



Haliburton Forest

& WILD LIFE RESERVE LTD

Dogsledding Experiences and Animal Welfare at Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve

- OFFICIAL STATEMENT -

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Haliburton Forest has offered dogsledding for more than a decade, providing tens of thousands of clients with traditional and exhilarating experiences. Recent media purports that numerous dogsledding operators in other regions of Canada have abusive practices. This document is intended to set the record straight for our clients and anyone else that is interested in our dogsledding operation.

The majority of our dogs at Haliburton Forest are Siberian Huskies. These animals come from a long breeding history with a focus on freight and human transportation. Siberian Huskies are eager running dogs with a high level of stamina. Dogsledding is one of the best methods of exercise to keep and maintain the health of Siberian Huskies.

Our kennel is home to 86 Siberian Huskies. We pay very close attention to the health and vigour of each animal. At the moment, 38 are “full day dogs” capable of running 35 km or more per day, 19 are “half-day dogs” capable of running 20 km per day, and 18 are “intro dogs” capable of running 8 km per day. This means that 88% of the population of our kennel is actually working and running on a daily basis during the winter.

The remaining 11 dogs are a mix of retirees and puppies. We keep our retired dogs until they are adopted out by a loving home, or pass naturally. The retired dogs are very well taken care of. All of their medical needs are covered whether medications, surgeries, as well as, comfortable living accommodations and healthy food. Pups are too young to run; we wait until they are approximately 2 years old, when their muscle and skeletal structures are fully developed, before allowing them to join our running teams.

Some of our current dogs are rescued dogs. Most of them are Alaskan Huskies of varying breed mixtures. These have been given to us by private owners and rescue shelters such as the SPCA. Because of our large kennel facility and skilled staff, rescued dogs with challenging behaviors are trained and become running, healthy dogs. Quite often, rescued dogs with previously unpredictable behaviors are trained into social animals capable of being handled by our staff.

It is important to note that our Huskies on our tours are not pushed to their max. Our tours are not only designed to provide clients with a good experience, but also to ensure that our huskies receive a healthy level of exercise. Those who have participated in one of our dogsledding experiences will remember how excited the dogs are to run at the beginning of a tour. Their yipping and barking is their way of saying, "Let's go!"

By running and exercising, Huskies burn a lot of calories. We have our dog food specifically prepared by a Canadian pet food producer for our kennel. The kibble has a high protein and fat content, and the dogs seem to thoroughly enjoy it.

Our kennel area is a large outdoor roofed facility. It is unique in that the dogs have kennels they share with one or more kennel mates but also have access to a large outdoor yard. This accommodates the temperament of our Huskies, being very social by nature. Several staff participate in the operation of the kennel throughout the year. During the spring and summer, there are two staff at the kennel for a minimum of 6 hours per day, giving our huskies the opportunity to play and socialize in an open yard. During the fall and winter there are between 4 to 6 staff, 7 days a week providing 6 to 8 hours of time in the open yard or on the trails. The kennel staff ensure that the dogs are fed, watered and cared for. The kennel coordinator monitors the health and condition of the dogs and the cleanliness of the kennels.

Haliburton Veterinary Services has provided care to our dogs for over 20 years. They have provided us with the attached letter of support.

We are proud of the conditions at our kennel and welcome the public to see it for themselves throughout the year. While there may be a few "bad apples" in Canada who have abused their dogs, we love our Huskies and take very good care of them. After all, they work with us during the winter, so it **is** our duty to work for them throughout the year. Should you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at 1800 6312198 or at info@haliburtonforest.com

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January 30, 2021

An Open Letter,

Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve has been a client of Haliburton Veterinary Services for 20 years. For the first 12 years Dr. Laurie Brown provided most of this service, and over the past decade this service has shifted to become my responsibility and privilege.

Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve is without doubt a client that I am happy to endorse. In the words of Dr. Laurie Brown, “The reality here is that EVERY dog has received the recommended preventative therapies, diagnostic tests, as well as medical and surgical treatments when needed, and the loss of every dog has been mourned.” This statement is as true now as it was then. Not only is the physical health and well-being of their kennel of utmost importance, but so is the mental health and stimulation of all individuals.

These dogs are happy, healthy and well looked after. It is my honour to be a small part of this kennel.

Sincerely,

Dr. Aimée Filion DVM