

Klondike SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

How low can you go?

Go south to find snow this year

by MARK DANIELS

Right through mid-January we had very little snow. Not just here in Whitehorse, where there was dirt showing on most trails, but most of the Yukon. Rumours are rampant: somebody said there's snow in Atlin so folks rush out there and find disappointing results. Somebody said Tally Ho is good but test rides result in bent A-arms and dented belly pans. The definition of "good snow" has changed from being measured in feet to being measured in inches. Buddies are booking expensive trips south to find powder. Who would have thought you'd have to go south to find snow in the winter?

While this year has been remarkable so far for its lack of snow, it also reflects a trend of diminishing snow pack. Gone are the heydays of my youth when the snow in the backyard was most of the way up the fence, and with a bit of work, you could make a pile of snow with enough cushion to avoid breaking your neck when diving off the sun-deck.

Assuming that low snow is the new normal, there are a number of things you

should consider as a snowmobiler: choice of snowmobile, riding location and riding habits.

Ever since the emergence of true mountain snowmobiles in the past decade or so, they've been selling like hotcakes. Riders enjoy the drivability of the longer skids over rough trails and the freedom to ride off-trail at will without the specter of getting stuck repeatedly. However, mountain sleds have become more and more specialized over the years and less amenable to use in low-snow conditions and packed trails. In a quest to drop weight, manufacturers have been deleting idler wheels and reducing

cooling capacity to the point that, without modifications, mountain sleds are less able to work well in low snow. Overheating, hi-fax wear and track lug damage are potential issues. Still, many people buy mountain sleds and use them mainly on the trails.

Thankfully, the manufacturers make a hybrid class of snowmobile that still affords good off-trail capability while maintaining the ability to operate in marginal snow conditions. Whether a Ski-doo Renegade, Po-

laris Switchback, Arctic Cat Crossover, Yamaha Sidewinder or any of the many variants in the hybrid class, these sleds are worth considering for the rider who wants to enjoy the occasional deep-snow foray with their buddies but spends most of their time in the bush or on the trails.

As the snow gods get ever grinchier, you may want to consider an expedition-type snowmobile. These long-track snowmobiles provide decent off-trail ability, and because they either are fan-cooled or have auxiliary liquid cooling systems, they can run on glare ice or very hard-packed snow without overheating. Extra idler wheels and snow scratchers reduce track friction and keep things turning. I'm not talking heavy utility or touring sleds here; some of these machines are built on mountain frames with reinforced running boards and handlebar risers that make them capable boondockers.

Just be honest with yourself and your local snowmobile dealer about how you plan to use your sled. They'll help you find the machine that works best for you.

Discussions about riding locations used to be mainly amongst mountain riders. This group tends to leave their sleds on trailers or in pick-up trucks and plans rides wherever the sky is bluest and the snow is deepest on any given weekend. The majority of sledders typically rode

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Mark Daniels
KSA President



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.



► HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

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from home. There was no need for most people to load up a snowmobile because there was enough snow for a decent trail ride straight from the yard all winter.

With barely enough snow to ride on in the Whitehorse area these past couple of years, transporting a sled is becoming a necessity, particularly in the early season. Whether you're carrying your sled in a pickup box, truck deck or trailer, make sure your equipment is rated for the task and you're doing things safely and legally. Carrying a sled unsecured in a truck box, deck or trailer is foolish and dangerous.

If you have an empty spot on your deck or trailer, consider inviting a friend or neighbour along. Not everyone can afford or justify the expense of a trailer but everyone appreciates an offer to ride good snow. They may chip in for fuel and—who knows—they may become your new favourite riding partner.

If you're thinking about getting a trailer but you don't plan to use it regularly, consider renting or fractional ownership. Some of my friends share or jointly own trailers. This is a great option to reduce costs for occasional use or when you tend to ride together regularly.

Low snow presents challenges that require a change in riding habits. Rocks, stumps and bare ground may be exposed. A snowmobile is difficult to steer—let alone stop—on frozen dirt, ice and glazed snow. Besides the obvious concerns about crashing, getting hurt and damaging your sleds, there are environmental and social concerns as well. When operated on low or no snow, snowmobiles can damage vegetation and cause rutting ►

that may later lead to erosion. You may even face legal troubles if the damage you cause is severe enough to raise concerns with the authorities.

