

»»» EXPECTATIONS DOCUMENT

The following are some general expectations that the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club (WTSC) have regarding proposed Land Use development that is overlapping or in close proximity to the Snowmobile Trails whose locations are provided on the Whitecourt Trailblazers' Snowmobile Trail System Map. The map can be viewed and download on the Whitecourt Trailblazers' website.

www.whitecourtrailblazers.ca/trail-impactors-information/

CLUB HISTORY

The Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club was formed in 1979 and is currently the largest and most active member club of the Alberta Snowmobile Association, with over 300 Trailblazers members. The Trailblazers manage and maintain an extensive snowmobile trail system consisting of 465kms of documented (CNT registered) trail system in the Whitecourt area (within Woodlands County). In addition, the Club has two snowmobile staging areas, three warm-up shelters, and three designated look-outs / points of interest at various locations along the trail system. The current 2011 value of the trail system is estimated at \$3,000,000.00.

The Snowmobile Trails were developed over a 30 year period largely through volunteer efforts and various levels of Government financial assistance. The Snowmobile Trail system is recognized as an important tourism and economic driver for the Whitecourt area by Government of Alberta. Approximately 5,000 – 10,000 snowmobiles travel the trail system during the winter season, generally from December 1 – April 15 each year. The Town of Whitecourt is the **Snowmobile Capital of Alberta**, and the Whitecourt area is the most popular snowmobile destination within the Province.

The Snowmobile Trails in the Whitecourt / Woodlands County are integral to the Province of Alberta and Whitecourt and area residents. Various levels of Government (Town of Whitecourt, Woodlands County, Province of Alberta – Tourism, Government of Canada) and the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club have invested thousands of dollars into the development and ongoing maintenance of the Trail system, and as such the protection of the trail system is a high priority for the Club and the various levels of Government.

DIGITAL TRAIL INFORMATION

GIS shape files and a GPS trail/track file are available on-line on the Whitecourt Trailblazers' website.

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PLANNED RESOURCE ACTIVITIES

Any company or individual (activity proponent) proposing activity on the public landscape that are in conflict (crossing, occupying or adjacent) with the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club's designated snowmobile trails must contact the Whitecourt Trailblazers via email (cnt@whitecourtrailblazers.ca) and provide a plan 30 days prior to the planned activities on how the specific planned activities will not impact the use of the snowmobile trails.

Activity proponents must recognize that the Snowmobile season in the Whitecourt area is generally from December 1 to April 15 each year and that this is a critical timeframe where any trail impact has a high

possibility of creating a potential safety issues for trail users and potential liability issues for the activity proponent.

It should also be noted that as many as 10,000 snowmobiles will utilize the trail system over an 18 week period. Activity proponents should also recognize that some portions of the trails generally have more traffic than other portions, and that a shortened season most often translates to higher traffic volumes during a condensed season. The 2011 estimates suggest average snowmobile traffic of approximately 550 movements per week, with 80% of that traffic visible on the weekends (Friday to Sunday).

In addition, the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club host an annual Snowmobile Rally on the 3rd Saturday and 3rd Sunday each year in February (Alberta Family Day Weekend). The rally brings 600 – 1200 snowmobiles to Whitecourt for the weekend. Specific trails see an unusual high volume of snowmobile traffic that weekend, and activity proponents should be aware of the increased snowmobile trail usage and higher than normal potential for incidents at trail impact areas.

Planned activities that will impact the trails should be conducted during weekdays (Monday to Thursday) in order to mitigate the impact and reduce safety concerns for the trail users.

LINEAR ACTIVITIES (ie. pipelines, roads, seismic lines etc.)

1.0 Linear Activity (will not occupy current trails)

The proposed activity **must** be reported to the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club.

Activity proponent **must**:

- Provide 30 or more days written notice to the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club.
- Mitigate the interference with the trail system by searching for alternative access or routes for their planned activities. Provide the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club details of proposed access routes.
- Provide detailed plans and/or GPS locations of activity.
- Provide specific information on the proposed activity.
- Advise all workers, contractors, delivery trucks, etc. of the nearby snowmobile trail system, and discuss the appropriate risk mitigation steps during worksite safety meetings.
- Recognize the trail boundaries, and where activity is immediately adjacent to the trail, proposed activity must not interfere with the trail and the trail should be maintained clear of deadfall, stumps, sand, gravel, fill, equipment, or other materials and equipment.
- Develop access routes / roads into the work site, as the CNT registered snowmobile trail system has not been designed for industrial or commercial use. The trail system includes some decks designed specifically for snowmobile use, and not intended for pick-up, truck or heavy equipment traffic.
- Ensure that snow piles or windrows are not placed on the trail at any time or at any location on the trail system.
- Ensure trail is returned to its original condition in the event that trail damage has occurred during the proposed activity. Trail damage includes, ruts from traffic crossing or utilizing portions of the trail. Traffic includes quads, ATV, pick-up, and other heavy equipment.
- Applicants must give one (1) week notice of commencement of work that will impact the trail so we can notify the public and possibly re-schedule the grooming. If possible the work should be scheduled during week days (Monday to Friday) for less impact with the public.

