



# NEGRC's Musher's Starter Guide

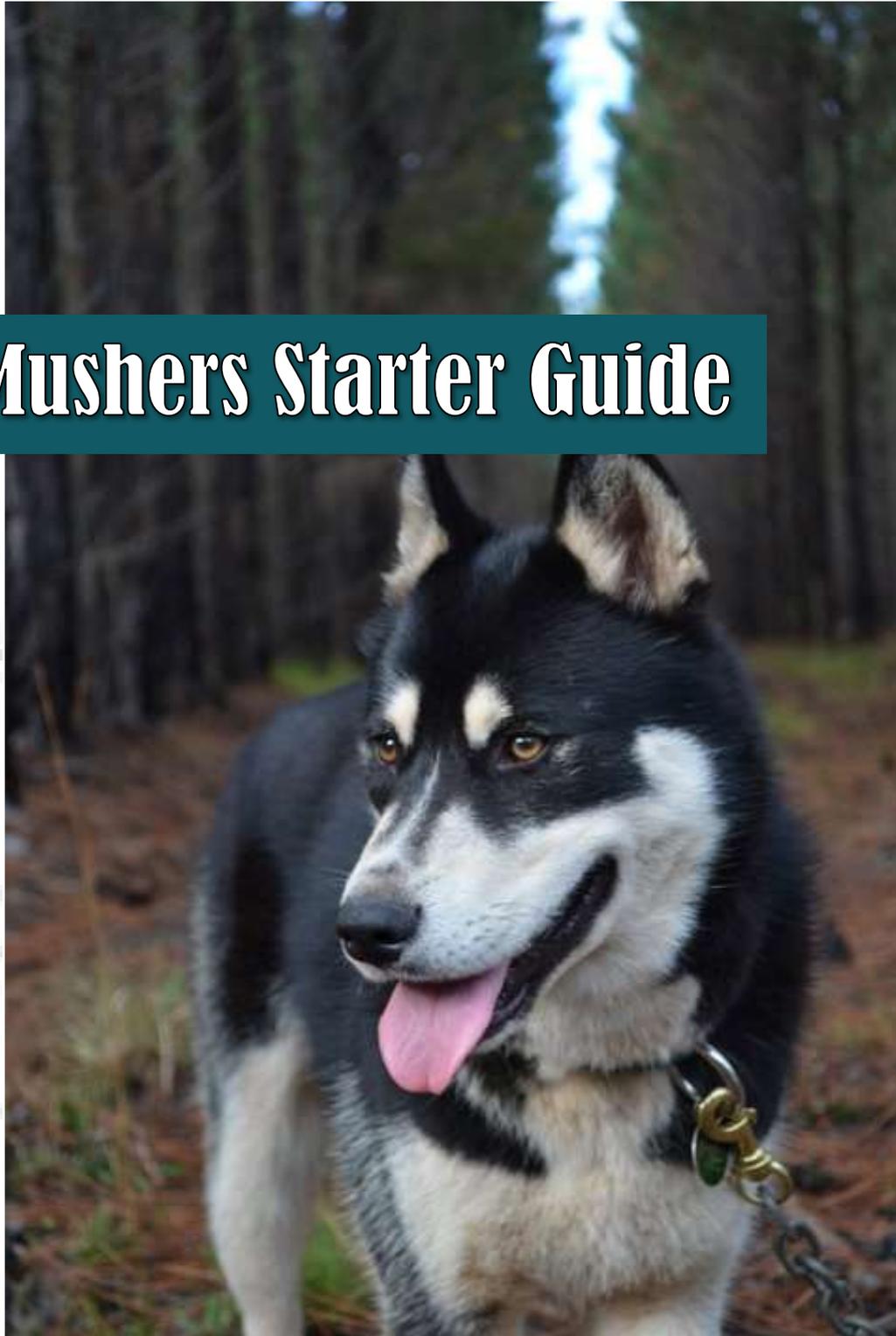


Photo By Leanne Taylor

**Northern Exposure Gig  
Racing Club Inc.**

**Queensland's Premier Sled  
Dog Club**

2/11/2020



## Welcome to the sport of sled dog racing in Queensland!

### *First, Some History*

In 1995, two Siberian husky Enthusiasts ventured down to Victoria to participate in what was now Australia's biggest sled dog race, the Undera Sled Dog Dash (now the NVSDC Classic). They returned with the idea to introduce sled dog racing to Queensland and with some encouragement, NEGRC Inc was formed.

