

Klondike SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's about safety, right?

HERE ARE THE FACTS ABOUT SNOWMOBILE-RELATED INJURIES



Mark Daniels
KSA President

At most trail planning meetings I attend, at least one person has a lot to say about their perception that snowmobiling is a dangerous activity. This is particularly true when the discussion turns to shared use of trails. These people are generally not snowmobilers and don't appear

to be overly concerned about the safety of snowmobile operators. They're mainly concerned about themselves and other non-snowmobilers who share trail use with snowmobiles.

Anecdotally, we know that the rate of injury on snowmobiles is very low. We also know that people are more likely to be injured riding on a snowmobile than they are being struck by one.

Never one to satisfy myself with anecdotes, I requested some statistics from the Yukon Hospital Corporation and Yukon Coroner's Service regarding rates of injury and death related to snowmobiling and other activities. They kindly provided me with some useful data.

It's comforting to know that Yukoners die predominantly from natural causes rather than other untimely means. It's also interesting to note that, of the 117 deaths that occurred from 2014 to 2016, none were related to snowmobiling. Considering that there were four homicides

and no snowmobile deaths in the reporting period, a Yukoner is more likely to be murdered than die as the result of a snowmobile accident (see Manner of Death in Yukon box at right).

For the years 2015 and 2016, there were 75,711 visits to Yukon emergency rooms. Injuries accounted for 15,521 (20 per cent) of those visits. Less than one percent—129—of those injuries were attributable to snowmobile use (see Reasons for Yukon Hospital Emergency Room Visits box on page 2).

We can see that, compared to other popular Yukon pastimes, safety concerns related to snowmobile use are far more an issue of perception than fact. For example, despite the fact that the Hamilton Boulevard Trail ▶



Nita Daniels photo

Sledders enjoy an afternoon up Coal Lake Road.

▶ is held up by the KSA and City Parks department as a shining example of a busy multi-use trail with no history of snowmobilers causing injury to others, some groups and individuals continue to make political mileage by promoting the perception that snowmobiling is inherently dangerous and should not be conducted on shared-use trails.

Continued on page 2 ▶

Manner of Death in Yukon April 2014 - March 2016

Manner of Death	2014/15	2015/16
Natural Causes	25	35
Suicide	8	7
Accidents	18	18
Homicide	3	1
Undetermined	1	1
Totals	55	62



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.



► IT'S ABOUT SAFETY *Continued from page 1*

Some of these groups and individuals are guilty of misinformation, meaning they are spreading falsehoods based on ignorance. They honestly believe that snowmobiling is dangerous and should not be allowed on the shared trail network. Because of the outreach and education provided by the KSA, fewer groups and individuals can honestly claim ignorance. What we're seeing more now is disinformation—individuals and groups knowingly spreading false information for an ulterior motive—to exclude snowmobiles from shared trails simply out of preference.

Next time you hear someone say that snowmobiling is dangerous, tell them that Yukoners are four times more likely to be injured by a bicycle, three times more likely to be injured skiing, and twice as likely to be injured on a playground than by a snowmobile. By sharing the facts, we can push back against both misinformation and disinformation. ■

Reason for Yukon Hospital Emergency Room Visits 2015 - 2016

Activity	2015	2016
Playground	121	89
ATV/Motorcycle	121	173
Snowmobile	65	64
Bicycle	229	255
Skating/Hockey	149	187
Skateboard/ Inline Skates	54	50
Ski/Snowboard	168	173
Total for All Injuries	7,580	7,941
Total ER Visits	36,013	39,698

The worst trail user ruins everyone's fun

by MARK DANIELS

The following is an editorial by Jill Missal that ran in the Anchorage Press a couple of years ago. A fellow member of the Whitehorse Trails and Greenways Committee brought it to my attention this winter. It's a humorous read. What's not so funny is the detrimental effect people such as those described by Ms. Missal have on the shared-use trail system. Her wisdom applies equally well to Whitehorse and Anchorage.

We have tons of trails here in Anchorage. They're all on public land, they're all maintained with public funds (grants from the city and state are public funds, people), and they're all shared by members of the public. We love our trail system; it's one of the crown jewels of our town. But bad trail users seem to ruin it for everyone. Bad trail users are why trail use is a constant, never-ending issue. Bad trail users are why we have endless rules, endless conflicts, and have to take endless surveys and go to endless public meetings.

