

VISION 2015

A Snowmobile Family Experience



Mission: The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs is a volunteer led not-for-profit association which, through strong leadership, provides a wide range of quality programs and services to, and on behalf of, its member organizations.

Vision: Our provincial network of organized snowmobile trails connects Ontario communities providing responsible riding experiences that are safe, enjoyable, and environmentally sustainable.

Values: As a provincial federation, the OFSC succeeds when our members succeed. Consequently, we strive to fully understand and consistently meet the needs and expectations of all our various members. Our decision making processes are accountable, transparent, inclusive, timely, provincial in perspective, and respectful of local interests and priorities.

To achieve our vision and mission we:

Listen - work earnestly to understand the needs and concerns of our members and others who have interest in what we do.

Learn - work continuously to gather facts and data upon which good decisions can be made.

Lead - work persistently to be effective stewards of our organization, its brand, and its people and to inspire common purpose that enables and empowers action.

1. Getting Started - Our Introduction to Recreational Snowmobiling

- » Trail permits are easy to find and convenient to obtain.
- » Opportunities to learn the right way to snowmobile are accessible for riders of all ages.
- » Information, resources, and advice are readily available to new and prospective snowmobilers.
- » OFSC snowmobile trails provide access to unique winter landscapes and enjoyable experiences.

2. Dispelling Myths - Let's Tell the Truth about Today's Snowmobiling

- » Every snowmobiler understands potential risks and the smart choices that avoid them.
- » A coordinated program of public education, legislation, and enforcement continues to make a real difference in preventing snowmobile incidents.
- » Snowmobiling is accessible to a wide range of participant ages and abilities.
- » Snowmobile use leaves little lasting impact on the natural environment while already low overall snowmobile emissions continue to decline.

3. Membership Has Its Privileges - Great Trails and So Much More

- » OFSC snowmobile trails are consistently well groomed, signed, and maintained.
- » Trail services like food, fuel, and accommodations are simple to locate and access.
- » OFSC permit members enjoy access to valuable member benefits.
- » New technologies connect members with information, services and each other.

4. Doing Our Part - Volunteering with Our Local Snowmobile Club

- » OFSC club responsibilities are well defined and fully embraced.
- » A broad range of OFSC training and support resources are available to clubs and their volunteers.
- » OFSC clubs welcome new volunteers, and are actively ensuring that there are enough volunteers available to complete club responsibilities.
- » OFSC clubs are well respected and supported by their communities for the social, recreational, economic and tourism benefits they provide.

5. OFSC Districts - Taking Care of Business

- » OFSC district responsibilities are well defined and fully embraced.
- » Clubs and associations work together within their district to reduce duplication, increase purchasing power, enhance sponsorship opportunities, coordinate marketing initiatives, and increase operating efficiencies.
- » Districts collaborate to improve the tourism trail product, secure long term land access, and providing the kind of riding experience that snowmobilers really want.
- » District offices have access to management level staff and provide consistent and accountable administrative and coordination support to volunteers.

6. Partners - A Little Help From Our Friends

- » Landowners are recognized and appreciated by snowmobilers, snowmobile related businesses, their local communities, and all levels of government.
- » Businesses whose success is linked to snowmobiling are investing dollars, material, and services-in-kind at appropriate levels.
- » Federal and Provincial and Municipal Governments have developed and implemented strategies to support snowmobiling.
- » Other trail users and groups are willing and able to contribute their fair share to shared trail operations including controlling trespass.

7. Team OFSC - Understanding the Big Picture

- » OFSC provincial responsibilities are well defined and fully embraced.
- » OFSC governance processes are up-to-date and effective.
- » Member organizations have a strong voice in the decision making process and the needs of volunteers are always considered in planning and implementation.
- » Team OFSC is appreciated as the best trail operating organization in the business.

8. Go Snowmobiling - Ontario's Best Rider Experience



I. Getting Started »

Our Introduction to Recreational Snowmobiling

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- » OFSC snowmobile trails provide access to unique winter landscapes and enjoyable experiences.



