

## Mush ado in the tropics

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Handschuh/News

Devon Anderson (top) takes a visitor for a spin on his 'sled.'

It's 14 degrees below zero and the February wind is howling across a frozen lake bed in western Canada's Yukon Territory.

Through the extreme-cold mask and heavy, fur-lined parka hood pulled tight around his head, Devon Anderson is heard asking a question to no one in particular.

"It's 90 degrees in Jamaica right now, maybe warmer," he says through chattering teeth.

"Why am I here?"

The reason is as simple as it is unlikely. Anderson, the operations manager for Chukka Caribbean Adventures in Jamaica, was on frozen Lake Laberge early this year honing his mushing skills - he's captain of the Jamaica Dogsled Team.

Yes, Jamaica, the Caribbean island where it never snows.

Except that instead of huskies, Anderson drives a mismatched pack of mixed-breed dogs, large and small, that were either taken off the streets of Kingston or

found at animal shelters and rescued by the Jamaican Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (JSPCA).

Sponsored by singer Jimmy Buffett of "Margaritaville" fame, the Jamaica Dogsled Team is the brainchild of Danny Melville, founder of Chukka Caribbean Adventures, who was hoping to tap into some of the whimsy of "Cool Runnings," the 1993 film about the Jamaican bobsled team that competed against all odds in the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary.

(The founding of the dogsled team - and Anderson's quest to compete in the grueling Yukon Quest 1,000 Mile International Sled Dog Race - is chronicled in "Sun Dogs," a documentary that was released on DVD last month.)

Visitors to Chukka Cove can experience a unique travel experience and help the JSPCA at the same time. At Chukka's "Jamaica Dogsled Team Experience" and "Dogsled Encounter," guests help water, feed and care for the dogs, some of which were just days away from being put to sleep. A portion of proceeds from all tours, merchandise and DVD sales goes to the JSPCA.

*For more information about the Jamaica Dogsled Team, go to [www.jamaicadogsled.com](http://www.jamaicadogsled.com).*