It seems that every group has complaints about the others. Winter bikers are fast, scary and cocksure, full of attitude, frightening genteel dog walkers and hikers as they whiz up silently from behind at breakneck speed. The dog walkers are a menace, with their out-of-control animals and widespread dog poop deposits. The snowmobile riders are practically homicidal, and the dog mushers operate teams so hazardous that to simply cross a mushing trail requires endless signage urging "CAUTION" and entreating people to consider the "DANGER" of getting near a mushing path. The hikers

leave postholes wherever they go, creating hazards for other users. Horse riders clog the trails with odiferous horse manure, chopping up packed snow in winter and making the trail smell like a barnyard for miles. Cross-country skate skiers are provincial, grouchy, stuck-up and take up the entire trail, refusing to move over for other users even on the multi-use trails. Classic skiers are defensive and territorial of their machine-created tracks, and who can blame them, as they're in mortal danger from every other trail user's propensity for denting the tracks that are a classic skier's very lifeline.

Everyone's lights are too bright or they don't use enough lights. One person's loose dog is OK but everyone else's should be on a leash. One type of ski is acceptable, but another type of ski might make mortal enemies out of two ordinary people. This person doesn't yield the centre lane so that other person doesn't either, creating a head-on collision on a 10-foot wide trail. One type of mark on the snow is the equivalent of damage—"ruining" the snow—while another type of mark is fine because it will be groomed out later.

One group of people can't wait to use the freshly groomed corduroy but no one else should touch it. Even if you're on the same equipment as another person, chances are you'll end up with them breathing down your neck because you're not going fast enough, while going faster than another user is the equivalent of an attempted drive-by shooting.

Anything you do on an Anchorage trail is probably vociferously opposed by someone else whose interests aren't the same as yours. Last winter, Dallas Seavey offered dog mushing tours on the Hillside, prompting irate trail users to post petitions at the ►


KSA Members receive
10% OFF
YOUR MEAL
when you present your membership card



i'm lovin' it™ 4227 4th Ave., Whitehorse • 867-668-3502

This offer is only valid at participating McDonald's Restaurants in Whitehorse and subject to change at any time.

Conquer snow...
seize the Great White North
YUKON YAMAHA



8:30 - 5:30 Monday to Friday, 10 - 4 Saturday
867-668-2101 or 1-800-661-0430
91311-B Alaska Hwy., Whitehorse, YT

YAMAHA

SNORIDERS

SPECIAL KLONDIKE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION REPORT

► trailheads in protest, which were removed by Chugach State Park rangers who patiently reiterated that dog mushing is a supported use of the park. The creators of the petitions hoped that other users would share their alarm at having to share trails with a musher—but who can blame them? Remember that they've been taught via signage that dog mushing is dangerous for other trail users.

Trail use conflicts inspire groups to war against each other, citing the defense of "our" trails, as if these were privately owned parks to which access can be controlled. The lobbying for user-specific trails has created the idea that all user groups must be strictly separated to maintain peace and safety and spare people the hassle of learning to share and co-operate.

There's a faction that wants excruciatingly specific (and harshly enforced) rules for each section of trail, and there's the predictable equal and opposite reaction from those who feel any and all things are appropriate at any and all times. That's why we get people who feel justified in following other people to their cars with a stream of threats and invectives and why we get people who think it's OK to bring 10 or 12 dogs to an off-leash dog area: people who equate "off-leash" with "no rules."

A simple line in the snow, packed by boots, skis and tires, becomes a line in the sand.

Oh, the bad trail users, we all know who they are. So, if we're all the big losers for sharing our precious outdoors with bad trail users, who is the big winner? Who gets the

snowball-full-of-horse-manure prize for being the worst trail user?

As writer of this column and therefore sole judge of this impromptu contest, I award the title to anyone and everyone who can't manage to be friendly anymore. It's you two skiers who literally turned your backs and muttered when we rode by the other night, making no response to any of our "hellos" and "thank yous" and "nice night, eh?" comments. It's you, the bike rider who is too focused on his heart rate monitor to smile and thank the hikers for stepping off the packed single track. It's you, cross-country skier who flails legs and poles across the entire trail and won't make room to let anyone else get by, making a face at anyone who tries because your workout is more important than anyone else's. It's anyone who can't bother to smile and acknowledge another person on the trail, and anyone who doesn't even try to make a trail encounter easy and friendly.

