

CHITTENDEN DAMMERS, INC.

A 501(c)3 Corporation

INCEPTION

The Chittenden Dammers Snowmobile Club was organized in 1965 with 14 original members with Reggie Cook, the founder, serving as the first president.

MOTTO

“Snowmobiling Courtesy and Environmental Awareness”

MISSION

Community involvement and charity work.

The organization has developed approximately 45+ miles of trails across both state and U.S. Forest Service land as well as private properties belonging to resident and non-resident landowners. The trail system is utilized year-round by residents, non-residents and tourists to the area for the following activities:

- Hiking
- Snowmobiling
- Mountain biking
- Cross-country skiing
- Camping
- Horseback riding
- Fat bike riding
- Snowshoeing
- Hunting
- Fishing

LEADERSHIP

The organization is led by the below individuals:

President	Dave Dutton
Vice President	Scott Harrison
Treasurer	Lisa Todd
Secretary	Rich McCoy
Trail Master	Doug Todd
Head Groomer	Paul Racine
Landowner Liason	Bob Evegán

County Representative	Marty Zipf
Social Media	Amy Carr
Board of Directors	Charlie Robbins
	Paul Vazzano
	Aaron Carr
	Sam Welch

MEMBERSHIP

In 1966, membership consisted of 25 individuals. By 2005, membership exceeded 800 members. Although many of the members are Chittenden residents, individuals from various neighboring towns as well as other states are among the organization's membership role. The number of trails, quality of maintenance of the trails (e.g. width, height, bridges, culverts, snow grooming, etc.) along with the amount of snow due to the high elevation combine to make Chittenden a highly sought-after destination.

MEETINGS

Leadership of the organization meets monthly throughout the year with supplemental meetings conducted as needed. Membership meetings are open to the public and occur monthly from September through May of each year at The Mountain Top Inn & Resort in Chittenden.

A representative of the club is present at all meetings of the Rutland County Snowmobile Club, Inc. which are held throughout the year in Rutland. Various members also attend the annual Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc. (VAST) meeting hosted at various locations throughout the state of Vermont. A member(s) of the organization also attends U.S. Forest Service meetings as requested.

EQUIPMENT

Chittenden Dammers, Inc. was one of the first snowmobile clubs in the state of Vermont to have a modern snow groomer. In 1989, the organization's 1980 Tucker grooming machine was purchased for \$14,000, while the grooming machine purchased in 2021 cost in excess of \$240,000. The organization also owns and maintains the appropriate heavy equipment attachments for the machine to groom snowfall to optimum conditions.

TRAIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Creation and maintenance of the trail system requires a tremendous volunteer commitment and effort throughout the year. Below are some of the tasks individuals and/or teams from the organization perform on the trail system:

- Regular servicing, maintenance and repair of the trail grooming machine

- Regular servicing, maintenance and repair of the heavy equipment attachments for the trail grooming machine
- Approximately 2,000 hours annually in the trail grooming machine grooming the approximate 45 miles of trail system for optimal snow conditions and safety of all individuals utilizing the trails
- Removal of trees (large and small), de-brushing, tree trimming, etc. to ensure the trails are the ideal height and width for the various activities enjoyed on the trail system
- Regular touring of the trail system to identify areas of concern
- Immediate action taken to assess, repair and remove storm damage to ensure optimal trail conditions and to ensure the safety of all individuals utilizing the trails
- Creation of new trails including GPS tracking, excavation, logging and de-brushing
- Identification of need, installation, repair, resurfacing and replacement of bridges on the trails to ensure safe passage over water for the various activities enjoyed on the trail system
- Identification of need, installation, repair and replacement of culverts on the trails to ensure proper water flow and safe passage over water for the various activities enjoyed on the trail system
- Creation and maintenance of proper ditching alongside trails for proper water runoff
- Construction and installation of trail gates to discourage misuse/abuse of the trail system
- Creation, repair and review of trail signage to ensure accuracy, promote local businesses and ensure safety of all individuals utilizing the trails
- Assistance with rescues that occur on the trail systems, such as stranded and/or lost riders, injured individuals, stranded vehicles, etc.
- Assistance to other local snowmobile clubs when needed, including trail grooming, vehicle rescue, etc.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Other responsibilities are required and are completed through a tremendous volunteer commitment and effort throughout the year. Below are some of the additional tasks individuals and/or teams from the organization perform:

- Communication with landowners to address questions/concerns as well as to obtain permissions for trail use on their properties
- Current and accurate communication to the public on trail conditions via club website, phone call inquiries and e-mails
- Creation and maintenance of club website to encourage membership, use of the trail systems and tourism to the area and the local businesses
- Active involvement in federal, state and local discussions regarding land purchases, land permissions, trail changes, etc. that could impact the current trail system
- Analysis and identification of new trails so as to improve the various activities enjoyed on the trail system and allow greater access to local businesses

- Liase with local businesses on potential improvements and enhancements to the trail system so as to better benefit their business and/or access to their business
- Liase with organizations that utilize the trail system for other sports to ensure our support, addresses any issues/concerns, etc.
- Regular communication with the other area snowmobiling organizations and participation and/or support of their events

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

The organization hosts various events throughout the year to encourage individuals to participate in the sport of snowmobiling, meet other members and support and enjoy area businesses. Organized events occur several times per month and have included a scenic trail tour to a local inn for breakfast, a multi-town outing to a local brewery and a tour to a nearby restaurant for live music and dinner as examples.

