

THE ALBERTA Snowmobiler



TRAIL ETIQUETTE

EVERY SLEDDER IS AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE SPORT
BY DARRYL COPITHORNE, President

The first thing I need to do is send out a couple of thank you's. We recently held an ASA board meeting in Grande Prairie, followed by a guided ride of some of their trails. Our Northwest Zone regional director, Don Hodges, arranged everything for us as well as picking me up at the Grande Prairie airport and escorting me around for the weekend. We also were hosted by the Wembley Snowmobile Club on Friday night for a social. Thanks Wembley! Since it was way cheaper for me to just jump on WestJet and fly up, I did not have a sled with me for the Sunday ride. Don arranged, through Stojan's Power Sports and Marine, a loaner Ski-Doo for the ride. A big thank you to Don for his work, as well as a thank you to the members of the Swan City Snowmobile Club and Stojan's Power Sports.

We enjoyed the ASA Jamboree in Fox Creek and what a great time—a well-organized event that went off smooth as silk, at least as far as a participant's perspective goes. Good job Fox Creek! I had started this article on trail etiquette prior to the Fox Creek outing, so I was paying close attention to trail etiquette that weekend. I was very impressed with what I observed, as I only saw one thing that made me frown. I will cover that later in this article.

What does trail etiquette mean? To me it covers everything associated with the snowmobiling activity, not just the riding portion.

Let's start at the beginning with planning for the trip. Planning ahead will have a huge impact on the outcome of the trip. Poor planning can completely mess up a snowmobile trip.

THE SLED

A week or so prior to your trip go over your sled and make sure everything is good to go. Fill your oil and gas. One of the biggest annoyances is to pull into the area you are planning to ride and have one of your group say, "Oh, by the way, I need to stop for fuel or oil." Now you have started the ride on a sour note.

YOUR GEAR

Unpack your riding gear bag and make sure everything is there. It is very easy to miss an important piece of riding gear that was put in the

wash or left in the back of the truck. Lay it all out and do an inventory. And keep it all together in one bag big enough to fit it all. People who take a small bag, then their boots and helmet separately, sooner or later will leave something behind.

TRAVELLING

Most of us travel with a buddy. Be on time. Whether you are the driver or passenger, be on time. We all hate the guy who is supposed to pick us up at 7 a.m., who needs to stop for gas and coffee, then go back for the boots he forgot, and shows up at 8:30. Will the others you are to meet wait or is everyone's day shot?

PARKING

Here is one of the biggest problems in the snowmobile community. As enclosed trailers, especially four-place units, gain in popularity, available parking is not increasing so we are having parking issues. This is becoming a huge problem at most staging areas and hotel parking lots. At the Fox Creek event there was limited parking in the hotel parking lot, so parking our rigs to take up the least amount of space was important.

Sadly, one inconsiderate person backed his four-place trailer in beside other units that were already parked and left his unit partially jackknifed, effectively taking up two parking spots. When you pull into a parking lot or staging area think about how you park, and consider that you are not the only one who has to park there.

PIT RACING

A term used to describe riding a sled, bike or ATV in and around a parking area. Do not rev up your sled, burn doughnuts, or accelerate hard in or out of a parking area. Use some etiquette by starting your sled and slowly riding out of the parking lot. And if you have a loud exhaust on your sled, leave it at home in your garage. Noise is still a huge part of our image problem with non-sledders. Loud snowmobiles simply do not belong anywhere, except maybe on a racetrack.

RIDING

So now we are finally out on the trail. Here is a list of commonly accepted trail etiquette points.

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>> EVENTS

Hosting an event or ride? Don't forget to post it on the ASA website calendar for all to see!

