

Klondike SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

Wrapping up with a bang

Signage refresh and trail improvement projects are in the works

by **MARK DANIELS**

True to the strange winter we had, the season ended abruptly in late March. Yukon broke almost 100 temperature records in a short period of time. Local trails turned to puddles; mountain snow rotted and disappeared. My last ride was more boating than sledding. Winter returned briefly in early April to punish me for getting my street bike out so early but didn't bring enough snow to ride on so I put the sleds away earlier than I ever have. Spring has definitely sprung and we're making plans for summer trail projects.



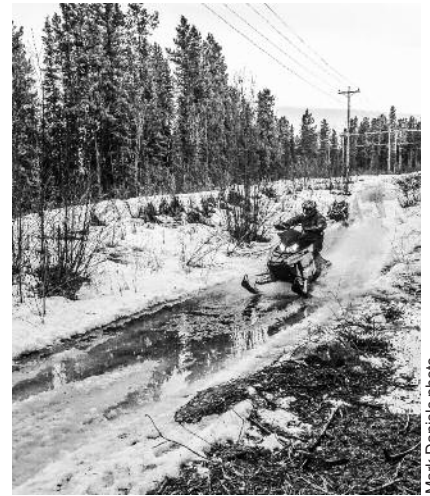
Mark Daniels
KSA President

I submitted a funding application to the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) to do a signage refresh in the Whitehorse area. TCT rebrands on a regular basis and they want us to keep the signs up to date. Many of you probably remember when they switched from the original bold TCT symbol to the swoopy pastel symbol. It was so light that it was hard to find in the bush. We left most of the old signs up because, with 10 years of sun fading, they looked almost like the new pastel ones. TCT has now rebranded to The Great Trail (<https://the>

[greattrail.ca](https://the)). We put up a handful of these new signs last year and instantly got asked if the TCT had somehow folded or been taken over by this new "great" trail group. No, the organization is still the TCT. They just rebranded the trail. If the funding comes through you'll see us out rebranding the trail. We'll also replace any missing, damaged or faded regulatory and directional signage. Let us know if you see any issues with the signs on your favourite trails at klnsnow@gmail.com.

I've been planning with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for a trail improvement project while they're in town this summer. They offered to provide 25 soldiers per day to perform manual labour on the trail the weekend of June 1 and 2. We're hoping to improve the wooden bridge down by Cowley Lakes and to do some brushing at various locations along the Trans Canada Trail—oops—The Great Trail. I'm looking for saw operators to lead groups of army labourers. Let me know if you can help out.

The City of Whitehorse (City) started brushing the Copper Haul Road early last



Mark Daniels photo

The last ride of the season was more boating than sledding.

winter. They're planning to continue that project this summer. The work is intended to provide a wide fire break along the west side of Whitehorse as well as an access route to mobilize heavy fire-fighting equipment in the case of a wildfire. The project also includes grading the road surface and installing more gates with the intent of keeping vehicular traffic off long sections of the haul road. Off-road traffic will be allowed continued use of the haul road. I'm working closely with the City and will keep you in the loop when I get their project schedule and detailed plans.

Continued on page 2 ▶



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.

Give caribou a wide berth—at least 500 metres. When you see caribou on the trail, stop and turn off your machine. Take the opportunity to view the caribou and wait until they move on.



► WRAPPING UP WITH A BANG

Continued from page 1

The Government of Yukon has opened consultation on two pieces of legislation that are of interest to snowmobilers: the Off-Road Vehicle Use Regulations and the Motor Vehicle Act (MVA). You can follow the consultation process at <https://engageyukon.ca>. Be sure to make your views known by attending the various open houses, completing the surveys and talking to your MLA. For my part, I attended an interview with government officials regarding the MVA and told them the following on behalf of the KSA:

- Snowmobiles should be kept separate from ATVs in the legislation because they are materially different machines with unique requirements.
- Snowmobiles should not be singled out for punitive action by government. I gave the example of the predatory practices of the City where a helmet ticket on a bicycle will cost you \$50 whereas the same ticket on a snowmobile will cost \$300.
- All operators and passengers should be required to wear helmets when snowmobiling on roads (the MVA does not address off-road operation).
- The definition of “highway” cannot include trails. We got this definition changed a few years back and I don’t want it to creep back in.
- Where registration and plates are required, the option of a vinyl plate (a sticker) should be made available. Snowmobiles were not built to accommodate metal licence plates.
- The cost to register a snowmobile should not rise.
- Proceeds from registration, current- ►

ly about \$12,000 annually, should be given to the KSA as the central agent for organized snowmobiling and the steward of the trail network.