The organization also hosts an annual gala at the Mountain Top Inn and Resort in Chittenden with approximately 240 people in attendance. Members of the club, local residents as well individuals from across the state enjoy a full dinner, live entertainment from local musicians, raffles and door prizes. The highlight of the evening is a 75+ item silent auction with products and services donated by local merchants with a retail value exceeding \$6,000.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & CHARITY

Since 1972, Chittenden Dammers Inc. (via membership in the Rutland County Snowmobile Club, Inc.) has raised funds for the Mitchell Therapy Pool (MTP) at the Vermont Achievement Center, located in Rutland. To date, the charity has received \$640,000. The Mitchell Therapy Pool at VAC (MTP) is an indoor, heated and specially equipped therapy pool for adults and children, and is the only therapy pool in central Vermont. With its warm waters and specialized ramps, the pool provides therapeutic swimming for children and adults of all abilities.

During the past several years, Chittenden Dammers Inc. (via membership in the Rutland County Snowmobile Club, Inc.) has also raised \$8,000 for Child First Advocacy Center of Rutland County, located in Rutland. The Child Advocacy Center (CFAC) provides a safe and supportive environment to assist victims and their families in the discovery, intervention, treatment, and prevention of child sexual abuse.

The organization, in conjunction with neighboring clubs, has awarded approximately \$5,000 to Make-a-Wish of Vermont. Known as the Rutland County Charity Ride, the organization also participated in raising funding for Camp TaKumTa, which provided a camping experience for Vermont children diagnosed with cancer. The organization has also hosted a booth at the Vermont State Fair, participated in Chittenden Day events and donated funds and/or manpower to various other local and regional charities.

In February 2021, Chittenden Dammers presented a \$1,000 donation to the Chittenden Fire Department. The award was intended to aid the local volunteer fire department as Chittenden

is one of the 96% of rural towns in Vermont where volunteer firefighters protect and provide invaluable service to their communities.

In May 2021, members of the Chittenden Dammers held a volunteer day at the Rutland County Humane Society in Pittsford. The project included clearing brush, installing trail signs, doing painting projects, hanging gutters and downspouts and upgrading of landscaping including edging, seeding, planting shrubs and installing of fabric and gravel. Chittenden Dammers sought and received donations from area businesses including J.P. Carrara & Sons, Casella, LaValley Building Supply, Mark Larson, Pratico's Landscaping & Fence Company, Alan Roberge, Mac Equipment & Steel Company, Amy and Aaron Carr, Goodro Lumber, The Home Depot and Paul Vazzano. Donations including gutters, topsoil, surepac, shrubs, edging, grass seed, landscape stone and other items.

The completed project honored the animals, hardworking RCHS staff and the families that adopt by upgrading the exterior and should be enjoyed for years to come. Per Executive Director Beth Saradarian, "Our shelter looks amazing! Thank you so much for the fresh, clean, new look we now have. We're so appreciative of all of your efforts, time and hard work. The shelter is home to many animals until they get adopted so making it extra special for them, the staff, volunteers, and the public means a lot to us. Thank you for being there for us."

AWARDS

Chittenden Dammers, Inc. was awarded the State Club of the Year in 1991 by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers Inc. (VAST). Founded 50 years ago, VAST is responsible for the organization of the sport of snowmobiling, maintaining and grooming over 4,700 miles of trails in Vermont. One of the oldest snowmobiling organizations in the U.S., VAST includes 127 clubs statewide, with over 24,000 members combined.

That same year, Ralph Farwell, a member of the Chittenden Dammers, was named Snowmobiler of the Year for his effort to expand the trails from 4 feet in width to 12-15 feet in width so as to accommodate the newer and wider snow groomers. This award is given to the individual who has demonstrated their commitment to the sport, a true volunteer, unselfishly giving of themselves, above and beyond. The Individual must be involved in snowmobile organizations striving to make the sport even more enjoyable in the future. In 2019, Doug Todd, Trail Master for the Chittenden Dammers, was presented with the award as recognition for his outstanding volunteer efforts over the course of many years.

In recent years, Paul Racine, Head Groomer for the Chittenden Dammers, was named Groomer of the Year by VAST. The award is given to an individual who has demonstrated their commitment of the sport by promoting the development of and grooming of snowmobile trails. The individual has unselfishly given of him or herself above and beyond and has striven to make snowmobiling even more enjoyable now and in the future.

In 2016, the organization was awarded Best Signed Trails by VAST based upon signage created and installed that met all of the criteria established in the VAST Signing Manual. The award was the result of a large-scale project including research and design of signage, construction of posts and installation. The new signage provides information on the individual's location on the trail as well as proximity to gas, food and lodging. This information is critical to ensuring that all individuals utilizing the trail system (e.g. hikers, cross country skiers, snowmobilers, etc.) remain safe as well as enjoy the local businesses in the area.

In 2019, club trail master and member Doug Todd was named Vermont Snowmobiler of the Year. He was presented with the award at the 52nd annual meeting of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) held at Northern Vermont University in Lyndonville. The award is given to an individual who has demonstrated their commitment to the sport, a true volunteer, unselfishly giving of oneself, above and beyond. The award identifies an individual who is involved in snowmobile organizations while striving to make the sport even more enjoyable in the future.

Club members Mark Oldenburg and Marty Zipf were awarded Snowmobile Family of the Year in 2020 presented at the 53rd annual meeting of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) held in Barre. The award is given to the family who has demonstrated their commitment to the sport, are true above and beyond volunteers. The individuals must be involved in snowmobile organizations and striving to make the sport even more enjoyable in the future.



Trail Master, Doug Todd, pictured with previous groomer



Riders in early years at Mountain Top Inn