

ISC Report for 2015 WSSA

The 2015 Niagara Falls, NY International Snowmobile Congress represents my fourth opportunity to attend this event. Many snowmobile associations that represent the U.S., Canada and Russia gather for the international promotion of snowmobiling. Sadly again this year Sweden was not present. This year representing Washington State was Dean and Karlene Meakin, Matt, Kathryn and Ryan Mead, Wayne and Florence Mohler, Roger and Roxanne Brittan, Kay Lloyd, Jim Kingman, and Pamela McConkey in addition to me.

The attendees of the ISC capture the essence of excellence in the international snowmobile community much like 212° The Extra Degree. At 211° water is hot. At 212° it boils, and with boiling water comes steam, and steam can power a locomotive. The one extra degree makes the difference. This simple analogy reflects the ultimate definition of excellence. Because it's the one extra degree of effort, in business and life, that can separate the good from the great.

Most, if not all, of the representatives of the state and provincial organizations exemplify this level of effort as witnessed throughout the four day event. Much of my time was spent with the Western Chapter of Snowmobile Associations and American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA). There were numerous breakout sessions on topics such as GPS and Trail Maintenance, Organized Meetings for Organized Trails, Working with Charities, Liability Can Ruin a Trail, Utilizing Economic Impact, Women on the Trail, Trail Signing, and Modern Media to increase Use and address problems. I chose GPS and Trail Maintenance and Organized Meetings for Organized Trails. The GPS presentation was excellent and provided important insight on how today's technology can be employed to provide real time information regarding trail grooming, maintenance and conditions. This is something that WSSA will be exploring more in depth with WA State Parks. The Organized Meetings for Organized Trails was essentially about the business of conducting public meetings for clubs and association, and how and when to employ the use of Robert's Rules in conjunction with your organization's by-laws.

The Western Chapter of Snowmobiling Associations includes all western states and provinces. During our meetings we were able to complete work on our organization's SOPs for the Western Chapter Scholarship Fund. We formalized how chapter dues were communicated in January, and that the scholarship application notification would be sent at the same time. Also Western Chapter will going forward determine the topic for the scholarship application for the next year during our meetings at ISC. WE also discussed our web page and its content. Dean Meakin has taken over the administration of our site www.sledwest.org, and here you can find out about members, events and news items for the western states.

When all of the state associations join together under ACSA we had a very full slate of business to conduct such as nominations for the election of new officers. Congratulations to Dean Meakin who is now the new Secretary/Treasure for ACSA. Dean has become very active on both a regional and national level with promoting snowmobiling. We are very proud of Dean's achievement. As you can imagine I could go on forever – but I won't. There are many aspects of the business of snowmobiling found on the ACSA website www.snowmobilers.org, and all WSSA members and clubs are encouraged to become Friends of ACSA to help support our legal action fund raising and awareness.

There are also a number of events in the evening for fund raising for FOSPAC (Friends of Snowmobiling PAC) and the ACSA Legal Action Fund, and a good time to socialize with other state and province members.

WSSA also invites and supports the attendance of the IASA by our WA State Parks Winter Program Manager, Pamela McConkey. IASA is the leading source providing statistics, guidelines, and resources to its membership and the broader snowmobile and trail community. Areas of IASA interest include snowmobile safety, uniformity and enforcement of laws, rules, and regulations; International, Federal, State, Provincial, and Territorial cooperation and coordination; harmonious relationships with the environment and wildlife; the collection, development, and dissemination of information; and collaboration with other trail user groups.

IASA seeks to be proactive in developing cooperative solutions to common issues and opportunities. In this regard, the IASA has been very successful in advancing its mission and is recognized as an effective and forward thinking professional association.

What does this mean to the snowmobile community in Washington State? Our Snowmobile Program is administered through WA State Parks Winter Recreation Program. Since WA State Parks is a long-term active member in this association, it is able to gain information to assist in managing our Snowmobile Program through the development of joint initiatives, sharing of best practices and professional networking.

These efforts have resulted in the creation of resources such as IASA's International Snowmobile Directory, Guide to Snowmobiling in the USA and Canada by State and Province, Guidelines for Groomer Operator Training, Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Signing and Placement, Renting Snowmobiles Successfully: A Guide to Best Business Practices, safety videos used with the Snowmobile Safety and You Manual, and Snowmobile Safety Education Minimum Guidelines.

In conclusion, the time spent attending this conference is always very educational and beneficial. We all come back with the ideas to pursue promoting snowmobiling in Washington State.

Submitted by Sandy Sternod
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