

Klondike SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Motorized issues

THE DANCE OF ACCESS AND RESTRICTIONS



Mark Daniels
KSA President

Welcome to the first edition of the KSA News for the 2015-2016 season. Forecasters are calling for a strong El Nino this winter and warmer than normal temperatures in Western Canada. We can only hope that warm Pacific ocean air will bring loads of snow when it meets the colder air from the interior.

As always, the KSA board has been working through the summer on your behalf doing advocacy work, planning and trail upgrade projects. We were heavily involved in the consultation over the Parks and Public Open Space Bylaw. I warned the membership that the bylaw had the potential to restrict motorized recreation. Indeed, there was pressure from some groups to do just that but we managed to push back. However, there is a clause in s.34 of the bylaw that authorizes the City to erect a sign to completely ban snowmobile access to huge swaths of public land or restrict access to designated trails only. They tell me the intent of the clause is only to control snowmo-

bile use in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) consistent with the existing snowmobile bylaw. Regardless, keep an eye out for non-motorized signs in your neighbourhood because they will now apply to snowmobiles unless stated otherwise. Let me know if your riding op-

portunities are being reduced and I'll address it with the City.

One positive aspect of the new Parks and Public Open Space Bylaw is a restriction on automobile use on public trails. ATV use has been unfairly blamed for the majority of trail damage and degradation over the years. ATVs do cause some rutting and erosion, particularly on wet trails, but a very basic understanding of physics would rule out ATVs as the cause of most of the grief. ATVs are just not large enough, heavy enough or powerful enough to cause the extent of damage we witness on the trails. The majority of trail damage in the summer and virtually all damage in the winter are done with four-

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Nita Daniels photo

KSA trail crew installs signs on the Crestview Bypass.

Crestview Bypass project complete

by MARK DANIELS

You may recall that we started the Crestview Bypass Project in the summer of 2015. The project entailed upgrading the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) from the Whitehorse landfill to Trails North into an all-weather route. We accomplished this by replacing collapsed culverts with good ones that were donated previously by the highways department of the Yukon Government, draining mud holes and then filling them with pit run, and clearing brush. We also extended the TCT from Trails North through the Kulan industrial park and around Crestview to join the Alaska Highway west of Cobalt Construction's yard. The previously designated TCT route in the Crestview area was the

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YG photo

Caribou share their home with you. Be a respectful guest.

At the end of a great day of sledding in the backcountry, you get to return home. Caribou don't—the wilderness is their home. As a guest, you should be on your best behaviour. Stay on designated trails when travelling through caribou country.

Before you head out into the backcountry, pick up your free **MULTI-USE TRAIL GUIDE**. It will help you see wildlife while minimizing disturbance. Available from the Klondike Snowmobile Association, Environment Yukon, and snowmobile service businesses.



SNORIDERS

SPECIAL KLONDIKE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION REPORT

► MARK DANIELS *Continued from page 1*

wheel-drive trucks and SUVs. We have seen trails destroyed, culverts squashed and bridges smashed by truck traffic. Automobile traffic on recreational trails is associated with vandalism, littering (I mean truckloads of garbage, not just a couple of discarded Timmy's cups) and fires, including bonfires and burned vehicles. Ever wonder how your neighbour got mud splattered to the top of the windows on his jacked-up diesel? Probably tearing up a recreational trail that volunteer groups like the KSA work hard to maintain.

Speaking of bylaws, I'm still pushing for an amendment that would allow minors to operate while under adult supervision. No progress yet but I haven't given up. I'm also trying to get rid of the term "Motorized Multiple Use (MMU) Trail" and replace it with "ATV Trail" to reduce confusion. Lastly, I've been working with Bylaw and Parks to implement consistent, standardized signage with symbols to indicate what activities are permissible and what are restricted.