ASA Annual General Meeting April 9, 2011

Capri Hotel, Red Deer
 Hosted by the Central Zone Snowmobile Clubs

International Snowmobile Congress 2011 June 1 - 4, 2011

Hyatt Regency, Calgary, AB

Edmonton Snowmobile, ATV & Off-Road Show October 21 - 23, 2011

Edmonton Northlands Expo Centre, Edmonton

ASA Annual Snowmobile Excellence Awards October 22, 2011 • 7 p.m.

Edmonton Northlands Expo Centre, Edmonton

ASA Semi-Annual General Meeting October 23, 2011 • 9 a.m.

Edmonton Northlands Expo Centre, Edmonton

>> NEWS

ASA to host ISC 2011

June 1 to 4 at the Calgary Hyatt Regency hotel, the ASA will host delegates from around the world at the annual snowmobile congress. See the website, phone the office or talk to any ASA member to get more details about how you can become involved in the largest snowmobile conference on earth!

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SLEDS2BUY.COM





Forty years of sledding

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

BY CHRIS BROOKES, Executive Director

I've spent an entire week starting this article for *RidersWest*. It's not that I have any trouble with finding something to write about. Quite the reverse. There's so much going on at any one time here that I don't know where to start!

I was going to focus on the ASA's 40th anniversary in this issue. As many of you know, the ASA was officially incorporated in 1971 and we have been going strong ever since. The number of clubs and members may rise and fall over the years (usually with the amount of snow we get in any given year) but interestingly, many of the issues and problems have remained the same.

I started reading through Volume 1 of the *Alberta Snowmobiler* (published November 1970) to get a sense of what was going on back at that time. At 25 pages, it was a pretty interesting read. The first thing that catches your attention is how many snowmobile manufacturers there used to be. Of course, Ski-Doo, Polaris and Arctic Cat are well represented, but how many of you remember AMF, Moto-Ski, Snow Cruisers or the Ski-Whiz by Massey-Ferguson? There must have been more than 100 sled builders back then; any company that made a motor probably made a sled as well—or "motor-toboggans," as I see them referred to occasionally. But there are many similarities to what I work on here on a daily basis.

Page 6 has an article about the growth in the number of snowmobile clubs in Alberta. There is much discussion about families discovering the fun that can be had by a weekend outing to the country and the snowmobile areas. At the time, Edmonton Snowmobile Club president (and later ASA president) Dennis Blakeman is quoted as saying "... Snowmobilers get no support or sympathy in their pursuits from the Edmonton parks and recreation department. We must go out to outlying communities for facilities and it has become a weekend exodus." Still true today! I had the pleasure of meeting Dennis at the Fox Creek Jamboree in February and he gave me heck for not having the ASA president's banner on display at the banquet. Once an ASA president, always an ASA president!

A nice article on page 10 discusses the benefits of snowmobiling for tourism in Alberta. The *Al-*

berta Snowmobiler editor (and first ASA president) Mike Welykochy was writing about a recent report on the adequacy of tourist facilities and services to serve the public in these fields and the promotion of tourism in the winter period. He writes, "Of interest to snowmobilers were the recommendations put forward by the committee that (a) snowmobilers be permitted winter access to park areas, particularly near population centres, (b) the establishment of snowmobile trails and (c) the government investigate and establish the standards of safety with respect to the thickness of ice cover on lakes, and the carrying of survival equipment when travelling in isolated areas."

Two of the bigger projects we worked on last year were (a) an economic impact study on the benefits of snowmobiles and snowmobile tourism in Alberta and (b) a provincial curriculum to teach snowmobile safety to Albertans. Forty years later and many of the same issues are on the table today. Out of the report that we worked on with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation was the following:

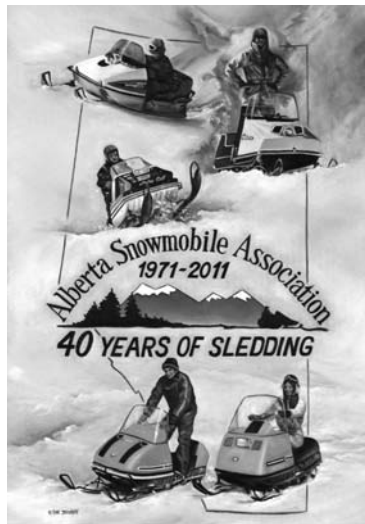
Conservative estimates suggest that total expenditures on snowmobiles and related activities in Alberta exceeded \$366.5 million in 2009. This total includes capital expenditures of about \$111.7 million (by snowmobiling enthusiasts and clubs), tourism expenditures of about \$254.7 million, and other expenditures of money raised and spent by snowmobiling associations and clubs.

Certainly, these numbers would have boggled the minds

of the snowmobiler organizers 40 years ago, but this shows that while many of the questions remain the same, the answers are much different.

The new Ride with Respect that the ASA helped the province to create will bring improved messaging to Alberta schools and community groups on safe riding practices for snowmobiles and ATVs. The ASA has become the leader in safety education in Alberta schools with our Sled Smart program being presented to thousands of Albertans every year. This is an area where the ASA has taken the lead over the years and we continue to advocate for safe riding for, and on

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>> CLUB NEWS

► DARRYL COPITHORNE *Continued from page 21*

- Stay on marked trails
- Keep to the right to allow others to pass
 - When stopping, stay as far to the right as possible and, once stopped, point your skis out into the trail—this allows you to ride away even if the sled in front of you is not leaving
- Obey all signage and ride only where permitted
 - Use hand signals (I was very impressed with the number of riders using hand signals on the Fox Creek ride)
 - Do not steal or tamper with signage or property
 - Be courteous to volunteers and other riders; be especially courteous to others you meet who are not on sleds
 - Purchase your trail pass to assist with trail maintenance costs and to help your ASA to keep you riding
 - Avoid excessive speed—on Crown land in Alberta, the speed limit on trails is 30 kilometres/hour
 - Be litter free—take out what you bring in
 - Alcohol and sledding do not mix, and it is illegal to drink and ride; law enforcement personnel still catch too many sledders with booze
 - Groomers have the right-of-way
 - Pass slower sledders in a safe manner and only if absolutely necessary.

For me it is rewarding when you return from a snowmobile outing and, having observed all the trail etiquette we have learned, you can feel better about the outing. No issues, no drama and nobody swearing at those darn snowmobilers.

Remember—every snowmobile rider must be an ambassador for the sport.

Our actions represent who we are.



► **CHRIS BROOKES** *continued from page 22*

behalf of, all Albertans.

Page 11 of Volume 1 features an article about safe and responsible trailering, very similar to the article that ASA president Darryl Copithorne had in our last issue. Page 12 talks about a trip taken by a Calgary family, leaving the Town of Banff, riding out of the park and down the Spray Lakes, and then back to Banff again. This is a trip we can only dream of today.

One of the programs that the ASA participates in today is the national Snowmobile Environmental Program. As a proud member of the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO), every February we participate in an environmental awareness campaign, to help snowmobilers develop a healthier attitude toward the environment and to let other Albertans know that we do care. Attached to the bottom of every one of my emails is a logo that reads, "Snowmobilers care about our environment." And we do! The article on page 18 of the 1970 issue is headlined The Snowmobiler Is a Conservationist. Writer Frank Grief writes about many of the same messages we use today. The snowmobiler "... should attempt to leave the site nearly as he found it, making sure that what came in goes out, so that other people can enjoy the areas as unspoiled as he did." Today we say pretty much the same thing.

Page 20 of Volume 1 is a report on the first meeting of the first ASA board, held at the Edmonton Northlands Sportex building. The Alberta government had representatives present, as well as club representatives from all over the province. A new board was elected and a fee structure brought in. Mike Welykochy was elect-

ed as president and a fee of \$1 per person was decided upon. Our budget has changed a lot since those days!

