

Manitoba's Snoman REPORT



THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

PROVINCIAL TRAIL NUMBERING SYSTEM IS IN THE WORKS

BY ALAN BUTLER, President

I'm sure that this past season in Manitoba will go down as the winter that never was. Records will prove that this was one of the warmest winters with the least amount of snow. Out of the 51 clubs in the province less than 50 per cent of the clubs had enough snow to groom trails. Thanks to those clubs that did have enough snow to open trails and their efforts to keep them in the best shape possible.

After last winter's record snowfalls and long riding season, this year has been viewed by many as a real downer. The question that everyone is now asking is what will happen next season? Is climate change really happening? Will we have enough snow for next season? Well, if the weatherman and the best climatologists in the world cannot forecast the weather two to three days in advance, I surely am not going to try and guess what is going to happen next winter.

Maybe this past season was not the best, but we must move forward. Snoman has a few initiatives underway, one being the development of a provincial trail numbering system. I'm sure we all have been on the trail, looked at our map and tried to figure out where the next intersection is. Or we've been at an intersection and wondered what trail we should take to get to our destination. A committee has been given the mandate to bring forth a plan that would see all Manitoba trails with a designated number. The committee will be looking at other jurisdictions to try and align our system of trail numbering to be similar with other systems across Canada. We are hopeful to have a concept plan in place by the beginning of next season with possibly some implementation starting during the course of the season.

Snoman continues to work with MPI in order to

bring improvements to our Snopass sales distribution system. One area we are trying to improve and make easier is the sale of Snopasses to out-of-province riders. There is a need to improve the process to make it easier for Ontario and U.S. riders to purchase their Snopasses. Out-of-province riders contribute significantly to our provincial and local communities' winter economy.

Plans are starting to get underway for the second annual Snoman Snowmobile Congress. The congress will be held on November 9 and 10 at the Club Regent Hotel in Winnipeg. This year we

hope to have different types of workshops; the intent is to set up the workshops so members will be able to attend more than one workshop and will be able to select the ones they wish to attend. A spousal program is being planned and will be expanded from last year. We will be addressing the concerns brought forth from last year's event. Please keep an eye on the Snoman website; as plans unfold we will be updating the website (www.snoman.mb.ca).

I suggest that snowmobilers take a similar outlook as farmers: "Oh well, let's hope for a better season next year." If you are looking toward next

season and want a new sled, there are some great deals out there. Many dealers have a large inventory of sleds and are eager to reduce their inventory. As a result they are offering excellent deals. Shop around; this is the time to buy.

For those that had snow, I hope you had a great season, and for those of us that did not have snow, thanks to the clubs that took the extra effort to ensure their trails were groomed so we could all enjoy at least part of the winter.

Have a great summer and see you on the trails next season.



Snoman in Thompson



The end of the snowmobiling season

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The season of a trail auditor

All the trail auditors get together at a pre-season meeting to talk about last season and what changes need to be made before the season starts. We also discuss what club's trails are going to be audited. At Snoman we have 10 people that work as a committee. This committee is structured with a chairperson, one staff person and two representatives from each of the five regions in our province. One of the main reasons for this committee is trail safety. We at Snoman want the trails to be well signed and as safe as possible for Snopass holders in Manitoba.

The trail auditor will then contact the club he/she is auditing. At a pre-arranged time and place the auditor will meet with the club's representatives. The trail audit is like a picture in time

to identify a part of the club's trail system. What the auditor is looking for is placement and the condition of the signs, designations or directional signs. They are also looking at the trail conditions and if the club wants to they could show off their grooming equipment—as auditors we all like to see that. Once the trail audit is done the auditor will sit down with the club's representatives and have a debriefing session. This is when the auditor goes over any problems that were found. The auditor will ask the club if they have any questions about the audit or about Chapter 6 of the operation guideline manual.

This is only a brief outline and I hope this answers some of the questions on what a trail auditor does over the course of a riding season.

