

# Klondike SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Shifting seasons

TRACKED ATV RIDERS MUST RESPECT SNOWMOBILE TRAILS



**Mark Daniels**  
KSA President

I wrote this article in mid-November, as I sat in my home office taking a break from attending an all-day CCSO board meeting by teleconference. While my paid provincial counterparts were socializing and sipping coffee (or whatever) in a hotel boardroom near the

Toronto airport, I looked wistfully out the window at the meager offering of snow that, so far, has hardly covered the grass in my yard. I'm not complaining about being a volunteer. It would be nice if we could afford to send delegates to national and international gatherings all expenses paid like the large provincial associations. But, if it's a choice between going to Toronto and staying home to ride, I'll be here every time. If only we had enough snow.

Sure, it snowed this year. It snowed several times so far, but the snowfall reminds me of my winters spent in Ross River—you get this light dusting of dandruff on-and-off with daily accumulations so thin you don't even have to sweep your vehicle before you head

out, not like the snowfalls I remember growing up in Whitehorse. Even my acquaintances who are allergic to shovelling say they'd rather have a big dump of snow than daily dustings that do little more than keep the roads extra slippery.

I went to Haines Junction last week for business. Normally, the Junction gets more snow than Whitehorse and they should be riding by now. Even with the storm I drove through to get there, I didn't see more than four inches of snow on the ground the whole trip. The situation is similar in Teslin. Like Haines Junction, Teslin normally gets more snow and gets it earlier than Whitehorse. Teslin gets lake-effect snow early in the year when Teslin Lake is open. Friends went out last week and reported no more snow there than in Whitehorse.

The trend to less snow has been going on for a while now. For the past few winters, we've had less snowfall than average and more mid-winter melts than in winters past.

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Nita Daniels photo

It's a short ride to Haeckel Hill windmills.

### Yukon Wide Adventures

by MARK DANIELS

Yukon Wide Adventures (YWA) joined the KSA this year as a corporate sponsor. Yukon Wide Adventures was founded in 1991 under the name Log Cabin Adventures Yukon. Thomas de Jager took ownership of the company in 2003. In recent years, the company developed into a very successful German- and English-speaking Yukon tour operator and outfitter.

Thomas' wife Kelly has been working in the company since 2006. Along with her adventure tourism studies, Kelly has practical experience as a wilderness guide. Her skills and education in watersports and wilderness first aid, as well as experience with ski patrol, add an additional level of safety to their tours.

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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

### ► PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *Continued from page 1*

This results in reduced snowpack to ride on. The local trails have been bare or glazed for much of the past couple of years.

The mountain riding areas have also been affected. Tally Ho on the Annie Lake Road used to be one of my early season favourites. Now I don't ride there until after Christmas. The coastal passes used to average 20 feet of snowfall. I rode the Chilkoot area one year on 30 feet of snow. Recent years have produced far less than average snowfall. The face of Big Blue, a glacier in the White Pass area, used to tower 50 feet above the valley floor. You can see a photo of it in the gallery on the KSA website. Now you'd be hard pressed to find it.

Lack of snow has significantly reduced the snowmobile season in this region and elsewhere. The North American snowbelt has seen flat or declining snowmobile sales and increased ATV/UTV sales, particularly side-by-sides, and track conversion kits for these vehicles. Almost nobody in the Yukon owned a tracked ATV just a couple of years back. Now it's commonplace to see them on the trails in the shoulder seasons and even in the dead of winter.

Tracked ATVs are a blast to ride. Those with grip heaters, windshields and power steering are also comfortable for long forays. While tracked ATVs are a welcome addition to the winter snow scene, operators need to be aware of the potential they have to damage the trail. They have little to no effect on packed or groomed trails but they can deeply rut trails with recent new snow or in melting snow condi-

tions. As with most machines, impact to the trail can be minimized by responsible operation. I could easily burn a trench into a trail with my mountain sled but I don't. I lower my impact on the trail by saving my thumb for boondocking or riding a trail sled instead. I don't want my actions to cause a hazard for another trail user. Likewise, those riding tracked ATVs need to stick to packed trails, adjust their riding style to the conditions and be aware of the impact they're having on the trail and other users. ■

### ► YUKON WIDE ADVENTURES *Continued from page 1*

In 2008 and 2009 Yukon Wide Adventures was awarded the Yukon Tourism Award of Excellence, Marketing Innovation Award. YWA received this award from the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon for the outstanding and creative work in serving tourism. In 2007 Yukon Wide Adventures was listed by National Geographic as one of the "best adventure travel companies on Earth."

