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**NEWS FROM THE CURRY RIDGE RIDERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB,
THE CLUB OF SOUTH DENALI/PETERSVILLE.
March, 2008**

WELCOME

This is the Spring Curry Ridge Riders Newsletter for the 2007-2008 riding season. We are the club of the Petersville/South Denali area. This area includes North and West of Trapper Creek, Alaska, off the Parks Highway at mile 115.

After a late start on trail work due to warm weather this fall, we finally had enough snow and frozen water to access the trails and started grooming in late December. The snow was welcome, the trails are in good shape, and we're having a great riding season. As I write this, there is still enough snow, but with the warming weather, watch for open water – lakes, swamps, and creeks. Right now they are in good condition, but when the temperature rises again the East/West Express Trail, and the Chulitna Bluff Trail at Railroad Creek, will not be passable due to creeks washing out our snow bridges. Check the Hot Lines and the website for updates on the trail conditions.

If you are not a current member, renew now, and tell your riding friends the importance of membership, and encourage them to join the Curry Ridge Riders. You can also renew at the annual BBQ and be eligible for a chance at some door prizes.

Anyone with news or articles of interest to snowmachiners are invited to submit them for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

We prefer to communicate with members via email. If you received this Newsletter through the regular mail, or found out that you did not receive it at all, that means we do not have an email address for you. If you have email, please let us know your address. We won't give it out.

We still have a supply of Club decals. These look like the logo/decal above. They are available for sale at \$5 each. Give us a call, or send a check, and we can provide.

CLUB WEBSITE

The club has a website, at www.curryridgeriders.com. We will keep current events posted there. Check the latest club news and schedules for work parties and rides. Thanks to John Scudder, who is doing all the work to keep the website current. Membership forms can be found there.

In addition to the website, keep current by checking the club's Hotlines: 352-3669 in the Valley, 689-7669 in Anchorage

Our website has a place for photos of our riding area. We will post digital photos you send to our email address at curryridgeriders@hotmail.com. We can't post them all, so be selective, original, and innovative.

Our website also has a place to post classified ads – For Sale or Wanted. Your ad, including photos, should also be sent to our email address for posting. Ads should be for snowmobile related items. The “rules” are posted on the Classified page.

BUSINESS MEMBERS

We encourage business membership. They can advertise their business for free on our site. We just need a business card or similar picture, and can add a link if you desire. Current business members include:

Trapper Creek Inn.....733-2302
Ocean Bluff Bed & Breakfast.....262-2643
Dave Miller Services.....696-2096
Susitna River Lodging.....733-0505
Team CC – Wasilla.....357-3200
Wasilla Arctic Cat.....376-5845

They support us, let's support them.

FREE BBQ/ANNUAL MEETING

Mark this on your calendar! We will be hosting our *free* annual Club BBQ on March 29, 2008, from noon to 3pm. The location will be in the South Denali riding area. We will announce (email and website) the exact location soon. The trail will be marked to the BBQ site. It will be an easy snowmachine ride and we will give directions with the announcement. Hot dogs, chips, coffee, and soft drinks will be free. We will conduct the Annual meeting during the BBQ. The primary business will be the election of a Board of Directors. See the next item. Watch for further announcements.

Election of Directors: In accordance with the Club's By-Laws, the election of Board members will take place at the annual meeting, which coincides with the BBQ. Any member, who wishes to serve on the Board, or nominate another member, may submit his/her name to the club by email at curryridgeriders@hotmail.com. We need more members willing to serve – don't be shy! As soon as the Board is elected, at the meeting, the Board will convene to elect Officers.

If anyone would be interested in serving as a club Officer, be advised you need to submit your name for election to the Board. All officers are elected by the Board, from the Board.

CRR TRAIL RIDES

The website identifies dates for group rides, lead by members familiar with our area; or even another area. The next rides are planned for March 15 and 22, 2008, in the South Denali area. Where we ride will depend on conditions. **We are always looking for ride leaders, so if you have a favorite route, and are willing to lead, just let us know and we'll provide the help.**

Members of the CRR are welcome to tag along on Anchorage Snowmobile Club rides, and we offer them the same. You can check out the ASC ride schedule at www.anchoragesnowmobileclub.com. We recommend that you join the ASC also, to help support their efforts.