>> CLUB NEWS

► WHAT A WINTER *Continued from left*

doubt been a negative effect on snowmobile sales and related items; however, snowmobiling was not the only activity affected. The lack of snow was by no means just a Manitoba problem, but stretched throughout most of Canada and the northern United States.

In looking back, our club volunteers did a great job under very difficult circumstances, and in many areas were able to provide a safe designated trail system. We know that trying to predict the weather seems to be an elusive art, but with optimism we can hope that next year's season will make up for this year's disappointments. On behalf of our member clubs, board of directors and staff, I would like to thank all of those who purchased Snopasses along with our many sponsors for their support.



Groomer demo enjoyed by all

On the weekend of February 25 and 26, snowmobile clubs from Manitoba had a chance to test out some of the newest in trail grooming technology.

A 2012 Tucker Terra 2000 pulling a brand new Mogul Master XLMBP 16-08 HD

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What a winter!

ONLY THE NORTHERN REGION HAD ANY SNOW TO SPEAK OF
BY KEN LUCKO, Executive Director

The previous winter was my first season with Snoman and there are always the typical challenges with starting a new job. The one thing that really made last season special was that it was one of the longest riding seasons in memory with most of the province having at least 14 weeks of good trail riding. The spring Sneak Peek show had a great turnout and spring sales were looking great. Jump ahead to this season and it seems that Mother Nature has played a cruel joke on us. The anticipation was endless—all of us winter-loving folks couldn't wait for November. Then we waited and waited, and in some cases, we are still waiting.

The Northern Region was the luckiest and has enjoyed lots of snow and exceptional riding with the season starting in mid-December. The northern portions of Western and Eastern regions received some snow. The remainder of the regions have received limited to no snow, particularly in the southern portion of the province. The weather forecasters just seemed to tease us with forecasts of very limited amounts of snow that never seemed to exceed light dustings.

A lot of sledders travelled to places like Swan River to take advantage of their good fortune which, in turn, was a windfall for the local busi-

ness community. The economic benefit to the province is well documented with over \$200 million annually being injected into the economy. Many rural communities welcome the snowmobilers as it allows many of their local businesses to be open in the winter.

Just try and imagine the challenges that our volunteers had to endure with this type of winter. They had to decide whether to begin signing or not. If they did decide to go ahead, the limited snow meant having to gather snow with a shovel in order to make piles of snow to hold the signs because the ground was frozen. You also have to remember that each club can have thousands of signs to put up. Then to receive snow that you pretty much know is going to melt in a few short weeks—this was the scenario for a number of clubs and you have to admire their commitment for making that tough decision and doing all that work so that snowmobilers would have somewhere safe to ride.

At the time of writing this article, the forecast is not looking too promising as the temperatures are predicted to be well above freezing for the coming week.

In talking to industry insiders there has no
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Springhill Trailblazers

BY SUSAN ROGERS

Three times—that is the number of rides I have been out on this winter. I was not trying to extend the life of my little 500 sled. I wanted to get out there and tear up those trails. (Groomer Rick, I really didn't mean to say tear up the trails; it's just a figure of speech!)

The club went on an amazing weekend trip to the Pinewood Lodge. The hospitality was terrific, the resort itself beautiful if you like pinewood, and I do. The club had pretty much taken over the main lodge and enjoyed having the pool and hot tub area for our evening chinwags.

Thirty-two members made the trip; some of us rode out there from our staging area not knowing what to expect with regard to the trail conditions, but the trails were pretty good. We didn't hit too many rocks or tree roots. Our thanks to the clubs that had been out there grooming—we appreciated it.

We rode all day Saturday in the Whiteshell area. Al cooked us some tasty hotdogs in one of the Whiteshell club's shelters. Our thanks to the club members from Whiteshell who had a nice fire burning in the wood stove. It was good to get in and warm up before we continued on our trek. We misplaced one club member along the way home. The lost found his way home and now he has a T-shirt that he must wear at all

times while out riding. We all got together in the main dining area, and enjoyed a delicious meal on Saturday night and then gathered at the pool area for more "who spent more on gas than the other guy" talk. All in all, the weekend was a success and we are planning to go back next year.

