Chinook Owners Association
Working Dog Program
Draft Group: Sledding

Requirements for Novice Level Certification

The Draft Group of the WDP is designed to recognize Chinooks that demonstrate ability in common working and pulling disciplines. The Sledding section rewards achievement in the traditional pulling area. The WDP recognizes that pulling a sled is not possible for some dogs in areas without snow and therefore allows wheeled vehicles such as scooters, bicycles, and rigs to be used in the fulfillment of the requirements.

The Novice level is designed for the less experienced dog and/or handler as an easy introduction and should not be beyond the means of any sound Chinook. While specific conditioning is not required, the WDP encourages owners to introduce their Chinooks to pulling in a gradual and responsible manner. Training sessions to familiarize the dog with harnessing and pulling a light weight such as a motorcycle tire or drag sled are good ways to begin your dog's pulling career on the right note. Chinooks should be happy and excited in anticipation of an outing- owners are responsible for ensuring their dogs have positive experiences on the trails. Brief, positive training sessions will allow a Chinook to understand what it is being asked to do, as well as look forward to the outing before they are ready to attempt a qualifying outing. For specific advice on introducing your dog to pulling, please contact the WDP Committee for more information and mentors in your area.

Once a dog is familiar with the components of pulling, it is ready to earn a Novice Sled Dog certification. Any Chinook that participates on a team pulling a sled or other vehicle is eligible for the Novice Sled Dog certification.

Working in harness should be an exciting and fun experience for Chinooks. It is critical that owners and mushers focus on providing a positive experience for their dogs. The WDP supports working with Chinooks to responsibly introduce them to sledding – physical and mental abuse are expressly prohibited. No action or inaction that causes preventable pain or suffering to a dog is allowed. If a dog is tentative or nervous hooked into a team, yelling at it or forcing it to be dragged along is not only abusive, it is counterproductive and will lead to an insecure dog afraid of even being harnessed. If a Chinook is tentative in harness, working slowly to build its confidence in sledding with small steps is critical. Please contact the WDP Committee for more information on gradually introducing a Chinook to sledding.

A dog must meet the following requirements to be awarded the Novice Sled Dog certificate:

1. Harness: Allow itself to be harnessed.

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2. Hook Up: Allow itself to be hooked up without repeatedly tangling lines or trying to get to the owner (holding it's "line out" position).
3. Start: Start cleanly in the desired direction of travel.
4. Pace: Maintain an appropriate pace during the trip.
5. Stop: Hold its position on a stop.
6. Distance: The dog must pull the sled (or vehicle) an uninterrupted distance of:
    a. 1 mile per dog on the team in a race
        i. Races must be sanctioned by ISDRA OR
        ii. Race rules must be approved by the WDP Committee prior to the event.
    b. OR 3 miles on a training run.

Note:

- Vehicles may be snow sled or wheeled vehicle.
- The team does not have to be all Chinooks.
- An impartial witness must sign the form to be sent to the Committee. The witness must be someone other than the owner of the dog.
- New technologies frequently become available to document distances and locations (e.g., mapping tools, ipod apps, etc.). Please consult with the Committee prior to using any of these tools on qualifying runs to ensure their eligibility.

Novice Sled Dog Application Checklist:

To apply for the certification, the following documentation should be sent to the WDP Committee:

- ☐ Novice Sled Dog Form, signed by driver and witness.
- ☐ Map of location and distance traveled.
- ☐ Photo of trail with comments about conditions on the day of the run.
- ☐ Photo of the dog harnessed and hooked to the vehicle.
- ☐ $5 application fee (check or paypal).

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