Sled dog racing can be a recreational activity or a competitive sport for the whole family. With musher classes starting as early as 2yrs (Mini pee wee, adult accompanied) and ranging through the years with pee-wee (7-10 yrs) and Junior (11-14 yrs) up to Open/Adult classes.

NEGRC Inc. has seen many changes through the years, and has a promising future ahead. 2013 marked the return of the "Northern Exposure Classic" a race that previously highlighted the sport in Queensland, drawing attendance from interstate competitors. This sprint race is held annually and gives both inexperienced and veteran mushers the opportunity to run a designated trail while competing against the clock. 2013 also saw the rebranding of the "Classic" to the new "NEGRC Northern Challenge".

Above all NEGRC's aim is for its members to **have fun with their dog/s at all times!**



## *Mission Statement.*

**N**orthern exposure Gig Racing Club Inc.  
**E**ncourages the participation and promotion of  
**G**reat sled dog racing, both competitive or recreational  
**R**ight here in Queensland with the premier sled dog club  
**C**ommitted always, to the proper care and handling of the sled dog and the mushers enjoyment of the sport.

Sled dog racing is a 'team' oriented activity, that's why it makes such a great Social sport. If you would like to discover the 'sled dog' in your pet or socialise with like-minded people and share experiences then please contact any of our committee members below or Email us at

[info@negrc.org.au](mailto:info@negrc.org.au)

NEGRC Inc is committed to educating mushers about this great sport and how it can be enjoyed safely. The committee has compiled a number of information sheets to assist you in beginning this fantastic sport!

## *Your 2020 Committee*

<b>President</b>	Steven Roberts	0412 485 185
<b>Vice President</b>	Brad Powell	0435 118 430
<b>Secretary</b>	Nicole Robinson	0421 059 192
<b>Treasurer</b>	Nerrida Powell	0412 902 229
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Amy Rodgers	0458 004 991

**General Committee Members** - Ben Bonaddio, Ingrid King, Charlie Queen, Steven Shale



## Introduction

- Welcome to the sport of sled dog racing! So, you've heard about sled dog racing but you're not really sure if it's for you?
- That's Okay! NEGRC Inc encourages you to come along for a look first, **before** making any decisions, here is some information to help make that first visit easier.

## What you need to bring...

- Water (at least 2L per dog) and Bowls
- Stake-out, tie-out or crate, for your dog/s so they are secure when not running.
- Standard collar (Muzzles or any collar that can be hooked into a full choke are prohibited)
- Cycling Helmet and warm gloves, if you have them.
- Change of clothes, just incase!
- Each dogs current vaccination certificate.

## What NEGRC can provide for you to try...

- Scooter for you to use and try out (many varieties are available)
- Tuglines and Harnesses
- Safety kit
- Head or scooter mounted lights for night runs.



**IMPORTANT: All Dogs visiting a sled dog site must be currently vaccinated. Ensure your Dogs are also flea and tick treated and check them for ticks when you get home.**

### *Most Common Commands.*

- 🐾 **HIKE!** Command to go faster.
- 🐾 **GEE!** Command to turn right.
- 🐾 **HAW!** Command to turn Left.
- 🐾 **OKAY!** Command to Go.
- 🐾 **E-A-S-Y!** Command to Slow Down.
- 🐾 **ON BY!** Command to pass a distraction.
- 🐾 **WHOA!** Command to slow down and prepare to stop.
- 🐾 **NO!** Immediate correction statement.