2.0 Linear Activity (where linear activity crosses trails)

In addition to the Conditions listed in 1.0 above, the proposed activity proponent **must**:

- Install temporary signage if activity is ongoing between December 1 to April 15 to alert snowmobile traffic that equipment may be crossing the trail. Applicants must provide sufficient temporary signage to assume completely, all liability in conjunction with the applicants activities.
 - Reflective DOT approved highway signage (related to the specific work being undertaken) must be used and installed on the trail 100m from the crossing on either side of the trail crossing. In addition, temporary bright orange reflective ribbon should be fixed to trees or temporary posts within 2m of the crossing location. Consideration should be given to the use of flashing lights for all disturbed sections of the trail in order to improve safety for snowmobilers travelling in the dark, placed within 2m of the crossing.
 - Each crossing must be identified independently, and it is not acceptable to utilize one set of signs to mark multiple crossings.
- Discuss with and advise all workers, contractors, delivery trucks, etc. of the nearby snowmobile trail system, and discuss the appropriate risk mitigation steps during worksite safety meetings. Risk mitigation plans must include direction to workers, contractors, etc. to yield to snowmobile traffic on the trail system.

3.0 Linear Activity (where a permanent trail crossing or road is required)

In addition to the Conditions listed in 1.0 and 2.0 above, the proposed activity proponent **must**:

- Compensate the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club in order that the Club can install approved snowmobile trail signs (4 per crossing) at the new permanent crossing required by the activity proponent.
 - Each Crossing shall bear a flat fee compensation of \$1,000.00 payable to the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club. Compensation to cover signs and posts for each crossing (4 required) plus installation and travel costs.
 - All permanent snowmobile trail signs must meet the approved *International Association of Snowmobile Administrators (IASA) Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing & Placement 2000*. A link to the guideline document is available on the Whitecourt Trailblazers' website. www.whitecourtrailblazers.ca/trail-impactors-information/
- Any permanent crossings requiring a high grade road must leave the snowmobile trail accessible via a gradual slope. In cases where a ditch is required along the road then provisions must be in place for gradual access (ie. culvert). This is at the cost of the applicant.

LARGE AREA ACTIVITIES (ie. wellsites, cutblocks, etc.)

4.0 In addition to the Conditions listed in 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 above, the proposed activity proponent **must**:

- Consider leaving 'wildlife trees' no closer than 1m from the trail edge (overall trail width of 6m) in order to help distinguish the trail through the cutblock.
- All debris that has fallen on the trail **must** be cleaned up daily to ensure trail safety for trail users.
- If a pit is required then the pit should be 40m from the trail edge in order to maintain trail safety for users.

5.0 It is expected that the proposed activity proponent will exhaust all other access and location options prior to proposing to detour or re-route the existed designated trail location. In the event that detouring

or re-routing the trail is the only viable option to mitigate long-term potential hazards between the activity proponent facility or worksite and future trail users, then the activity proponent **must**:

- Construct the trail that meets or exceeds the minimum standards as described in the:
 - *Government of Alberta – Alberta Recreation Corridor & Trails Classification System Document*
 - *Government of Alberta – Best Practices Guide for Trail Stewards, Operators, Managers and Owners.*

A link to both of these documents is available on the Whitecourt Trailblazers' website.

www.whitecourtrailblazers.ca/trail-impactors-information/.

For budgeting purposes, the activity proponent should anticipate trail relocation costs of \$5000 to \$7500 per kilometre (2011 costs) in order to meet the minimum requirements of the *Government of Alberta – Alberta Recreation Corridor & Trails Classification System Document (Section B4(S) Developed Trail – page 26)*.

- Trail should be constructed using industrial mulching equipment rather than a dozer, as a berm or brush / material pile on either side of the trail is unacceptable and does not meet the *Alberta Recreation Corridor & Trails Classification System Document* or Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club trail development precedent.
- Any new development of trails must be a minimum of 6m wide to allow for effective access for snowmobile trail grooming equipment.
- Any trail relocation or new development of the trail should depart from the original/existing trail at a shallow angle (30 degrees or less).
- Slope and side slope considerations must be taken into account as per the *Alberta Recreation Corridor & Trails Classification System Document*. Activity proponent should consult with Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club representative to confirm slope considerations.
- Advise the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club that the trail must be relocated and
 - Provide 30 days notice to the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club prior to the trail relocation if the relocation work is to be completed between April 16 – November 30.
 - Provide 90 days notice to the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club prior to the trail relocation if the relocation work is to be completed between December 1 – April 15.
 - Recognize that a representative of the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club will consult and review the proposed trail relocation plans with the activity proponent supervisor and that the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club will be compensated \$500 for a four hour consultation or \$900 for a daily consultation. The minimum consultation shall be four hours.
 - Realize that additional signage may also be required as per the *Government of Alberta – Trail Guideline Document*, and as such cost of signage (as per 3.0 above) would also be the responsibility of the activity proponent.
 - Provide GPS data or GIS data of the entire length of the relocated trail portion. Digital files should be provided to the Whitecourt Trailblazers Snowmobile Club.