Possible uses for our trails are endless and unpredictable. A rumour of a pony pulling a dog sled on the Chester Creek Trail is even making the rounds. We live in a place where ponies pull dog sleds; how can we not love that? The bottom line is that it doesn't matter what type of gear is on your feet or what's propelling you around the trails, all you have to do to enjoy our city's trails is to get out there. If you resent other people for getting outside and playing, you're officially the worst trail user.

Here's your prize: splat! ■

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
- 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 for details. Member code is "CCSO"
- 10% off at Mt. Lorne Bed and Breakfast - www.klondikerv.com
- Special rates at Choice Hotels - see 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

POWERFUL. EFFORTLESS.

The next Summit is so agile and there's so much room to move around when carving in technical terrain, you'll be connected to your sled like never before. To create this new standard in effortless mountain riding, we designed the new REV platform and Rotax 850 E-TEC engine together, with you—the rider—at the centre of everything.



2017
 SUMMIT
 SP G4 850

YUKON HONDA

1 Chilkoot Way, Whitehorse, YT • 867-668-4451
www.yukonhonda.com • sales@yukonhonda.com



SUPPORTING

THE KSA IN 2016/17

KLONDIKE SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

THE TRIGGS FAMILY

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.

- Alpine Aviation - Whitehorse
 - Alsak 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
 - Checked 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

Playing the tourist with visiting sledders

by JAMES CONNOR

Late last season and once again this season I've had the opportunity to introduce some folks from outside to Yukon snowmobiling. We lucked out both times as our visitors were kind enough to bring absolutely perfect riding weather with them, and big-time fun was had by all.

For both rides we rode what I like to call "the standard tourist loop." I like this route because it is reasonably easy for beginners and doesn't stray too far from home, while at the same time introduces visitors to a good variety of riding and offers some pretty amazing views of the Whitehorse area.

Depending on the most convenient logistics, I either start from home using the McLean Lake Urban Connector Trail, or trailer to the Copper Haul Road/Fish Lake Road staging area. I like starting tours on the Copper Haul Road because the trail has a great story to tell, and it's an easy place for beginners to get the feel of sledding.

From there I take them up the Mount McIntyre Trail, right to the top if conditions allow. The view of Fish Lake never fails to bring everyone to a grinding halt for a photo stop, and the view from the top is a great place to play tour guide and point out the various landmarks from Marsh Lake right through to Lake Laberge.

On the way back down we turn and go down to Fish Lake, but not before a quick reminder to pull over and turn off the sleds when we meet a dog sled team, because we



Nita Daniels photo

Busting some drifts is a whole lot of fun.

always do. Once on the lake there is a chance to play with the sleds some more, or perhaps go check out the ice fishing.

Back on the trail we head towards Jackson Lake where, with any luck, we find some powder to play in. The big bowl and powdery lakes offer up a great chance for new sledders to try a few moves and get to know sledding a little better.

From there the trail winds through the forest and brings us to the Haeckel Hill access road, which takes us back to the staging area. The entire loop is about 45 kilometres, not including side trips. It can be accomplished in two hours with beginner riders leaving time for rest stops and photo opportunities. There's enough time left in the day to go out and enjoy the other attractions Whitehorse has to offer.

It takes a few minutes to get used to riding at beginner speeds again, but sometimes it's nice to slow down and just enjoy the view. The Whitehorse area has some pretty amazing views to enjoy, and the smiles on everyone's face when they discover just how much fun a snowmobile ride can be is always worth it as well. ■

"Sometimes it's nice to slow down and just enjoy the view."



6111 - 6th Ave., Whitehorse, YT • www.micmactoyota.com
867.667.7202 • 877.667.7202

like sledding? so do we.

More of what you love online. For snowmobilers in Western Canada. Sign up for a free email newsletter today. Log on and enjoy the ride.

www.snoriderswest.com

Don't forget to check out the digital edition of your favourite snowmobiling magazine at www.snoriderswest.com/emagazine