### **TIPS:**

- 🐾 Commands should be used *sparingly but meaningfully*. Constant chattering will result in the sled dog team switching off to meaningful instruction you give as the musher.
- 🐾 **Give Praise** to your sled dog/s when they have done well and not for the sake of giving praise. Team spirit can be lifted on trail during time of hard work by giving praise.
- 🐾 **Water Dogs a few hours before a harness run.** This helps ensure hydration and allows time for the water to be absorbed into the system. Flavour baiting can be used to encourage drinking.
- 🐾 **Be constant!** Try to adhere to a constant pattern of behaviour and preparation prior to and while working with your dogs in harness. Sled dogs possess a very acute sense of picking cues or subtle indicators of a musher's intent. Remember, cues are subtle often subconscious indicators, whereas commands demand an immediate response. **Learn to read your dogs!**



## *Summer Training.*

Most of us spend warmer months in two ways, counting down the days until the next season begins, and wondering how to keep our sled dogs occupied. Here are a few suggestions to start you on the way to a successful sledding season.

### ***Early morning walk/jog***

Start as early as possible to avoid the heat and avoid cement and bitumen areas. Use the walks as an opportunity to introduce and build your dogs understanding of commands such as 'Gee/Haw' (turn commands) and others such as 'On-By' (pass a distraction) in an environment where you have more control over the situation. The heat will slow them down so limit distances and commands like 'Hike'. It's also a good opportunity to get dogs used to the feel of racing harnesses and the pull of the gang lines.

### ***Swimming***

This is a bit harder to find the right location but if your sled dog isn't 'allergic' to water then it is a great opportunity to get out that extra energy. Swimming is an excellent form of exercise that will (for the most part) keep your dog cool and the salt water really cleans out the coat.

### ***Line-out training***

It may not seem like it but 'Line-out' training is a very important element to sled dog racing. It involves the dog/s standing stationary (in harness) the gang line taunt behind them awaiting another command. For training it may be helpful to use 'stay' command in combination if your dog already understands this. Line-out is valuable skill in many situations especially for new mushers.

### ***Checking your dog's alignment***

Most people wouldn't realise if their dog was out of alignment, let alone take them to an animal chiropractor, but this is something we recommend doing before you start running your dog. If your dog is out of alignment (and the majority are or will be at some stage in their lives), they may be stiff or sore and



running them may make this worse and could have the potential to lead to injury. By getting them checked before the sledding season starts will ensure they are in good shape before they start running; a quick adjustment if needed will mean a happier and healthier dog too! Here is the link to the Australian Veterinary Chiropractic Association's website to find a local registered animal chiro <http://avca.com.au/>

### ***Harness Conditioning***

You may be thinking that walking your dog is more like walking a steam roller, what could they possibly need to know about pulling! But for many dogs the sensation of pulling in harness and the noise of something following just a few meters behind can be a little off-putting.

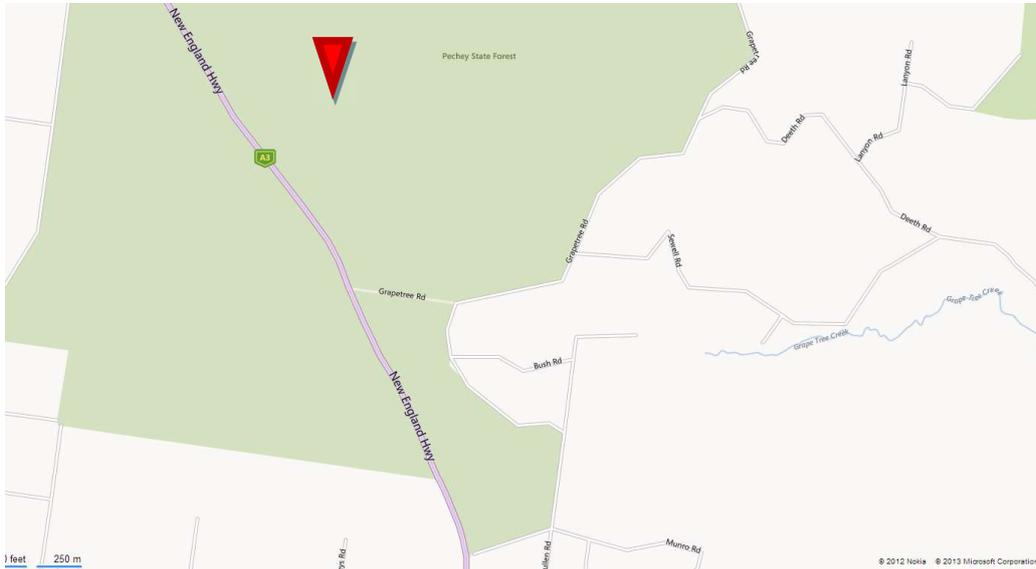
If you have the correct gear (racing Harness and gang line) it is easy to simulate the 'feel' of this pull/weight for your dog without the full impact. It is far too hot during the summer months for your dog to be pulling heavy weights (ie. A scooter and yourself). Try Filling a 2 litre bottle with water or sand and getting them used to pulling this along the ground behind them.