A Snowmobile Family's Experience

The following narrative is written from the perspective of an individual snowmobiler in the year 2015:

Do I enjoy snowmobiling? You bet I do! Friends and family enjoying breathtakingly beautiful winter landscapes on exhilarating, fun-to-ride vehicles; what's not to love?

As good as that sounds, there's so much more to tell you. So please sit back and let me describe what recreational snowmobiling in 2015 is really all about. I think you just might be surprised by how far we've come in just 5 years...

» My very first snowmobile ride ...

happened many years ago at a school friend's cottage. Although we really didn't travel very far on those temperamental old machines, at the time it seemed like a great adventure and was certainly a lot of fun.

So when neighbours offered to take us snowmobiling a few years ago, I was sure I knew what it would be all about. My husband, who grew up in a country with no real winter to speak of, was sure that he would freeze solid. Turned out we were both wrong.

That was in 2010 and our neighbour's snowmobiles – sleds they called them - were amazing. Easy to drive, comfortable to ride, and the borrowed helmets and suits kept us warm and dry all day. The trails were an even bigger surprise. Groomed flat by big tracked vehicles like you see on ski hills, they wound their way through awesome winter landscapes leading us to places we'd never get to see any other way.

Some trails were wide and straight while others were full of twists and turns as they followed the changing contours and elevations of the natural environment. Special signs helped us navigate and even led us to a nice lunch spot filled with other enthusiastic snowmobilers. On our way back home, we stopped at spectacular scenic lookout and even saw some deer

grazing in a trail-side meadow. Tired but exhilarated, we had so much fun reliving the whole ride all over again during dinner that night. Needless to say, we were completely hooked on the entire riding experience.

Getting started in snowmobiling took a little research. But once we discovered the helpful information and resources available to prospective snowmobilers, it wasn't long at all before a few successful snowmobile rental experiences turned into actual sled ownership. That initial welcome and coaching was so important to us. I'm glad it's even better today.

Our local snowmobile dealer was very helpful and a brand new, entry-level snowmobile, plus a late model used sled, met our needs affordably. Suits, helmets and other gear made welcome birthday presents and a snowmobile trailer answered more practical concerns about transportation and storage. Vehicle registration and insurance were obtained just like we do for our car, and the snowmobile trail permits we purchased online arrived promptly.

Of course, both our kids were eager to take their snowmobile driver training courses right here in town. And even though our first snowmobiles were very easy to operate, my husband and I decided to access some really good new adult driver training opportunities. Learning the right way to snowmobile really helped us gain confidence and competency. We also adopted a zero alcohol approach before and during snowmobile rides - it just made sense.

- ☒ Snowmobiles;
- ☒ Gear;
- ☒ Training;
- ☒ Registrations;
- ☒ Insurance;
- ☒ Trail Permits.

We were finally good to go! Getting ready to snowmobile that first season wasn't all that difficult. Still, I appreciate the improvements that have made it easier and more convenient with each passing year. Even experienced snowmobilers like to be "ready to ride" with as little fuss as possible.



2. Dispelling Myths »

Let's Tell the Truth about Today's Snowmobiling

- » Every snowmobiler understands potential risks and the smart choices that avoid them.
- » A coordinated program of public education, legislation, and enforcement continues to make a real difference in preventing snowmobile incidents.
- » Snowmobiling is accessible to a wide range of participant ages and abilities.
- » Snowmobile use leaves little lasting impact on the natural environment while already low overall snowmobile emissions continue to decline.

» I smile now when I hear others repeat myths ...

about how snowmobiling is an inherently unsafe and extreme sport, harms the environment, offers little health benefit, or is just too cold or difficult to be fun. And doesn't global warming mean that winter will soon be just a memory?

While less common today than they once were, these mistaken beliefs persist and can negatively impact the future of what we know to be a great recreational experience. So I take the time to provide correct information politely but firmly whenever I hear things I know to be wrong. After all, if snowmobilers don't speak up for themselves, who will?

