Who is VAST?

- VAST is a 501 (c) 3 not-for profit corporation.
- VAST represents over 130 local snowmobile clubs, with more than 35,000 members.
- Local snowmobile clubs maintain more than 6,000 miles of snowmobile trails.
- More than 80% of snowmobile trails are on private property.
- Local snowmobile clubs are required to obtain permission for the use of land for snowmobiling.
- More than 8,000 private property owners grant permission for the use of their land for snowmobiling.

VAST Liability Insurance

- VAST is required to provide liability insurance that covers all snowmobile clubs, and their activities; this policy also names all landowners as additional insureds.

Recreation is important to all Vermont residents, as well as the visitors to our beautiful state, and it provides a significant economic impact to Vermont.

The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc. (VAST) is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Statewide Snowmobile Trail System for the State of Vermont through a cooperative agreement with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. VAST was founded more than 40 years ago.

Landowner Liability

Vermont law protects landowners giving permission for the use of their land for snowmobiling, and no public or private landowner, or their agent, shall be liable for property damage or personal injury sustained by any snowmobiler...

(Title 23, Chapter 29, § 3206 (d)).

VAST was founded in 1967 and is responsible for organized snowmobiling in Vermont.
- VAST is one of the oldest snowmobiling organizations in the U.S.
- VAST is a non-profit, private group that includes over 130 clubs statewide, with over 35,000 members.
- Clubs and their steadfast volunteers are the backbone of the organization.
- VAST is run by 14 Directors, who are elected by the clubs in each of Vermont’s 14 counties and by four officers also elected by the members.
- The VAST office is overseen by seven full-time employees and is centrally located in Berlin, Vermont.

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Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc.
26 Vast Lane, Barre, VT 05641
T 802.229.0005 • F 802.223.4316
www.vtvast.org

VAST trails are for winter use only!
- Permission to use snowmobile trails does not extend to use of these trails by ATVs, four-wheelers, motor or mountain bikes, hiking or other uses, unless specifically authorized.
- A VAST trail is a trail only during the snow season; any other use will be considered trespassing.

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Snowmobile Use

Title 23 V.S.A., Chapter 29 § 3206 (d) provides all landowners allowing snowmobile use of their land the following protection:

“No public or private landowner or their agents shall be liable for any property damage or personal injury sustained by any person operating or riding as a passenger on a snowmobile, or upon a vehicle or other device drawn by a snowmobile upon the public or private landowner’s property, whether or not the public or private landowner has given permission to use the land, unless the public or private landowner charges a cash fee for the use of the property, or unless said damage or injury is intentionally inflicted by the landowner.”

Vermont Recreation and Your Protection under Vermont Law

Snowmobile Use Title 10 V.S.A., Chapter 20 created the "Vermont Trail System." Many Statewide and local trails systems have been accepted to be a part of the Vermont Trail System, and they are covered by the § 446 of Chapter 20, Title 10:

"No public or private owner of land which is a part of the Vermont Trail System shall be liable for any property damage or personal injury sustained by any person using these trails unless the public or private owner intentionally inflicts the damage or injury."

General Access – Inherent Risk Title 12, Chapter 27, § 1037 provides the landowner with liability protection for all users of their land not covered by those protections above:

"A person who takes part in any sport accepts as a matter of law the dangers that inhere therein so far as they are obvious and necessary."

This means that no one can sue a landowner for injuries sustained as a result of the risk that is inherent to the activity they are pursuing: cross country skiing; mountain biking; equestrian use; walking; hunting; etc.

Effect of Posting on Liability Posting does not affect Liability. The landowner is protected whether or not the land is posted; Title 12 V.S.A., Chapter 203 § 5794 (e)

Effects of Easements on Liability Easements do not affect liability. Both the landowner and the holder of the easement are similarly protected, as if there were no easement.

Vermont Trail System Title 10 V.S.A., Chapter 20 created the “Vermont Trail System.” Many Statewide and local trails systems have been accepted to be a part of the Vermont Trail System, and they are covered by the § 446 of Chapter 20, Title 10:

"No public or private owner of land which is a part of the Vermont Trail System shall be liable for any property damage or personal injury sustained by any person who, without consideration, enters or goes upon the owner’s land for a recreational use and proceeds to enter upon or use a) equipment, fixtures, machinery or personal property, or b) structures or fixtures not described in subdivision (2)(A) (4) or (5) of this section."

限制 on Landowner Liability

Vermont Statutes Annotated; Title 12: Court Procedure Chapter 203: Limitations on Landowner Liability § 5791. Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to encourage owners to make their land available for recreational uses by clearly establishing a right to make use of the land to conduct recreational activities, enter upon, or use the land for a recreational use and proceeds to enter upon or use a) equipment, fixtures, machinery or personal property, or b) structures or fixtures not described in subdivision (2)(A) (4) or (5) of this section."

§ 5792. Definitions

(As used in this chapter)

Consideration means a price, fee or other charge paid to or received by the owner in return for the permission to enter upon or to travel across the owner’s land for recreational use. Consideration shall not include:

a) compensation paid to or a tax benefit received by the owner for granting a permanent recreational use easement;

b) payment or provision for consideration to be paid to the owner for damage caused by recreational use;

c) contributions in services or other consideration paid to the owner to offset or insure against damages sustained by the owner from the recreational use or to compensate the owner for property damage.

§ 5793. Liability Limited

(a) The fact that an owner has made an easement; or (b) The fact that an owner has made recreational use, does not by itself preclude the land owner from the land available without consideration, from damage arising out of recreational use.

§ 5794. Landowner Protection

(a) The fact that an owner has made an easement; or (b) The fact that an owner has made recreational use, does not by itself preclude the land owner from the land available without consideration, from damage arising out of recreational use.

§ 5795. Exceptions

This chapter shall not apply to lands owned by municipality or the state.

The Vermont Statutes Annotated (V.S.A.) is available online at: http://www.law.state.vt.us/statutes/ statute02.htm

For more than 49 years Vermont landowners have graciously shared their land with Vermont snowmobilers. Without your generous support, the Statewide Snowmobile Trail System would not exist! Your permission for snowmobile use is for winter only and does not include any other recreational use.

Thank You Landowners!