YWA offers a few options for snowmobilers. The self-directed rider can rent a snowmobile by the day, week or month. They also rent skimmers in various sizes, including a 14-foot fibreglass tub that would be handy on a bison hunt. They have a fleet of trailers: two three-place open, a four-place open and a 24-foot enclosed V-nose model. They offer weekend and Christmas deals and a delivery service.

Their entire fleet of 16 snowmobiles are either Ski-Doo Tundra 550 Sport or Ski-Doo Skandic 550 fan-cooled sleds. They buy all their snowmobiles locally to support the industry in Yukon. I had a good look at the fleet this fall and can tell you that they're all like new and in great shape. Thomas sells off



Nita Daniels photo

A young sledder enjoys the trails.

his rental sleds after a couple of years. It's well worth keeping in touch with him if you're interested in a used one.

If you're new to snowmobiling or just want to check out a new riding area, YWA offers single and multi-day guided trips on the Livingstone Trail, Dawson Overland Trail, South Canol and other areas. These all-inclusive trips would be a great way to introduce visiting friends, family or business associates to Yukon winters.

Other winter activities organized by YWA include snowshoeing, dog mushing, downhill and cross-country skiing, ice fishing, winter camping and trips to the hot springs for a relaxing soak after a day of adventures. Thomas guided alpine ski groups for many years in the European Alps. His knowledge of winter sport activities is very valuable for any cold-weather excursion.

YWA is an all-season adventure company. While I was looking at the snowmobile fleet, I also checked out its summer gear. Thomas rents Honda Fourtrax 420 ATVs and

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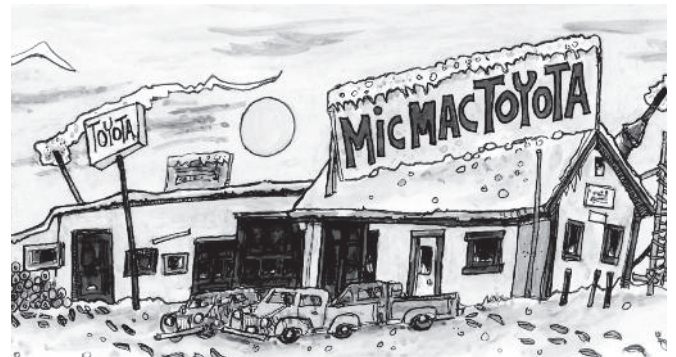
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# SNORIDERS

## SPECIAL KLONDIKE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION REPORT

### ► YUKON WIDE ADVENTURES Continued from page 2

Honda Pioneer 700 side-by-sides. Like the snowmobiles, these units were bought locally and they're meticulously maintained. You can rent a range of tub trailers for work or hunting. The same transport trailers are available summer and winter, as are the weekend specials and delivery service. If you're looking for company, you can join them on a guided ATV tour in the Mt. McIntyre area.

If paddling is more your thing, they have a wide selection of canoes and kayaks that they will rent to you along with plans and advice for self-directed trips. Or you could choose to take guided canoe trips lasting between four and 22 days, depending upon the destination.

Thomas has over 35 years canoeing experience and participated successfully in more than 100 national and international competitions in wildwater canoeing. He is very capable to pass on his skills to experienced canoeists as well as beginners. Thomas has a German-instructor certification and trained several years with the Monheimer Canoe Club.

YWA can rent you just about everything you need for an outdoor activity: from tents to dishes to satellite phones. If you only need it once, or just occasionally, consider renting rather than buying it and risk losing it in that pile of stuff we all have in our basements. They offer a 10 per cent discount to KSA members.