Truth is, like many outdoor activities, staying safe on a snowmobile is really just a matter of understanding the potential risks and making smart choices to avoid them. While a very small number of riders are involved in incidents each season as a result of their poor choices, a coordinated program of persistent, relevant public education, effective legislation, and enforcement has made a real difference. By any fair measure, snowmobiling incidents rates on trails are low and continue to decline.

One of the great strengths of snowmobiling is that it can be enjoyed by people from a very wide range of ages and abilities. For many, snowmobiling has been a lifelong passion first experienced in

youth, enjoyed later as adults, and continued well into their senior years. But while most people find it easy to do, snowmobiling is certainly not a passive activity and is anything but cold.

Specialized boots, gloves, helmets, plus outer and inner clothing made with advanced materials are all carefully designed to keep us

warm and dry. In fact, staying comfortable is the key to maximizing the significant health benefits that result from a physically active and mentally invigorating day well spent in the great outdoors. We go to bed tired but happy and eager for our next ride. Believe me - no 3D interactive computer game or movie can compete with that.

So much has been made over the last two decades about global warming and changing weather patterns. It seems clear to me that winter conditions suitable for snowmobiling exist today and will continue in Ontario for the foreseeable future even if it is more variable than we're used to. By operating with flexibility and responsiveness, we can accommodate and even capitalize on changing environmental conditions. Snowmobiling has led the way in celebrating and promoting Ontario's unique winter recreation and tourism opportunities.

Few people see more of Ontario's incredible landscape, so it should be no surprise that snowmobilers are caring, committed and capable stewards of the natural environment. Modern snowmobiles are sophisticated, technologically advanced off-road vehicles with dramatically lower exhaust and noise emission levels than those old machines most people seem to remember. And every year, snowmobile manufacturers find ways to make their new models even more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly.

Fact is, snowmobiles leave little physical impact on the natural environment other than short-lived impressions on the protective covering of snow. I like that a lot. Hey, it's my kids' planet too!



Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations



3. Membership has its Privileges »

Great Trails and So Much More

- » OFSC snowmobile trails are consistently well groomed, signed and maintained.
- » Trail services like food, fuel, and accommodations are simple to locate and access.
- » OFSC permit members enjoy access to valuable member benefits.
- » New technologies connect members with information, services and each other.

» There are so many ways to enjoy snowmobiling:

short rides exploring our local area, attending special events, longer day trips in and around our region, weekend visits to new or favourite destinations, and week-long vacation tours that cross vast stretches of this amazing province. But as varied as riding opportunities are, they all have one important thing in common – consistently fun to ride snowmobile trails.

While the trails were often good when we first started snowmobiling, we've been delighted by the way they have steadily improved in consistency over the past five years. Today in 2015, we find that everywhere we go in the province, OFSC trails are consistently well groomed and well signed. No matter what our destination, trails are always highly developed and maintained; trail amenities like staging areas and washrooms are well planned; it's easy to find our way around even in unfamiliar areas; and services like food, fuel, repair shops and accommodations are simple to locate and access. When I say "it's all good", I mean just that.

The organized snowmobiling community has always made good use of new technology and that too has evolved greatly over the past five years. The whole Trail Permit process is so much easier now

for both buyers and sellers. GPS route planning, accurate near real time trail status and grooming reporting, up-to-the minute news and information, and advanced social networking opportunities, are all available on a wide range of platforms including mobile applications. Snowmobiling offers an entire digital world that my husband and I visit often and our kids truly live in.

Today, we think of our snowmobile trail permits as far more than simply a legal requirement to use the OFSC prescribed trail network. By accepting OFSC member benefits, our permits become passports to the entire snowmobile lifestyle and rider experience. They unlock a whole world of valuable member benefits like an informative member magazine, better access to trip planning and other comprehensive on-line resources, and special offers that save us money or add value to things we need and want.

We really like it that purchasing our permits is so convenient, offers so many member benefits, and that our permit investment is being used accountably to provide a consistently excellent rider experience. We're OFSC members, and proud of it. Every snowmobiler should be!