There is a great article on page 22 on general riding tips, most of which are still applicable today. The article advises riders to "drive in a sportsmanlike and courteous manner. Remember the other fellow is out for fun and excitement just the same as you are. Don't drive faster than conditions warrant. Be especially careful around people. Remember, the neck you save may be your own!" Always good advice.

While so many of the articles still seem current, one big thing has changed—the ASA. We have grown from the small initial meeting 40 years ago into an organized and well-respected organization. When the province has questions about snowmobiling they contact us. When Albertans have questions about snowmobiling, they contact us. When schools need safety presentations, they call us. The ASA has become the voice of snowmobiling in Alberta. We have much to be proud of!

As a part of our 40th birthday celebration, the ASA, in partnership with the Alberta Relic Riders, will be auctioning off a fully restored 1971 Ski-Doo. The Relic Riders plan to have it finished in time to display it at the International Snowmobile Congress in Calgary, June 1 to 4 at the Hyatt Regency. All proceeds from this raffle will go to Ronald McDonald House and we will display and make the draw at the ASA Snowmobile and ATV Show in October.

The ASA is also selling 40th anniversary limited edition prints, by the talented and hard-working ASA volunteer Pat Deputat. Prints will be on sale at all ASA events throughout the year.

>> **CLUB NEWS**

► **CLUB NEWS**

Cont'd. from pg. 21 sidebar

ASA celebrates 40 years of organized sledding

The ASA is celebrating its 40th birthday this year and you can participate! In partnership with the Alberta Relic Riders, we will raffle off a completely restored 1971 Ski-Doo, lovingly rebuilt by the Relic Riders. It will be on display at the ISC conference and the snowmobile show, where it will be raffled off. All proceeds will go to Ronald McDonald House for families of sick children.

Limited edition 40th anniversary prints

We are also selling limited edition 40th anniversary prints by Pat Deputat. Prints will be on sale at all ASA events throughout the year.

It's a lot of work

—by *Addam Saruk, Northeast Regional Director*

I am finding out that the role of an ASA director is a challenging one. I have been very busy this season; work takes half of my time and the other half is spent with family. Somewhere in there I have to make time for my local club activities (where I am the president), and other club activities, like the Myrnam Fire Department where I am deputy chief.

I want to keep up with the goings-on at the other clubs in the Northeast Region. I would love to get out there and ride their trails and attend more meetings. As well, the ASA board meets every second month and attending those meetings is often complicated with family and work.

My club is still very busy this season. In March last year our main cabin was completely destroyed by fire and we

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February was a very busy month

BY **LYLE BIRNIE**, Northwest Zone Regional Director

When we get snow we get an excellent amount but the weatherman sure gave us a variation of cold and warm days through January and the first part of February this year. However, everyone rode as much as they could despite the temperatures. All the trails were in good shape for the most part and grooming was completed many times.

I attended the VIP and Media Ride hosted by the Whitecourt Trailblazers on February 1st. This was an excellent day with a short ride up to the first cabin for lunch and a presentation and opening of the new trail dedicated to the Manweilers. Alex has volunteered thousands of hours for the club and the trail named in his honour was well deserved.

As I write this, most of the snowmobile rallies are over. The Pembina Drift Busters from Westlock, the Snow Seekers and Edson all held rallies

on the 5th of February. Whitecourt was on the 19th, Athabasca on the 20th and Swan Hills was on the 26th. A busy month indeed.

The annual ASA Jamboree was hosted by the Northland Sno-Goers from Fox Creek on the 11th and 12th of February and they did an excellent job of putting it all together. They had 375 sleds in the rally and a sold-out banquet of 300-plus, with a super meal. There were door prizes galore and, of course, great trails groomed by Harold Bellwood (groomer extraordinaire). Thanks from all of us, Harold.