Yukon Wide's base of operation is in the Takhini Hotsprings area. To better serve its customers, YWA is opening a storefront location across from the Visitor Information Centre on Lambert Street next June.

Until then, you can call them at 867-393-2111, email [info@yukonwide.com](mailto:info@yukonwide.com) or look them up at [www.Yukonwide.com](http://www.Yukonwide.com). ■

## The advent of snowmobiling

by PHIL PERRIN

Most people think of a snowmobile as what we see now, a single track, a pair of skis attached to a body with a seat, a windshield and other items. It wasn't that long ago that a snowmobile was made up of airplane parts and a propeller attached to a frame with seats and a basic steering wheel. Those models worked reasonably well on lakes but weren't suitable for general use because the public wanted to head out into remote areas and trails in winter.

Bombardier and other manufacturers took us into the 20th century with a two-track machine with a single ski on the front. This was the true introduction into snowmobiling as you could purchase a mass-produced snow machine to take the family out on. The reality was most Canadians did not bother to buy one of these machines as cost and reasoning didn't support the purchase. It wasn't long before cheaper and simpler

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## Membership Form

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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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
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- Access to Last Run Lounge at Mount Sima (please, no drinking and sledding)
- 10% off at Klondike RV Rentals - [www.klondikerv.com](http://www.klondikerv.com)
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- 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](http://www.habervision.com) for details. Member code is "CCSO"
- 10% off at Mt. Lorne Bed and Breakfast - [www.klondikerv.com](http://www.klondikerv.com)
- Special rates at Choice Hotels - see [www.choicehotels.ca/ccso](http://www.choicehotels.ca/ccso) 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
- 10% off snowmobile rentals at Yukon Wide Adventures



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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### KSA corporate members

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](http://ksa.yk.ca).

- Alpine Aviation - Whitehorse
- Alsek Valley Contracting - Whitehorse
- Atlin Mountain Inn - Atlin, BC
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- Braeburn Lodge - Braeburn
- Brewery Bay Chalet - Atlin, BC
- Canada Flooring - Whitehorse
- Capital Helicopters - Whitehorse
- Centennial Motors - Whitehorse
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- City of Whitehorse
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- Klondike Visitors Association - Dawson City
- Locksmith Services - Whitehorse
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- Yukon Yamaha - Whitehorse



Nita Daniels photo

On our first quad ride of the season, we found a burnt vehicle—an all-to-common sight on local trails.

#### ► THE ADVENT OF SNOWMOBILING *Continued from page 3*

sleds came onto the market. I feel the 1970s were the era of the introduction of the affordable machines with the advent of the Elan from Ski-Doo in 1971 and the Yamaha Bravo a little later in 1982. The years in-between saw many other snowmobiles including the OMC Snow Cruiser and the Johnson Golden Ghost. Although many of these earlier machines were single cylinder and light in weight, snow machines became heavier as greater speed and comfort became desirable.

When snow machines became more popular and heavier, items such as a cigarette lighters, hand warmers, seat heaters and even command start became commonplace. The desire for more options eventually resulted in sleds that were not unlike cars both in comfort and weight. At one point even the introduction of side-by-side snowmobiles, such as the Ski-Doo Elite, occurred. As much as the benefit of a partner next to you is nice, the increased width and weight

greatly limit your trail access.

It wasn't long until some individuals desired the lighter machines again, and some companies started producing short sleds that were nothing more than a small seat with tracks and skies.

Now we have come full circle. There are many who appreciate the performance of mountain and trail sleds and there are others who look for the machines that fall between. For example, many hunters and ice fishermen prefer the Ski-Doo Skandic with its long track and reliability over a high-performance machine.

What is ironic is most experienced trappers and hunters would give their eye teeth for a Bravo or Elan with their simple one-cylinder engines and simple drivetrains that are easy to fix and even easier to get unstuck. As great as reverse is, there is nothing better than a lightweight snow machine when you're buried.

It doesn't really matter what sled you want to ride as long as you're outdoors enjoying the winter safely with your family. ■

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