4. Doing Our Part »

Volunteering with Our Local Snowmobile Club

- » OFSC club responsibilities are well defined and fully embraced.
- » A broad range of OFSC training and support resources are available to clubs and their volunteers.
- » OFSC Clubs welcome new volunteers, and are actively ensuring that there are enough volunteers available to complete club responsibilities.
- » OFSC clubs are well respected and supported by their communities for the social, recreational, economic and tourism benefits they provide.

» One of the most rewarding things we've ever done ...

as a family was to get involved with our local snowmobile club right from the start. We knew that it takes a lot of volunteer work to maintain the trails in our area and we wanted to help. But getting involved turned out to be far more interesting and rewarding than we anticipated. We've learned so much, had so much fun, and met so many great people – all while doing good work for snowmobiling and for our community.

As new volunteers, our club really welcomed us and carefully explained how everything works to ensure that snowmobilers with little detailed knowledge of our local area always have a great experience while they're here.

We learned that community snowmobile clubs like ours are generally responsible for:

- » Delivery of Club Programs including local trail routing, access to services, land use securement and landowner relations, and trail construction, maintenance, and signage,
- » Delivery of District Programs including grooming, marketing, communications, and mapping,

Delivery of Provincial Programs including volunteer development, safety and risk management, and administrative reporting, and

Club Governance including club business operations and participating in district and provincial planning.

My husband and I have taken on leadership roles within our club and we help out generally whenever we can. The kids help out too and appreciate that the club offers youth specific events and that their volunteer hours are recognized at school. My parents really enjoy volunteering at club special events and fundraisers too, even though they don't snowmobile.

All of us are appreciative of the broad range of great training programs and other comprehensive resources the OFSC makes available to support local volunteers. This includes up-to-date, user friendly, and intuitive web based reporting systems necessary for the organization to manage risk and ensure accountability.

We're proud that our club is well respected in our community and enjoys constructive and supportive relationships with key groups like the business community, enforcement and emergency response personnel, municipalities, other trail operators, health units, schools, and our tourism office. It's really gratifying to know that the economic, recreational, and tourism benefits provided through our volunteer work is acknowledged and appreciated and that we're part of it.

More than anything else, we enjoy the people. Our club is stronger and better able to provide great trails because we all pull together and have fun. In fact, I think my husband would make a great club president – just don't tell him I said so.



5. OFSC Districts »

Taking Care of Business

- » OFSC district responsibilities are well defined and fully embraced.
- » Clubs and associations work together within their district to reduce duplication, increase purchasing power, enhance sponsorship opportunities, coordinate marketing initiatives, and increase operating efficiencies.
- » Districts collaborate to improve the tourism trail product, secure long term land access, and providing the kind of riding experience that snowmobilers really want.
- » District offices have access to management level staff and provide consistent and accountable administrative and coordination support to volunteers.

With a few years of club experience...

under my belt, I've recently taken a seat on the board of directors of my OFSC snowmobile district. I want to make a difference by helping my district be the best it can be. Clubs and associations work together through our district to reduce duplication, increase purchasing power, enhance sponsorship opportunities, coordinate marketing initiatives, and increase operating efficiencies to get the most out of the resources we manage.

Today, district organizations like ours are responsible for:

- » Allocation of Resources within the district using processes which are fair, transparent, and accountable,
- » District Trail Planning and Operational Coordination to ensure a rider experience that consistently meets provincial objectives,
- » District Coordination of Provincial Programs including volunteer development, safety and risk management, and operational reporting,
- » Development and Implementation of District Programs including communication, marketing, fundraising, partnership development, and routine administration functions to support both district and local operations, and

- » District Governance including district business operations, ensuring club participation in district decision making and planning, electing and interacting with governor and operations director, and participation in provincial planning.

Working with committed and knowledgeable volunteer representatives from across our district has been such an eye-opener in understanding how organized snowmobiling is delivered. I especially like the way our district collaborates with the adjacent districts in our region of the Province to improve our tourism trail product, secure long term land access where ever possible, and focusing on providing the kind of riding experience that snowmobilers really want.