President's Day Presidents Ride – North Loop and Almost to High Country



February 8 Ride to Dutch Hills

UPDATE ON TRAIL ACTIVITIES

A note from our Trail Co-ordinator, Joe Gauna:

This season has included quite a bit of trail work, as we've completed the North Loop and are about halfway from MP121.5 to Trapper Creek, a distance of about six miles. It's not ready for traffic yet but it will be soon. I know I really pressed a lot of you for help and pushed pretty hard when we were out there, and I haven't heard from a number of our members for a while. I regret that part of being a trail guy—pushing people away—but I try to balance it with the benefit for the whole group and snowmobilers in general. I am very impressed with the amount of trail clearing and cleanup that was accomplished this year, by a group of dedicated and hard-working members. Even before we were finished with the North Loop, riders were coming through in both directions, having “found” the trail by following the Tokositna or Chulitna Bluff trails. The term “if you build it, they will come” certainly applies in this case. I know a number of cabin owners and regular P-ville riders who have been in the area for 20 years but had never come farther north than Bunco Lake. I saw them on the trail last Saturday and they were amazed at how much more country there is for them to explore. Not that the P-ville area isn't a good, fun place to ride: It's just that they never knew what was out there waiting for them. Families have mentioned the good feeling of safety and security they get with their kids on the trails, especially after dark, when it's easy to get turned around. I'd like to ask for some continuing help with the trails as the season goes on, in the form of everyone taking 2-5 minutes to stop and cut off a “sticker” or a hanging branch while you're out there. I'd love to get them all but I just can't find every one. Also, if you see a trail marking wand falling over or see one on the snow, please pick it up and reset it, so that others will be able to see it. As spring and warm weather arrive, the snow gets soft and we lose a few here and there. Lastly, please be careful at creek crossings-this is overflow time and some crossings may go out unexpectedly. We try and build the sturdiest snow bridges possible but sometimes the meltwater and warm temps beat us. There's usually ice under the overflow but if you're in doubt, don't go. Find another route or go back around, even if it's a bit longer. I hope to see you out there the next few weekends-it's definitely not finished for the year.

SnowTRAC: For any that do not know what SnowTRAC is all about, this is the State program funded by your snowmobile registration fees. The intent of the registration was that all of the fees collected by the state would be returned to the snowmobile community. SnowTRAC is the name of the organization within Alaska State Parks that disseminates the funds. The process is to award grants to organizations, like the CRR, for projects that support snowmachining. Any money not awarded in grants is put into the grooming pool for snowmobile trails.

MSB Trail Care Agreement: The Club has signed a Trail Care Agreement with the Mat-Su Borough for many of the trails in our riding area. This agreement is similar to the “Adopt a Highway” program. The Club will be recognized for its agreement and care, and the Borough will provide signs and markers for us to use. We are also responsible to maintain trails so riding will be safe, and the trails will be accessible for the groomer, and for trash pick-up on the trails. We need to track our activities in meeting our obligations, and report to the MSB.

New Chulitna Bluff Trail (CBT) South: we have a Recreational Trail Grant to extend the trail south from the mile 121.5 Parking Lot to Trapper Creek, and continue south to connect with the Rabideux Trail and the mile 105 trailhead just north of the Big Su Bridge. We will be working on this during this season, and next winter.

Work parties: watch the website (“Trail Notes”) for announcements of upcoming work parties for trails. Our volunteers are the only ones who do this work. It is necessary to keep the trails safe and to make it possible to groom.

BRING HAMMER

We have a carpentry project to do when the weather warms up. We need to build a shed to store all of our trail work equipment. The club will provide all the materials, we just need some labor – probably only one day. We’ll send out more info later.

MAP OF OUR RIDING AREA

If you have ridden the trails in the South Denali area this year you should have passed several locations where the Curry Ridge Riders and the Anchorage Snowmobile Club installed metal signs depicting all of the trails in the area. Below is a picture of the Sign. We will soon have a version of this map available for free download at our website - watch for it.

GENERAL

The club is always looking for members who want to initiate and manage a Search and Rescue program to assist public safety. Let us know if you are interested.

