

Klondike SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Addressing winter use

PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL DURING YOUR WINTER RECREATION



Mark Daniels
KSA President

On December 10, I attended what I discovered at the meeting was the final installment of the annual Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site (CTNHS) Winter User Group meeting. With the cutbacks in funding to Parks Canada they've decided to focus their seasonal operations in the

summer months when the area gets the most visitors. Parks Canada will no longer lead the annual meeting of the CTNHS Winter User Group. They believe that the primary issues the group was created to address when established over 15 years ago have been solved. Parks Canada will continue to produce and distribute the annual CTNHS Winter Use Schedule and work with the individual stakeholders to manage issues as they arise in the future. Parks Canada also remains responsible for visitor safety and for the protection of natural and cultural resources throughout the year.

There was general consensus among the stakeholders that the annual forum is valuable and should continue in some form.

There was also agreement that the scope of this group should be expanded to address winter use and land management issues for the greater White Pass region. However, no stakeholder group stepped forward at the meeting to lead the process. Land managers from Parks

Canada, B.C. and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation will discuss land management and get back to the group.

Park wardens patrolled the CTNHS regularly last winter with a focus on non-motorized weekends and monitoring closed areas and cabins. In general, compliance was good and there were only a few incidents including dogs off-leash and a break and enter at the Bennett shelter. Somebody cut and burned a bunch of trees and part of the Deep Lake Bridge. The bridge has since been replaced with a non-combustible model. I hope that anyone witnessing vandalism or any other criminal acts would call the police. There was also a report of snowmobile tracks going near the Bennett Church. This



Mark Daniels photo

The Skagway Summit looms above these sledders.

area is closed to snowmobiles and the area is well signed. Sledders must park at the bottom of the hill and walk up to the church. Please respect all closures. Offenses of this sort could lead to a partial or total ban of snowmobiling in the CTNHS. There was one anonymous report of a helicopter landing and someone illegally operating a business in the site. Any such activity requires a licence.

RCMP had no off-road patrols nor calls for service off-road in the White Pass last year. They proactively worked with Parks last winter during the Buckwheat race weekend. Checkstops and radar enforcement resulted in no charges. Their goal for this winter is to focus on big events such as the Buckwheat race, the Backcountry Bash, and Easter weekend.

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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.



► **WINTER USE**
Continued from page 1

RCMP will provide initial search and rescue (SAR) response in the area. The Parks Canada Mountain Parks Safety Team will work with RCMP to assess and plan emergency responses in the CTNHS and will be able to be on the ground to respond to significant emergencies within two to three days. The Parks Canada winter rescue cache is stored at the Carcross RCMP detachment again this winter. The RCMP, and SAR groups under their direction, have access to this equipment and to the CTNHS patrol cabins. There will continue to be park warden presence in CTNHS this winter and they can assist in SAR, though their primary focus is law enforcement. The town of Skagway also has SAR capacity.

The Bennett public cabin remains closed this winter. The two Lindeman cabins are open but have no reliable source of firewood. Once again the Log Cabin Ski Society and Yukon Highway Maintenance will help Parks Canada keep the parking lot open at Log Cabin and clear access to the outhouses.

The multi-use Backcountry Bash is happening March 14 to 16, sponsored by The Mountain Shop in Skagway. It will include a film fest and music in Skagway, a barbecue and avalanche beacon demo at Log Cabin on Saturday and a Kite Yukon demo. The Skagway snow carving crew is helping carve the Buckwheat aid station and is also leading an Ice Carving 101 demo at the Bash with the sculptures presented at the Buckwheat finish line. Details can be found at skagway.com/ events.

Please be respectful of the winter use ►

► schedule and other users while recreating in the pass this winter. This area is managed by four governments and enjoyed by numerous individuals and stakeholder groups. It's in everyone's interest to get along. ■

Sled corral welcomes visiting snowmobilers

by MARK DANIELS

It didn't take Ron Leblanc long to make an impact as a KSA director after getting elected this fall. He immediately approached Don Wilson, general manager at the Mount Sima ski hill, about accommodating visiting snowmobilers. Don obliged and had his staff build a sled corral near the entrance to the main parking lot to give snowmobilers a safe place to park their sleds while visiting the facility. The corral is actually a parking area surrounded on all sides by walls built of snow. The access lanes are too narrow for a vehicle to get through and signs identify the corral as designated for snowmobiles. This arrangement should eliminate the risk of somebody backing their vehicle into your sled while you're parked at Sima. Please refrain from parking your sled anywhere else on the property, especially in the fire lanes.

