



Project "SledSooley"

Submitted By: Mike Smith

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Sled Sooley, the Man, the Website, the Legend, is the man for which our riding group has been named. I guess this is because Mr. Sooley's attitude, friendship and love for sledding accurately represents the pulse of our whole crew. This is a group who will get in a ride at every opportunity, who are always eager to try a new jump, hill climb, etc, who are not afraid to wrench on a machine and always eager to help out a buddy or stranger in need.

Sledding for our crew started quite a few years ago, but really got into full swing in 2003 when most everyone finally had their own machine. That winter as most of us were getting used to our machines we also started documenting our adventures on camera which led to the creation of the website www.sledsooley.com as an online medium to share our adventures.

Sooley's journey into sledding started with the acquisition of his fathers 1989 Enticer 340T. To say it wasn't in the best of shape would be an understatement because the Sooley's as a clan are hard on equipment. A run in with a hard object had badly damaged the front frame, the sled had been a victim of many "Johnny Repairs" and overall it had seen better days. But this was Sooley's sled and it was to be the best it could be, and also the very first Area 51 project.

In a marathon like effort starting in October 2003, we completely scrapped the machine right down to separating the front steel frame from the aluminum tunnel. An afternoon's trip to a scrap heap located well outside St. John's rewarded us a free undamaged Enticer Frame found sitting under an old washing machine. We returned with our treasure, re-skinned the belly with new steel and attached it to the tunnel. This was the crucial first step in rebuilding the Weapon.

We worked day and night to clean, paint, replace worn parts, and slowly reassemble the Enticer. Mr. Sooley added a final touch by applying a fresh coat of Tremclad Blue paint to the hood. Like most things Sooley put his hands to, this simple project turned out much more involved then it should have been. This is frequently

due to the excitement (read: rush) of seeing the project finished! Problems with the paint running and flaking off, led to Sooley using 4 cans of spray paint to finish this rather small project and thereby covering of every object in Area51 with a fine coat of the same blue paint!!! (A lot this secret location is still blue to this day!) Sooley then added the crowning jewel to wind up the rebuild process, a brand new perfectly clear windshield. Alas the sled was finished, reassembled and running well which was a major accomplishment for our crew.

On its maiden test flight early that season, Mr. Sooley successfully performed a motor test and gathered a lot of speed following Crew Member Bill Hillyard on his Vmax 700 across a field. Unfortunately in that field was a rather large ditch that Bill managed to jump but Sooley grabbing for the brake, slid straight into. The Enticer stopped instantly in the ditch, but its rider did not as he was thrown from the sled, crashing through the brand new windshield on the way to the ground! A few oaths may have been sworn, but they certainly weren't heard over the laughter of the crew! Heck, that's what buddies are for!

Later that season the Sled Sooley Crew took a trip to the Terra Nova Area, departing Port Blandford and riding to Gambo then back. Like most trips it was filled with fun, mishaps, and machinery break downs, but none quite as funny as poor ol' Sooley (well funny for us anyway). The engine of old enticer decided to act up that afternoon in Gambo, the trouble was found to be a crack in ignition coil which caused the machine to partially break down whenever it got wet. Not having a spare we decided to head back to Port Blandford. On the return trip the sled would run great for awhile, and poor the next as one cylinder lost fire then mysteriously came back to life. On one particular stretch, a very frustrated Sooley held the throttle wide open as both cylinders began to fire in perfect order. As his luck has historically demonstrated it ran out fast as a big drift appeared on the trail in front of him pitching the sled skyward with the rider hanging on (read: being dragged on his belly) for dear life! A broken throttle lever was the only casualty other than the hurt bellies of the crew from laughing so hard (after we found Sooley to be in good health!).

The end of the 2004 riding season rewarded Sooley with the purchase of a newer sled, a 1997 Mach1 700 triple, a beautiful machine in great shape. Through the 2005 riding season, the new sled ran very well and was a heck of a lot of fun. A little pre season maintenance including the replacement of some boggy wheel bearings and some adjustment of the clutch alignment was about all the mechanical

work required that season, a far cry from the work performed the previous year! Unfortunately the life of the Mach1700 was abruptly cut short during an Easter Weekend trip to Mount Peyton, but more importantly the life of Mr Sooley was spared, as close a call as it was. As recounted in Sledworthy magazine (Vol 1, No.1), Mr. Sooley climbed the wrong part of the hill, on the top of which was no place to stop. The sled skidded down the far slope as the rider kicked himself free but slid behind it to the edge of the cliff. Fortunately a large rock at the edge of the cliff arrested his decent, as he watched the sled tumble and fall the great drop directly in front of him. There was nothing salvageable of the sled and thus ended the riding season for Sooley that year. On a brighter note, Sooley was OK and it led to a resurrection of the ol' Enticer!

The 2006 season was relatively uneventful, the steel rear rack fell off the enticer, so a Sooley solution was put in its place in the form of a blue milk crate. Carburetor problems (mostly caused by Sooley's bad luck with cleaning such devices) took awhile to troubleshoot but were finally resolved with a visit to a local mechanic. The machine continued to run very well as Sooley was proud to demonstrate one evening on a vacant lot opposite his house. A group stood by and watched as Sooley drove around then gunned the throttle from the far side of the lot. He didn't slack off one bit as he hit the plow roll landing dead center in the middle of the road, a pretty mean feat for an old sled indeed, but Sooley wasn't finished yet! The throttle remained wide open as the sled picked up speed climbed the bank of snow on his own front lawn shook itself free of Sooley and cleared the top just out of site of the spectators. The Enticer stopped with a rather ominous THUMP and the engine still running at full throttle. Inevitably the throttle had stuck wide open, and the location of Sooley's personally designed kill switch required the use of about 3 hands. The run ended when the Enticer rear-ended his cousins car damaging only the muffler tip of the car and once again the bellies of all the spectators as they fell to the ground in a fit of laughter!

The 2007 season saw the creation of another modification that only Sooley himself could conceive. The purchase of a new 110 volt welder immediately required a project, and that project was found in building custom steel running board reinforcements for the old enticer. Basically, small square tubing was welded together to form a ladder and then was bolted to the top of the running boards to add extra grip and support for standing. This project was followed by a freshening of the motor with new rings and gaskets, the installation of hand warmers and a new ignition kill switch to prevent a repeat of last years mishap.

Later that year at the annual cabin trip, Sooley's wonderful wife surprised him with the purchase of another new snowmobile! This sled is a 1994 Mach1 670, is in fantastic shape and a much needed step up from the now very tired Enticer. Since then its seen the installation of new skies, some clutch work to solve a primary clutch problem and the installation of new handle bars graciously donated from a REV chassis machine. This is bound to be a great year for Sooley and the rest of the Sledsooley Crew. Keep up to date by checking out the crew website at www.sledsooley.com , and for my tech articles please visit www.shed-headz.com.