free Kid's Ski Lessons in conjunction with Alger County 4-H.
- Local school group ski and snowshoe lessons.
- Taste and Glide Event the first Saturday in March.
- Two snowshoe trails and a groomed snow bike trail in cooperation with the Munising Bay Trail Network.

The Friends of Valley Spur greatly appreciates our Sponsors for their continued support. The Friends of Valley Spur are very diligent in ensuring the funds they receive go towards making Valley Spur the best Cross Country Ski Trails in the Midwest.