Remember the AGM will be in Red Deer on April 9th at the Capri Hotel so please book your rooms at 403-346-2091. If you have anyone in your club who wants to join the board of directors they have to be nominated by the local club, then email the names to Pat McGrath at

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Sunny days, snowy trails

RIDING BEAUTIFUL GROOMED TRAILS IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE

BY JANET RIOPEL, Vice-President

What a beautiful weekend we had for the ASA Jamboree this year. I am sure that the Northland Sno-Goers did lots of snow dances and sunny day dances, because that's what we all got when we arrived in Fox Creek for the ASA 40th Anniversary Jamboree. I have to say that the Northland Sno-Goers did a tremendous job. The jamboree was a sold-out event—there was not another ticket to be had for the Saturday night banquet.

But let's start at the beginning of the weekend. On Friday the Tracks for Cancer girls arrived in Fox Creek, which was the end of the cancer ride that started out at Cold Lake. Harold Bellwood, Jeff Johnston and Jesse Johnston met the Whitecourt Trailblazers and the ladies at Gundy's Cabin for their final leg of the Tracks for Cancer ride. The group arrived in Fox Creek in time to spruce up and head on down to the hall to greet everyone coming in to pick up their registration packages for jamboree weekend. The Friday evening reception was hosted by the Fox Creek Chamber of Commerce, and it was a fun night. We saw people with smiles on their faces ready for a great weekend of trail riding. The sun gods were with us come Saturday morning and, after a great breakfast put on by the 2011 Tour Group from Fox Creek High School and a Sled Smart presentation by ASA instructor Andrew Blakely, it was off onto the trails.

I have to thank Harold and Helen Bellwood for letting many of us park our sleds in their heated shop—it sure was nice. Some of us even got our sleds polished thanks to Jeff. By 9 a.m. we were off to the trails. Fox Creek is one of the few places where I have seen the trails groomed right in town, so it was right onto a groomed trail and we were off to the first rally stop. Well, most of us were; there were a few that were playing with the deer on the trail and went to the fourth checkpoint, right Glen and Wendy? After we played our rally cards at checkpoint 1, we headed out to the Eagle warm-up shelter where we had hotdogs and hot chocolate. At the Eagle warm-up shelter the slingshot game was played—that was where you got three shots at the tin can with a slingshot and if you hit one you got to put your name in for a draw for a helmet. Sad to say, I can't hit the broad side of a barn so I didn't get my name in for the helmet but it was lots of fun trying. After a bite to eat and some good laughs we were off to checkpoint 4.

On the trail to the Trappers Cabin we had to stop for some pictures, it was so beautiful up high in the hills with the trees and the deer. Once

we had our cards picked at the Trappers Cabin it was back to town to pick our final card and pick up the prizes that we had won. I have to say for a community of less than 3,000 people, the prizes that the Northland Sno-Goers had were just fantastic and I know that my new sledding gloves will keep my fingers plenty warm for a few years to come. Once we had a shower it was back to the hall for an evening of visiting, food, speeches, children's games, prizes and dancing. I must say that the free shuttle service that the Northland Sno-Goers had set up was just wonderful—thank you so much for making sure that everyone got home safely.

On Sunday we got up to a fresh dropping of snow and after a quick breakfast we were back on the trails again, this time heading to the Waskahegan Cabin. It is on the Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail (TCST) heading towards Grande Prairie. Again, it was a beautifully groomed trail (or highway, as I like to call the trails at Fox Creek). We started off with 30 in our group for the ride out to the cabin and by the time that day was done more than 70 riders made the trip out to the cabin for a great ride to top off the weekend. The only sad part of the weekend was loading up the sled and heading home. I think that after such a great weekend with the Northland Sno-Goers, they are going to have many more visitors to their trail system as it is one of the superior trail systems in all of Alberta.

