

# Klondike SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Trail planning update

THE KSA ADVOCATES FOR A BALANCED APPROACH

I'm feeling a bit dejected as I write this note to you on a balmy evening with temperatures hovering a couple of degrees above zero and the roads covered in brown slush. The little bit of snow we received over the past couple of weeks is almost gone. Rather than promising more snow, the forecast predicts warm temperatures and rain—not a great start to the season. I hope this isn't karma getting back at me for making fun of my counterpart from Prince Edward Island. At a national meeting I once teased him for being the president of a snowmobile association that doesn't have a snowmobile season one out of every four years due to lack of snow. Whether or not we ride, there's always work to be done promoting and protecting the sport we all love.

The City's task force is in the final stages of trail planning for the south end of Whitehorse (Pine Ridge, Mary Lake, Wolf Creek, etc.). The proposed plan will soon go to open public consultation followed by the final recommended design heading to coun-



**Mark Daniels**  
KSA President

cil for approval. Keep an eye on the City's website for your opportunity to have input.

It became evident during the consultation process that residents on the southern fringe of the city are seeing the results of the decades-long municipal practice of catering to the vocal anti-motorized advocates. Folks from areas of the city where motorized recreation has been unreasonably restricted have reportedly migrated to the southern fringe where locals are seeing increased trail use by residents from the disenfranchised parts of town.

The sentiment around the table was that each region of the city should reasonably accommodate their disparate groups of trail users. The near abolition of motorized access east of the Yukon River (Riverdale through to the sewer lagoons) came up a few times. Hopefully the City is listening to its citizens and will reflect a more balanced approach in future trail planning and management.



Mark Daniels and City officials cut the ribbon to open the improved Hamilton Boulevard connector trail.

City of Whitehorse photo

Hot on the heels of the south Whitehorse process, the north Whitehorse (MacPherson, Hidden Valley, etc.) trail planning task force is already struck and is scheduled to have a draft plan ready for public consultation early in the new year.

The KSA is an active participant in both these trail-planning groups where we're constantly advocating for a multi-use trail approach to trail management. A great example of this inclusive concept is the recent improvements made to the Hamilton Boulevard Trail extension that runs from Falcon Drive to the underpass. The KSA and local residents have petitioned the City to improve this stretch of trail since the construction of the Hamilton Boulevard extension years ago.

The City rallied this fall and hauled over 160 truckloads of material to upgrade the

**Continued on page 2 ►**

► **TRAIL PLANNING UPDATE**  
Continued from page 1

trail in an area plagued with ground springs and black gooey mud. The result is a sustainable, four metre-wide, all-season multi-use trail that everyone can enjoy for years to come. For those who missed it, here's my speech from the ribbon-cutting event:

*Hi. I'm Mark Daniels, president of the Klondike Snowmobile Association and head of the Trans Canada Trail for the Yukon.*

*The KSA has been the voice for organized recreational snowmobiling in the Yukon for over 35 years. We:*

- *develop and maintain multi-use trails for the public*
- *organize group and family activities on the trails and in the backcountry*
- *promote safe and responsible recreation.*

*The KSA is also the territorial agent for the Trans Canada Trail. In this role, we are responsible to facilitate the construction, maintenance and promotion of the Trans Canada Trail in the Yukon year-round.*

*An organized trail system has been shown to:*

- *Preserve and protect the environment by concentrating activity to established corridors*
- *Promote the physical fitness and well-being of citizens*
- *Provide a safe location for recreational activity*
- *Stimulate the local economy*
- *Encourage outdoor family activity.*

*How we manage our trail systems defines us as a community. Are we an inclusive community that shares our public resources and invites others to share them with us? Or are we a collection of narrowly focused special interest groups attempting to commandeer public*

*spaces for our exclusive use?*

*I'd like to think that Whitehorse is a generous and inclusive community. This project is a great example of how citizens, community associations and government can work together to build multi-use trails for all users. Particularly in this jurisdiction, with our small population and tax base, a multi-use trail system is the most sustainable approach to trail management.*

*Congratulations to Doug, Gord and their staff at the City for a job well done.*

## It's about the environment, right?

by MARK DANIELS

I've been hearing a lot lately about the impact that snowmobiling has on the environment. Generally, this impact is measured in two broad categories: air pollution (carbon footprint) and physical impact on the soil and vegetation. Since every human activity has some kind of impact, I'd like to put snowmobiling into the Yukon context.

### Pollution

According to Statistics Canada, about 70 million litres of gasoline and 60 million litres of diesel are sold in the Yukon each year for motor vehicle use.

From my extensive reading on the subject, I've found that the average snowmobile in North America burns about 225 litres per year. This makes sense based on my 40 years experience with snowmobiling in the Yukon. There are about 1,100 snowmobiles registered in the Yukon. However, we know there are far more out there. So, for the sake of argument, let's say there are 3,500 snowmobiles in active use—one for every 10 Yukoners. Those 3,500 snowmobiles would



Mark Daniels photo

Well, that's one solution to low snow levels.

burn less than 800,000 litres of gasoline, or about 0.5 per cent of fuel consumed by all motor vehicles in the Yukon per year.

Snowmobiles average 15 miles per gallon (mpg). Thanks to four-stroke and advanced two-stroke technology, new sleds get upwards of 25 mpg and two-strokes use a fraction of the oil they did just a few years ago. I can say with certainty that my sled averages better mileage than my truck. I burn far less fuel riding my sled on the weekends than I do commuting to work during the week.

However, fuel to run vehicles is but a portion of the hydrocarbons burnt in the Yukon. Joe Sparling was recently quoted as saying Air North would spend over \$20 million on fuel this year (*Yukon News*, October 28, 2016). That same article quoted a placer miner who said that his operation goes through 150,000 litres of fuel per year. Three major airlines and a handful of smaller ones service the Yukon. And who really knows how many placer miners there are? Add to the equation all the diesel- and propane-fired heating appliances and you have a significant amount of fuel consumption.

