

An Apology to our Snowmobilers & a Thank-you to our Clubs-Volunteers

As President of the New Brunswick Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (NBFSC) and all 51-Member Clubs, I want to extend and express an apology to any and all snowmobilers who in the past three weeks have travelled to those regions of N.B. with snow and not had the experience – trail grooming – you contributed towards. As member clubs, we have a responsibility to do our utmost to groom and sign all NBFSC - Club trails to a minimum guideline...and in some trails we did not meet this expectation. There are many reasons, but I am not going to dwell on this as it will only come across as defensive and sound like excuses. Today I wish to start by apologizing.

Next I want to express my deep appreciation and thank you to a number of member clubs, individuals, corporate partners and other businesses who in the past 3 weeks have gone in my opinion above and beyond to assist and try their very best to address some of the immediate grooming issues and challenges that arose. I will single them out below; if there are others I am not aware of then please understand I also deeply appreciate your contribution and so do all the snowmobilers. Also, many clubs are not mentioned here because simply they continue to trail sign and groom as needed, with no excuses, so thank you to them.

The Kedgwick SC had a major breakdown of their member's trail groomer approximately three weeks ago and it took some time to repair. As we all know the Kedgwick – NBFSC trails are in the “middle” of the system in Zones 1 and 2 and when not maintained we all hear about it. So **Thank-you** to the volunteers of Kedgwick for working as quickly as possible to get the groomer fixed and for keeping the NBFSC in the know (all Clubs are requested to advise the Federation when broke down, not all do).

Thank you to the Restigouche SC and Lynn Mann for grooming portions of Kedgwick's trails, NBFSC #17. **Thank you** to the Green River (Riviere Verte) SC and Yves Cormier for also responding to the breakdown; grooming NBFSC #17. Last **thank you** to the St. Quentin SC and Romeo Castonguay for assisting the Kedgwick club's trails (NBFSC Trail #28) during this time.

At about the same time our Nepisiguit SC had a major breakdown of one of their two groomers. At the time it appeared the breakdown would be for the balance of the season, which would translate to a large section of NBFSC #23 not being maintained. **Thank you** to Nepisiguit for keeping **one** of the best groomed trail systems in the entire Province, every season.

On Tuesday, March 15th, we (NBFSC) requested the Hon. Bill Fraser at the Tourism department to allow one of the trail groomers based at Mt. Carleton Park be allowed to groom NBFC Trail #23 on an alternating basis with responsibility already for approximately one-half of NBFSC Trail #58. On Wednesday, March 16th, we received permission. (The NBFSC does not own the 2 trail groomers at Mt. Carleton Park).

My gratitude and a large thank you goes out to Tourism Minister Bill Fraser, Tourism Deputy Minister Kelly Cain and to Mayor Nicole Somers from St. Quentin for their immediate understanding of the issues and for all agreeing to the request to assist us. (The Town of St. Quentin is under a provincial Concessionaire agreement to operate the grooming, not the NBFSC).

Thank you to Alyre Marquis of the Serpentine Lodge who donated 300 litres of fuel for the Mt. Carleton Groomer to groom NBFSC #23.

Thank you to Richard Dobson and the Nepisiguit SC for donating 100 litres of fuel to the Province's trail groomer when it reached the trail system (NBFSC Trail #23) at Popple Depot.

At the same time snowmobilers were also attempting to access the trails and snow belt by using NBFSC Trail #58 from many points in the Miramichi trail system; Boiestown, Doaktown and Blackville as well as many back country forestry roads. (The NBFSC or Clubs by provincial law are not permitted to groom roads without DNR authorization that takes upwards of 1 year to obtain).

To resolve the grooming issues on NBFSC #58 ...again we have had tremendous cooperation from more people I wish to express our appreciation towards.

Thank you to Brent Dunphy and the Fredericton SC and **thank you to** Robbie Graham and the Nashwaak Valley Fredericton North SC for coming together to ensure the southern end, (below Highway #180) has been groomed and will be groomed consistently the rest of 2016. Fredericton SC has donated their groomer and an operator and will be basing it in the region and the Nashwaak Fredericton North Club is donating the fuel costs for the trail grooming.

Thank you to Corporate Partner, Keith Wilson of Wilson's Lodge on the Miramichi River for donating 100 litres of fuel towards trail grooming.

We have also learned that two snowmobilers-volunteers were also instrumental in assisting with Trail #58; Earl Holland floated the Fredericton SC groomer and Ralph Anderson will return the groomer at the end of the season, so... **Thank you.**

I am proud to be President of the NBFSC and consider it a privilege. We do not do everything perfectly, but I trust that with this information above you will gain a little insight into what has occurred and how we do not always have the complete control to do what everyone wants...immediately. Some actions or inaction is controlled by Government and most solutions by the 51 Member Clubs.

With support of the Board who I report to and ultimately the support of a majority of the 51 Member Clubs, I intend to at the clubs' Annual General Meeting in May address the issue of trail grooming. We as volunteers have a finite amount of resources – money and people - so perfection is not the goal, rather better cooperation and the ability to solve the problem which only the clubs can make happen, not the NBFSC from the top down.

We need to do a better job, we need to cooperate more, we need to share grooming equipment and we need to understand that we should be listening to our customers – snowmobilers – who contribute to the trail system. We must stop being defensive when you ask *why* so that we can continue to enjoy New Brunswick's unique position of always having snow and snowmobile trails regardless of where it falls.

Thank you for accepting my apology and **thank you** to everyone who has contributed to make us better.

Best Regards,

Brad Mann, President, NBFSC - A Volunteer Organization