

The History of the Doug Dean Trail

Fernie Snowmobile Association

In 2010, a few of the older members of the Fernie Snowmobile Association decided that it was necessary to find a family friendly trail through the Rolling Hills to the Wrangler's cabin. As it was at the time, the route was difficult, treacherous, and near impossible for families in the best of times and trouble when there were whiteout conditions. With more people staging out of Coal Creek and for safety reasons a family friendly trail was deemed necessary.

A lot of talk was generated and finally Wayne Stamler, Jim Thorner, Monty Heather, Mike Scarpelli and Doug Dean decided that it had to be tackled with sleds. The venture began on Saturday, February 12, 2011. Seasoned riders, with years of experience struggled to find an easy way. A second weekend was required and the route was no further ahead. Doug Dean suggested that this had to be done in the summer by walking with a GPS and taking grades to allow the SnowCat to be able to groom the trail.

On Monday, August 22, 2011 Doug Dean, with survey tape and a GPS in hand, made an attempt to venture off the McEvoy FSR in the vicinity of the Wrangler's cabin to begin the family friendly trail. Immediately, creeks and drainages were encountered. The SnowCat was basically limited to less than a 12% grade and that was a serious consideration. A half day of walking and another half day walking back to the truck and the first leg was marked with survey tape. The evenings were spent putting the track on Google Earth and checking the grades and looking for the next days route. Six days in total to walk, flag, and assess the grade. Some days started by removing the last days tape and doing it over due to grades that were too steep or finding a better way to cross creeks and drainages. Volunteers were busy with work and no one was stepping up, so it ended up being a one man job with the bears/cougars looking on. Bears were sighted on numerous occasions.

On September 14, 2011 the Wrangler's end was completed and ready for clearing. The next day, the Rolling Hills cabin end was finished and ready for clearing.

Friday, November 18, 2011 permission came from NARCAN in Ottawa to cut the trail. Ten days later, Monday, November 28, with the much appreciated help of Steve Temple and Jim Thorner from Tembec for logistical support, a track hoe & operator (from Florentino Construction), a safety supervisor (Joe Feeze), and a faller (Todd Hurley) were provided to start the clearing. The snow was three feet deep and snowshoes were required for the faller and a swamper (Doug Dean). The track hoe laid down the smaller trees and the faller cut the larger trees falling them out of the way of the trail. The swamper carried the chainsaw gas/oil and walked the trail looking for the survey tape. Walk in in the morning and walk out in the evening taking 5 days to complete the work.

Monday, December 5, 2011 at 2:30 pm the rough work was done with the track hoe. On Sunday, December 11, Wayne Stamler and Doug Dean started taking the SnowCat over the

trail and we got about one third of the way through. The following Saturday, a club work party cut stumps and smaller trees and the SnowCat walked the rest of the trail and intersected with the McEvoy FSR. A great accomplishment and a great family friendly trail for all to use. President, Paul Kramer was instrumental in naming and suggesting signage be installed in recognition of the work necessary to accomplish this feat.

The entrance into the Rolling Hills off of the Paiges FSR was accomplished with Mike Scarpelli Construction and Excavating doing the upgrading of the existing road and laying of culverts for drainage to access the Rolling Hills cabin site.

With the building of the Rolling Hills cabin in the years following, the Doug Dean trail has been a very positive asset for the club and it's members.