



Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is fun for families and municipalities benefit economically from this activity. Snowmobiling generates \$1.2 billion for local economies each winter in Ontario. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) estimates that snowmobilers rode over 150 million kilometres on its trails in the winter of 2008.

The importance of snowmobiling has recently been recognized by the McGuinty government as they announced in Barrie on April 14 2008 that OFSC will receive \$3 million from the provincial government to attract more sports and adventure tourists to use the province's 40,000 km of snowmobile trails. This money will be used to improve trails across Ontario and promote the province as a prime snowmobile tourism destination.

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs is a non-profit volunteer organization comprising of 250 local snowmobile clubs grouped into 17 districts. Simcoe County is made up of District 8 and part of District 4.

In North Simcoe County alone over 5,000 permits were sold for the 2007/2008 winter season. The local snowmobile clubs maintain and groom approximately 1,600 km of trails at the cost of about \$500 per kilometer of trail. This cost is paid primarily by the user pay system, ie, the sale of snowmobile permits. In Ontario there are about 90,000 trail permits sold each year.

Snowmobilers have enjoyed a long and successful relationship with Simcoe County and the use of its county forests. This use has continued and now includes a system of designated trails for snowmobilers. Enforcement of the county forest trails as well as all designated snowmobile trails is accomplished by a program operated by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs called S.T.O.P. (Snowmobile trail officer patrol). This program is run cooperatively with trained club volunteers and the Ontario Provincial Police to enforce speed limits, licensing, and trail permits.

The trails are maintained by local clubs in Ontario and are connected to other local regional networks. The OFSC provincial trail system is the largest recreational trail system in the world.

For more information, contact the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC), 50 Welham, Barrie, Ontario, L4N 0A1, 705-739-2005, www.ofsc.on.ca