

Grooming Program Summary

Winter 2024/2025

By Nick Beatty, Program Director

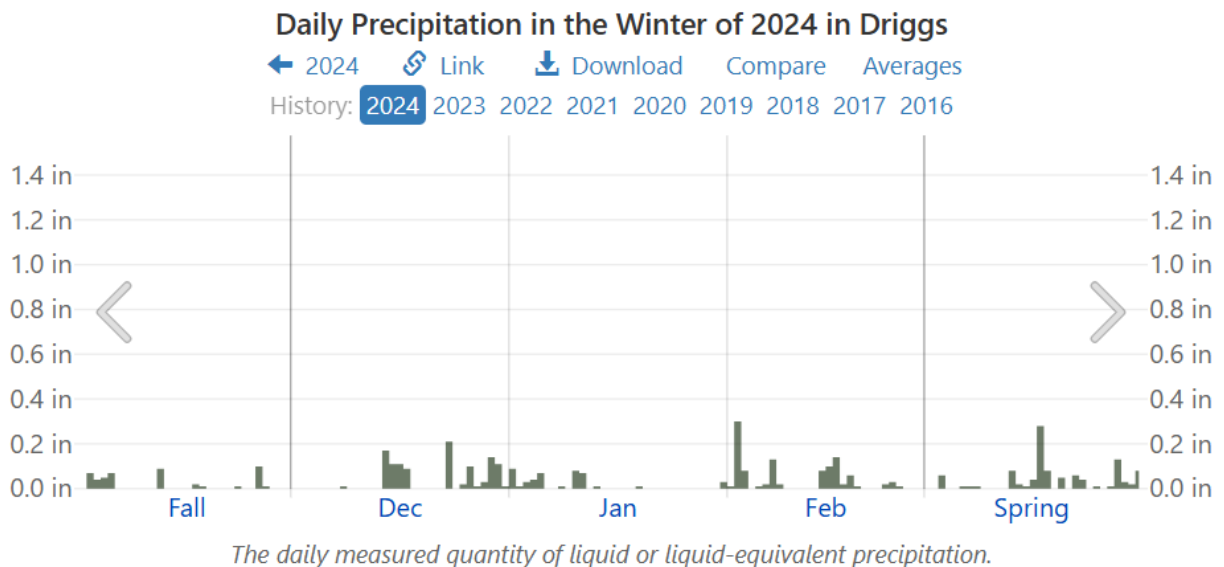
We had a great crew of volunteers and staff who worked tirelessly to keep up with the variable weather conditions. This summary is a deep dive into the data that was gathered during the 2024/2025 winter grooming season. New additions to the grooming program this season include:

- Hiring a part-time snowcat operator, Mike Barklow.
- Providing fuel storage boxes at every venue.
- Focus on classic track setting and providing resources and training to do so successfully.
- Growing the team to reduce strain on staff and provide break opportunities.

Precipitation

It was another rollercoaster ride this winter dealing with periods of abundant precipitation as well as periods of dryness. Notably, a bit of the precipitation we received this season came in the form of rain instead of snow (early February).

From Nov 26 to April 8th we had **59 days of measurable precip.** This is 9 days more than we saw last year during this time period.