I've come to really appreciate and value the important role our district office plays in providing consistent and accountable administrative and coordination support to our local volunteer-driven clubs. Having access to management level staff is a great backup and support for our district board as well.



6. Partners »

A Little Help From Our Friends

- » Landowners are recognized and appreciated by snowmobilers, snowmobile related businesses, their local communities, and all levels of government.
- » Businesses whose success is linked to snowmobiling are investing dollars, material, and services-in-kind at appropriate levels.
- » Federal and Provincial and Municipal Governments have developed and implemented strategies to support snowmobiling.
- » Other trail users and groups are willing and able to contribute their fair share to shared trail operations including controlling trespass.

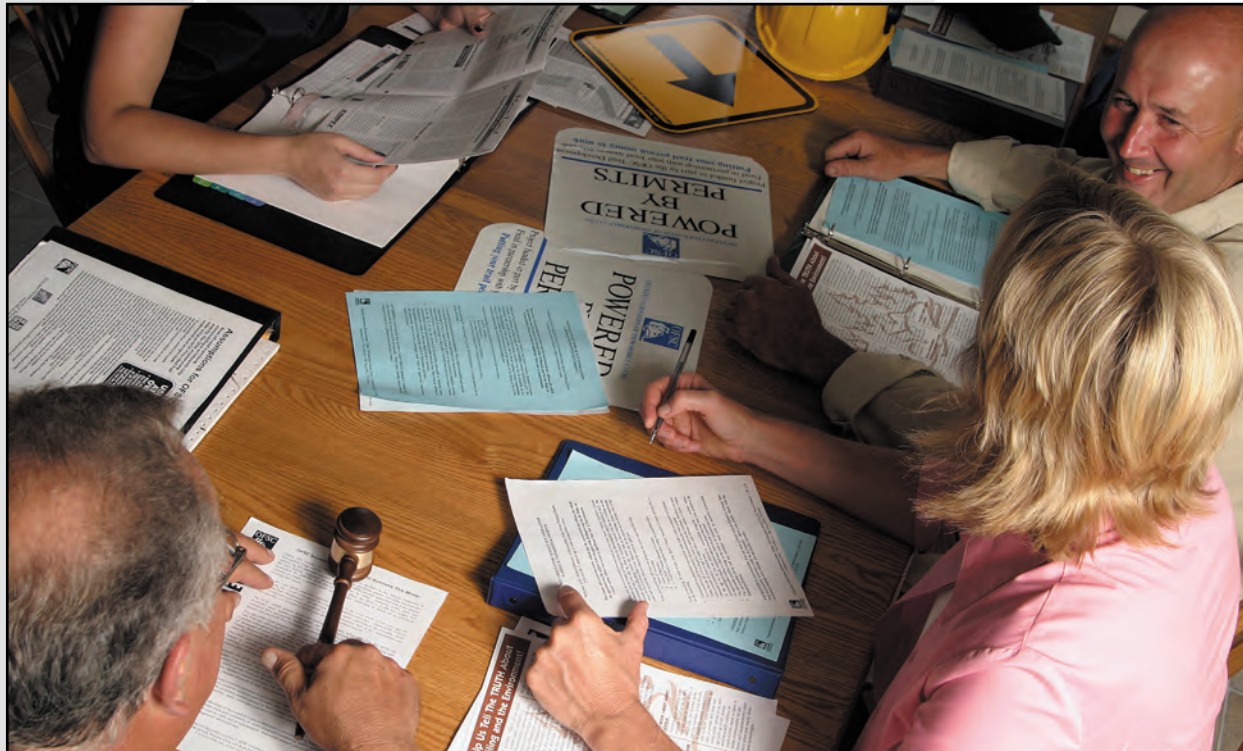
» Working with my club and district has given me...

a new perspective on the broad range of partners and stakeholders interested in the success of today's organized recreational snowmobiling including:

- » Landowners who allow snowmobile trails to cross their property are recognized and appreciated by snowmobilers, snowmobile related businesses, their local communities, and all levels of government.
- » Businesses whose success is linked to, or influenced by snowmobiling are investing dollars, material, and services-in-kind at appropriate levels.
- » The Federal and Provincial Governments have developed and implemented strategies to support snowmobiling for both its tourism and recreational values and to remove or reduce bureaucratic and administrative barriers wherever possible.