Let me know if there’s any other aspect of the MVA you want me to promote at klon.snow@gmail.com. Have a great summer!

Snowmobiling is good for your health

by MARK DANIELS

I wrote about the health benefits of snowmobiling back in 2015. That article was based on scientific data specific to summer off-road activities extrapolated to snowmobiling. Now, thanks to the good folks at the University of Guelph, we have snowmobile-specific data to prove conclusively that snowmobiling is good for your health. To illustrate, I’ll borrow heavily from the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO) synopsis of the research and add some local context.

To measure the physical demands of snowmobiling, researchers collected information from more than 4,000 people who rode at least once per week. From this data it was apparent that there were differing demands according to the terrain, and thus the physical demand was categorized into flatland and mountain riding categories. The data survey was used to create courses in Revelstoke, BC (mountain riding) and Haliburton, ON (groomed trail riding) that represented a typical snowmobile ride. A third course was created in Maniwaki, QC to represent a technical, single-track, backcountry ride. Here, 65 local recreational snowmobile riders rode this course while researchers collected data on oxygen use, heart rate, fa-

tigue, body position and perceived effort. They also collected data during tasks that are related to riding, such as digging out a sled.

The researchers found that snowmobiling sufficiently increases metabolic demand (the amount of energy used) for it to be classified as moderate intensity physical activity. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that a person participate in 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Snowmobiling can be categorized within different intensities of physical activity depending on factors such as participant effort, riding location, ride duration and riding terrain. This means that while the physical demand of a snowmobile ride can vary substantially, all can be effective for accumulating the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity and accompanying health benefits.

Snowmobiling increases several indicators of beneficial exercise: oxygen use, heart rate, physical exertion and resulting muscular fatigue. Controlling the snowmobile requires constant isometric input through the handlebars and grip strength that tax the arms and upper body. Keeping the sled upright while leaning through curves and on sidehills requires core strength; while off-trail, mountain and even bumpy trail riding requires constant standing or transitions from sitting to standing that work the leg muscles.

Yukon riding falls into the upper end of this scale, as we don’t have trails that look anything like the smooth, groomed highways in the tourist areas of Ontario. Most Yukon snowmobiling is done on steep and twisty trails or off-trail. Further, a large segment of riding is done in the mountains—the most strenuous type of riding evaluated in the university study. This puts Yukon ►



SNORIDERS

SPECIAL KLONDIKE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION REPORT

Nita Daniels photos



(L to R) Getting some backcountry therapy; riding on a sunny day at the Annie Lake Golf Course.

► snowmobiling in the same exercise realm as jogging, cross-country skiing and bicycling. For example, a one-hour snowmobile ride at a vigorous intensity might burn 600 calories.

In addition to the snowmobile ride itself, a day of snowmobiling involves a lot of different activities that could require you to get your body moving. These might include loading/unloading from a trailer, filling up with gas, performing repairs, digging out your sled, removing snow from the tracks and clearing the way ahead, among other activities. Because of this the amount of activity involved in a day of snowmobiling might be considerably higher than just during the ride. Of these tasks, digging out a sled is the most physically demanding. Digging out a sled in deep snow can require the use of 8.3 times more energy than at rest. However, not every ride involves digging out your sled. Only 40 per cent of groomed trail

riders reported normally having to dig out their sled, but 81 per cent of mountain riders dig out at least once per ride. Digging out is also more frequent for backcountry riders.

