

President's Report – JYD AGM 2026

Club Successes & Highlights 2025-2026

When you look at what happened on the trails this past year, it's pretty remarkable.

On the River Trails there were berms added and reshaped, bridges improved, drops adjusted, new features built, connector trails created, benches and picnic tables installed, and even a tool station put up so now when maintenance calls when you are on the trail, you can fix it in style. We extended Two Tired Trail, with Field of Dreams, reboarded the lower bridge, reset the double drop, and kept a close eye on erosion. And the good news? We didn't have the washout issues we saw the year before - thank you Assinaboine river for staying in your lane!

What's really impressive is how much of this work was volunteer-driven. We had individuals putting in hundreds of hours this year and many others contributing consistently all season long. Weed eaters, chainsaws and mowers could be heard, and don't forget winter trail grooming. I won't single anyone out... but you know who you are, and we are deeply grateful.

We also saw great community engagement:

- Women's rides continued through the spring, summer and well into fall.
- The Gravel Grumble during Bike Week delivered 32 kilometres of grit and creek crossings.
- Five junior high schools held their divisional trail run at our park.
- We had media coverage on multiple occasions including the Activity Park grand opening.
- And we kept strengthening relationships with the City of Portage, Manitoba Cycling and the Portage Active Transportation Committee, and local schools to name a few.
- Our local vendors are where we get our supplies and many of them are also our sponsors. The billboard at the Activity Park is our recognition of their key role in our success.

Behind the scenes, we transitioned our banking, improved our reporting, kept our filings current, and added QR codes to make memberships easier. Not flashy work, but important for keeping the club stable and sustainable.

Activity Park & Grand Opening

The Activity Park Grand Opening. That was a milestone moment. Seeing the space full of riders, families, volunteers, and community leaders was incredibly rewarding.

One of the things I'm most proud of from that day was our partnership with ARC Industries for the on-site barbecue. ARC didn't just show up; they ran it beautifully. And I want to share a moment that really stuck with me.

When I bought my hamburger, I handed over a \$20 bill. The woman serving me, who was completely blind, counted out my change and handed it back perfectly. No hesitation. No fuss. Just professionalism and pride in her work.

That moment meant something to me. We talk about building trails and building features, but partnerships like that build community. I absolutely love ARC Industries, and I am proud that Junk Yard Dogs partnered with them. It made our event better, and it reflects the kind of organization we want to be.

Beyond the event itself, this year we:

- Completed the binzobos (think gazebo based on a grain bin design), including picnic tables.
- Completed the bathroom installation with landscaping,
- Installed some signage, still a bit to go here but it's on track,
- Continued discussions with the City about maintenance funding and long-term sustainability,
- And moved forward with planning for enhancements like the Beaver Pond bridge.

The Activity Park is no longer just a project. It's a destination. And that's because of the members of this club.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to take a moment to sincerely thank our Board of Directors.

- Chris Kitchen — especially for his leadership in event promotion and making sure the details actually come together for events.
- Patrick Guerreiro — for his steady and consistent work in keeping our club communications clear, organized, and professional.
- Kelly Folley — who has navigated some fairly complex financial transitions this year and kept us stable and accountable through it all.
- Chad Gillis — for his focused, hands-on leadership in trail development and for continually pushing projects forward.
- Rosemarie Holtmann — for keeping us connected to the broader active transportation community and ensuring we're part of conversations beyond our own trails.

- Brett Finney — for backing and coordinating club efforts, always willing to step in and help move initiatives ahead.
- And Jeff Skinner — for the significant amount of time and effort he continues to invest directly into trail building ideas and feature development.

This group has put in a tremendous amount of time and energy this year from governance and financial oversight, to trail design, event planning, partnership discussions, and negotiations with the City. A lot of that work happens quietly behind the scenes, but it is absolutely essential to keeping this organization healthy and moving forward. I'm grateful to serve alongside each of you.

Looking Ahead

Now, where are we headed?

First, we want to continue strengthening our maintenance model. As the park and trail system grows, the responsibility grows with it. We'll be building a business case to improve our maintenance agreement with the City and exploring sustainable options for hired seasonal help.

Second, we are eager to revive the Kids of Mud program. It's been dormant for a few years, but we now have an incredible set of trails that are perfect for it. The infrastructure is there. The appetite is there. What we need now is the right volunteer coordinator to help lead it and build the next generation of riders.

We're also continuing to explore race events, bridge solutions, improved signage, and smart ways to manage growth with our enthusiastic volunteers.

When you step back and look at 2025, it's clear: this club is not standing still.

The momentum is real. Thank you for being part of Junk Yard Dogs. Thank you for believing in what we're building. Thank you to every volunteer, every member, every sponsor, and every partner for helping turn a pile of ideas into something that truly benefits the community of Portage la Prairie.