

## Letter from the President November 7, 2023

**Great News everyone!!!** Our new Piston Bully is in route to Alaska at this very moment....!

Mike, Pete, and Garth have been coordinating all the logistics with Lynden Transport and Colin Hales at Piston Bully in Oregon, this past week. I've been informed our new Piston Bully has been loaded on a flatbed headed to the Port of Tacoma to be loaded on a barge bound for Anchorage. How exciting is that! When it arrives, it will be delivered to Cruz Construction's shop in Palmer. There we will finish mounting some additional storage boxes and have it readied for its new life at Lake Louise.

A celebration is certainly in order, which is why we're organizing a party that we call "Bully-Fest" on February 24<sup>th</sup>. We'll be recognizing everyone's contributions and hard work it took to make this all happen. More details will be announced in the near future. Eileen Probasco is our coordinator and she's seeking ideas and suggestions for swag and other activities from everyone. We are also seeking a nick name for our new groomer. Right now Wolfgang has been suggested. It's German meaning "wolf" and gang meaning "path-way". Let Eileen know, ASAP, if you have another suggestion to consider or are willing to help her plan the event.

Hopefully everyone had a great summer and is ready for another season of fun winter activities. Now is a good time to fill everyone in on what the board has been doing over the summer months. We've been communicating back and forth by email and held a board meeting in Palmer on October 11<sup>th</sup>. The main topics of discussion were the arrival of the new Piston Bully, winter activity schedule, and the upcoming grooming season.

### **Grant Funding**

Once again, we all need to express our appreciation to Pete Probasco for spending a lot of volunteer hours researching and writing several grants on the Club's behalf. Because of Pete's efforts, the club was awarded several grants to assist with the purchase of the new Piston Bully, and a trail grooming grant of \$11,000 from the Borough. SnoTRAC grants for grooming have not yet been awarded. Pete submitted an application in September, but we haven't heard anything yet. The SnoTRAC grant administration has been moved to the Department of Transportation this year from the State Parks administration. They are still making the transition so we hope to hear soon how much the club will be approved for this year.

## **Work Party**

On **Saturday, December 16**, will be the first **Work Party** of the season. Marking the Lake Trail around Lake Louise and Lake Susitna will be the Mission. As long as the temperatures don't drop to -20 F degrees and overflow isn't 8" deep, we'll **meet at the Lake Louise Lodge at 9:00 am** to coordinate our efforts. All you need to bring is yourself (dressed appropriately for a day on the trail), your ride, and whatever munchies you like. Last year we had enough folks show up to get the entire trail done in one day, and our goal is to do the same this year. The plan is to get it all marked on Saturday and finish up on Sunday if need be. The club has all the tools and markers needed to do the job and will fill your gas tank too. Keep a watch on our website and Facebook for any changes. Please RSVP to me so I have an idea of how many to expect. You can call or text me at (907) 232-9080 or send an email to [hholt@mtaonline.net](mailto:hholt@mtaonline.net)

## **Grooming**

This year will be really exciting having the new groomer. (More on that to follow) Wonder where Big Foot has been? It's been getting some extensive maintenance done during the past six months. We parked Big Foot in Rob William's backyard, on Rice Island, this summer and hired Rob to inspect and repair all the electrical, mechanical, and safety systems. As you might remember we had way too many breakdown issues last season caused by an accumulation of these problems. Rob has informed me he has made great progress and Big Foot will be up and running this season.

Like years past we plan to begin grooming the trails beginning the first of January. Starting with the Crosswind and Tolsona trails preparing for the Copper Basin 300 dog sled race. The race starts January 13, 2024, and will be coming to Lake Louise that weekend using these trails. We'll then continue grooming the other trails as quickly as we can, with the goal of having all the trails done by the end of January. We'll be breaking out the first trails with Big Foot while at the same time getting to know how the new groomer operates. As we gain more confidence and experience in the new groomer, we'll begin using the Piston Bully almost full time. If anyone has ever wanted to groom trails, now is your opportunity to jump in and learn and help in a brand-new machine. We need new people to train and make time to help. Right now, there are only about five guys doing all the grooming. Anyone interested contact Harry 907-232-9080 to make arrangements.

## **New Trail**

Early this summer we received approval from DNR to develop the short trail going from the back bay of Lake Susitna to Tyone Lake. One day in September Eric Carlson organized a work party of about eight volunteers and cleared and marked the new trail. This trail creates a loop trail into Tyone linking to Nipple

Mountain trail and Tyone River. Hopefully by the end of this season DNR will have issued us the easement to this trail.

**Safety First!**

I have one last reminder. When was the last time you really “unloaded” or “dumped out” your emergency gear bag? Have you checked it for outdated items, refreshed your hand warmers, batteries, fire starter, signaling items, etc.? Now would be the time to do just that and possibly save you a lot of discomfort when such items are needed.

Looking forward to a great new season!

Thank you,

Harry Holt, President