Objects such as besser bricks or old tyres make a great weight for your dog to pull as they create enough resistance to get your dog used to these new experiences without straining your dog once the summer is over and the temperatures start to drop. Remember to always supervise your dog, and to make it a positive experience. It's fine to use treats as lures, but try to phase this out as you do not want your dog to be standing in front of you on trail waiting for a treat!

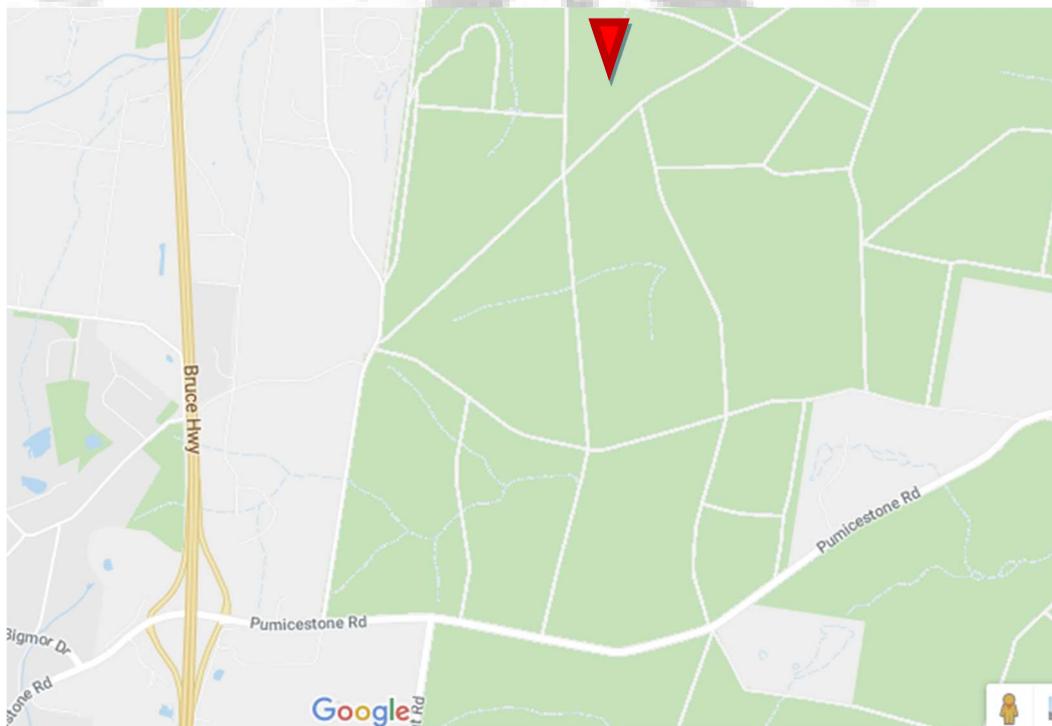


# Our Trails

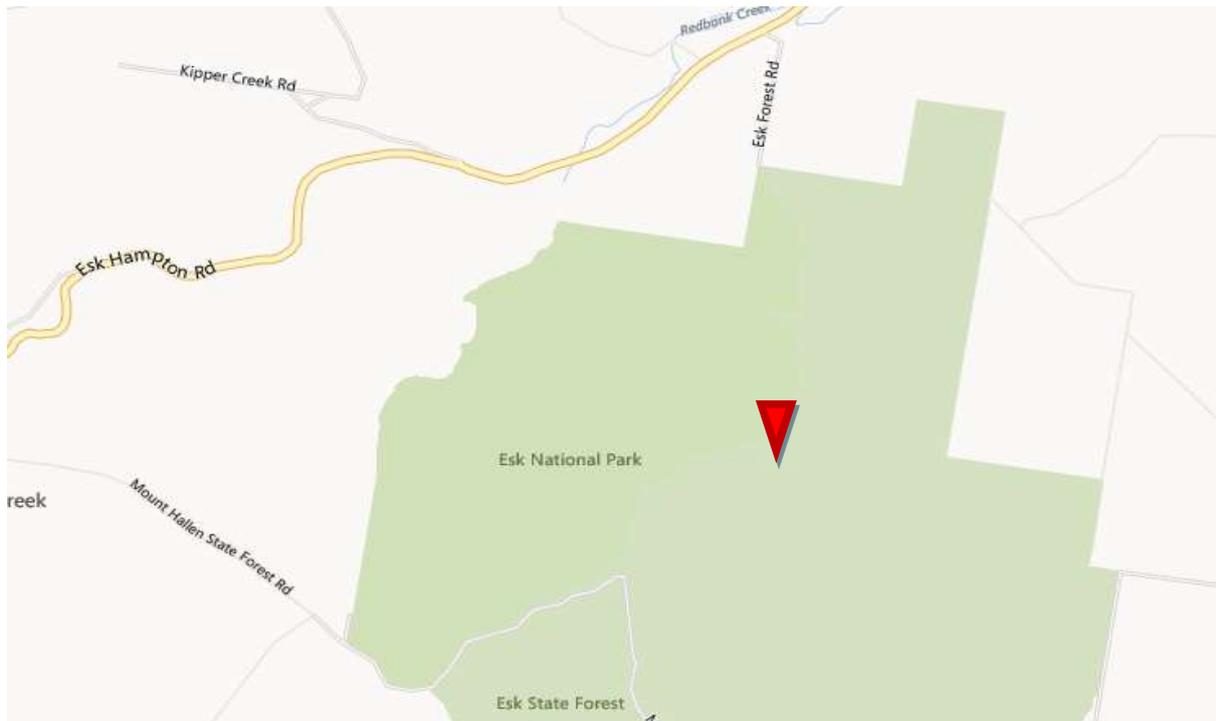
*Pechey state forest – off Grape Tree Road*