Seriously, when out riding with a group you must follow some simple rules and one of them is, if you lose sight of the rider behind you, stop and wait for him or her, especially if you are making a change in trail direction.

We have pretty much had an organized ride every weekend; the lack of snow didn't hold us back. I have included a few pictures of our rides, one of our group in front of the Pinewood Lodge, one of Ross with his new T-shirt and one of a group ride to the Grand Beach area. The scenery that day was absolutely magnificent, all the trees wearing white fur coats and the millions of diamonds sparkling on the hills as we rode through the trails.

People, it just doesn't get much better than that unless, of course, you are sitting under a palm tree, sipping on a fancy pineapple drink somewhere, but that too is a matter of opinion. Until next time, get

out there and take advantage of what little winter we have left.



>> CLUB NEWS

► GROOMER DEMO *Cont'd. from pg. 22 sidebar*

was brought out to the Brokenhead Trail Blazers clubhouse by Mike Heino Jr., from The Shop Industrial. A total of five clubs from the Eastern Region were present over the two days and had a chance to drive the Tucker Terra 2000 and actually groom some trails to give it a good test. Mike Jr. described the event as a success, and they hope to make this an annual event at the Trail Blazers clubhouse, just north of Beausejour. The Shop Industrial Inc. is an authorized Tucker dealer for Manitoba and is also the manufacturer of the famous Mogul Master trail groomer. Did you know that The Shop Industrial has manufactured a total of 1,390 Mogul Master groomers?

If your club is interested in testing out a new Tucker unit or checking out a new Mogul Master drag, be sure to watch for updates next season for the annual demo events.

► VINTAGE DERBY *Continued from left*

wood from Hamiota, Manitoba, who brought a very unique machine that was constructed in 1949 according to plans contained in *Popular Mechanics* magazine at the time.

The trail held up very well to the larger than anticipated number of sleds and remained quite smooth even for those who were among the last to go around the trail. Several riders rode the 25-mile loop twice and many compliments on the scenic area and the trail were received. Many riders were thrilled at the hospitality offered by the people of Roblin and Makaroff. Once again, the Makaroff Community Club provided delicious meals and desserts, which were enjoyed by everyone.

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Roblin's vintage snowmobile derby

by PETER MYSKO

The 6th annual Makaroff Vintage Snowmobile Derby held on Sunday, February 19, was a huge success this year with nearly 200 vintage snowmobiles and enthusiastic riders showing up from four provinces. This was the largest turnout in the event's history. We had two riders from Lloydminster, Alberta, as well as one each from Gilford, Ontario; New Lowell, Ontario; and Utopia, Ontario. The Ontario participants actually had their machines shipped to friends in York-

ton, Saskatchewan, a couple weeks prior to the derby and flew out to Regina where their pals picked them up the day before the derby and hauled them and their sleds to Makaroff to take in the ride. Now that is some commitment to vintage snowmobiling!

There were riders from all across Manitoba and Saskatchewan as well as a terrific showing from Roblin and surrounding area.

The Oldest Sled Award went to Lanny West- ►

Trail ride of the week

BY GUS WRUCK

This ride in the Eastman region will take one over a wide variation of terrain. The towns of interest are Lac du Bonnet and Pinawa and there are numerous sights to see along this route.

Seddons Corner (PTH 44 and PR 214) is a favourite staging location for people wanting to go for a day of snowmobiling. There is a large parking area behind the fuel station to park a trailer and leave it for the day. The owners of the fuel station welcome snowmobilers. They have an assortment of refreshments as well.

From Seddons Corner the first destination is Lac du Bonnet by one of three routes. The first is along an old railbed just to the west of the station that parallels PR 214 to Lac du Bonnet. The second is to travel east on old PTH 44 for two miles to the Centerline Trail. This trail is an old fireguard road and was recently upgraded to allow for logging in 2011. This winter (2012) the trail has been one of our best trails. Along the trail, one will notice some clear-cutting of the forest. This is part of the province's forest management practices. Regrowth will occur in the next few years and the forest will regenerate.

