



OFSC MEDIA RELEASE

Police to Enforce Snowmobile Trail Permits this Winter *Chief Justice of Ontario Sets \$205 Fine for No Permit*

Barrie, ON. December 23, 2002: It will cost recreational snowmobilers \$205 if they attempt to ride trails operated by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) without a valid Snowmobile Trail Permit this winter. In addition, if they wish to continue riding OFSC trails, they will still have to pay the \$170 fee for purchasing a 2003 Snowmobile Trail Permit. That is the message from the OFSC after the Government of Ontario completed the two legal protocols necessary to improve the judicial process for laying permit charges and obtaining convictions.

Following a recent high level meeting with the Solicitor General's office initiated by the OFSC, the Government provided the "Short Wording", which enables enforcement agencies to more easily write tickets for "failure to have or display" a permit on an OFSC Prescribed Trail. Meanwhile, the Chief Justice of Ontario approved the "Set Fines", which clearly established a first-time offence penalty of \$205. Both the Short Wording and the Set Fines are being distributed to police forces across Ontario for action this winter.

"Snowmobile Trail Permits are now as enforceable as are the provisions that snowmobilers must carry proof of registration, insurance and a valid driver's licence." stated OFSC General Manager Ron Purchase. "For our clubs and volunteers, these approvals mean that every police force and S.T.O.P. (Snowmobile Trail Officer Patrol) volunteer now has the ability as well as the legal requirement to fully enforce Snowmobile Trail Permits this winter."

Snowmobile Trail Permits became a legal requirement on OFSC Prescribed Trails with the passing of Bill 101 two years ago, but have been enforced inconsistently since then. With the completion of the associated judicial requirements, permit enforcement will now be universal and consistent for the first time across Ontario, starting immediately.

"The OFSC and our members clubs have an active and positive working relationship with the Ontario Provincial Police and most other enforcement agencies," commented Purchase, "We appreciate their presence on our trails to enforce safety and to help ensure that snowmobilers are riding legally."

The goal of Bill 101 was to ensure that recreational snowmobilers pay their way. However, it also recognized that snowmobile trails on Crown Land are sometimes used for commercial purposes, so limited trail permit exemptions were allowed, applicable only for Prescribed OFSC Trails on Crown land. These exemptions are for specified workers while engaged in their work and able to prove it with appropriate documents. They include bait harvesters; commercial fish harvesters; trappers; prospectors; forest workers; utility companies and mining or exploration companies.

Bill 101 also reconfirmed limited exemptions for land owners and their tenants and the immediate family members of both while on their own land, including while travelling directly to or from their property on Crown land, if the OFSC trail is the only or safest access route from the closest road. The same exemption for 'Crown land only' applies to Crown land tenants and their immediate family members. A Crown land exemption was granted to the Aboriginal people of Canada. A very limited exemption on Crown land only is also available to specific anglers and hunters who can prove that they are using a snowmobile while engaged in their sport, but only when the OFSC trail on Crown land is the only or safest access route from the closest road.

It is important to understand that these exemptions do not apply to OFSC snowmobile trails on private land, except for the specific owner of that land. Anyone, other than a Snowmobile Trail Permit holder or the owner and family, who wishes to enter or use private land must first obtain permission from the landowner. For com-

plete details on trail permit exemptions, please refer to Ontario Regulation 185/01 of the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act which can be found on the OFSC web site at www.ofsc.on.ca .

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs is dedicated to providing strong leadership and support to member clubs and volunteers to establish and maintain quality snowmobile trails which are used in a safe and environmentally responsible manner to further the enjoyment of organized snowmobiling.

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*For further information, please contact:
Ron Purchase, General Manager at (705) 739-7669*