Even "non-motorized" activities have a fuel consumption impact. For example, most members of the Whitehorse Cross ►

# SNORIDERS

SPECIAL KLONDIKE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION REPORT



Photo courtesy Mark Daniels

Mark Daniels and friends enjoyed a springtime ride last season; here's hoping for a good snow year in 2016-2017.

► Country Ski Club drive to the facility and their trail grooming operations consume about 7,000 litres of fuel annually (email from the operations manager).

Here's my point: It's clear that, from a fuel consumption perspective, snowmobiles have a negligible contribution to air pollution when compared to the overall consumption in the Yukon.

## Ground and flora

I recently saw on a local website a pair of photos of the back slope (also known as a cut slope) adjacent to Mountainview Drive. One photo was a winter scene in which the slope was crisscrossed by snowmobile tracks. The second photo was a summer scene of the same section of back slope crisscrossed by tracks that were obviously caused by ATVs and motorcycles. The intent was to show the lasting environmental damage done by snowmobiles. While there's no

doubt those snowmobiles driven over bare ground can leave tracks on the soil, the activity is rare and the effect is generally minimal. The most laughable aspect of this failed attempt to discredit snowmobiling is this: the major environmental impact portrayed in the photos is the road itself, not the tracks on the slope.

Here's a fun activity. Have a look at Mountainview Drive on Google Earth. At an eye altitude of 10,000 feet (see the number in the bottom right corner) you can clearly make out both the road and the established trail beside it. What you don't see is any tracks on the back slope caused by snowmobiles or ATVs. At 52,800 feet (10 miles), the trail fades but the road is still clearly visible; just like it is at 20, 50, 75 and 100 miles. Outer space officially starts at 62 miles (the Karmen line). So, you can barely make out 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 2016/2017 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](http://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](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

Phone: 867-667-7680 • Email: [klonsnow@yknnet.ca](mailto:klonsnow@yknnet.ca)

### 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  
 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  
 Trails North Car & Truck Stop - Whitehorse  
 U-Brew Yukon - Whitehorse  
 Village of Mayo  
 Wilderness Tourism Association Yukon  
 Workforce Information & Networking Hub - Whitehorse  
 Yukon Alpine Association  
 Yukon Alpine Heliski  
 Yukon Avalanche Association  
 Yukon Meat and Sausage - Whitehorse  
 Yukon Quest  
 Yukon Trappers Association - Whitehorse  
 Yukon Wide Adventures - Whitehorse

**Corporate Gold members:**  
 Main Street Driving School - Whitehorse  
 McDonald's Restaurants - Whitehorse  
 Mic Mac Toyota - Whitehorse  
 Safe Trails North Training Services - Whitehorse  
 Triggs Family - Whitehorse  
 Yukon Honda - Whitehorse  
 Yukon Yamaha - Whitehorse

► **THE ENVIRONMENT** *cont'd. from page 3*  
 trail at the altitude Air North flies you to Vancouver (30,000 feet) but you can see the road from outer space. Which is the greater environmental impact?

I volunteer about 1,000 hours per year to the KSA/TCT. Much of that time is spent brushing trails. A typical Yukon recreational trail will be virtually impassible from overgrowth in two to three years of non-use. Don't even ask me to guess how long it would take nature to reclaim Mountainview Drive but I'm betting I'd be pushing daisies by then. Play the same Google Earth game with the Canada Games Centre (CGC). On my computer it fades from sight right around 62 miles of elevation (outer space).

Our trail systems accommodate the greatest number of recreational users and the widest variety of recreational uses, yet they have far less environmental effect than many of our other recreational facilities.

#### My point

Rest assured, I'm not down on Air North, Mountainview Drive, the games centre or the ski club. I happen to be a proud Air North shareholder; I live in Porter Creek and work downtown so I drive Mountainview at least twice a day; I'm a regular attendee at the CGC for hockey and other activities; and, though I'd rather ski downhill than cross-country, I applaud those who enjoy it.

I freely admit that my actions have an effect on the environment. What bugs me is the hypocrisy of those people who enjoy all these same modern conveniences but single out motorized recreation, particularly snowmobiling, as a major contributor to environmental degradation when it clearly is not. So, if it's not really about the environment, then what does drive their outspoken opposition? ■

### Check the weekly Hot Zone Report

by MARK DANIELS

After having built capacity and great momentum, the Yukon Avalanche Association (YAA) has struggled lately to attract enough funding to carry out its mandate promoting avalanche safety and awareness among backcountry users. From 2011 to 2015, the YAA partnered with Avalanche Canada to deliver avalanche forecast services for the extremely popular coastal mountain passes.

With reduced funding, the association can no longer afford to send out teams of field technicians so it has scaled back its services and will start using a weekly Hot Zone Report for the White Pass and Wheaton Valley this December. This tool will combine field observations collected and submitted by backcountry travellers to the Mountain Information Network with professional analysis to produce a report that will assist recreationalists to make good decisions.

The Yukon Avalanche Association is a great bunch of folks just trying to make things safer for everyone who ventures out into the winter mountain terrain. Check them out on Facebook or their website—[www.yukonavalanche.ca](http://www.yukonavalanche.ca)—where you can find info on memberships and training opportunities. More info on avalanche safety, including some online education, can be found on the Avalanche Canada site at [www.avalanche.ca](http://www.avalanche.ca).

When you head out, always file a trip plan with someone staying home, carry your probe, beacon and shovel on your body (not your sled) and know how to use them, and get some avalanche safety training. Remember, the best avalanche safety tool you have is your brain. ■