

# Snowplows in the Wild

Story by Stuart Baum  
Pictures by Zoë Baum



● Our small town has feral snowplows.

They live in the pine forest, down the mountainside. When it snows, they come up the mountainside, plow our sixteen small streets, somewhat noisily, but without missing even the smallest clump of snow, and then drive themselves back to the woods.



Sometimes there are three of them. Sometimes four. Once there was five, the highest number, which makes us believe there are five total. But there might be six.

There is another small town on our mountain, but the wild snowplows never go there. Those townspeople have to plow their own roads. Except once, when the snows were especially deep. One of the snowplows drove itself to that town and plowed their main street, two side streets and the parking lot of their post office. Then the snowplow left.

The people of that town were scared since, while they knew we had wild snowplows in our town, they had never seen one in their own town. They were worried it would run over the children or run into a building, but, of course, it did not.



■ had the idea, one morning when there was only a very light snow, to follow the snowplows down the mountain to wherever it was that they live when it doesn't snow.

I put on my red and blue striped snow cap, my green jacket and yellow snow pants. The snowplow that plowed the road in front of our small, log house was red with a yellow plow. It had a yellow plow and I had yellow pants. For some reason, I thought this would help when we met in the wild.

It was easy to follow the snowplow down the mountainside and into the pine forest; there was a path that soon met other paths. By the time I realized that five other snowplows were waiting ahead of me in the woods, I was scared. I started walking slower and slower until, by the time I got to the edge of the woods, I stopped. I could not find the courage to enter the woods. But when I turned around, I saw that there was a snowplow right behind me. It was so quiet!



It flashed its lights twice, so I stepped off of the path. But it did not move. It flashed its lights twice again. For some reason, without even thinking, I walked over to the passenger door, opened it, and got in. Of course there was no driver. As soon as I closed the door and had buckled my seat belt, the snowplow started moving forward.

The trip through the pinewoods was longer than I expected. Perhaps I napped or perhaps we took a path near the edge of the mountain, since I recall that part of the trip was through the clouds. At one point, we turned sharply and there was a clearing with five other snowplows, in a circle, with one open space.

We pulled into the spot.

Again, without knowing why, I got out of this snowplow and walked over to the one that plowed in front of my house, the red snowplow with the yellow plow.

As soon as I had the door closed and my seatbelt fastened, the snowplow backed out of the circle, turned around (a perfect three point turn) and started driving up the mountainside. The trip back

was much shorter and we did not go through the clouds this time. Either this snowplow took a different path or it was because I remained awake the whole time.



The snowplow stopped in front of my house and, having no idea what else to do, I got out and stood on the sidewalk. The snowplow blinked its lights twice and then drove away.

The next time it snowed, I looked outside and saw the red and yellow snowplow waiting in front of my house. It had plowed the streets up to my house, but stopped there.



I pulled on my red and blue hat, my green jacket and my yellow pants, walked downstairs, outside and got into the snowplow's passenger sheet. Together we plowed the rest of the street, two more streets, and the parking lot at the elementary school.

Then it dropped me back off at my house and drove away.

This was the pattern for two more years, until...



One day, the snowplows stopped coming. All the people in the town stood, ankle deep in the snow, wondering what might have happened. No one knew why the snowplows suddenly did not appear.

We shoveled our own streets that day.

The next time it snowed, again, the feral snowplows did not arrive. So we shoveled our own streets once more.

After shoveling our own streets a few more times, a few people in town bought snowplows and began to plow the streets themselves.

Then we stopped waiting for the feral snowplows to appear. As soon as we woke up on a morning it snowed, we grabbed our shovels and started clearing the streets.

No one knows why the snowplows stopped coming to our town. Or if they decided to plow another town. No one in our town ever saw them again.

I thought about walking down the mountainside to the clearing to see if they were there.

But I decided that perhaps it was better not knowing, not bothering them, if, indeed, they were still there. The snowplows in the wild.

**The End.**