Whitecourt also held their 2011 VIP/Media Ride in February and opened their new trail called the Manweiler Trail. The Trailblazers dedicated the new trail to Alex Manweiler. Manweiler Trail was officially opened on February 1st, 2011, in conjunction with the ride. The club decided that the 2011 ride would showcase portions of the new trail system developed in 2010 through the National Trails Coalition (NTC) trail development program, through grants from the federal and provincial governments. The 2011 ride took VIPs and media to the Summit warm-up shelter where the Manweiler Trail begins. The club therefore took the opportunity to officially open the trail with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Alex Manweiler was a founding member of the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club in 1979. He attended the first-ever meeting and has been heavily involved ever since. During his 33 years of active volunteerism with the club, Alex has served on the club executive for a number of years, holding many positions. He also served as

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>> CLUB NEWS

► JANET RIOPEL *Continued from left*

an executive member on the Alberta Snowmobile Association (ASA) board for several years. At 73 years, Alex still volunteers more than 1,000 hours a year and has done so since his retirement several years ago. In addition, he is currently the lead groomer operator. He enjoys the camaraderie and the volunteer work that gets him outdoors and keeps him much younger than his birth certificate would suggest. The club executive decided that it was very appropriate to celebrate Alex's accomplishments and tireless volunteerism with the club by naming a trail after him, in recognition of his efforts. The trail in question was chosen after some discussion with the club executive and Alex himself.

The Manweiler Trail starts at the Summit warm-up shelter, located approximately 35 kilometres south of Whitecourt on the Silver Summit Trail. The Manweiler Trail departs the Summit warm-up shelter heading north through the east windfall area, crossing the Athabasca River and Highway 43 and ending at the Gundy rest area and warm-up shelter, and is approximately 60 kilometres long. The Gundy rest area and warm-up shelter are located approximately 54 kilometres west of Whitecourt on the Golden Triangle Trail/Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail towards Fox Creek. The Gundy rest area and warm-up shelter have tremendous significance to Alex Manweiler. Dale Gunderson passed away on January 14th, 2007, and Alex and Dale were the best of friends, sharing a passion for snowmobiling and volunteering. They enjoyed working together for the Trailblazers

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► **JANET RIOPEL** *continued from page 24*

club and you could usually find them together on many days doing various tasks for the Trailblazers. The Manweiler Trail ending at the Gundy rest area and warm-up shelter brings these two best friends together again. Thanks to Dan Guenette for all the information about the media ride and trail opening.

The Trail Seekers have also been busy fund-raising this year. They held a ladies snowmobile ride on January 23rd for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. The ladies enjoyed a ride on the groomed trails and the men were in charge of the food and all the checkstops on the trail. The club raised \$4,125, which was donated to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Alberta, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Then in February they held their annual Poker Rally, Supper and Silent Auction. It was just a bit windy that day, but we all had fun on the trails. It was good to see the local RCMP out on the trails checking for registrations and insurance. I think that only one ticket was given out that day, but the guy did win one of the poker hands so it helped him pay for the ticket. The supper held in Wabamun was just fantastic—great home cooking and lots of laughs. The entertainment was hilarious—the chicken dance, the hula hoops and the skipping ropes were a delight to watch, something you should never miss. It is good to see the great relationship that the Trail Seekers have made with Wabamun. The Trail Seekers do a great job in building relationships with new people, places and companies. This year they worked with the town of Wabamun and the businesses in town, right down to getting an awesome deal for anyone who wanted to spend the night at the Shore-side Inn & Suites in Wabamun.

With having our board of directors meeting in the different zones, the clubs are getting to really show off what they have done and are doing. In January the board was off to the Mighty Peace Zone. Grande Prairie was our destination for the weekend. We all met with the Wembley club Friday night for a meet and greet. It was a fun evening and I even learned a new acronym—STP—Same 10 People. It seems that no matter what club you talk to, it is usually the case with volunteers that it often comes down to the same 10 people doing most of the paperwork and organizing events. What is the answer to getting more members involved in the paperwork and being on the club's executive? I don't have the answer to that but I am sure that someone might, somewhere. It was really great to meet some of the Wembley club members and listen to their stories about the rides they have had, where they all sled to and the different events that the club puts on. Many of the club members have winter cabins out on the trail and spend many nights out at their cabins. It sounds like fun and I wish that we had had a few more days up there to go out to