KSA members have also been granted membership privileges to the Last Run Lounge on the upper floor of the chalet. Membership is required as the lounge is run under a club licence issued by the Yukon Liquor Corporation. KSA members need to show their membership cards when they sign in. Food is available in the lounge and the whole family is welcome to sit together and enjoy a meal. Just leave the wobbly pops until you're parked for the day.

Don wishes all members a safe and happy 2014. ■

Spirit of sharing is seen in multi-use trails

by MARK DANIELS

After a tremendous amount of time, effort and resources were expended in public consultation, the city's plan for designating motorized multi-use (MMU) trails east of the Yukon River was approved at a city council meeting on January 27. Right down to the moment of the vote, there was vocal opposition to the designation of any trails in the area. The resulting MMU trails are paltry considering the vast landscape on the east side of the river.

MMU trails are significant to snowmobilers in a couple of ways. Though snowmobiles are permitted on most trails, the KSA encourages snowmobilers to stick to the MMU trails as much as possible to avoid conflicts with other trail users. Also, MMUs are the only accepted route through any designated Environmentally Sensitive Area. ATVs, on the other hand, are restricted solely to MMU trails.

The inadequacies of the designated MMU trails around Riverdale have reopened the discussion of allowing motorized access to the trails across the river. The KSA, the City and others have worked diligently to establish and maintain a network of trails on the west side of the Yukon River with the Copper Haul Road as the spine and main Trans Canada Trail route.

For years, the KSA has lobbied for MMU access across the Yukon River. In fact, the late Peter Greenlaw, former president of the KSA, was a partner in planning the Rotary Centennial Bridge. Pete told me the bridge was originally conceived and designed to be multi-use but a political decision late in the

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SNORIDERS

SPECIAL KLONDIKE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION REPORT

► SPIRIT OF SHARING *cont'd. from pg. 2*

process changed the intended use of non-motorized. This move effectively cut off a large portion of residents from using the bridge in their recreational pursuits.

The anti-motorized faction has done all it can to eliminate legitimate motorized recreation east of the Yukon River, an area comprising about one third of the land mass within the municipal boundaries. Much of this same faction opposes motorized access across the bridge. Essentially, they're saying that motorized trail users can't recreate on the east side of the river and they also can't leave. The KSA will continue to work with the city and reasonable stakeholders for shared access across the bridge.

The Contagious Mountain Bike Club is one such organization. Their president made a presentation to city council and gave me permission to reprint it here.

Hello, my name is Sierra van der Meer. I am the president of the Contagious Mountain Bike Club and I am here to speak on their behalf. As many of you know, a large number of the trails east of the Yukon River were built by mountain bikers. As a community, we play an active role in trail stewardship, co-ordinating efforts with the City's Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that the trail system is maintained. The trails east of the Yukon River have been acknowledged in the mountain biking world as being first class. They have been featured in Bike Magazine, PinkBike, and formed an integral part of Outside magazine's article naming White-

horse the Bike Destination of the Year.

The East Yukon River Plan would see Fat Tire Fever and Long Flat Trail opened to motorized traffic. These are two trails that are old roads and that have multiple parallel non-motorized options. In our view, the plan does not greatly impact the mountain bike community. Yet, we are here to speak to mayor and council about concerns we have on the proposed East Yukon River Plan. This concern is that the current plan is inadequate in meeting the needs of the motorized community.