About eight kilometres down the Centerline Trail, one will come to a junction that offers two choices. Continuing straight will take one to Lac du Bonnet; alternatively, turning right here will take the snowmobiler across a swamp to the Halfway Hut. From there follow the signs to Lac du Bonnet. This trail is actually more scenic with a wide variation in tree growth. Oftentimes deer will be seen for an instant on the trail.

On the way to Lac du Bonnet in the Agassiz Forest, regardless of the trail you choose, about

15 to 18 kilometres from PTH 44 the trails come together as one trail. The second junction going straight will take one to the railbed and along the way one will pass the location of an old peat processing plant that was in operation about 105 years ago. Turning right at the second junction is a destination sign pointing to Lac du Bonnet for a slightly shorter route to that community.

In Lac du Bonnet there are two hotels and two motels as well as three fuel stations and several eating places. From Lac du Bonnet we will travel across the river to the east and connect to the Riverland Trail. After travelling about two miles we are in the forest again. At the first junction just inside the forest we come to the main access to the Lee River Trail system. We will continue straight to the next junction, then turn left and travel in a straight line for about two miles to PR 520. Just across the road is the Pinawa Dam Provincial Heritage Park. This is the site of one of the first hydroelectric generating stations in Manitoba. Once in the park, one can go into the old forebay area and see the inside of the dam in its wintertime beauty.

Following the trail again, one crosses the Pinawa Channel in the direction of King's Kookout Hut. After a short rest, we will continue to Pinawa along a winding trail that crosses a beaver dam or two.

Just before reaching Pinawa one will cross the large coffer dam that holds water to provide the

required head for the Seven Sisters Dam. In Pinawa a stop at the Pinawa Club can be made as it is along the trail and marked.

After resting one can follow the trail through

>> CLUB NEWS

► TRAIL RIDE OF THE WEEK *Continued from left*

Pinawa heading in the general direction of Seven Sisters. After travelling about 15 to 18 kilometres one will arrive at the Seven Sisters Dam. The trail goes across the top of the dam. A spectacular view will be on the right as you cross the dam.

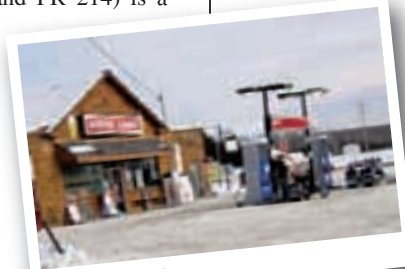
Continue to follow the trail signs and you will go onto the Whitemouth River for a short distance. Just after passing under the PR 307 bridge you will turn right and head west back towards Seddons Corner. Follow the trail to PTH 11 and cross the highway; from there go left and follow the trail under the power lines heading southwesterly to PTH 44. At PTH 44 travel west on the old highway for about 12 kilometres to Seddons Corner. We hope you will enjoy our little place in paradise.

► VINTAGE DERBY *Cont'd. from pg. 23 sidebar*

Poker hand winners were:

- **1st place:** Lanny Westwood of Hamiota, MB
- **2nd place:** Megan Leflar of Roblin, MB
- **3rd place:** Tim Gregoire of Brandon, MB.

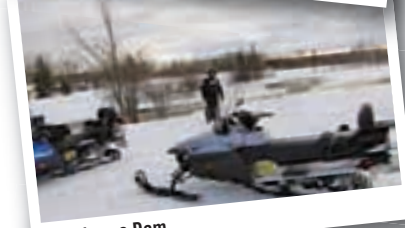
The award for Rider from the Farthest Distance went to Kent Petch of Gilford, ON (2,312 kilometres); Sarah Ruf of Canora, SK, was the first-place winner of the Oldies Song Trivia Contest; and Nick Vogel was the winner of the Hard Luck Award, having broken down a few miles into the ride. He did, however, complete the ride on another sled. The True Grit Award went to the Gehl family of Regina and Tregarva, SK, who made it out for the ride six years in a row, despite having had a long day of racing at Earl Grey, SK, the day before the derby.



