



## Revelstoke Snowmobile Club

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## Snowmobile Revelstoke Society

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We the Revelstoke Snowmobile Club and the Snowmobile Revelstoke (Grooming) Society appreciate the opportunity to make you aware of some of our concerns and challenges that we continue to face. We have included some information to help you easily understand our issues and fully appreciate how the issues impact our organizations, our community and our province.

Revelstoke is a small community with a population of 8000 in the interior of British Columbia. The Revelstoke Snowmobile Club currently represents 630 members and has been the largest Snowmobile Club in British Columbia for the past five years. In an average winter season, Revelstoke typically welcomes over 22,000 snowmobilers with the majority of our visitors coming from other communities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Europe. Snowmobile tourism is an \$8 million economic boost to our community each winter.

While snowmobile tourism is vital to our community, our snowmobile areas continue to be whittled away. The Revelstoke Snowmobile Club and the Revelstoke Grooming Society have a strong history and have been actively involved in land use and wildlife processes for over thirty years. In fact Ron Laroy Director of the Revelstoke Snowmobile Club was a speaker at the ISC in Jackson Hole in regards to these very issues.

Prior to 2000 the majority of snowmobile areas were open to the snowmobiling public. In 2000 over 75% of our riding areas were closed to snowmobiling without proper process and public consultation however, the majority of these areas continue to be open to helisking. This has had tremendous impact on snowmobilers and our community. We responded by ramping up stewardship activities in an effort to try to maintain our areas and stop all future closures. In the past 10 years alone, RSC and SRS have:

- Produced and paid for Trail Maps (\$5000 X 10 years (\$50,000)
- Purchased and installed signs for trail heads, boundary marking etc. (\$9500)
- Produced and paid for Caribou Brochures to educate public on snowmobiling in areas with Caribou (\$6000)
- Website design and maintenance costs (\$2500)
- Trade Shows to educate and distribute information brochures (\$16,800)
- Magazine Articles and information (\$5000)
- Snowmobile Patrol Program (\$36,750)
- Snowmobile Patrol Safety, 1<sup>st</sup> Aide and Avalanche Courses for volunteers (\$6,300)
- Snowmobile Patrol Jackets and Equipment (\$10,000)

This is an investment of over \$143,552 supporting Stewardship activities. It should also be noted that the Revelstoke Snowmobile Club has assisted Ministry of Environment in installing signs as well as purchasing signs for the Ministry to mark the boundaries of some of the legislated closure areas. We strongly believe that the management of closure areas and successful compliance levels are directly related to the dedication and commitment of the Revelstoke Snowmobile Club and Snowmobile Revelstoke Society volunteers.

In 2006 when Mountain Caribou Recovery options were presented by the Species at Risk Coordination Office, the RSC and SRS responded by signing a Stewardship Management Agreement with Ministry of Environment. Boundaries were renegotiated and signed off on. Recently we have been informally advised of additional closures to two of our major snowmobile areas but are yet to receive official confirmation from government although new maps with the revised boundary showing the new restrictions are already posted on government's website.

Caribou Basin an important area, which was only open on weekends for snowmobiling, has now been closed entirely to us. A complete closure has been put in place with the boundaries extended to the highway to allow for easier enforcement purposes by government.

Keystone Standard Basin is the second recent closure put into effect by the provincial government. This area is of great importance to the Snowmobiling community. It is a larger area that is used more often. Local Ministry of Environment representatives have noted excellent compliance for this area for many years. When the provincial government approached us with the possibility of additional closures we reviewed the telemetry data and proposed workable solutions and alternative boundaries. We travelled 665 km or 413 miles one way to Victoria to meet with four Ministers of our Provincial Government. We left that meeting feeling confident that more closures would not be imposed but rather solutions would be sought out. The solution was rejected by the provincial government. At this time as stated earlier in

this presentation we are still waiting for official confirmation from government that the closures have in fact been implemented.

These recent closures are of great concern to the club. Over the last 30 years Revelstoke has been used as pilot project on managing Mountain Caribou and motorized recreation in British Columbia. Up until now these programs have proved for the most part to be very successful. With the sudden additional closures of two of our prime snowmobile areas without notification to the club and society we fear that further closures could happen throughout the province

We can no longer afford further closures to snowmobile areas throughout British Columbia. To date over 2 million hectares that is 4,942,108 acres already been closed throughout the province of BC under the guise of protecting Mountain Caribou.

Interestingly enough snowmobile tourism is very important for British Columbia as a whole. The Provincial Government has recognized the importance of snowmobile tourism for small communities and in December of 2009 Tourism British Columbia published the Experiences BC Snowmobile Sector Tourism Plan. Snowmobile Tourism in BC is considered to be a developing sector that has had very little tourism marketing. Tourism BC through the Experience BC Co-operative Marketing Program is actively investing in snowmobile marketing with the objective of growing snowmobile tourism at a rate of 2% higher than overall growth of tourism in BC. With government investing in snowmobile tourism, why would another branch of government limit snowmobiling opportunities especially when compliance levels are reported to be high? It is counter-productive to actively pursue increasing the number of snowmobilers one hand while limiting snowmobiling opportunities on the other hand.

We are now asking for help from the snowmobile community. Through ISMA, the Canadian Council Snowmobile of Organizations and the British Columbia Snowmobile Federation in working towards a solution to these very serious issues.