You are probably asking yourself right now: "Why would the bike club care if the plan is unsatisfactory to motorized users?" The bike club cares because we want a strong, sustainable trail network and we believe sharing and integration is key to creating this. A shared system means multiple stakeholders who feel value and ownership over the trails. It means that groups with different strengths and resources can work together to solve problems and maximize opportunities. It means that the mountain bike club doesn't have to phone the Parks and Recreation department to send an employee on an ATV through the trails to remove a nest of trees, because there are other volunteers ready and available to reach those places too far for a bike and handsaw. A properly shared system means that the City can invest in building and maintaining the trail system instead of enforcement. A shared system builds community instead of fostering conflict. . . . By telling

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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 2013/2014 season:

Single \$20 Family \$30

Corporate \$105 Gold Corporate \$315 including GST

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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 volunteers are working on your behalf to enhance and promote trails in the Yukon Territory
- Five free issues of *SnoRiders* magazine
- 5% discount on Airport Chalet rooms
- 6% off gas at Tags 4th Ave. Whitehorse (not valid during gas wars)
- 10% off at Mark's Work Wearhouse on regularly priced merchandise; separate card required, which is issued with membership
- 10% off at Mt. Lorne Bed and Breakfast - www.klondikeriv.com
- 10% off at Klondike RV Rentals - www.klondikerv.com
- 10% discount at McDonald's restaurants - Whitehorse (not valid with other offers)
- 20% off at Sandor's (Chilkoot Mall) on regularly priced goggles, gloves, toques, snowpants, jackets and snowboards
- Special rates at Choice Hotels - see www.choicehotels.ca/ccso for details; only available for online bookings
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- Corporate Members can link to our website
- Gold Corporate Members get two free single-issue 1/8-page ads per year in our newsletters.



If you have comments, photos or story ideas for the Klondike Report send them to:

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4061 - 4th Ave., Whitehorse, YT Y1A 4H1
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► SPIRIT OF SHARING cont'd. from pg. 3

two groups that they cannot be expected to get along, and by perpetuating the idea that motorized and non-motorized users should be enemies, we encourage conflict. We let people believe that it's the natural state of being, when evidence suggests that it isn't necessary.

I am not saying that sharing is easy. It means tolerance and it means compromise. And I am not saying that sharing makes sense on every single trail. But, I think it is important to remember that these are not biking trails, nor are they hiking trails, they are City of Whitehorse trails and they fundamentally belong to all Whitehorse citizens. In other areas of the city motorized and non-motorized users are expected to share. And there are many examples of very successful integrated networks. Communities like Squamish (B.C.) have large motorized multiple use areas on trails that are often considered far more technical than ours. The Slickrock Trail in Moab (Utah) is shared use and perhaps one of the most iconic mountain bike trails in the world. And even closer to us, the Dewey Lake Trail system (near Skagway, Alaska) with its many Holland America hikers is open to all users.

The plan, as presented here, does not suggest that we believe that sharing is possible. It seems to imply that motorized and non-motorized cannot co-exist. This is a real problem, because, if we believe that motorized and non-motorized areas are mutually exclusive, do we start preventing bikers and hikers in motorized multi-use areas? How do we expect motorized users to share, when we can't?

If this is the very best that we can do east of the Yukon River, the mountain bike club suggests that the City ensure that the motorized



Nita Daniels photo

A sledder gets some air in the Skyway area.

community has an alternate place to recreate that meets their needs. If we can't share east of the Yukon River, we need to find a way to share the larger Whitehorse trail network. This may include building new trail networks, or legitimizing existing ones such as those west of the Yukon River. We also need to provide adequate access to motorized users to get there. If we cannot allow motorized operation east of the Yukon River, we believe that opening up the Rotary Bridge to get users to the other side makes sense.

Ultimately, if there is not an alternative location of similar value available for motorized use, we believe this plan will come with significant enforcement issues, which costs the City money, breeds conflict and is bad for all trail users.

Lastly, we hope that the motorized community knows that we are not their enemies and that we do want to work together to improve, enhance and maintain our trail system. Being non-motorized and being anti-motorized are not the same thing.

Nancy Thompson of the Trail and Ultra Runners Association also made a presentation to city council in which she claimed she experienced no conflict with motorized users in 13 years of running the trails in Whitehorse. Nancy and her association are another example of reasonable people who share our vision of a multi-use trail system. ■

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