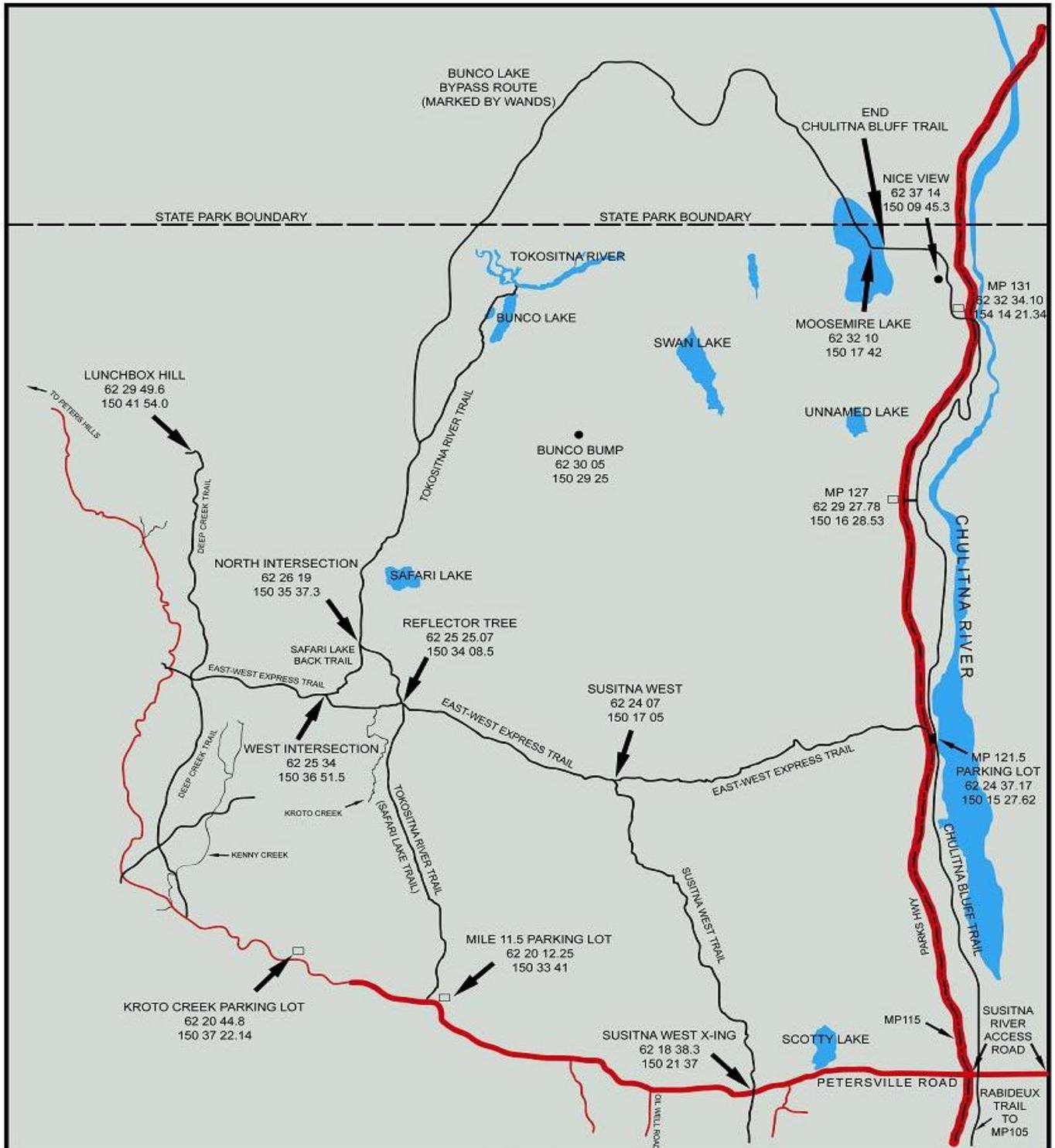
Club Officers:

Bruce Brockett, President
Mahlon Greene, Vice President
Randy Crosby, Secretary
Shauna Munro, Treasurer

Board of Directors:

The above Officers, plus
Glenn Swan
Joe Gauna
Robert Connor

Contact any of us through the club’s email at curryridgeridrs@hotmail.com to give us your ideas and comments to make the club better serve you.