Equipment

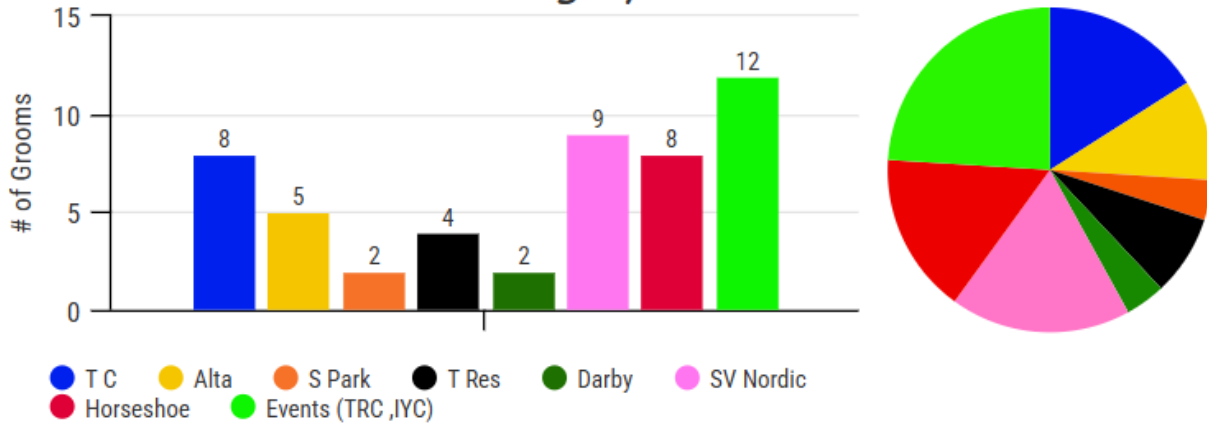
I can't tell you how grateful the groomers are to have such quality equipment to work with. We encountered a few equipment hurdles throughout the season, but no major breakdowns. It is nice to have efficient and reliable machines that the volunteers enjoy working with. When the equipment works well, the operators are happy and enjoy grooming. When the operators enjoy grooming, the trails stay in great shape. If the trails are in great shape, then the trail users are happy. It is a simple formula, and all goes back to having good quality equipment.

Snow Rabbit

This season we prioritized being more efficient with the Rabbit to better support the snowmobile groomers. This meant not grooming a venue in full with the Rabbit only, but rather we prioritized grooming tasks that the snowmobiles struggled with, like leveling a section of trail or compacting soft edges. We operated the Rabbit 3-4 times/week, depending on snow conditions. This year we had a 15-week grooming season when there was enough snow to operate on. We put 170 hours on the machine (10% decrease) but groomed with it 13 more times than last year (35% increase). We averaged about 11.3 hours of Rabbit grooming per week. Add another 100 hours of transport and maintenance time and the Rabbit absorbed 270 hours of attention this winter.

Snow Rabbit 2024/25

Grooming by Venue



<u>Rabbit stats:</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
# of groomings	50	37
Total grooming hours	170 hrs.	189 hrs.
Total Fuel Consumed	261 gal	274 gal.

The Rabbit was essential in creating the two successful race opportunities (TRC and IYC) at Mike Harris this winter. These two events would not have been possible without the use of this little snowcat to create the stadium and necessary course connector trails.

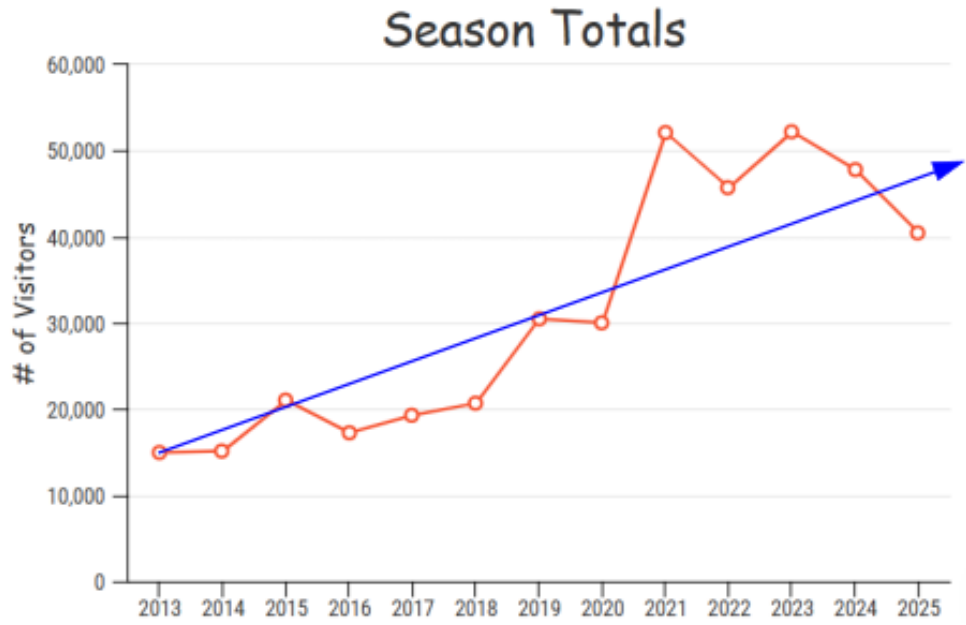
Distance Groomed

This grooming season similar in length to last year. TVTAP machines groomed an estimated 7,569 miles, which is a 2.8% decrease in mileage from last winter (7,792 miles).