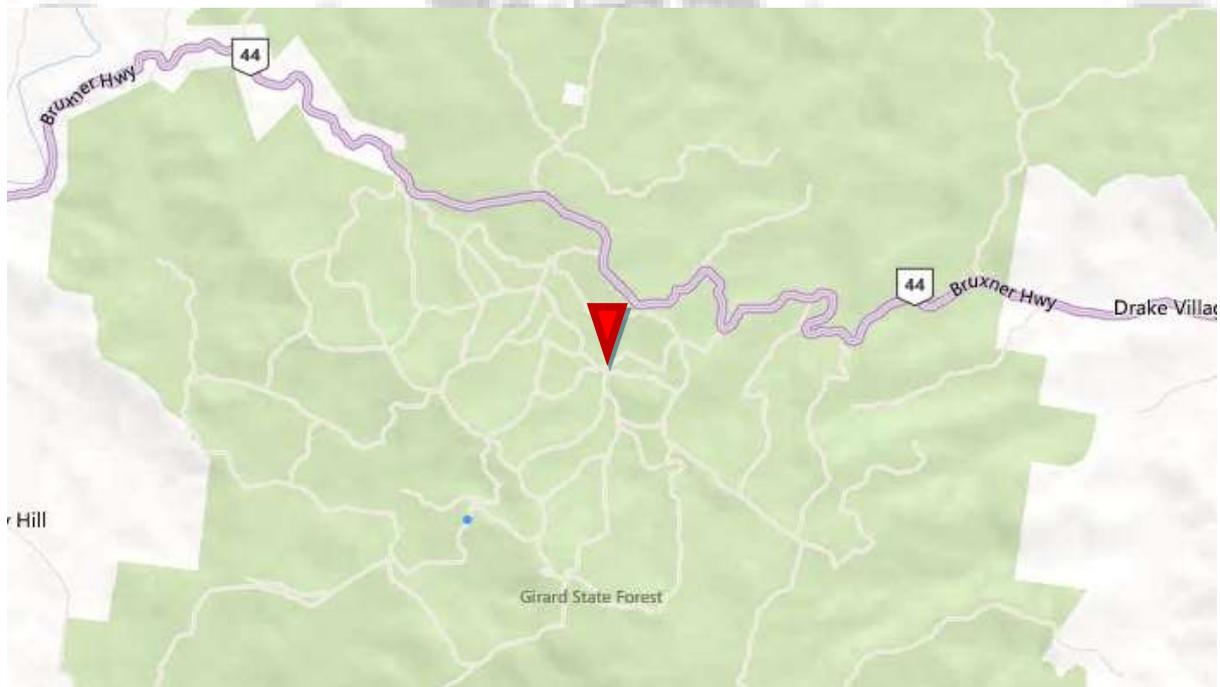
*Elimbah/Beerburum state forest- off Rutters Road,*



*Esk state forest – off Esk-Hampton Road (11km from Esk town)*



*Girard State Forest – off the Bruxner Highway between Tenterfield & Casino, NSW*



## Outfitters and Suppliers of sled dog equipment\*



**Tarro Signs – QLD**

<https://www.facebook.com/tarrosigns/>

PH: 0421 323 460



**Windchill Dog Gear - VIC**

Ralph and Sandy Koch

[www.windchill.com.au](http://www.windchill.com.au)

PH: 03 9714 8540 / Email: [sales@windchill.com.au](mailto:sales@windchill.com.au)

**K9 Pawspective / Taiga Mushing Supplies Australian Distributor - VIC**

Kylie Venardos

PH: 0414 792 829 / Email: [kylie.venardos@monash.edu](mailto:kylie.venardos@monash.edu)

**Todd McGuire - QLD**

PH: 0418 232 637 / Email: [snochasasd@gmail.com](mailto:snochasasd@gmail.com)

**Canine Equipment & Services – VIC**

<http://www.facebook.com/canineequipmentandservices>

PH: 03 5433 3283 / Email: [ces\\_enquiries@iinet.net.au](mailto:ces_enquiries@iinet.net.au)

**Kickbike Australia – QLD**

Bruce Cook

<http://kickbike.com.au/cross-max-20d>

PH: 0407 699 884 / Email: [bruce@kickbike.com.au](mailto:bruce@kickbike.com.au)

**Kick Scooter Sydney – NSW**

<http://www.kickscootersydney.com.au/content/dog-scooter-and-canicross>

PH: 0421 812 547 / Email: [info@kickscootersydney.com.au](mailto:info@kickscootersydney.com.au)



**Tuff Dog Beds – VIC**

[Dog Beds Online](http://DogBedsOnline.com.au) | [Tuff Dog Beds](http://TuffDogBeds.com.au) | [Australian Made Pet Beds](http://AustralianMadePetBeds.com.au)

PH: 1800 TUFF DOG / Email: [info@tuffdogbeds.com.au](mailto:info@tuffdogbeds.com.au)

*\*This list shows suppliers of dog sledding equipment for information purposes only, it does not indicate if a supplier is or is not a sponsor of the club.*