NOTE:

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE ARE APPROXIMATE USING WGS84 DATUM. VALUES ARE IN DEGREES, MINUTES, SECONDS. NOT ALL TRAILS ARE GROOMED. ROUTES DEPICTED HAVE BEEN SURVEYED AND DEDICATED. ONLY THE NORTH CONNECTOR IN THE STATE PARK HAS NOT BEEN SURVEYED NOR DEDICATED.

- PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY & LOCAL ACCESS TRAILS
- REMEMBER TO PACK OUT TRASH & DON'T MOGUL TRAILS



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ANCHORAGE SNOWMOBILE CLUB
CURRY RIDGE RIDERS



Successful Search

A pair of CRR members participated in a successful search effort Saturday and Sunday, March 29th & 30th, 2008. Randy Crosby and Joe Gauna played a role in locating a lost camper in Denali State Park. A 12 year old boy, participating in a winter campout about a mile and half northwest of milepost 127 of the Parks Highway, became separated from his group of snowmobilers and spent the night walking the North Loop winter use trail in Denali State Park.

The young rider, after being separated from the group around 6:30 pm Saturday, apparently became disoriented as to his location and became stuck just off the North Loop Trail, about two and half miles north of the encampment. Details of his activities through the night are sketchy but when Crosby and Gauna found the snowmobile, stuck in a snow bank about 25 feet off the trail, against an alder thicket, the riders helmet was in the rack, indicating that he may have gotten warm trying to extricate the snowmobile. Water bottles, packed by one of the camping leaders, were absent, which suggested the rider took them with him when he left the scene.

Leaders of the camping group notified state troopers shortly after the snowmobiling group returned and reported that they were missing one rider. Gauna, a land and cabin owner near the site, on his way to the cabin, stopped in at the camp about 9:00 pm Saturday, to say hello and check on the group. When apprised of the situation, he contacted Randy Crosby, a long-time local resident, building contractor and avid snowmobiler familiar with the area. They met with the camp leader, got as much information as they could, gassed up and started a grid search of the area, concentrating on the north-south swamps that dominate the area, with an emphasis to the north.

Crosby later met with state troopers, showed them maps of the area and suggested search areas for the helicopter to cover, then returned to the on-the-ground search. Other local cabin owners and residents had been alerted by the early hours of Sunday, including groups from Petersville and Talkeetna. By 5 AM, Crosby and Gauna had ridden about 90 miles, checking the verges of the swamps for the rider's snowmobile tracks or footprints in the snow, which were quickly being covered by a 4 inch snowfall. They ranged north from the camp site to Tokosha Mountain Lodge, in the national park, enlisting the aid of John Neill, lodge owner, and as far west as Swan Lake, an area covering about 30 square miles.

About 9 AM, returning for more fuel and a check in with state troopers and state park ranger Dan Valentine, Crosby and Gauna made a brief stop on the North Loop Trail, where it leaves Denali State Park and heads east, toward the gravel pit at milepost 131 of the Parks Highway. While discussing possible next steps, Crosby noticed some depressions in the newly fallen but undisturbed snow on the trail. Cautioning Gauna to stay put, he followed the faint tracks to the east and came upon the stuck and abandoned snowmobile. He and Gauna then followed the wandering tracks into and out of the woods, then back to the trail, where they appeared to head north, back into the state park. Crosby, walking north and calling the boy's name, thought he may have heard a response. Encouraged, he mounted up and started north, stopping often and continuing to call out. Gauna remained on site, coordinating communication and making contact with camping group leaders, state troopers and other searchers.

By this time, search groups had arrived in the area, as well as Dan Valentine, state parks ranger. Valentine directed the searchers as to a pattern to follow and conferred with state troopers. An Air National Guard helicopter, on site since late the night before, landed, confirmed information with Valentine, then took to the air to continue the effort. Crosby, continued north, following the trail and calling out, hoping to hear a response. Valentine and Neill, to the west, of the tree line near the trail, also headed north, eyeing the edge of the forest. Valentine spotted the youngster and alerted Crosby and Neill, who converged on the boy, trading his wet gloves for dry and putting Valentines coat over his shoulders. The now-found boy was cold, hungry and very thirsty but overall in good condition, possibly because he spent the majority of the night hiking back and forth as the search helicopter flew its pattern.

The rescuee was put aboard the helicopter and flown to waiting ambulances at milepost 131 about 10 am Sunday.



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March 28, 2008**

This is a Special Edition of news from the Curry Ridge Riders, the club of the South Denali area.