the campsite for a night or two. Saturday morning the board got up bright and early and had our ISC meeting, followed by our board meeting. Sunday morning we were off to ride on the Grande Prairie trail. The ride was just beautiful, with about five feet of snow and lots of fresh powder to play in, even if some people did get stuck in the play areas. After a wonderful ride through the trees and hills we were back to the cabin and were treated to a delicious chili lunch put on by the Grande Prairie club. A big thank you to Don Hodges and the Swan City club for hosting a wonderful weekend for us all to enjoy.

After riding on all of these beautiful groomed trails in Alberta, the question that most clubs ask is how do we get funding to maintain them? In Alberta we have more than 5,500 kilometres of snowmobile trails that are built and mapped out for everyone to enjoy, but like everything else, it takes money to keep the trails functioning every year. I know that the trail pass money only goes so far when it comes to running a groomer; even if you have volunteer groomer operators there is still the expense of upkeep on the groomer itself, fuel and insurance, and that is only to groom the trails. What about the trees that fall on the trails? With the big windstorms that we have been getting lately in Alberta, it is a full-time job with a chainsaw bucking up the trees that fall on the trails. But the biggest expense and the most time-consuming job on the trails is fixing the quad damage. In Grande Prairie we had to skirt around a couple of big quad holes that were at least eight feet wide and more than six feet deep—how do you fix something like that? Where is this money going to come from? Good questions, and it is on the minds of the ASA board of directors and also the Trail Funding Committee. That is something that is on the top of my list—to find funding for grooming and trail maintenance.

This being the 40th anniversary of the ASA, it has been a very busy year for all of the clubs and I would like to thank each and every one of you for all of the time and effort that you have donated to your local club. Without you, your local club and the ASA would not be where they are today, so THANK YOU and I hope that all your rides are safe and happy and on a beautiful groomed trail.

I hope to see you all at the AGM in Red Deer on the 23rd of April. We can all celebrate the Alberta Snowmobile Association's 40th together. Check out the ASA website for more information.

Mark on your calendars the ISC in Calgary June 1st to 4th. I hope that many of you come on out to see what goes on at an International Snowmobile Congress. It is interesting to see what the rest of Canada is doing and that we have much in common with Sweden, the United States and Russia. See you soon on the trails. Until then—ride safe, ride sober.

►► **CLUB NEWS**

► **ADDAM SARUK**
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have been rebuilding for the last couple of months. It is nearly done now, but we have also been working on trail permissions, marking trail and preparing for our snowmobile rally, which was held on the Family Day weekend. While doing all of this, we still want to ride in the wonderful white stuff while it lasts!

I have been in contact with a potential new club to our area, which will help extend trails toward Highway 16. Other clubs have been asking for help trying to start up again as well.

With all the snow we had this year, I know every club was grooming and working on trails and cabins to keep everything running smoothly. This year's rallies were well attended, and I tried to get out to most of them. I attended the Fox Creek Jamboree and hope everyone who was there had a great time.

This is just a little glimpse into the life of one ASA board member. I am hoping that it keeps snowing so maybe, just maybe, there will be time to do everything before spring. See you out on the trails!

► **LYLE BIRNIE**
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pmcgrath@providentenergy.com or call the main office at 780-427-2695. All ASA club presidents have been sent the nomination packages with all the details.

If you have any outstanding members that you feel should be part of the annual awards program you can download the application forms from the ASA website and send them in to the office before June 1st.

This will be the last production until fall so everyone snowmobile as much as you can and have a great summer!



