

# ONTARIO FEDERATION OF SNOWMOBILE CLUBS

*Dedicated to providing strong leadership and support to member clubs and volunteers, to establishing and maintaining quality snowmobile trails which are used in a safe and environmentally responsible manner, and to furthering the enjoyment of organized snowmobiling.*

April 1, 2006

## Is your organization struggling to obtain affordable general operating liability insurance?

To: Ontario Volunteer Based Community Service Organizations

### Subject: Participation in the Protect our Volunteers! Initiative

Across the province, volunteers performing valued and often essential community services, are exposed to unreasonable claims of liability. Unlike other jurisdictions, Ontario has not passed legislation to shield volunteers from exposure to unfounded or frivolous claims. Consequently, not-for-profit organizations must redirect millions of scarce program dollars to pay for expensive insurance protection for themselves and their volunteers.

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) has always provided good liability insurance coverage for our clubs, volunteers, and landowners. But over the past four years, the premiums have increased by as much as 1000%, causing considerable hardship in other program areas. Our research tells us that most other community service organizations are facing a similar challenge. Your organization may be one.

We think it's time for Ontario's volunteer based organizations to speak with one voice on the issue of insurance. That's why the OFSC is proposing a province-wide initiative urging the Government of Ontario to enact legislation that shields community volunteers and not-for-profit organizations from unreasonable liability claims.

- **Protect our Volunteers!** is a coalition of Ontario's community service groups calling for affordable liability insurance to protect volunteers.
- **Protect our Volunteers!** is a call for the Province of Ontario to pass appropriate volunteer liability legislation immediately.



## **HOW WILL THE PROGRAM OPERATE?**

- The premise of the program will be to have participating organizations recommend to their members that they visit the *Protect our Volunteers!* web site where the need for provincial government action will be explained.
- The *Protect our Volunteers!* web site will offer individual visitors who agree with the need for provincial government action, the opportunity to send an message of support to Premier McGuinty.
- The site is currently active at [www.protectourvolunteers.ca](http://www.protectourvolunteers.ca)

## **WHAT IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE?**

- Your agreement that your logo can be included on the *Protect our Volunteers!* web site as a participating organization. We can link it back to your own web site if you wish.
- Your agreement that you will use your best efforts to recommend to your members that they visit the *Protect our Volunteers!* web site. This can be through your own web site plus whatever other communication tools you have at your disposal including newsletters, special events, press releases, etc.
- Other than the costs related to recommending that your members visit the *Protect our Volunteers!* web site, there are no other fees or expectations. It is up to each participating organization to explain the need for volunteer protection legislation in the way that makes most sense for them.

### **Can it really be that easy?**

We think so. The internet is a powerful and inexpensive way to allow Ontario voters to express their concern regarding an important topic.

### **Will it make a difference?**

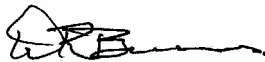
We think so. If the *Protect our Volunteers!* initiative is embraced by the largest of the province's volunteer organizations and their members, then the Premier will likely receive tens of thousands of emails requesting that the Province take immediate action.

Attached you will find additional information related to program implementation. Please feel free to ask questions once you've reviewed the material and visited the demo web site. Our sincere hope is that your organization will agree to add its voice.

I'd like to close with a personal comment. Information provided to me indicates that in 2004, there were approximately 45,000 not-for-profit organizations working in the public good in Ontario and that in year 2000, 2,378,000 individuals volunteered their time. As leaders of the volunteer sector, we need to speak with one voice on the subject of liability insurance costs. **Protect our Volunteers!** is a simple and easy way for us to do just that without a lot of administration and expense. Let's get on with it and not let a good concept be encumbered by unnecessarily detailed analysis and examination.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participation in the **Protect our Volunteers!** initiative.

Yours truly,



Dennis R. Burns  
President



# PROGRAM AT A GLANCE:

- Program Name:** *Protect our Volunteers!*  
Ontario Community Service Groups Calling for Affordable Liability Insurance to Protect our Volunteers.
- Purpose:** The objective of the *Protect our Volunteers!* program is to prompt the Ontario Government to pass legislation which shields community volunteers and not-for-profit organizations from unreasonable claims of liability as has been done in other jurisdictions
- Methodology:** Participating not-for-profit organizations will encourage their members to visit the *Protect our Volunteers!* web site where the initiative will be explained and they will be offered the opportunity to send an email of support to the Premier of Ontario. An individual response rate in the 10s of thousands is possible.
- Eligibility:** Incorporated Not-For-Profit organizations operating in Ontario whose success is closely linked to volunteers are eligible to identify themselves as a “Participating Organizations” by committing to the following:
- Agreement that your logo can be including on the *Protect our Volunteers!* web site as a participating organization.
  - Agreement that you will use your best efforts to recommend to your members that they visit the *Protect our Volunteers!* web site.
- A letter of intent is all that is required to participate. There are no fees for participation.
- Leadership:** None required. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs is getting the ball rolling in terms of encouraging other organizations to participate. Participating organizations are united by their identification on the web site only. Each participating organization will explain the need for the program to others in the terms that best suit their needs.
- Administration:** The OFSC will provide general program administration including web-site maintenance. Key Contact: Iris Laycock, OFSC Executive Assistant, [irislaycock@ofsc.on.ca](mailto:irislaycock@ofsc.on.ca), (705) 739 7669 x 233
- Web Site:** [www.protectourvolunteers.ca](http://www.protectourvolunteers.ca)
- Initiation Date:** April 1, 2005 to make web site live with as many participating organizations as possible. Others can be added after that date.



**Protect Our Volunteers**  
Ontario Community Service Groups  
Calling for Affordable Liability  
Insurance to Protect Volunteers

**Participating Organizations:**



Ontario Trails Council  
Conseil des sentiers de l'Ontario



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***You Can Help!***

**Click here to send your message of support to the Premier!**