Lastly, damaging the environment also damages the reputation of the sport, so think twice before boondocking in low snow. ■

Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site

by MARK DANIELS

The Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site has had a wild past. Whether it is the story of Tlingit and Athapaskan First Nation traders and travellers, or the stampede of prospectors making their way to the Klondike goldfields, the living history and natural beauty of the Chilkoot have attracted visitors for decades. Here's what you'll need to know to stay safe and have fun at the site this winter:

Please respect other users and share the site

World famous as a summer trail, the historic site has also become a popular winter destination. The Log Cabin Parking Lot and adjacent lands are shared by backcountry skiers and snowboarders, snowshoers, dog walkers, cross-country skiers, bike riders, dog mushers, campers and snowmobilers. Parks Canada has created regulations as a way to reduce user conflicts and ensure that the area is protected for everyone to enjoy.

Winter safety

This is a remote area. Winter users need to be self-sufficient and responsible for their own safety. In the event of an emergency, you should be prepared for lengthy delays in search-and-rescue response. Significant avalanche terrain and other natural hazards

exist, and users should be trained and carry the appropriate equipment. There is no cell-phone coverage in the area. Parks Canada recommends all users carry a satellite phone. If you carry a satellite device, understand how it works. Leave a trip plan with someone at home who can contact emergency services if you don't return as scheduled. Check out additional online resources for winter safety, local conditions, trip planning and training on the Parks Canada and Yukon Avalanche Association websites:

www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/yt/chilkoot/secure-safety/hiver-winter
www.yukonavalanche.ca/

Non-motorized weekends

Snowmobiling is permitted in much of the Chilkoot Trail NHS for most of the winter. However, every third weekend, from Friday through Sunday, is set aside exclusively for non-motorized activities. Use of over-snow vehicles anywhere in the Chilkoot Trail NHS, including staging, loading and unloading machines in the Log Cabin Parking Lot, is prohibited on the following days in 2019:

January 18-20

February 8-10

March 1-3 and 22-24

(Buckwheat International Ski Classic)

April 12-14

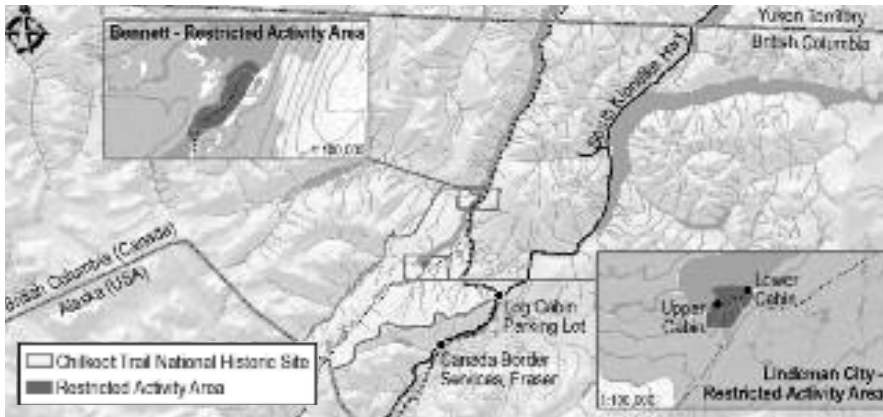
Lindeman and Bennett Restricted Activity Areas (see map on page 3)

The Lindeman and Bennett town sites have special protections in place to prevent damage to fragile artifacts and historic features. Snowmobiling and random camping are not permitted in these areas at any time. Please walk, ski or snowshoe (do not ride your snowmobile) if you would like to visit the old church at Bennett. Camping is allowed in the immediate vicinity of the ►



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two day-use cabins at Lindeman and near the shelter (closed for the winter) at Bennett.

Lindeman Day-Use Cabins

There are two user-maintained, day-use cabins at the south end of Lindeman Lake that remain open throughout the winter. Each cabin has a wood stove, and you can find firewood inside or buried beside the cabins. It is illegal to cut or gather any other wood from the Chilkoot Trail NHS than what is provided. Please respect the Restricted Activity Area: snowmobile access to the cabins is via Lake Lindeman only. If you decide to spend the night, pitch your tent near one of the cabins.

Log Cabin Parking Lot

The Log Cabin Parking Lot is part of the Chilkoot Trail NHS and is a hub for winter activity in the area. The parking lot can be busy with kids, dogs, vehicles, snowmobiles,

trailers, campers and tents; be cautious and slow down when driving through. Camping is permitted at Log Cabin between December 1st and May 15th. There has been an increasing number of fire rings and garbage left in the parking lot, especially during busy weekends. Please dispose of garbage in the bins that are provided, but don't add to already full garbage cans (bring it back to town if there isn't room). Fires are allowed in the parking lot area, but must be contained within a fire pan (not burned on the ground). Bring your own wood. It is illegal to cut or gather firewood within the site, and firewood is not provided. Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times. While the Log Cabin Parking Lot is patrolled regularly, it is up to all users to maintain a clean site. Its a privilege to access and use this area—please respect it.