► CRESTVIEW BYPASS *Continued from page 1*

highway. For the sake of convenience, most of the TCT in Yukon is within the highway right-of-way. Our long-range plan is to route the TCT away from highways, especially near populated areas such as Whitehorse where there's a user base large enough to maintain the trail. For the bypass around Crestview, we used existing trails that the Crestview Community Association identified as the preferred route for motorized recreational ►

► traffic. We then installed about 40 signs to keep people going in the right direction.

The final element of the project is a bridge across the creek at the west end of Crestview. The City completed the bridge this fall as part of its commitment to the project. Originally intended to be shorter, the installed bridge is 10 metres (32 feet) long with a 1.8-metre (70-inch) wide usable deck—wide enough for a full-sized side-by-side UTV.

Why do we always give in?

by MARK DANIELS

I happened across a fellow I know well some time ago while running an errand to the bank. We struck up a conversation on the sidewalk and the subject quickly turned to the constant struggle to maintain access to motorized recreation in the City of Whitehorse (City). This guy asked me, "Why do we always give in?" At first, I was a bit insulted. As the president of the KSA, I constantly meet with other user groups and decision-makers and advocate for continued and increased access for motorized recreation. I never "give in." But this guy is smart, a respected business owner and a long-time resident, so I got to thinking, "If we aren't giving in, why would it appear that we are?"

The KSA has achieved tremendous success in almost all our pursuits. We have great working relationships with various levels of government, businesses, most other trail user groups, and national organizations such as the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations and the Trans Canada Trail. Heck, we even get along with some of the folks at the City, particularly in the Parks

Department. Where we constantly lose ground is with the city government (i.e., council). Starting with the Trail Plan of 1997, the City annexed huge swaths of land from motorized use, including the entire east side of the Yukon River. This was done without proper consultation and the loss to motorized users was never compensated; they were never afforded additional access elsewhere in the City to make up for lost opportunities. In reality, access was "given up" almost 20 years ago. Since then, we have battled with limited success to win back or maintain access for motorized recreation.

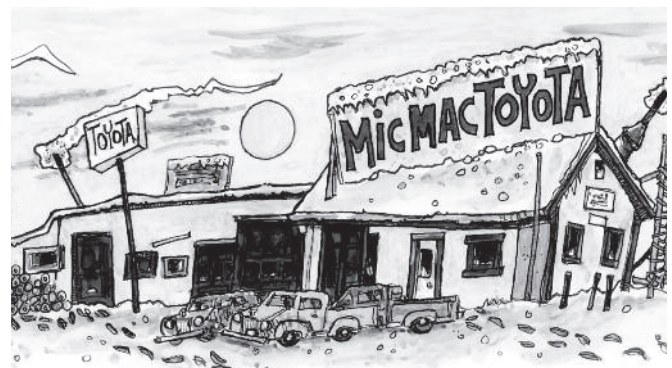
The City has a strange relationship with the KSA: they support us funneling territorial and federal dollars and volunteer labour into the local trail system but, when confronted with difficult decisions over trail use, they routinely capitulated to groups that put little to no effort into trail development or maintenance, but rather to letter-writing campaigns intended to commandeer public facilities for their exclusive use. We're quickly becoming more like Vancouver North where motorized recreation is outlawed than Yellowknife West where you're free to commute downtown on your ATV or snowmobile.

Motorized advocacy groups in most jurisdictions have two levels of organization: an association to manage political issues at the provincial level and clubs to manage the day-to-day activities at the community level (e.g., trail construction, grooming and group rides). Each association has its own board of directors and volunteer force.

The KSA is the territorial body representing organized recreational snowmobiling across the Yukon. In the absence of a local club, the KSA is also the de facto Whitehorse Snowmobile Club. And we're the territor- ►



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The City Public Works Department built a trail access ramp off the highway at the Mary Lake subdivision.

► WHY DO WE ALWAYS GIVE IN? Continued from page 2

ial agent for the Trans Canada Trail. With so much going on, we lack capacity to constantly lobby city government. When we try to play the political game, we can't keep up with the letter-writing campaigns organized by anti-motorized groups.

