



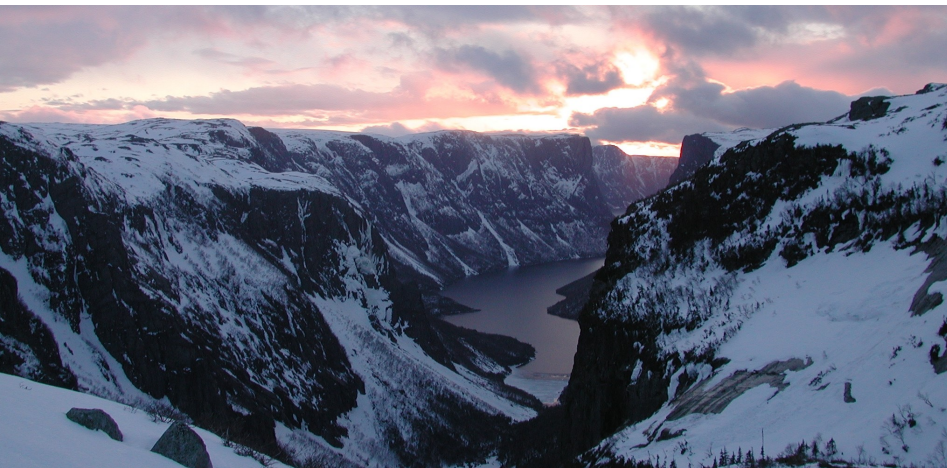
Resident Snowmobiling in Gros Morne National Park

A UNESCO World Heritage Site

Snowmobiling in Gros Morne National Park

Recreational snowmobiling in national parks is a rare privilege. The ability to snowmobile in Gros Morne National Park was negotiated as part of the federal-provincial agreement to establish the park in 1973. During those negotiations, Parks Canada agreed to “...permit the use of snowmobiles within the park in accordance with national park regulations and operational policies where this use will not affect wildlife, vegetation or terrain.”

At that time, snowmobiles were extremely limited in where and how far they could travel. Things have changed since then and advances in snowmobile design now mean that machines can travel almost anywhere and go all day on a single tank of gas. At the same time, climate change means fluctuating temperatures resulting in variable snow conditions. This makes it extra challenging to ensure the potential impacts of snowmobiling are managed and mitigated. This is not something Parks Canada can achieve alone. Rather it requires the cooperation of everyone who would like to see snowmobiling continue in Gros Morne National Park.



Working Together

In the early 2000s, Parks Canada, in partnership with resident and non-resident snowmobilers, non-motorized users (i.e., skiers and snowshoers), environmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders, developed guidelines for managing snowmobiling in Gros Morne National Park. A Snowmobile Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from these same stakeholder groups, was also created to work with park staff to monitor the activity and provide advice on how to improve our management of snowmobiling in the park.

The committee’s primary objectives are:

- ♦ To protect the environment, including sensitive wildlife;
- ♦ To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for snowmobilers; and,
- ♦ To preserve opportunities for non-motorized users to also enjoy the park.

To achieve these goals, Parks Canada relies on snowmobilers to abide by the terms and conditions of snowmobile permits. Together, we can ensure snowmobiling continues to be an activity that future generations can enjoy in Gros Morne National Park.

DID YOU KNOW? Did you know that 84.4% of the park is open to resident snowmobiling, meaning just 15.6% is off limits for ecological reasons or reserved for non-motorized use?

Important Changes Taking Effect This Season

The following changes have been introduced with input from the Snowmobile Advisory Committee and town councils:

Annual Resident Permits

The 3-year resident snowmobile permits have shifted to 1-year permits. One-year permits will allow us to more accurately track user numbers and ensure residents have the most up-to-date information each year. Annual permits will also be consistent with park passes, which are issued on an annual basis.

Burridges Gulch and Southeast Hills Area

Burridges Gulch/Southeast Hills snowmobile exclusion zone has been extended to Route 430. This follows on adjustments made last year to the exclusion zone around the Tablelands and Southwest Gulch area to preserve space for the enjoyment of non-motorized users.



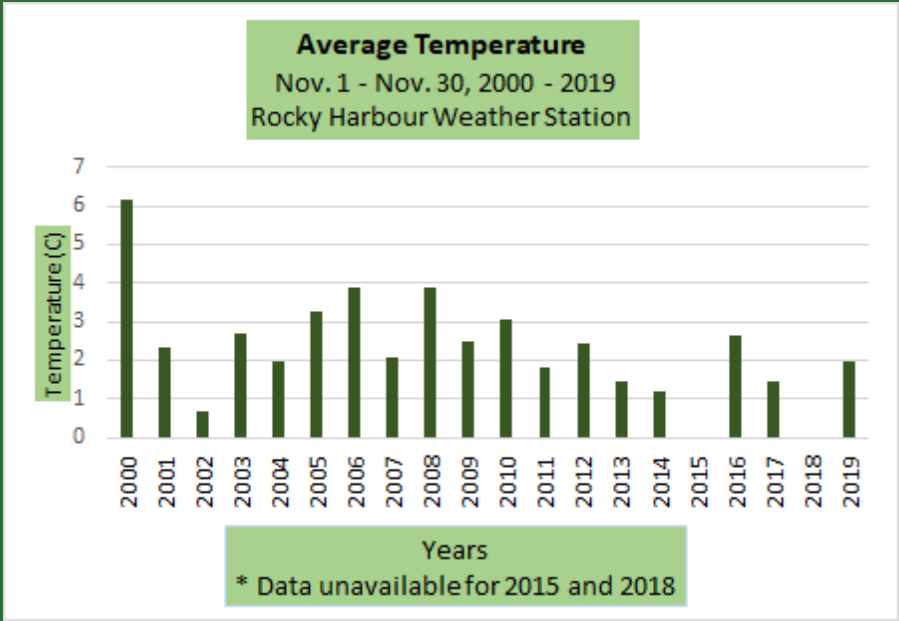
Photo: Snowmobile tracks at Southwest Gulch, a popular location for downhill skiing. Like snowmobilers, skiers enjoy fresh powder and untracked slopes. Snowmobile tracks are not fun to ski over and can ruin the experience for skiers.

