



Cold Winter Good for Ontario Snowmobiling
Participation Up and Over 95% of Trails Available to Ride

(Barrie, ON – February 16, 2015) In a customer survey last spring, 95.8% of respondents said that Ontario snowmobiling is enjoyable, very enjoyable or extremely enjoyable. So for a second consecutive winter, the not for profit Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) is pleased to report that over 30,000 kilometres (95.5%) of its snowmobile trails are available for snowmobilers to enjoy in February, including Ontario's Family Day Long Weekend. With continuing cold temperatures in the long-range forecast, Ontarians could have OFSC trails to ride right through the March Spring Break.

The OFSC's extensive trail system provides more kilometres of snowmobile trails than there are kilometres of provincial highways. It offers excellent sledding opportunities for local residents, touring riders and out of province visitors in every snowbelt region of Ontario. Consequently, the popularity of snowmobiling is growing, with participation up 21% last season, including a significant resurgence of new participants and the highest number of permitted sleds in the past ten years. Sled manufacturers also report that Ontario new sleds sales increased by 21% in 2014 and that many dealers are sold out of 2015 snowmobiles.

"This growth is only possible because our 213 clubs and thousands of volunteers prepare, maintain and operate a truly world class trail system that's second to none," commented Remi Sauve, OFSC president. "It's an amazing accomplishment and we welcome everyone to go snowmobiling to discover the winter wonderland that's been created for their enjoyment with Mother Nature's cooperation."

To keep trails as smooth as possible, OFSC snowmobile clubs operate about 352 heavy industrial groomers for over 90,000 hours each winter. With an estimated total fleet value of \$26.3 million, these groomers are similar to those used on ski hills. With the International Snowmobile Manufacturer's Association reporting that the average snowmobiler rides about 2,600 kilometres each winter, it's estimated that OFSC permit holders and their families logged in excess of 200 million kilometres on OFSC trails last season and are well on their way to achieving that milestone again this year.

"By most measures, snowmobiling is Ontario's premier winter tourism activity. We offer trails in almost every part of the province, the opportunity to travel by snowmobile from community to community, and for riders to see sights and places that can only be reached and appreciated in the winter," said Paul Shaughnessy, OFSC executive director.

With an economic impact of \$1.7 million annually for the benefit of winter tourism in Ontario, OFSC snowmobiling is also a major contributor to the wellbeing and sustainability of many winter businesses and rural communities. The OFSC invites more Ontarians to buy a trail permit and discover snowmobiling this winter at www.ofsc.on.ca.

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.