KSA members can do a couple of things to help out. First, they can elect city councillors and other politicians who will support a true multi-use trail system. Ask candidates where they stand on the issues and consider their responses when voting. Second, become an advocate. Part of our job at the KSA is to advocate for access and alert the membership when things are going on that may affect their ability to enjoy their recreation of choice. But we can't be everywhere at once. Please let us know if something comes to your attention and, when we ask for it, provide your support by writing letters, calling your elected representatives and encouraging others to do the same. ■

Multi-use trail upgrade project

by MARK DANIELS

Our major trail project for this past summer was designating and upgrading three out-and-away trails for motorized recreational traffic to access the Copper Haul Road (main TCT trunk) from the subdivisions south of downtown Whitehorse (Mary Lake, Pine Ridge, Spruce Hill, Cowley Creek, Wolf Creek and Mount Sima or Whitehorse Copper).

This project is part of our program of working with the City of Whitehorse to identify, designate and upgrade key trails as Motorized Multi-Use (MMU) out-and-away routes to direct motorized recreational traffic away from the more populated urban areas.

Working with City planners, KSA identified three key trails in Whitehorse South for designation as MMU trails:

1. Mount Sima Trail - running about 1.1 kilometres from Moraine Drive near Nunatuk Place in the Sima (Whitehorse Copper) subdivision south to intersect the Wolf Creek Trail;
2. Wolf Creek Trail - running about 4.2 kilometres from the north end of Harbottle Road in the Wolf Creek subdivision east to the haul road;
3. Mary Lake Trail - running about 3.5 kilometres from the entrance to the cadet camp in the Mary Lake subdivision south to the

Continued on page 4 ►

Membership Form

Time to renew your KSA membership. Do you know someone who should become a member?

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

Membership dues for the 2015/2016 season:
 Single \$20 Family \$30
 Corporate \$105 Gold Corporate \$315
 including GST

Please make cheques payable to:
Klondike Snowmobile Association,
 4061 - 4th Ave., Whitehorse, YT Y1A 4H1

Membership Benefits

- KSA membership card
- KSA newsletters (four per year)
- KSA licence plate and decals
- Input into the development of KSA policy
- Assistance with problems, projects and trail development initiatives in your area
- A strong, unified voice with government and other agencies
- A guarantee that a team of volunteers are working year-round to enhance and promote multi-use trails throughout the Yukon Territory
- Four free issues of *SnoRiders* magazine
- 6% off gas at Tags 4th Ave. Whitehorse (not valid during gas wars)
- 10% off food at Trails North (excluding alcohol)
- 10% discount at McDonald's Restaurants Whitehorse (not valid with other offers)
- Access to Last Run Lounge at Mount Sima (please, no drinking and sledding)
- 10% off at Klondike RV Rentals - www.klondikerv.com
- 10% off at Mark's on regularly priced merchandise (separate card required, which is issued with membership)
- 20% off at Sandor's (Chilkoot Mall) on regularly priced goggles, gloves, toques, snowpants, jackets and snowboards
- Special prices on Haber Vision sunglasses and goggles - see www.habervision.com for details. Member code is "CCSO"
- 10% off at Mt. Lorne Bed and Breakfast - www.klondikerv.com
- Special rates at Choice Hotels - see www.choicehotels.ca/cso for details. Only available for online bookings.
- Special snowmobiler rates at the Atlin Inn
- Corporate Members get a link on our website
- Gold Corporate Members - 2 free ads in KSA newsletters



If you have comments, photos or story ideas for the Klondike Report, send them to:
Mark Daniels, Klondike Snowmobile Association
 4061 - 4th Ave., Whitehorse, YT Y1A 4H1
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A special thank you goes out to all the businesses that help support the Klondike Snowmobile Association via corporate memberships! For more info on becoming a corporate member, please see the Become a Member page on our website: ksa.yk.ca.