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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

Membership Form

Time to renew your KSA membership.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Membership dues for the 2018/2019 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 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)
- 10% off food at Trails North (excluding alcohol)
- 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
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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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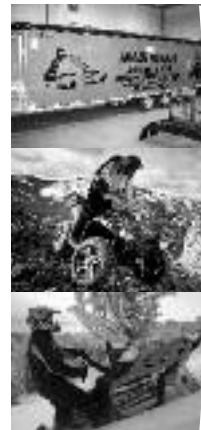
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KSA corporate members

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.

Corporate Gold members:

Main Street Driving School - Whitehorse
McDonald's Restaurants - Whitehorse
Recreational Powersports and Marine Repairs - Whitehorse
Ruby Range Adventure - Whitehorse, YT & Anchorage, AK
Safe Trails North Training Services - Whitehorse
Triggs Family - Whitehorse
Whitehorse Toyota - Whitehorse
Yukon Yamaha - Whitehorse

Corporate members:

46271 Yukon Inc.
Alpine Aviation - Whitehorse
Alpine Club Canada - Yukon
Asek Valley Contracting - Whitehorse
Braeburn Lodge - Braeburn
Brewery Bay Chalet - Atlin, BC
Canada Flooring
Capital Helicopters - Whitehorse
Centennial Motors - Whitehorse
Checked Flag Recreation - Whitehorse
City of Whitehorse
Fireweed Helicopters - Whitehorse
Klondike Visitors Association - Dawson City
Locksmith Services - Whitehorse
Nomad Air - Whitehorse
Quality Bearing Supply - Whitehorse
SnoRiders magazine - Cranbrook, BC
Territorial Contracting - Whitehorse
Tourist Industry Association - Whitehorse
Up North Adventures
Village of Mayo - Yukon
Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
Yukon Avalanche Association
Yukon Honda - Whitehorse
Yukon Quest
Yukon Trappers Association - Whitehorse
Yukon Wide Adventures - Whitehorse

Snowmobile club:

Dawson City Sled Dawgs



Photos courtesy Parks Canada

Lindeman Lake is a great place for snowmobiling especially on a sunny day.

► CHILKOOT TRAIL Continued from page 3 Winter camping

Winter camping is allowed in most of the Chilkoot Trail NHS. Unlike in the summer, camping permits are not required, and you do not have to stay in designated campgrounds. In the Lindeman and Bennett Restricted Activity Areas, tent camping is limited to the immediate vicinity of the day-use cabins. Campfires are only allowed in the Log Cabin Parking Lot and must be contained within a fire pan.

Log Cabin cross-country ski trails

Volunteers maintain approximately 25 km of cross-country ski trails just outside the Chilkoot Trail NHS adjacent to the Log Cabin Parking Lot. These trails, home to the annual Buckwheat Ski Classic race, are enjoyed by thousands of skiers every year. Please, respect the signs and do not drive your snowmobile on the ski trails. For up-to-date trail conditions, call the Mountain Shop in Skagway at 907-983-2544.

First Nation trapline and residence

There is an unbroken connection between the modern Indigenous peoples in this area and their ancestors who trapped and trav-

elled here thousands of years ago. A Carcross/Tagish First Nation family maintains a trapline north of Log Cabin and along the railroad tracks, and they have a seasonal residence at Bennett. Respect their privacy and do not interfere with their traps or property. Dogs can disturb traps and may be injured. Please keep your dogs on a leash at all times.

Do your part

- **Leave no trace.** Pack out your garbage, including dog waste.
- **Protect cultural and natural resources.** Do not remove, disturb or damage archaeological or historical objects, plants, animals or other natural objects.
- **Winter users are our eyes and ears on the land.** Contact Parks Canada at 1-780-852-3100 to report damage to facilities and unusual or illegal activity.
- **Fishing, hunting and possession of firearms is strictly prohibited.**
- **Do not approach, disturb or feed wildlife.**
- **For more information, call 1-800-661-0486 or visit www.pc.gc.ca/chilkoot.**
- **For emergencies and to report infractions, call Parks Canada 24-hour dispatch: 1-780-852-3100.**

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