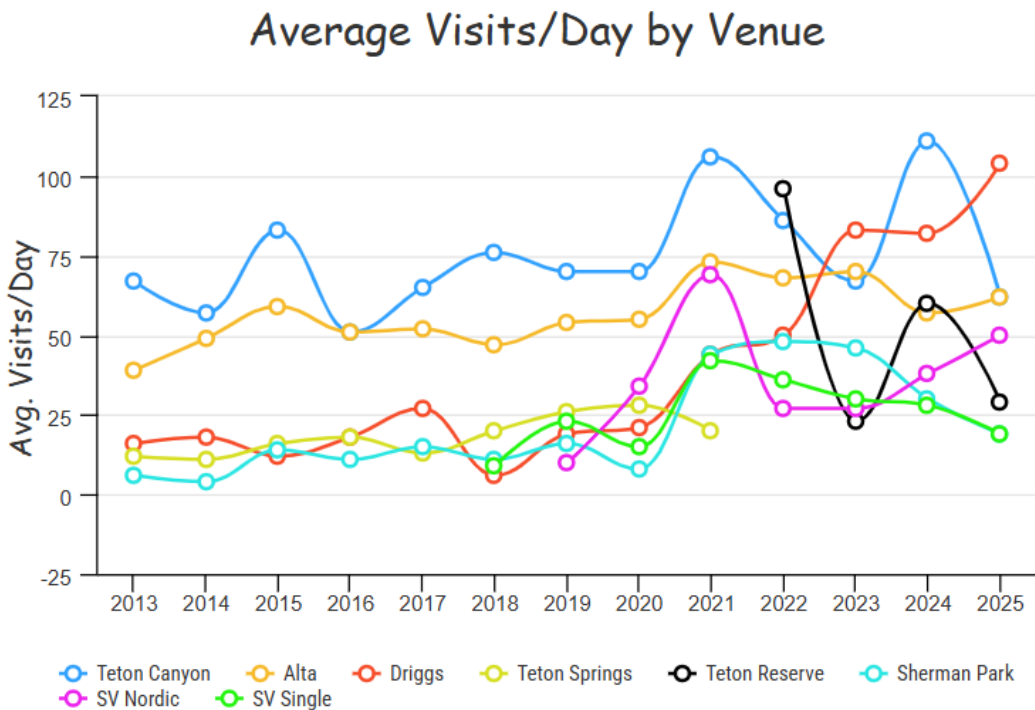
Trail Use Data

Each season we set up infrared data collectors that capture the number of warm bodies that pass by that particular spot on the trail. They are installed in the same spot each winter so we can analyze trends in use over time. We secured a grant and purchased two additional trail counters this season, which provided us with more accurate trail data.

The total of trail visitation this winter is **40,455 visits, which is an 15% decrease** from last winter (2024).