- Alpine Aviation - Whitehorse
- Alsak Valley Contracting - Whitehorse
- Atlin Mountain Inn - Atlin, BC
- Bombardier Recreational Products - Sherbrooke, QC
- Braeburn Lodge - Braeburn
- Brewery Bay Chalet - Atlin, BC
- Canada Flooring - Whitehorse
- Capital Helicopters - Whitehorse
- Centennial Motors - Whitehorse
- Checkered Flag Recreation - Whitehorse
- City of Whitehorse
- Fireweed Helicopters - Whitehorse
- Klondike Visitors Association - Dawson City
- Locksmith Services - Whitehorse
- Nomad Air - Whitehorse
- Quality Bearing - Whitehorse
- SnoRiders* magazine - Cranbrook, BC
- Territorial Contracting - Whitehorse
- Tourist Industry Association - Whitehorse
- Village of Mayo
- Wilderness Tourism Association - Whitehorse
- Yukon Alpine Association
- Yukon Avalanche Association
- Yukon Meat and Sausage - Whitehorse
- Yukon Quest
- Yukon Trappers Association - Whitehorse
- Yukon Wide Adventures - Whitehorse

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- Safe Trails North Training Services - Whitehorse
- Trails North Car & Truck Stop - Whitehorse
- Triggs Family - Whitehorse
- U-Brew Yukon - Whitehorse
- Yukon Honda - Whitehorse
- Yukon Yamaha - Whitehorse

► MULTI-USE TRAIL UPGRADE PROJECT *Continued from page 3*

old quarry where the haul road crosses Wolf Creek at the Peter Greenlaw Memorial Bridge.

These trails follow popular existing routes with no need to build new trails. There are no conflicts with private property owners or First Nation land. All three trails had critical deficiencies, including narrow sections, wet and/or rutted sections, mud holes and water crossings. Trail users had placed small makeshift bridges made of boards, logs and pallets at these crossings but they were not safe or environmentally sustainable.

We had planned to install puncheon, a sort of slightly raised boardwalk, in the wet and rutted sections of the trail but opted instead for gravel backfill. Puncheon has proven effective in other jurisdictions but we decided it wasn't practical for this project. The three creek crossings will be addressed with field-constructed bridges made from all-weather wood. At the time of this writing, two bridges are complete.

Other work included brushing, signage and grading of the trail intersection with the highway at the Mary Lake subdivision which is the main entry point to the TCT system for residents on the east side of the Alaska Highway (Spruce Hill and Pine Ridge subdivisions). There used to be a steep gravel bank with about a 30 per cent grade for about 80 metres at this location.

While not an issue for experienced riders, it was an unsafe and intimidating entrance for novice riders and unusable for bikers and skiers. The City took care of the intersection as part of its contribution to the trail. The City also provided the gravel needed for the project.

Material was stockpiled at accessible trail-

heads, and the contractor hauled and placed it with smaller equipment.

The Sima and Wolf Creek trails are still a bit narrow in places and the bridges are only two metres (five feet) wide between the curbs. This is wide enough for most snowmobiles and ATVs. If you have a large stock side-by-side or have widened your rig with aftermarket parts, you'll want to use the Mary Lake access point.

The total cost for this project is over \$80,000. Funding for the project came from a number of partners. The National Trails Coalition (NTC) is a consortium of major trail organizations across Canada. They received a large, one-time grant from the federal government's economic stimulus program for trail development and improvement in all the provinces and territories. The funding is divided into three categories: snowmobile, ATV and non-motorized trails. The KSA received about \$31,000 from the NTC for this project.

We got about \$40,000 from the Community Development Fund (CDF) of the Yukon Government. The KSA is a frequent client of CDF. We really appreciate this support for our ongoing trail development and maintenance programs. Not only do they generously fund our projects, they're excellent folks to work with.

The City of Whitehorse is a partner in this project as well. It facilitated the initial assessment of the trail needs and solicited input from community associations.

Yucan Consulting managed this project for us. Toos Omtzigt at Yucan has been working with us for years on TCT planning and various construction projects. Her technical expertise and practical approach have helped us get a lot of trail built without breaking the bank. ■



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