

## Don Wheaton CCSO Excellence Award

Don Wheaton, President of the Miramichi Snow-Goers, NBFSC Club #22, was awarded the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organization's (CCSO) Excellence Award for Outstanding Snowmobiler in Canada at the conclusion of the 2013 season.



At the 45<sup>th</sup> International Snowmobile Congress (ISC), hosted in Wisconsin, in June 2013 Don attended with NBFSC President, Sandy Young and General Manager, Ross Antworth the closing International Awards Banquet. The CCSO annual award announced at the ISC is the highest award a snowmobiler-volunteer can have bestowed upon them in Canada.

Don has been Club President for over 12 years and for many of those years he served as Club Secretary as well, as volunteers for this job

are few. During 2011-2012 season he volunteered as Secretary to the New Brunswick Federation of Snowmobile Clubs' Board of Directors. As Club President, Don interfaced with both Federal Member of Parliament, as well as his Provincial MLA to garner support for "Winter Tourism".



Don has personally *led the charge* to upgrade the Club's trail signage to meet new NBFSC guidelines. This in itself was quite a task, considering

the club has 335 kilometers of groomed trail. Don also operates the Club's two trail groomers and co-ordinates the maintenance of the Club's trail grooming equipment. He took a lead role in refurbishing the Club's bridges (six of them), which involved endless hours applying for permits, organizing work crews, and actually working on the project himself.



Another major accomplishment for Don was gaining government approval for the only government funded trail in the Province; NBFSC Trail #58. This trail - over 150 kilometers one way - is a vital link connecting the southern trails to the northern regions into the centre of the province, a vastly remote area, but into a snow belt that offers some of the best and longest snowmobile season in the province.

Another important project related to NBFSC #58 that was completed, was gaining approval from the Department of Natural Resources to create a 16 km trail on Crown Land that would run parallel to a busy logging road...this was essential to keep sledders' safe!

Don has taken the lead to grow his snowmobile Club from a "local only" approach to becoming a partner in a Province-wide Winter Tourism product.

Don has made snowmobiling better by being organized, tireless, and diligent in keeping the volunteers in his club motivated to carry out the mundane tasks...many times doing them himself. He is forward thinking, and refuses to take no for an answer, especially when dealing with the frustrations of government rules and regulations. If a project seems too large to tackle...ask Don...he'll figure out a way to "make it happen".

The NBFSC was proud to nominate Don and to witness his accomplishments being rewarded by the CCSO at the ISC. He joins a long list of NBFSC volunteers who have also been awarded the CCSO's Excellence Award in the past 15 years; Evelyn Broad (Twin Rivers SC), Bob Walsh (Miramichi Valley SC) and Harold McCann (Fredericton SC).