

FACTS ABOUT SNOWMOBILING AND WINTER TRAILS

By Beautiful Eastern Association of Snowmobile Trails (B.E.A.S.T) & West Carleton Snowmobile Trails Association (W.C.S.T.A)

The B.E.A.S.T and W.C.S.T.A fully support the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT) being established as a multi-use trail (including snowmobiling) and will work with all stakeholders to build a positive trail experience for all users.



Multi-Use Trails

-Many snowmobile trails are open for multi-use

- Snowmobile trails often provide opportunities for other winter recreationists, at no cost to them.
- Groomed trails, on public property, provide easy access for the elderly and people with mobility difficulties.
- BEAST and WCSTA have excellent relationships with Beckwith and Montague Townships, City of Ottawa, Carleton Place, Lanark County, Almonte, Pakenham, Arnprior, and Blackeney.
- Both clubs carry general liability insurance.
- BEAST trails on multi-use trails have been successful for over 20 years without major incident.

Winter Economics

-A catalyst for success

- Snowmobiling generates \$8 billion in annual spending across Canada and generates over 41,000 jobs.
- Impact in Ontario is \$1.7 billion. The impact in Eastern Ontario is \$95 million and about 900 fulltime jobs.
- Eastern Ontario is a common riding area with the Ottawa / Kingston area ranked #2 in Ontario.
- Day trips generate \$111 at restaurants, \$45 at stores, \$83 on snowmobile fuel and \$65 for vehicle fuel.
- Overnight trips generate \$175 at restaurants, \$69 at stores, \$178 on snowmobile fuel and \$129 for vehicle fuel, and \$350 for accommodation.

Charity

-Snowmobilers are caring neighbours

- Snowmobilers raise over \$3 million for various charities each year across Canada
- BEAST has supported the Carleton Place Hospital, Lanark County Interval House, and Beckwith Township trails network.
- WCSTA supports the snowsuit fund, local food bank and other important community events.
- Other clubs support Easter Seals, Ride for Dad, schools, search and rescue services, medical services and other fund raising events that support the greater community.

Environmental Impact

-Snowmobiles have a minimal impact

- Snowmobilers exert dramatically less pressure on the ground than other recreational activities (i.e. 1/10 of a hiker and 1/6 of a horseback rider).
- Numerous studies have concluded that there are no detrimental effects to soil or vegetation from snowmobiling.
- All evidence of snowmobile operation disappears when the seasons change and snow melts.
- Snowmobile technology has drastically improved and are therefore significantly cleaner.

Emmissions, Snow and Water Quality

-Snowmobile engines are drastically cleaner

- Four-stroke engines and semi-direct injection two-stroke engines have truly driven a major transformation.
- Use of low-emission synthetic engine oils has also greatly reduced emissions.
- Studies (2006, 2013) in Yellowstone National Park have concluded that the effect of snowmobile emissions on the snowmelt is well below EPA criteria and below levels that would adversely impact aquatic systems.
- A 2010 study in Vermont indicated no detectable volatile organic compounds (VOC) or petroleum in surface waters adjacent to a major snowmobile trail.

Safety and Maintenance

-Snowmobiles are maintained and patrolled

- The OFSC has liability insurance.
- Trail Patrol members patrol the trail system to provide on-trail support, assistance, and directions.
- Trail Patrol members are also empowered to enforce the Trespass Act.
- Clubs provide numerous signs including cautionary (stop, arrows, speed), regulatory (no trespassing), and information (fuel, direction, accomodation, food).
- The trail and minor bridges are brushed and maintained for safe use. The trail is professionally groomed.

Sound

-Snowmobile sound levels have been reduced 94%

- 4 stroke snowmobilers are very quiet - it is often difficult to know when they are on.
- Snowmobile manufacturers are employing state of the art technologies to reduce noise.
- A post 1975 snowmobile is 78 Db(A). For comparison, a dishwasher is 70, lawn mower is 85, snowblower is 110.
- The practice of modifying a snowmobile exhaust system is illegal in Ontario.

Working Together

-Multi-use trails are successful with collaboration and communication

- Parking is often an issue for all participants.
- It is important to recognize there are significant differences between summer and winter motorized activities.
- User-friendly maps are important to show boundaries.
- A well-designed management plan is required.

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References: The Economic Impact of Snowmobiling in Ontario 2013-2014 (May 2014)
Facts and Myths About Snowmobiling and Winter Trails (2014)