Seddons Corner



Winter wonderland on Centerline Trail



Old Pinawa Dam



Lee River and Eastman groomers at King's Hut



Spillway at Seven Sisters

Coast to Coast by Dennis Burns

Support at the political level

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has met with the National Trails Coalition (NTC) group and has also spoken with CCSO president Kevin Sweetland (now past president) about trails in Canada. Stay in touch with your MP and look for their support for the future of snowmobile trails in Canada. The CCSO board of directors has placed a very high priority on finding a way to start replacing the groomer fleet in Canada.

Thank you to the volunteers, landowners and corporate members/sponsors

Thank you to the thousands of volunteers that make the snowmobile trails magically appear. Each and every one of you deserve our admiration for the long hours and dedication. Every job requires a special talent and the willingness of a person to have a "git 'er done" attitude. No job is too big or too small. Also some special recognition for the hundreds of thousands of dollars that you raise for so many charities and worthwhile causes—we can never thank you enough for your generosity of time and cash donations. Well done and thank you!

And to the landowners who allow the volun-

teers to cross your properties to build a connected snowmobile trail system—without you approving the access, trails could never be fully connected from community to community—thank you for being so helpful and understanding!

And to our corporate members who donate time and money to assist the CCSO in delivering the safety and environmental messages all across Canada. These cash donations also allow the

CCSO to work closely with our members to adopt a unified look and approach in so many of the business practices that it takes for a national body to operate in today's fast-paced business world—thank you for being there.

CCSO spring board meeting

The CCSO held the spring board meeting in Quebec City and the main topic on the agenda was the review and input to the CCSO strategic plan and budget for 2012-2013. Congratulations to the newly elected president Steven McLellan and re-elected vice-president Mario Côté. The board offered overwhelming support for all the executive and in particular

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper met then CCSO president Kevin Sweetland at an NTC event.

► Continued from left

thanked Kevin Sweetland for his work and efforts in his many executive positions and now as both the past president and the nominations chair for the coming year.

Welcome to our newest corporate members: Victory Resources and Sierra Iron Ore corporations join forces with the CCSO to sponsor the Zero Alcohol and Make the Smart Choice campaigns all across Canada.

The CCSO would like to thank our sponsors for the 2011/2012 season . . .

Please support businesses that support the CCSO—the national voice of organized snowmobiling!



Dennis Burns

Clean Snowmobile Challenge was a great success

Clarkson University of Potsdam, New York, captured first place in the 2012 SAE Clean Snowmobile Challenge, which closed March 10 at Michigan Technological University.

Kettering University of Flint, Michigan, placed second, with the University of Wisconsin-Platteville earning third place in the internal-combustion category.

The University of Alaska-Fairbanks won the zero emissions category.

The Clean Snowmobile Challenge is a collegiate design competition of the Society of Automotive Engineers. Engineering students from participating schools re-engi-

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The three Rs of volunteering

BY DENNIS BURNS

Many clubs are struggling to get enough volunteers these days to keep the trails open or to fill positions on the executive. But that being said, a great example of how to get 'er done is the Osgoode Carleton Snowmobile Trail Club, which is located just south of the city of Ottawa, Ontario. In a recent visit to the clubhouse, club president George Darouze introduced me to the many volunteers on his executive. An outstanding 24 people raised their hands—they work as part of his team to make the trails a success and 21 of them were elected to executive positions. Wow—unbelievable job by all.

So we asked George to share some of his leadership secrets with us. The first thing he said is that people will volunteer, but they need to know what is expected and what the time commitment will be. No one wants to commit for life or for every weekend. George created job descriptions and asked everyone filling the positions to both review and agree to what the job would be. If they agreed then this is what the club would expect of them and both sides would then understand what was needed and how to work together. At the club meeting each provides a report of activities to date and members can make suggestions or comments on work or repairs required. Club meetings typically get a turnout of 30 to 40 members and all are very active.

The second issue was how the club would communicate with the membership and snowmobilers at large. George again had a solution—email—but first he needed to create a database of email addresses so that it would be quick and easy to alert members. George spent his off-time building a file with more than 700 addresses so that his riding season was easier to manage—he even has a database of his sponsors and business owners in the area.