We have important news to share with the membership – not all good news!

Those of you who have been active members know we are a small club, with a big task. We have one of the largest and most popular trail systems in the state, in one of the most scenic areas. The expense in dollars, and volunteer's energy, has become more than the Club can sustain much longer. Our membership dues have remained at the same low level for years, but we must raise (double) our membership fees at this time. This increase, if we can maintain the current number of members, will help solve the next problem.

We absolutely need to have some help from our membership in administering the club. We have an important position that needs to be filled. Namely, we need someone to serve as our “administrative assistant” to handle membership applications, club mail, deposits, our checking account, and our annual tax filing. This would be a person assisting the Secretary/Treasurer (actually doing the work). We would love to have a volunteer take it on, but failing that, the club is willing to pay the person a nominal fee for what should only be a few hours of very important work each month. **If you are interested in assisting, please contact any of the Club Board members, either by email, phone, or in person.**

Riders in the South Denali area are very familiar with the trail grooming the Club is responsible for. For you that are not aware, we are provided with Grooming Grants, mostly administered through Alaska State Parks. With the grants we contract an independent contractor to perform the grooming. The amount of grant money, and the contractor's price, has not increased over time to keep up with the increased miles of trails expected to be groomed. This has become a critical issue. Beginning next year, it is unlikely we will be able to groom all of the trails we groomed this year, and we actually expect there to be more trails brought into the system. Something has to give.

We need more money from the state, or grooming will suffer. The Club has provided some funding for grooming, but it is not enough to make a dent in the shortfall.

The grooming program the Club has provided over the past four years has been very successful given all the difficulties of such an undertaking. There has been some misinformation out there regarding which trails are groomed. Of course, you can't please all the people all the time, and all trails can't be groomed all the time either. In order for any trail to receive trail funding from the current grant programs they must meet the following:

1. Be in a Trails Plan.
2. Have easements, or land use permits.
3. Be brushed and cleared wide enough for the groomer.
4. And most importantly, they must have a dedicated trail crew who will spend their free time doing all the work required by items 1-3.

Believe it or not it took over 8 years of meetings and letter writing, plus two years of hard labor clearing and surveying the trails, before any funds were available for the Curry Ridge Riders to start grooming. It also requires all of the above, each year, to continue grooming or expand to include other trails.

The question is not who is doing all this work but is who is not! Are you an active member enjoying the trails who helps with the trail effort? Are the businesses you support in the area members of the club and contribute to the trails that benefit them? Important questions because the core group of club members who do contribute their time gets smaller every year, get to ride for fun less, and are getting tired. At the same time, the funding amount remains the same but the expenses increase. In some cases, the State has dictated which trails are groomed, and the Club has suggested others. Most of the trails not currently being groomed are not recognized legal trails. Also note that most of those who benefit from the grooming, both riders and area businesses, contribute nothing to grooming, not even a club membership.

If we don't continue to do the work then there will be no more grooming and when I say "we" I also mean YOU! If you don't help, then you can't complain, so please help us and yourself continue the good works of the Club.

The Club's annual meeting will take place at the BBQ on March 29 this year. You should have received a notice of this event by now. There is still plenty of snow, and the trails are groomed: so please come on out! The main order of business will be the election of Board members. **Anyone who wants to take an active role in guiding the club is encouraged to let us know you would like to be on the ballot.** We need individuals who will attend meetings, answer emails, and get involved! This is not a passive position, so if you really want to make a difference, please get on the ballot, by contacting any of the current Board members, either by email, phone, or in person, before voting takes place.

The Club is what members make of it. Club activities don't just happen. We need to hear from the membership what it is you expect from the club. If you only want to have

club rides, or the newsletter, or the BBQ, or nothing but groomed trails, we need to hear it from you. Members can serve the club without being elected to the Board. We can form various committees to address most issues and activities. For example, we could have a Trail Ride Committee, a Membership Committee, a Newsletter Committee, etc. These can be a committee of one. Just let us know you are interested.

The club has a website, at www.curryridgeriders.com . We will keep current events posted there. Check the latest club news and schedules for work parties and rides.

In addition to the website, keep current by checking the club's Hotlines: 352-3669 in the Valley, 689-7669 in Anchorage

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See you at the BBQ!

Bruce Brockett, President
Curry Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club