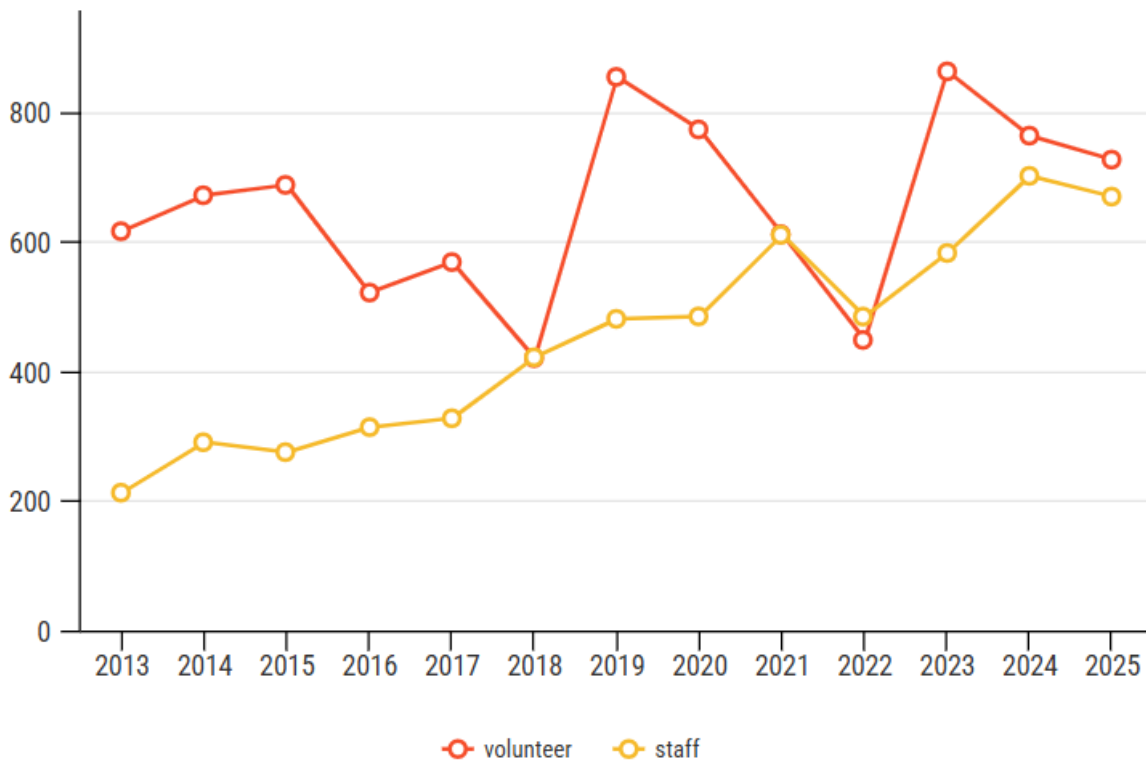
Some venues experienced an increase in visitation, while others had decreased use. We can speculate why this is but have no real way of knowing. Teton Canyon had a significant decrease in use (39.5%), likely due to the expanded trail network in the area (North Side Trail and Sheep Bridge Trail connection).



Grooming Effort

This year our crew of 23 volunteers logged 726 hours of grooming time. TVTAP's staff of 5 logged 669 hours of grooming, for a grand total of **1,395 hours** spent building and maintaining the groomed trails this winter. This is a 4.7 % decrease from last season. See graph below.

Grooming Effort



You will notice in the graph the volunteer effort and staff effort trended evenly this season. I'd like to think that both staff and volunteers were more efficient with the grooming...Rabbit and snowmobile working together!

It's worth noting that staff grooming hours went down, even though we added a fifth staff member to operate the Rabbit. This gave Kevin and I more time to manage the program, which was beneficial.

Grooming Program Metric

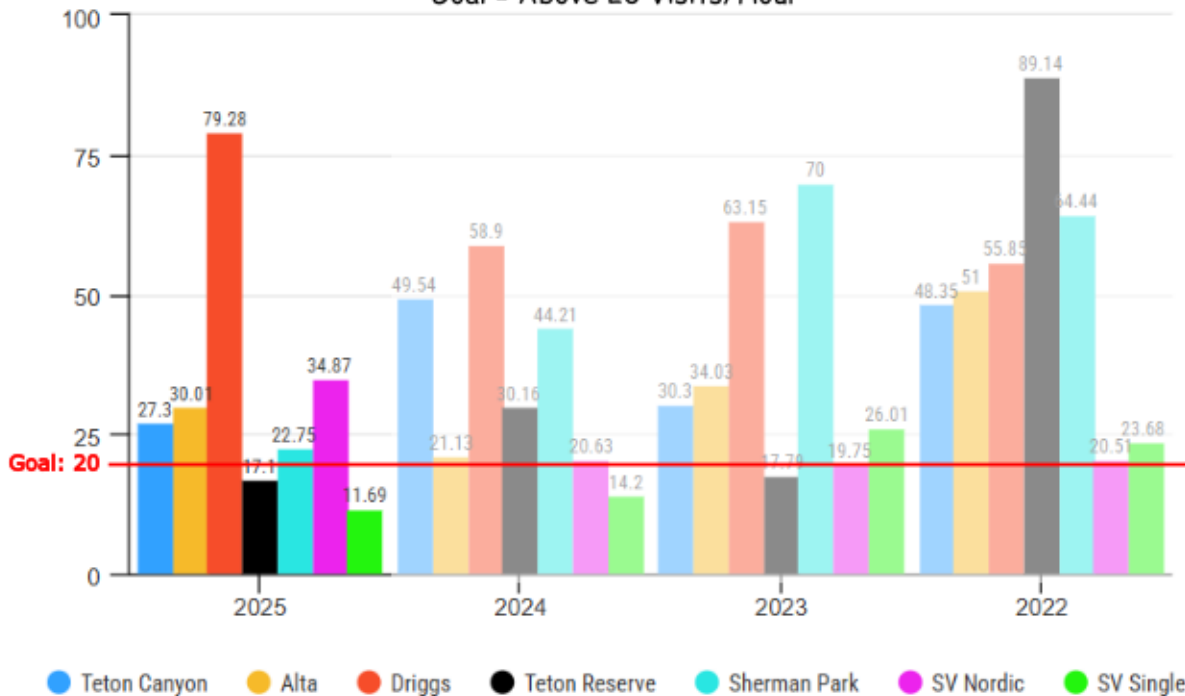
Years ago, TVTAP determined that we needed a way to analyze if our grooming efforts were worthwhile. The metric that we use for this is to compare our effort (grooming hours) to the amount of visits a trail gets. The formula looks like this:

$$\frac{\text{Total Trail Visits}}{\text{Total Grooming Hours}} = \text{Visits/Hour}$$

Our objective is to have at least 20 visitors for every hour we spend grooming. The graph below shows how we did this winter. There were a lot of people using the in-town trails which require less grooming effort.

Trail Visits / Grooming Hour

Goal = Above 20 Visits/Hour



Most years we average around 30-40 visits/hour with a couple venues dancing around the 20 visits/hour goal. This season we averaged **31.9 visits/hour**, 8% decrease from last year.

You will notice the increased results at Driggs and the rather low results at Teton Reserve and SV Singletrack. The singletrack is always below the goal because we require team grooming (two operators per grooming session) which doubles the effort. The Teton Reserve trail seems to react positively every year we do something new and negatively when the trail stays the same. We will strategize how to bring each of these trails closer to the goal, so we are not over-grooming or under-grooming to accommodate the trail use.

Singletrack Grooming

Trail use on singletrack is not trending in a positive direction. Are we grooming too much? Is the declining bike industry having an effect? We will analyze these results and make a plan to hit our goal for next season.

Fuel Consumption

- Snowmobiles = 739 gallons, \$2,594 (4.2% decrease gallons)
- Rabbit = 261 gallons, \$875.93 (9.7% decrease gallons)
- TOTAL Grooming Fuel = 1,000 gallons, \$2,669 (5.6% decrease)
This is a gallon decrease of 5.6% and a dollar decrease of 28%
- Automobile Expense = \$3,600– This includes fuel, maintenance, etc. (16.3% decrease)

This winter the snowmobiles burned 739 gallons of fuel averaging 10 MPG. Comparing the Snow Rabbit to the snowmobiles it is best to look at gallons/hour, since we don't track mileage on the Snow Rabbit.

- Snowmobiles = **0.6 gal/hr** (25% more efficient)
- Rabbit = **1.53 gal/hr** (5.5% less efficient)

TVTAP paid \$2,669 for equipment fuel. \$140 of that will be reimbursed by the City of Victor. Teton Reserve donated 94 gallons, and the City of Driggs donated 50 gallons.

If you compare our total Trail Visits (40,455) to the amount of fuel, we burned (1,000 gallons) you could say that this winter we achieved **40 smiles per gallon** (last year was 45 smiles/gal).

To wrap it up, this winter 28 operators (23 volunteers and 5 staff) regularly maintained 61 miles of trail (same as last year) in Teton Valley, grooming a total distance of about 7,570 miles. The delayed start to winter created a similar season length as last year, but we still saw significant trail use with 40,455 trail visits that averaged 303 visits/day (15% decrease over last year). The snowmobiles consumed 4.2% less fuel than last winter, and when adding the Rabbit into the mix we burned a total 1,000 gallons. This was a 5.6% overall decrease. The Snow Rabbit provided some great skiing opportunities in partnership with the snowmobile groomers and was necessary to support the Nordic race events.

In all, we had another great season and fulfilled our mission of providing quality winter trails in Teton Valley for our community to enjoy.

Nick