- » Municipal Governments have become increasingly snowmobile friendly and recognize the importance of snowmobiling by providing increasing and significant financial and in-kind goods and services.
- » Other Trail Users of all disciplines understand what trails can be shared and how to share them. More importantly, they also understand what trails cannot be shared and how to avoid trespass.
- » Other Trail Operators have come to understand that shared use really means shared operations and they are willing and able to contribute their fair share to shared trail operations.

The mutual benefits that result from creating and building our relationships with these groups takes sustained effort but has yielded rewards both directly in making our work easier, and indirectly in a promoting general understanding and appreciation for organized snowmobiling within our community.



7. Team OFSC »

Understanding the Big Picture

- » OFSC provincial responsibilities are well defined and fully embraced.
- » OFSC governance processes are up-to-date and effective.
- » Member organizations have a strong voice in the decision making process and the needs of volunteers are always considered in planning and implementation.
- » Team OFSC is appreciated as the best trail operating organization in the business.

» The fundamental purpose of the OFSC has always...

been to provide strong leadership and support to its member organizations. To fulfill its role, the OFSC works at the provincial level on the following primary tasks:

- » Development and delivery of programs to ensure that overall provincial resources are both adequate and sustained.
- » Fair and accountable sharing of provincial resources by districts to meet provincial objectives.
- » Provincial trail development coordination, support, strategy, and evaluation.
- » Development, communication, implementation, and evaluation of provincial policies and programs.
- » Provincial representation, external relations, communications, marketing, and partnership development.
- » Research, training, organizational development, and administration functions to support

provincial, district, association, and club operations.

- » Provincial governance including OFSC business operations, ensuring club and district participation in provincial planning and decision making, strategic planning, board of governors meetings, and annual meeting and convention.

As a club and district volunteer, I certainly appreciated the leadership and support that the OFSC provides. However I didn't fully understand the real meaning of "Team OFSC" until I attended my first annual general meeting and convention a couple of years ago. Working together with OFSC leadership and delegates from across the province, we provided direction for the organization while celebrating our many accomplishments and successes. It was fun, inspiring, motivating, and I returned home with new insight and energy.

As a federation, the OFSC understands that it can only succeed if its member organizations succeed. That's why it ensures that member organizations have a strong voice in the decision making process and that the needs of volunteers are considered in planning and implementation. In fact, a recent review has ensured that OFSC governance and decision making processes are up-to-date and effective.

The OFSC is recognized throughout Canada and internationally as a leading voice in organized recreational snowmobiling. In addition, the OFSC continues to take a leadership role in Canadian and international snowmobiling through its membership in national and international organizations and forums. Our volunteer leaders and professional staff are appreciated as the best in the business.

Through a process of outreach to its member organizations, key stakeholders, and partners, the OFSC has just released Vision 2020 to guide development over the next five years. I really like the atmosphere of confidence and trust that underlies Team OFSC's enthusiasm for our shared future.



8. Go Snowmobiling»

Ontario's Best Rider Experience

» It's the year 2015...

and Ontario's consistent, interconnected, and sustainable snowmobile trail network is widely regarded as the best in the world. Participation rates are on the rise once again and many attribute this to a clear focus on assuring the overall rider experience and tourism trail product.

Ontario snowmobiling continues to succeed because it is well organized. Through organization, issues are dealt with, opportunities seized, and partnerships formed. Throughout the province, today's OFSC is effectively governed, inclusive, and forward looking in its decision making.

Local volunteers, upon whom trails depend, are well supported and appreciated by everyone who benefits from their hard work. OFSC snowmobile clubs across the province report a resurgence in community support and interest.

There's never been a better time to Go Snowmobiling.

Please join us - you'll be glad you did!



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