Here is one of his emails:

Hello sledders! Mother Nature has blessed us with more snow. Yay! The groomers are out and our fantastic operators are continuing to make our trails great. This week's events: Tonight is wing night at the clubhouse. Come out and meet some new people and enjoy our warm clubhouse atmosphere. Wing night starts at 7:30 p.m.

The club also knew that they needed to have a place to meet so did they have a solution? You know it. The clubhouse started with two shipping containers. Then they needed to expand so they separated the two containers and added a raised wall and roof between; then they cut out two of the container sides and presto—a 40-by-40 clubhouse on a donated private section of land. Next they needed a way to keep the pop and food from freezing. Again, the club members had the idea

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► SNOWMOBILE CHALLENGE Cont'd. from pg. 25 sidebar

neer a stock snowmobile, while preserving the riding quality demanded by snowmobile enthusiasts. A total of 12 university teams participated in the internal combustion category.

The contest's zero emissions category, for battery-powered sleds, is sponsored by the National Science Foundation. NSF uses electric snowmobiles while conducting atmospheric research in pristine arctic locations. The electric or zero emissions challenge involves running up to 20 miles with one battery charge. Five teams participated in this category.

This was the 13th annual challenge. The snow was great and all the events ran smoothly. Awards were presented for recognizing the best balance between cost, fuel economy, performance, design, handling and acceleration.

The Clean Snowmobile Challenge is sponsored by Michigan Technological University, the Keweenaw Research Center and the Department of Mechanical Engineering-Engineering Mechanics.

The members of the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (Arctic Cat, BRP, Polaris and Yamaha) are gold sponsors of the event and support the competition throughout the year.

Plans for next year's event are being discussed and preparations are underway for another great event.

Reflections of a club president

BY GUS WRUCK, Eastman SnoPals

Early exposure to snowmobiling

I first purchased a used Massey-Ferguson Ski-Whiz in the early 1970s. This was followed soon afterward by an older Alouette. My first impressions of snowmobiling were that the snow cover presented an excellent means of accessing areas of the country that were not ordinarily available during any other time of the year. In addition, snowmobiling provided an excellent wintertime activity to do things outside with the family.

As time passed my career took me to other areas of the world, which included nearly seven years living and working in southern Africa. During my time in Africa I returned for a short time and lived in Lac du Bonnet and during this time my wife and I purchased a cottage lot in Lac du Bonnet. On returning to Canada perma-

nently, I began a career with government and I was living in Winnipeg.

Recent snowmobiling exposure

After several years back in Canada, the urge to go snowmobiling returned. Having spent several years in Africa without snow, and a trip to Florida in December of 1997, the decision was made. I purchased a new Ski-Doo Grand Touring snowmobile in early 1998. This machine has served me well. Soon afterwards, my wife got one as well. We stored the snowmobiles in a small shed we built on our lot in Lac du Bonnet. This lot was to be the site of our future retirement home that was eventually built in 2004. It was also very convenient to the trails in that we only had to open the shed door and go to the trails since they

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Gus with "wives" in Africa



**Remember...
Don't Drink
and Ride!**

► **REFLECTIONS OF A CLUB PRESIDENT**

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were only two kilometres away.

During our rides on the trail systems of eastern Manitoba, it became evident to me that our area was truly a wonderful place for riding. I began to look forward to winter as a time for enjoyable rides and exploring the countryside. This included riding on the trails of several clubs. As a result it was possible to see differences in the way the trails were maintained by the various clubs. I had no idea who the people were that maintained the trails nor did I care very much.

I did make a personal resolution that when I had more time, I would get involved with a club. I could see that some clubs were quite dedicated to their trail systems while others were less so. In 2004 it became time to build our retirement nest. The house was nearly completed in early 2005 except for landscaping and painting. In June of 2005, we moved into the house and I commuted to my work in the city. My actual retirement was not to occur until August of 2006.