Regular physical activity is beneficial for improving both physical and mental health. Recently, awareness of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety has revealed that the prevalence and severity of these diseases is more severe than previously thought. Yukoners can be especially vulnerable to afflictions such as seasonal affective disorder because of the limited daylight hours in the winter. Although these conditions are typically addressed with a variety of treatments, including with medications, snowmobiling involves factors known to complement medications to improve mental health. Snowmobiling is a physical activity and there is plenty of research suggesting that physical activity, alone or in

Continued on page 4 ►



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@gmail.com

Membership Form

Time to renew your KSA membership.

Name _____

Address _____

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Membership dues for the 2018/2019 season:

- Single \$20 Family \$30 Corporate \$105
 Gold Corporate \$315 including GST

Please make cheques payable to:

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Membership Benefits

- KSA membership card
- KSA newsletters (four printed newsletters per year, plus a monthly highlights email)
- KSA licence plate and decals (available upon request)
- Input into the development of KSA policy
- Assistance with trail projects, problems and development initiatives in your area
- A strong, unified voice for snowmobilers 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 with other offers)
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- 10% discount at McDonald's Restaurants, Whitehorse (minimum \$10 purchase, not valid with other offers)
- Free access to the Last Run Lounge at Mt. Sima (please no drinking and sledding)
- 10% off snowmobile rentals at Yukon Wide Adventures
- 10% off at Mark's Work Wearhouse on a selection of regularly priced merchandise (separate card is required, issued with membership)
- Special rates at Choice Hotels (special rates from the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations, please see www.choicehotels.ca/ccso for details, special rates are only available for online bookings)
- Special snowmobiler rates at the Atlin Inn
- Members can post free classified ads on our snowmobile buy and sell page
- Corporate Members get a link on our website
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- Gold Corporate Members get a website link and two free single issue 1/8 page ads per year in our newsletters



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KSA corporate members

A special thank you goes out to all the businesses that help support the Klondike Snowmobile Association! For more information about becoming a corporate member, please see our membership page.

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Main Street Driving School - Whitehorse
McDonald's Restaurants - Whitehorse
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Nomad Air - Whitehorse
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Up North Adventures
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Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
Yukon Avalanche Association
Yukon Honda - Whitehorse
Yukon Quest
Yukon Trappers Association - Whitehorse
Yukon Wide Adventures - Whitehorse



Mark Daniels photos

(L to R) Jackson Lakes group ride; enjoying the great view overlooking Jackson Lakes.

► GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH Continued from page 3

combination with medication, is an effective treatment for depression and anxiety.

In addition to being a physical activity, snowmobiling is also performed outdoors, in natural environments, and often with family and friends. Getting outdoors, seeing nature and socializing are all well-known methods of combatting mental health issues. Although the mental health benefits of snowmobiling have not been directly tested in the field, strong evidence suggests that snowmobiling could positively influence mental health.

So why is this so important? It's been said that Canada is in an "obesity crisis." It's clear that most Canadians could benefit from more exercise. Physical activity can lead to a reduced risk of heart attack, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes and osteoporosis. It can also improve fitness, body composition and mental health. These health benefits can occur regardless of age, ethnic background or gender. Snowmobiling could therefore be a way to improve health, either alone, or in combination with other physical activities.

Beyond the direct benefits of better physical and mental health resulting from snowmobiling, it's critical that we educate decision-makers on the health benefits of snowmobiling. Governments spend a grossly disproportionate amount of tax dollars supporting "active" recreation, rather than motorized recreation. Getting access to those tax dollars would be much easier if decision-makers understood the science involved in studies like this one from the University of Guelph. In the Yukon context, snowmobiling can be more physically demanding than "active" pursuits such as walking, downhill skiing, baseball and snowboarding.

Lastly, we need to promote the health benefits of snowmobiling to decisions-makers to protect it from local opponents. Some individuals and groups will go to any lengths in their attempts to have snowmobiling severely restricted or outlawed entirely. Given the Yukon context, we've demonstrated that snowmobiling is safe when compared to other outdoor activities, relatively benign to the environment, good for the local economy and, now, a healthy pursuit. Here's to your health. ■

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