A New Season, A Different Environment

Snowmobiling season came to an abrupt halt last spring when the COVID pandemic severely disrupted all of our lives and resulted in the closure of the national park to recreational users. Snowmobiling will resume this winter but Parks Canada is asking Canadians to be cautious and to respect any closures that may be in place. Anyone participating in recreational activities should take care to avoid injury or getting lost to help minimize the demands placed on search and rescue teams and on the health care system at this challenging time.



Opening Date for Resident Snowmobiling



While the current official opening date for resident snowmobiling is November 1st, this year Parks Canada issued superintendent’s closure notices closing the park to snowmobiling until at least December 22nd due to lack of snow cover and warm temperatures as snowmobiling on bare, unfrozen ground can have a detrimental impact on terrain and vegetation.

Analysis of climate data from the past two decades shows insufficient snowfall and above zero temperatures well into December in the Gros Morne region. As part of our ongoing efforts to monitor and mitigate the ecological impacts of snowmobiling as per the federal-provincial agreement, a change to the opening date for resident snowmobiling to December 15th is being considered.

If you have comments or questions regarding this proposed change, please contact us at 458-2417 or pc.grosmorne.pc@canada.ca.

Safety First, Safety Always

Avalanches occur throughout the winter in Gros Morne National Park. To reduce your risk, learn to recognize avalanche terrain and unstable avalanche conditions, carry appropriate safety equipment (shovel/transceiver/probe), a communication device, and practice safe travel skills when travelling through avalanche terrain. For more helpful tips, visit <https://www.avalanche.ca/>



Do You Know the Rules?

All recreational snowmobile operators in Gros Morne National Park are required to carry a Snowmobile Operator’s Permit and a valid Park Pass. The conditions of the permit are in accordance with provincial legislation, help protect the environment and ensure snowmobilers have safe and enjoyable experiences.

Each year, law enforcement personnel issue tickets and lay charges against snowmobilers who are operating their machines in violation of the terms and conditions of their snowmobile permit. Resulting penalties have included prohibition from snowmobiling in Gros Morne National Park for periods up to two years and fines of up to \$2200.

Examples of charges that have been laid include:

- ◊ Being in an Exclusion zone/Outside the corridor;
- ◊ Having a modified exhaust (“can”); and
- ◊ Operating a snowmobile within the park without a permit.



Can It!

Modified exhaust convictions have been on the rise in recent years. Modified exhausts, or “cans”, are illegal in the province and are a major concern for snowmobiling in the national park. Newfoundland & Labrador snowmobile regulations state, “A person shall not equip a vehicle with a muffler cut-off, straight exhaust, gutted muffler, Hollywood muffler, by-pass or other device which has the effect of by-passing or reducing the efficiency of that noise reducing equipment.”

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is eligible for a resident permit?

A: A resident is defined as a resident of the local enclave communities (Cow Head, St. Paul’s, Sally’s Cove, Rocky Harbour, Norris Point, Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook, Woody Point, Trout River) for at least six months and their immediate family.

Q: Does my child need a snowmobile permit?

A: Provincial legislation states operators of a snowmobile in Newfoundland and Labrador must be 13 years of age. Anyone 13 years of age or older operating a snowmobile in Gros Morne requires a snowmobile permit. However, youth 17 and under do not require a park pass.

Q: I have a resident permit, but I am traveling to the Gorge with friends who are non-residents. Can they operate their snowmobiles wherever I go?

A: Public/commercial permit holders **cannot** operate snowmobiles in the same areas as a resident, and must stay within public/commercial corridors. The public/commercial season opens January 15, 2021.

Q: Why do I need a snowmobile operator’s permit?

A: Snowmobiling is a regulated activity in the National Park. All snowmobile operators must have a permit to snowmobile in Gros Morne National Park. Issuing permits will assist Parks Canada in better monitoring and management of the activity.

Q: Why do I need a park entry pass?

A: All users of national parks in Canada are required to have a park entry pass. The funds generated from passes go directly back into the maintenance of park facilities as well as park monitoring and management programs.

How to Obtain a Resident Snowmobile Permit

Resident permits and park passes will be available at the following locations starting December 18th:

- ◊ Park Administration Building, Rocky Harbour: Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 12:00pm and 12:30pm - 4:30pm.
- ◊ Town Offices in Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook, Norris Point, St. Pauls, Trout River and Woody Point: Call your local town office for specific days and times.

Permits and passes can also be obtained over the phone and will be mailed out to residents. Call the Parks Administration Building at 458 - 2417 for more details.

* Please note, resident snowmobile permits are free but require a valid park pass.

Need to get in touch? Contact us:

Gros Morne National Park Administration Office
3 D.o.T. Dr., Rocky Harbour, NL, A0K 4N0
Tel: 709-458-2417 E-mail: pc.grosmorne.pc@canada.ca
Mon. - Fri., 8:30am - 4:30 pm (closed 12 pm - 12:30 pm)

- facebook.com/GrosMorneNL
- [@ParksCanadaNL](https://twitter.com/ParksCanadaNL)
- [parks.canada](https://instagram.com/parks.canada)

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.