Eastman SnoPals involvement

In October of 2005, a short article appeared in the local newspaper about the desperate state of the Eastman SnoPals. They could not elect a president as no one was willing to serve. I decided to go to a meeting planned in Seven Sisters to try to address this issue as noted in the newspaper. I went to a meeting completely unassuming and expecting nothing except the opportunity to learn something about the club, what it was doing and how it operated. After an hour or more of fruitless discussion and without resolution, I indicated to one of the members that if nominated I would consider serving as president. The meeting moved pretty quickly from there on. I was nominated, accepted and the meeting was adjourned.

I was quickly informed about the Eastman SnoPals. This club was formed as an amalgamation of three smaller clubs in 1996. These clubs covered the area of Pinawa, Agassiz Forest, Lac du Bonnet, Elma and Whitemouth. Most of the

members of the club are retired or are near retirement. This means that the energy that was once there for manual labour such as trail brushing and clearing is no longer there.

In 2009, the club applied for and received a grant from the National Trails Coalition for \$15,000 for brushing along the trails with the most infill. This was well appreciated by most members of the club as well as the trail users. Much of this money was used for contractor work with mechanical brushers.

The total trail system covers an area of about 287 kilometres of trails. Because of the large size of the system and because of traditions that existed before amalgamation, the club operates in three areas almost as separate sub-clubs. This poses some problems as each group comes with their own demands, which may not be in the best interests of the club as a whole. Currently, the club operates with three groomers, which further encourages the separate sections to operate independently.

As president, I had no idea of what to expect but I was soon to learn. Clubs are expected to be all things for all people. We have short distances of trails that cross private lands and while most landowners are cooperative and sign landowner use agreements, some are more reluctant and even hostile. I have had to investigate and report on three snowmobile accidents on our system. Soon after becoming president, I assumed the role of treasurer. Every year we have to make plans for trail improvements.

Every fall the trails are expected to be cleared and brushed, as well as signed and groomed, before they can be declared open for the season. The brusher bars added to the Pinawa and Lac du Bonnet groomers have been a good investment.

The major problems of maintaining groomed trails are almost always related to mechanical issues with grooming equipment and operator proficiency. I soon learned that the two Massey-Ferguson tractors we used were problematic.

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►► **CLUB NEWS**

► **THE THREE Rs**

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of a fifth-wheel trailer that they could connect on the end and presto again—a fully operational kitchen. A wood stove in the corner, a couple of couches, a table and chairs—a perfect meeting place. Oh, and yes, the trail goes right beside the clubhouse so meetings and evening rides bring one and all to the clubhouse.

Getting your volunteers motivated and keeping them involved requires effort and leadership. Nothing happens without a lot of work by someone. As leaders, the club executive members need to ensure that a job description is created for each position—from trails to signage, from president to social director. What about a volunteer co-ordinator position? All of the clubs require volunteers but it takes work to lead and it takes work to deliver. Better that both parties agree to what you need delivered before the person starts. Somewhere in the club activities the executive must deal with the three Rs of volunteering.

Recruit - Where do the new volunteers come from? For every new volunteer that you find, they will bring two or three with them.

Retain - What is the club doing to ensure the volunteers feel appreciated for their time and efforts so that they do not leave to volunteer for another group?

Reward - What is the club doing to recognize and reward the volunteers that you do have so that they work together as a team and are satisfied enough to return year after year?

The Osgoode Carleton Snowmobile Trail Club has a great formula that works for them. What is your formula for success?



On the trail



Retirement nest



Brusher bar on new groomer



Groomers meet on the trail

► REFLECTIONS OF A CLUB PRESIDENT

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They did not appear to be able to sustain the abuse they were given by the operators. While it is true the trails are rough and require care when grooming, especially early in the season, it also indicates that operator proficiency is needed. Snoman has contributed to correcting this issue by offering a groomer training course. Most participants from our club have appreciated this opportunity. A good mechanical maintenance program is essential as well.

In one instance, we encountered a major problem because the operator was not familiar with the trail location and groomed a trail that led to a beaver dam, resulting in a sinking disaster. The results of this were repairs extending over the next two years, and it may not be over yet. This was basically a communication failure.