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ASA CLUB MEMBERS

Snowmobile clubs are an integral part of this popular sport with activities including development of trail networks and staging areas, competitive events, trail rides, picnic/bonfire rides, safety clinics, fundraising for charity, camping trips, search and rescue and maintenance clinics. Club activities are often family oriented, so all ages join in the fun and also the work to make the fun possible. Check out the list of member clubs. Is your club a member? The ASA can help you form a club if there isn't one in your area. Call us at our office (780) 427-2695 or visit www.altasnowmobile.ab.ca.

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A valid ASA trail pass is required to ride on the ASA snowmobile trail network and is available from your local club representatives or through the ASA. You can also purchase them at specific retail snowmobile dealerships situated near the trail network.

Visit our website to find contact information for ASA clubs in your area, to learn about the benefits of membership and how to become an Alberta Snowmobile Association member.

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Nice to see some real snow

CENTRAL ALBERTA CLUBS ARE HOSTING SPRING EVENT

BY JAMES BRADY, Central Alberta Regional Director

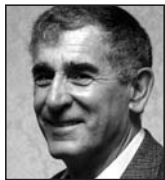
Well, here it is, another sledding season coming to an end. I hope that it was a very enjoyable and safe one, and that you put lots of kilometres behind you. This is also my favorite time—with all our sled manufacturers putting on their shows—to give us that sneak peek at what's available for the next season.

I would like to thank the Wembley club for their hospitality on the January 21st weekend in Grande Prairie. It was also nice to see what lots of snow looks like. I think that it was the first time I have heard that anyone had too much snow to run the groomer.

Also another great thanks for the hospitality shown to us at the jamboree in Fox Creek in February. I also enjoyed a busy weekend of sledding on the Family Day weekend by attending the David Thompson Rally on the Saturday and the Tail Creek Rally on the Sunday. Also the Caroline Rally on a new date this year, February 27th,

was very well attended with good snow and great weather.

I also want to remind all of you sledders about the big 40th anniversary spring meeting, supper and dance in Red Deer on April 9th. Remember, this event is open to all ASA snowmobilers, whether you are in for the spring meeting or you just want to come and visit, have a nice dinner, and dance away the evening, all hosted at Red Deer's Capri Hotel, Trade & Convention Centre. It will be a chance to hear from and chat with ASA presidents from years gone by, and to see that some of the issues from 1970 are still the same ones we are fighting in 2011. This event is being put together by your Central Alberta snowmobile clubs, David Thompson Snow Riders, Olds Snowmobile Club, Tail Creek Snowbirds, Caroline Snowmobile Club and the Drayton Valley Snowmobile Club. Call me or the ASA office for more information.



Boreal beauty

TAKE SOME SURVIVAL GEAR ALONG FOR THIS RUGGED RIDE

BY GEORGE DEPUTAT, Director at Large

We finally got to ride the trail we developed using funds provided by the federal government's National Trails Coalition (NTC) program last season. The trail in question runs on the northern boundary of the County of Smoky Lake, from Whitefish Lake to Hanmore Lake, for a total of 43 kilometres.

The terrain is part of Canada's boreal forest, which is home to many varieties of trees and animals, so it is not unusual to come across moose, deer or even wolves while riding. The area is rather rugged but a lot of the natural beauty was lost though grazing leases, oil-field development and a multitude of forest fire-fighting activity.

Nature is slowly repairing man's disturbance of the area with a lot of new growth making the region quite scenic. This

trail is some distance from roads so basically it is wilderness, and it would be a good idea to have some survival gear along for the ride.

Comprehensive signage will be completed later this summer, but one should add that because of the number of ponds and sloughs this is definitely a winter snowmobile trail only. Summer usage would be very damaging and detrimental to the landscape.

Accesses to the NTC trail are at Highways 36 and 855, the lakes and from the Iron Horse Trail using the Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail.

For more information on this trail contact the Smoky Lake Trail Twisters snowmobile club. Contacts are

listed in *RidersWest* magazine.



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ride sober...sled smart!**