



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MID-UNION SLED HAULERS (MUSH) SLED DOG RACE (FORT CUSTER) February 16-17, 2013

Augusta, Mich. – Experience the excitement as mushers race at Fort Custer Recreation Area, 5163 Fort Custer Drive, Augusta, Michigan 49012. Events begin at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 16, and 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 17, and feature competitive dog sledding, weight pulling, skijoring, and a 100-yard dash for our youngest mushers. The race is sponsored by the Fort Custer Recreation Area with trail assistance provided by the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy. Spectators are welcome at all MUSH events. Pets will not be permitted in the staging area and should be left at home for their well-being.

### About Mid-Union Sled Haulers

Mid-Union Sled Haulers, Inc., (MUSH) is a non-profit organization established in 1980 and located in the Midwestern USA dedicated to dog sledding on a recreational basis for the love of their dogs and the promotion of sled dog racing as a fun family activity.

### About Our Events

#### ***Dog Sledding***

The most easily identifiable form of the sport is regular dog sledding. “Mushing” as it is termed requires a team of well-behaved, social canine athletes who relish performing with like-minded canines. Anywhere from two to 16 dogs generally comprise most teams. Why do the dogs run and pull? Because they love it!

#### ***Weight Pull***

This sport can also be traced back to early Alaskan history when dogs were used to haul freight, mail and other heavy loads in the Last Frontier. As with team racing, teams met in local villages and friendly rivalries developed into challenges to determine the best pulling dog. In modern day events, dogs pull loads weighing as much as 1,800 lbs.

#### ***Skijoring***

Originating on the other side of the world where skis and pulks developed as a common method of travel across the frozen landscapes of Scandinavia, skijoring is another

popular dog-powered sport incorporated at MUSH events. Teams of one and two dogs tethered to a cross country skier compete on marked trails.

### ***The 100-Yard Dash***

The 100-yard dash is a race specifically for our up and coming generation of mushers. This is a supervised race designed to bolster the confidence of our young members and provide them with real life experience on a race trail. These kids are the future of our sport!

### **Sled Dogs Are Athletes**

Sled dog racing is one of North America's oldest winter sports. Races and training sessions are held in various locations throughout the state of Michigan. Mushers start training in September when cooler temperatures are ideal to optimize the dogs' physical condition and build on team commands before race season which usually starts in January and ends in March.

Arctic breeds such as Alaskan Malamutes, Samoyeds and Siberian Huskies are frequently used in sled dog racing. Other breeds and cross breeds are common such as the Alaskan Husky (a type of dog developed based on athletic ability) and the Eurohound which is a mix of German Shorthaired Pointer, English Pointer and occasionally Greyhound.

The dogs of today's racing teams are true athletes and share an incredible bond with their driver. Most dogs range in size from 40 to 60 pounds and are kept at an optimal, healthy weight. Drivers favor dogs that are even-tempered, gentle and able to stand the pressures of a rigorous training schedule. A sled dog may put in hundreds of miles during the training season and be transported in vehicles to races for many thousands of miles over the course of the three-month race season. The dogs and mushers relish their active lifestyle!

### **More Events Are Listed on**

[www.midunionsledhaulers.com](http://www.midunionsledhaulers.com) and  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Union-Sled-Haulers127808357249752>

### **For Current Race Status**

Call our "Cold" line at (906) 420-3993. For the safety of our athletes, animal and human alike, several factors are considered directly prior to the start of an event such as weather and trail conditions. The Cold Line is updated the Thursday before the race, confirming if the race will take place.

See you on the trail!

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