Observations

During the past few winters I find that most of my snowmobile time has been spent travelling the trails doing random inspections to observe safety problems and proper signage. I find I am always stopping to gut a branch or throwing one off the trail. Also, groomer operators put in long hours and they need some moral support as well.

I have learned that snowmobile club members can be divided into roughly three groups. There are the members that join and pay their dues for a

few years but this is the extent of their commitment to the club. They believe this is good enough as they will cite the fact that they pay a high fee for their Snopasses.

There is another group that joins the club, becomes active and is hard core for a while and then becomes less active but is still interested in the club activities. We have several members that have groomed every year for several years but are slowly losing interest and becoming tired of this job, often done without thanks or recognition.

The last group of members are hard-core volunteers that join and will always be there to help when asked or come forth and help even when they are not members. This may be OK but the number of people in this group is becoming fewer and fewer every year.

I think it is important to recognize that as people we need to have concern for all aspects of our being. It is not just about the work that volunteers can contribute but it is also about some of the social aspects and satisfaction that one can get when he or she is a member of the club. To this extent we have

started, during the past winter, to hold supper meetings. This has provided something to our hosts, usually a restaurant, and it has allowed members to interact before the meeting starts—it also appears to shorten actual meeting time.



Groomer sunk in beaver pond



End of season wrap-up event

Kudos to BRP for a great demo

BY JOE THIEVIN

On a bright sunny day, I had the good fortune of attending the BRP VIP Ride Demo Event. The event was held January 18 to 22 at Seddons Corner. There was a full line-up of sleds from the comfy-couch Grand Touring SE to the race-ready MXZ X-RS with rMotion suspension. Each rider was given the opportunity to choose from one of the 12 sleds for each of the four ride segments. During the two-hour ride, the group logged about 60 kilometres.

Given my preference for ditch banging, I grabbed the MXZ X-RS 800 E-TEC with the rMotion. The boys in the trailer did an amazing job of setting up the sled. The sled was very light and nimble and it was very easy to corner through some chatter bumps. I think what I found most impressive was how the sled would come off a crossing or small bump and stay planted.

There was no kick or bottom. Staff indicated that the oil consumption is “best of the fleet” but the fuel consumption not as good as the 600 E-TEC. If I had to find something I didn’t like with the sled, it would be that the power was a tad soft around the 100 km/h mark, and there is a lack of wind protection. Overall, this sled is very impressive.

My second choice was the MXZ X 600 E-TEC. While this sled does mirror the race-bred 800, there are some differences. The most noticeable difference is the power. The 600 E-TEC has a softer feel in terms of power and clutching. The sled handles well through the corner chatter; however, the setup was not what the rMotion delivered. The rear skid had a tendency to dance a bit when compared to the rMotion. Both the 800

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and 600 have very light steering with no desire to push in the corners. The MXZ 600 E-TEC is definitely an all-day rider’s idea of fun.

While I am not an off-trail rider, I did take the opportunity to jump on the Back Country X 800 E-TEC. The sled has a noticeable difference with the added track and weight on the back. While not as nimble as its short-track brothers, the sled still delivered a quality ride with a slight push in the corners. The larger wind screen provided superb wind protection. The sled pulled well and I am sure had lots of wow off trail.

The most interesting sled on the ride was the Grand Touring SE. This thing has it all! With its 1200 4-TEC engine, this sled is guaranteed to interest those who just want to trail ride in style. Some of the features included an air-ride suspension, heated seats and rear hand grips, reverse, back rest and a full load of electronic goodies on the dash. The power is delivered in a very linear fashion with very little engine noise. While the sled is designed for the two-up all-day rider, it does ride amazingly well and corners as expected. For those riders looking for the ultimate in comfort, this is the sled for you.

I just cannot say enough about BRP’s initiative and staff. As an added bonus, we were all provided a \$300 certificate on a new sled. I can tell you, it didn’t take long to use my certificate. Good on BRP and I look forward to the 2013 tour.



Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations