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Volume 6 issue 3

Michigan SNOWMOBILE NEWS

Uniting Snowmobilers to Keep Trails Open



The Official Publication of the Michigan Snowmobile Association
Making Sure You Have a Place to Ride Your snowmobile!

Inside:

- Take Time to Look Before You Pump
- Volunteers Make It Happen!

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Michigan SNOWMOBILE NEWS

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Magazine Deadlines:

To have your announcements or information included in the pages of the *Michigan Snowmobile News* please submit by the following deadlines:

December – Nov. 25
Jan/Feb – Dec. 6

March – Feb. 10

MSA News You Can Use

E-Mail Addresses Needed:

– We are looking to update and enlarge our e-mail database. Please contact the MSA office and give us your e-mail address. Also, help us save on postage. You can receive your Michigan Snowmobile News online. For more information, call (616) 361-2285. The MSA does not sell or provide your e-mail address or other confidential information to outside sources. MSA only uses e-mail addresses for important news blasts, calls to action or distribution of your Michigan Snowmobile News.

Buy Your Trail Permit From MSAs Office Directly: – For every trail permit MSA sells \$1.43 goes directly to MSA. One dollar goes to MSA as the trail permit seller, and \$.43 goes to MSA as the trail permit distributor.

When MSA sells 30,000 trail permits through the office or our Web site, those funds allow staff and the officers to attend important meetings and monitor the issues. Meetings that affect our trails and access go on weekly in the state. If we are not there, we are forgotten. We have to be represented at these meetings and protect our right to ride.

Photo Contest: – Don't forget to submit last year's ride photos to the Michigan Snowmobile News photo contest. Your photo could be on the cover of next month's magazine. E-mail your submission to mmgrogitsky@hotmail.com.



CIRCULATION: The Michigan Snowmobile News is the official publication of the Michigan Snowmobile Association, Inc., and is distributed as part of the membership benefits of MSA. It is also circulated through select promotional distribution. The Michigan Snowmobile News is published six times a year (September, October, November, December, January/February and March). **WARNING:** Some of the photographs in this publication show action that may be potentially dangerous. We encourage safe operation of all snowmobile equipment and advise you not to attempt to duplicate any action that is seen on these pages. Let your experience and skill guide you. The views and opinions expressed by our readers are not necessarily those of the Michigan Snowmobile Association or the Michigan Snowmobile News staff.

On the Cover: Group of riders pose in one of the many ice caves on the shore of Lake Michigan.



President RON CORBETT

Keeping Snowmobiling Alive – Volunteers!

Volunteers are the life blood of our organization; keeping our sport alive. In Michigan we have 100 recognized snowmobile clubs divided up into Councils, and three regions making up the Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA).

The American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) is the umbrella organization, covering most snowmobile states in the U.S. A few states have chosen to not be a part of ACSA, but still benefit greatly from what ACSA does. With few exceptions, all of the above mentioned organizations are made up of volunteers.

In Michigan our volunteers (I'm happy to say) are among the best of the best. As I travel to various regional, national, and international events, I've witness Michigan's individual participation. This participation is more than any other state. Your Michigan delegation is considered a leader and a go-to organization for its opinion or recommendations.

Local level clubs, made up of volunteers, are the base foundation for everything our state organization works for. These volunteers are by far the most important element of our structure. To all our volunteers, I can't thank you enough, Thank You -- Thank You! Volunteerism is the most important factor in keeping snowmobiling alive.

Anti Motor-Vehicle, Off-Road Usage Groups

Yes, the anti-groups are still around and apparently getting stronger. These groups use every means they can to curtail or stop motor vehicles, which in our case is recreational snowmobiling. Antis are venomously opposed to any off-road motor vehicles using forest trails. Some of these anti-groups are even supported from outside the U.S., and surprisingly enough from many large domestic corporations and organizations.

One only has to look at what recently happened in Idaho to understand what a negative impact a court ruling could have on our sport. As individuals or as a group at all levels --

local, state, nationally, and internationally -- all of us need to keep being vigilant.

Your Financial Support

Last season was a very good one for snowmobiling. The average snowmobiler rode 30 percent more. We had record snow fall for prolong periods of time, and trails were open for weeks straight. Trail permit sales were also up a little compared to last year. Everything from a snowmobiling point of view was good, except for some places in the Upper Peninsula where sled traffic was lower than normal because many decided to stay in our Lower Peninsula.

As good as the season was, your MSA organization ended with a financial short fall. Our membership going into last year appeared to be on an uptick because of new incoming members. At events new members were joining, but in the end more current members were not coming back.

Our snowmobile manufactures no longer supply sleds for a super raffle. We no longer have a truck raffle, and several other things we've used in to raise revenue just aren't as effective as they have been in the past. Karen has been working on other ways to raise funding, including the Daily Four drawing and 50/50 sales. Also, events such as our snow show in Martin have not been bringing in as much as they have in the past.

Last season MSA had four legislative rides. All were very successful, and without a doubt the best we've ever had. Legislative rides are very important, and if at all possible MSA must continue to have them. However, our legislative rides have become very expensive, and we cannot continue to support them the same as we did last year. We must come up with a better way.

Of course there were several other factors contributing to this short fall. A team was put together consisting of your current officers, three past presidents, and MSA's office staff to address this short fall. This team met in Gaylord on Aug.

Michigan Snowmobile Association

4543 S. Division Ave
Wyoming, MI 49548
(616) 361-2285
Fax (616) 363-0661 • www.msasnow.org

Office Staff

Executive Director: Bill Manson

billmsa@aol.com

Staff: Karen Middendorp

karen@msasnow.org

2014 Executive Board

President: Ron Corbett

(989) 306-0419 cell • corbett-r@att.net

Vice President: Al Green

(231) 775-6297 home • (231) 429-2183 cell
skidoosandhondas@gmail.com

Secretary: Maryann Noah

(906) 297-5989 home • (734) 358-9819 cell
noahfarm@hotmail.com

Treasurer: John Houk

(989) 734-7359 home • (989) 306-2545 cell
rjh42@hotmail.com

Past President: Bruce Wood

(231) 675-7669 cell
blwood@chartermi.net

2014 Executive Committee REGION 1 - U.P.

Maryann Noah (906) 297-5989 home
(734) 358-9819 cell
noahfarm@hotmail.com

Gail Scott (906) 842-3217 home
(906) 458-3785 cell

gkscott@alphacomm.net

Jim Duke (906) 387-3941 home

(906) 235-8270 cell
jimduke@jamadots.com

Karyn Hautamaki (906) 235-8271 cell
snowygirl1@live.com

Stu Volkers (906) 297-3060 home

(906) 235-1109 cell • sleds2@centurytel.net

REGION 2 - NORTHERN LOWER MI

Al Green (231) 775-6297 home
(231) 429-2183 cell

skidoosandhondas@gmail.com

John Houk (989) 734-7359 home
(989) 306-2545 cell • rjh42@hotmail.com

Rod Altman (989) 734-4557 home
rbjaltman63@gmail.com

Don Wing (231) 775-3901 home

(231) 878-5267 cell • wingjudy@msn.com

Joe Kuchnicki

(231) 330-1549
snosports@centurylink.net

REGION 3 - SOUTHERN MI

Jim Dickie (989) 585-3794 home
(906) 748-0276 cell

r2d2jim@hotmail.com

David Low (269) 792-2707 home
(616) 550-2707 cell • ddlow@att.net

Rick Brown (269) 624-1083 home
rickgrape@hotmail.com

Tom Myers (989) 792-0692 home

(989) 245-1681 cell
tmyers61@sbcglobal.net

Ron VanderVliet

(616) 772-4949 home • (616) 218-3736 cell
rjvliet@charter.net

All M.S.A. Officers will be more than willing to take calls at home, but ask that all correspondence be directed to the M.S.A. office.

STAFF

Publisher: Michigan Snowmobile Association

Managing Editor: Marie Grogitsky

Graphic Designer: Robert Miller

Advertising Sales: Marie Grogitsky

(810) 348-4855
mmgrogitsky@hotmail.com

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Calendar of Events

Nov. 7-9: SNOWMOBILE USA Show & Sale at the Suburban Collection Showplace. 2014 sleds plus clothing, accessories, trailers, performance parts, resorts, hotels, and scores of other snowmobile related products. Show times are Friday from 5-10 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$10. Children 12 & under are FREE. For more information, please visit www.snowmobileusa.com, or call (608) 223-6550.

Nov. 8: The Iceman Race will be held. Organizers are still looking for volunteers. Time slots will be between 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Pat Hurne at (231) 276-0180 or e-mail rafton3@hotmail.com.

Dec. 1: Michigan snowmobile trails officially open.

Dec. 4: Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW) will meet from 9 a.m. at Foggy's Steakhouse & Lounge in Christmas. The meeting is open to the public. Lodging facility is the White Pine Lodge, just across the road from Foggy's.

Dec. 5: MSA First Ride in Munising. Group will meet at 9 a.m. at White Pine Lodge in Christmas. The ride is open to the public.

Dec. 6: MSA Board of Directors Meeting will be held at 9 a.m. at Foggy's Steakhouse & Lounge in Christmas. The meeting is open to the public. For more information, call the MSA office at (616) 361-2285.

Jan. 16-26: International Snowmobile Safety Week. Many local clubs and snowmobile associations take this time to teach snowmobilers about safe riding. Many dealerships help by putting on seminars, teaching customers how to maintain their sleds, and keep them running in top condition. Visit www.snowmobile.org and download a Safety Week Campaign Action Manual with ideas on how to promote safety week and ideas for putting on safety week events.

Jan. 17: The Sixth Annual Blessing of the Sleds will be held starting at 11 a.m. at the Hillman, Michigan Fire Station. A Fun Run will follow with all proceeds going to the Hillman E.M.S. equipment fund. For more information, please call Ken (989) 657-4168.

Feb. 6-7: I-500 Snowmobile Race in Sault Ste. Marie. For more information, visit www.i-500.com/c/.

Feb. 6-16: The 7th annual TAKE A FRIEND SNOWMOBILING WEEK. Consider partnering with local clubs and other local businesses to encourage non-snowmobiling friends or those who haven't been snowmobiling for a while to join us for a time of fun. Many have tried snowmobiling for the first time with the experience resulting in the purchase of a snowmobile and joining a club and association – all because somebody asked them to come along. For more information and ideas on sponsoring a TAKE A FRIEND SNOWMOBILING event, visit www.gosnowmobiling.org.

Feb. 13-16: MSA Ride In, Kewadin Casino, Sault Ste Marie. Look for more details in future editions of the Michigan Snowmobile News.

Feb. 20-21: The Top of the Lake Snowmobile Show & Ride will be held in Naubinway. The featured Sled is Skiroule. Friday events: 7:30-9:30 a.m. - breakfast at the Naubinway Pavilion. 10 a.m. - ride

to Cranberry Lodge, 13 miles one way. All snowmobiles welcome, no registration required. 4-8 p.m. - get-together at the Snowmobile Museum, Saturday events: 8-10 a.m. - lineup for show, downtown Naubinway. Register at the museum. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. - snowmobiles on display. 4-6 p.m. - banquet at the Engadine/Garfield Town Hall. 6-8 p.m. - merchant drawings, 50/50, museum raffle drawing. Museum auction - donated items accepted, proceeds go to the Museum Building Fund.


March 2-7: Clean Snowmobile Challenge at the Keweenaw Research Center in Houghton.

March 6-7: MSA Groomer Work Shop at the Kewadin Casino in Sault Ste Marie. For more information, call (616) 361-2285.

March 14: Veterans Snowmobile Ride in Seney.

March 31: Snowmobile trails in Michigan officially close.

June 9-13: The International Snowmobile Congress will be held in Niagara Falls, New York at the Sheraton. For more information, please visit www.isc2015.com.



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Legislative Report

BY BILL MANSON

MSA Must Overcome Deficit — Drastic Cuts Being Made

Winter Wildlands Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to human-powered snow sports, has taken the lead, filing a petition with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service

Environmentalists are saying that in national parks the noise of the snowmobile hurts the animals by frightening them.

SNOWMOBILE CLOSURES
Under the Mountain Caribou Recovery Implementation Plan, scientists recommended over one million hectares across the mountain caribou range be closed to motorized winter recreation to facilitate recovery of caribou populations.

Snowmobilers Disappointed by Court Ruling in Boise, ID

Effort to save woodland caribou has clashed with snowmobiling

Snowmobile Use of the Forest Preserve, Conservation Advocacy Committee, Protect the Adirondacks

Vail, CO - A statewide snowmobile group is running full throttle against a Forest Service proposal to close terrain north of Vail.

MSA is in real trouble. MSA is on the verge of going out of business!

Yes, we are preaching to the choir, but we need you to know what is happening, the cuts we have already made, and what the Board of Directors is doing to get MSA out of debt! Our membership continues to decline, and without that dues income our revenue has decreased below minimum funding levels.

Changes are being made to help MSA stay in business. However, be aware that some of these cuts may have lasting effects on snowmobiling as you have come to know it in Michigan.

Also know, if we don't make up our deficit this year and get to a breakeven point, more cuts will have to be made. Costs are rising, membership is falling! Without being able to boast a large membership, the legislature will not hear you. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will not be directed to spend YOUR money wisely. The ultimate loser will be you the snowmobiler!

Budget Cuts Already Made

One of the cuts of most concern is that MSA has laid off our legislative lobbyist, Noel

LaPorte. Noel has worked with MSA since 1994. LaPorte still intends on helping us when able. He has waived his fees for one year. He is the lobbyist in Lansing who everyone goes to when a snowmobile issue arises. He is a tremendous asset and great friend to organized snowmobiling in Michigan.

Without him looking out for our interests, areas of concern will get closed due to pressure from large green groups. These groups are well funded and employ dozens of full-time lobbyists. If MSA cannot go to Lansing and lobby for you, trails will suffer.

MSA has worked tirelessly over the years on political advocacy; attending state and national meetings. This is not going to happen this year, and that will take a toll.

We will still be in on those meetings, but through conference calls. The problem with not being in attendance is that anti-groups still will be there. These anti-motorized recreation groups are well-funded and they

**Denali Park Access:
Next Major Issue
Facing Snowmobilers**

will have a physical presence at those meetings. It may not seem that important, but the age-old, "out of sight, out of mind" applies.

Even More Cuts

MSA office staff has been cut, and more cuts will take place if we don't get our budget in line. We have also made general administration cost cuts. Our advertising budget has been cut and public relations expenditures will be virtually non-existent this year. Legislative expenditures have been

cut by 2/3 compared to last year.

Do you know who ultimately controls the trails? The legislature controls our trails because they control the money. The reason MSA has been a success at promoting snowmobiling is because we have taken legislators out snowmobiling and shown them the impact of snowmobiling as a recreation and an economic generator.

Most of our legislators are located in southern Michigan and don't know what snowmobiling is all about. MSA has worked hard to educate those legislators by actually getting them on a snowmobile out on the trails of Michigan. Without additional funding, we will not be taking our legislators out snowmobiling this year.

How Can MSA Increase Income?

The MSA Board of Directors knows the urgency of increasing membership. Consider this; there are 230,000 registered snowmobiles, which breaks down to 115,000 households with at least one registered

snowmobile. At this time, less than 6 percent of those households are members of MSA.

At one time the MSA had almost 25,000 members. It was then that the recession hit. That lack of interest and concern continues, and our membership numbers have continued to decline. For more than 10 years, MSA has felt that decline. We have to get our membership numbers up! Your Board has done everything in its power to increase membership, but it just hasn't been enough.

We will continue to brainstorm and try and come up with ways to increase membership. Keep in mind, MSA works on behalf of all snowmobilers, not just our membership. Shouldn't we all pay for those smooth, groomed trails we have come to enjoy?

The Bottom Line -- MSA Needs to Increase Income!

Now to the immediate ways the Board is working with to increase revenue this year. The Board's reaction is two-fold, and is by no means a lasting, permanent fix.

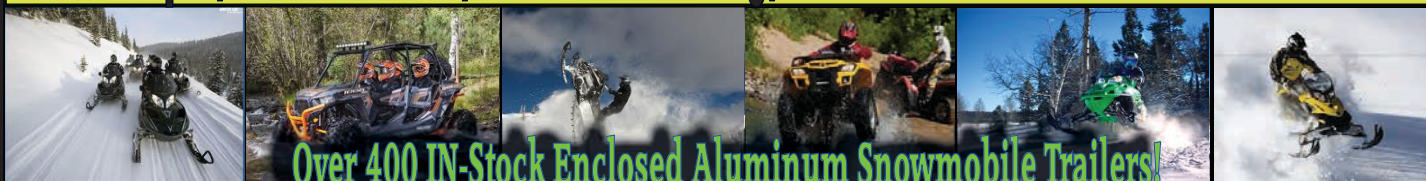
The best way right now to increase revenue is to sell ad space on MSA's Trail Reports pages on the Web Site. If, state wide, we can get 60 businesses or clubs to buy ad space on those pages, MSA funding problems would be at a break-even point for the year.

MSA will also be hosting more raffles, but this non-dues income is also dependant on the members of MSA buying and selling. Raffles are hard and time consuming. They are a short-term fix to a long-term problem.

In the past, your MSA has been there for you the snowmobiler. Now, MSA needs you the snowmobiler. It's time to pay back organized snowmobiling in Michigan. If MSA closes its door, the real loser will be you – the snowmobiler in Michigan.

Without an association to lobby on your behalf the state bureaucracy will get trail permit dollars, and spend them with no direction from organized snowmobiling. Smooth, groomed trails will become a thing of the past. Hang on; we are all in for a bumpy ride! ❄️

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Why They Do What They Do — VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN!

By its very definition, a volunteer is someone who gives of themselves willingly without asking for anything in return. Throughout the years, it has taken hundreds of these giving individuals to create and maintain organized snowmobiling in Michigan.

These volunteers are just like you, they can't wait for the snow, so that they can hit the trail and ride. They are snowmobilers who love their sport. It's that passion that has led them to seek out their local club or state organization, and get involved.

They attend meetings, volunteer at snow shows, and drive the groomer. These are the people who serve as officers of local clubs, spend hours brushing and signing the trails you ride, and give of themselves to make snowmobiling better – asking for nothing in return.

The Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) wishes to salute those who have, are, and continue to volunteer their service to snowmobiling.

In His Own Words:

My name is Ken McCrum. I am from Alpena, Mich. I am 72 years old and began my interest in snowmobiling in 1968. That's when I bought a used 1967 Rupp 292 single cylinder sled. It was very hard to start, with the high compression engine. It had a compression release button, which helped.

At that time, a friend I worked with had a cabin in Hillman, Mich. We would go north and ride all day, which amounted to about 30 miles.

We had a lot of belt changes and other minor break downs that would occur.

After buying several different sleds (through the years), in 1992 snowmobilers in the area began organizing a snowmobile club -- soon to be called the Elk Country Sno-Travelers in the Hillman/Atlanta area. I joined that club.

There were not many trails in the area, so the club became a grant sponsor in order to improve the trail system in the Hillman/Atlanta area. As a member of the local club, I joined the Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA). MSA had set some of the same goals that I believe in. We did a lot of trail work for several years until we turned it over to another grant sponsor in the area.

I became a certified snowmobile safety instructor. Every November we hold a class each year in Atlanta.

As I live in Alpena, I also joined the Alpena Snow Drifters Club, and was soon trained as a groomer operator. When I'm not out riding, which is not very often, I can be found on a groomer. I stay involved in snowmobiling because I love the sport. Through my involvement, I have met a bunch of similar-minded people.

My riding partner is my wonderful wife, Donnie. With the great winter snow season we had last year, we rode throughout the Lower and Upper Peninsula, putting on 3,472 cold miles.

Riding as much as we like to, we traded our 2009 Yamahas in for two new 2015 Yamaha RS Venture GTs. We love to ride in the western part

of the U.P., including the Keweenaw area, but we will ride any place that has SNOW.

A few years ago, the two clubs I belong to (along with several other clubs) decided we needed to form a Council, so that our concerns about some of the problems in the north east part of Michigan would be heard. Out of this concern, we formed the North East Michigan Snowmobile Council, consisting of only 5 members. The local snowmobile club and the MSA are the backbone of the snowmobiling community. If you do not belong to these organizations, snowmobiling could fade away. ❄️

Think Snow,
Ken McCrum





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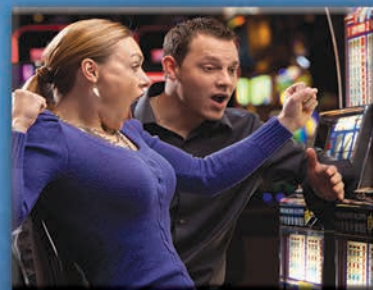
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There are 135,000 miles of snowmobile trails in the US? The majority of these trails are open for multiple uses.

Snowmobiling generates over \$26 billion in annual spending across the U.S., –much of it in rural areas.





2014 Waconia Ride-In

by Valdi Stefanson

The 2014 Waconia Ride-In (held in Waconia, Minn.) was held in late-January came with significant anticipation. After all, the entire Snow Belt was experiencing a good old fashioned winter -- really cold temperatures and plenty of the white stuff that didn't melt between snowfalls.

For the "Waconia crew" this meant days and days of snow clearing and site preparation. No problem, because we knew that our full slate of events would go on, without weather interruptions like last year when the warm weather forced cancellation of the trail ride. No -- this year was going to be full on! Moreover, with Yamaha as the featured brand, and a few Yamaha powered cousins (Roll-o-Flex & Sno Jet) thrown in for good luck, there was much buzz as the magical weekend approached.

Weather Did Play a Part

As it turned out, the weather was a factor --- but it was the cold and wind that played its hand unlike the previous year. Saturday, it was cold but bearable for the swappers, racers, and the 540 machines on the trail ride. It was odd to make the rounds and hear someone next to you say "Hi," but not recognizing the person because of the facemask or hood obscuring their face. No problem, really, because the ballroom was warm and noisy with those who were warming up and ogling over the special display sleds.

On display were nearly 20 examples of Yamahas, from their 1968 inaugural year through the early 1980s. With their stellar racing

heritage, you can imagine the significant race machines for all to see. Notables included the "Giant Killer," aka the 1971 SR433 that captured the 1971 World Championship in Eagle River in a contest of speed often described as the most exciting race in snowmobile history. You see, a young Mike Trapp battled head-to-head with Yvon Duhamel's 797 Ski Doo Blizzard, and the little Yamaha prevailed in a race with 13 lead changes! Another display included five Yamaha racers owned by Leon Koch of Crivitz, Wis. Also, I overheard more than one observer comment that the 1978 SSR on display was the prettiest snowmobile ever built.

A Dangerous Wind Chill

Meanwhile, on Saturday night, temperatures were dropping and the Northwest wind picked up. The local TV station weather forecasters were scaring their audience with exaggerated claims of "dangerous wind chill," and unanimous in stating that "travel is not advised." Yes, on Sunday it was cold and yes, attendance in the judged show was down.

The ORA oval racers soldiered on out on the Lake Waconia ice, with registrations up by 15 percent, compared to the year before. However, the winds created blizzard conditions and eight of the scheduled 44 races were scrapped for safety reasons. Event organizers moved up the awards ceremony by an hour to allow everyone to get homeward bound a little early.

A Great Side Story

A great family story came to light on Sunday

afternoon. A bit away from the show, we spied a family of four standing in front of pine trees and a collection of four restored Yamahas. I saw ponytails and thought, WOW -- these are teen-aged girls on an outing with their parents. As it turned out, we met a lovely family from southern Minnesota.

It was mom who told the story of her father owning the local Yamaha dealership. Her future husband happened to purchase a new Yamaha from her father. His daughter was introduced, and a result was this 2014 family photo shoot we witness. Dad restored the machines in front of them, including the one that he purchased that fateful day. Even the girls seemed to be "handling" the situation. I heard that at first, they stated that the matching vintage Yamaha snowmobile suits that they were wearing were "dorky." That was until several other people told them that they looked great in their vintage Yamaha attire. Now all of a sudden it was hip to be cool at the Waconia Ride-In.

If you would rather see than read about Waconia 2014, check out this great YouTube production. You can almost feel the Polar Vortex when watching: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGwTB1GP88E>

2015 will mark our 25th year! We will honor the two Minnesota manufacturers in a theme titled MINNESOTA ICONS. Mark the dates Jan. 23-25, 2015, on your calendar. Expect to see Polaris and Arctic Cat side-by-side. Bring your favorite Minnesota Icon and let's have some fun! Keep current at: <http://www.mwvss.com>. ❄️

America's Embrace of Ethanol May Not Be a Good Thing for the Environment After All

This article was originally published on September 13, 2014, At: <http://www.emagazine.com/earth-talk/ethanols-unrealized-promise#sthash.k4CA4g9H.dpuf>

It is reprinted with permission.

by Doug Moss and Roddy Scheer

Dear EarthTalk: I thought that putting ethanol in our gas tanks was going to help fight climate change, but lately I've heard reports to the contrary. Can you enlighten? — **Bill B., Hershey, PA**

Ethanol and similar "biofuels" made from corn and other crops seem like a good idea given their potential for reducing our carbon outputs as well as our reliance on fossil fuels. But recent research has shown that the federal government's push to up production of corn-derived ethanol as a gasoline additive since 2007 has actually expanded our national carbon footprint and contributed to a range of other problems.

U.S. corn producers started ramping up ethanol production in 2007 as a result of President George W. Bush's Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS), which mandated an increase in the volume of renewable fuel to be blended into transportation fuel from 9 billion gallons in 2008 to 36 billion by 2022. Ethanol now makes up 10 percent of the gasoline available at filling stations.

But environmentalists now say that the promise of ethanol has turned out to be too good to be true. For one, there is the issue of net energy produced. According to Cornell University ecologist David Pimentel, growing and processing corn into a gallon of ethanol requires 131,000 BTUs of energy, but the resulting ethanol contains only 77,000 BTUs. And since fossil-fuel-powered equipment is used to plant, harvest, process and distribute ethanol, the numbers only get worse.

The non-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) warns that continued production of corn ethanol is not only "worse for the climate than gasoline" but also bad for farmers, the land and consumers: "It is now clear that the federal corn ethanol mandate has driven up food prices, strained agricultural markets, increased competition for arable land and promoted conversion of uncultivated land to grow crops."

Additionally, the group reports that previous estimates "dramatically underestimated corn ethanol's greenhouse gas emissions by failing to account for changes in land use," citing a 2012 study documenting the conversion of eight million acres of Midwestern grassland and wetlands to corn fields for ethanol between 2008 and 2011. "These land use changes resulted in annual emissions of 85 million to 236 million metric tons of greenhouse gases," says EWG. "In light of these emissions, many scientists now question the environmental benefit of so-called biofuels produced by converting food crops."

Given the potential negative impacts of so much corn-based ethanol, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is reportedly weighing a proposal to cut the amount currently required by law to be blended into gasoline by 1.39 billion gallons. If the federal government decides to do

this, it could lower U.S. carbon emissions by some three million tons—equivalent to taking 580,000 cars off the roads for a year.

Meanwhile, researchers are trying to develop greener forms of ethanol, but none are ready for market yet. "The lifecycle emissions of ethanol 'from seed to tailpipe' depend on how the ethanol is made and what it is made from," reports the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). The best ethanol, they say, can produce as much as 90 percent fewer lifecycle emissions than gasoline, but the worst can produce much more. So there still may be room for ethanol in our energy future, but not if we keep doing it the way we are now.

CONTACTS: Renewable Fuel Standard; David Pimentel; EWG; UCS.

Continued on page 13



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ISMA Supports Look Before You Pump Campaign



The International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) has partnered with the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) in the Look Before You Pump campaign, an ethanol education and consumer protection program.

The campaign reminds consumers to always use fuels containing no greater than 10 percent ethanol when powering their outdoor power equipment or other non-road product, such as boats, snowmobiles and motorcycles, not designed for higher ethanol fuel blends.

Red Warning Symbol

ISMA is the leading association representing the manufacturers of snowmobiles, which encourage policies, programs and activities to improve the lifestyle activity of snowmobiling.

The Look Before You Pump campaign is most known by its emblematic prominent, red warning hand symbol indicating 'OK' for 10 percent ethanol and 'No' for mid-level ethanol blends (such as E15, E30, E85). The campaign was launched in October 2013, in response to higher ethanol blended fuels being made available in the marketplace for 'flex-fuel' automobiles, and to warn consumers not to inadvertently mis-fuel their engine products not designed to handle these higher ethanol fuel blends.

More Mindful of Fuel You Select

The level of support for Look Before You Pump continues to grow. No one wants to damage or destroy their equipment. But the changing fuel marketplace demands education, as evidenced by retailers, dealers, and manufacturers — and now major industry organizations — being more proactive in telling American consumers and business owners to be more mindful when selecting the right fuel for their products.

According to Ed Klim, President of ISMA, "It is important our customers know their fuel selection is important."

The National Marine Manufacturers Association also joined forces this summer in spreading the campaign messaging, and major retail outlets including Lowe's, Walmart and True Value, as well as independent dealers, began using the Look Before You Pump message in their stores and in customer circulars and catalogs this past year.

A summer 2013 Interactive study shows the vast majority of Americans (71 percent) are "not at all sure" if it is illegal or legal to put high level ethanol gas (i.e., anything greater than 10 percent ethanol) into engines such as those in boats, mowers, chain saws, snowmobiles, generators, and other engine products. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is on record stating that snowmobiles should NOT use fuel with more than 10 percent ethanol (E-10). ❄️

Continued from page 4

President's Message

4 and on a telephone conference call the following week. A special Board of Directors meeting was held on Oct. 4, bringing your board up to date. This year's budget has been cut to the bone. Officers will be responsible for their own expenses. The organization has

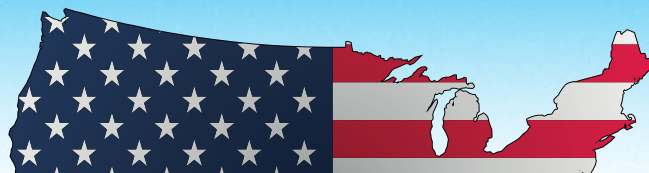
covered them in the past.

MSA needs your support financially. Donations have been coming in from individuals, clubs, and Grant Sponsors. Any amount you can donate will help.

Help keep your sport alive and well in

Michigan. Talk with other snowmobilers about becoming MSA members. Remember if each member gets one new member, our membership would double.

Be safe, Track side down! ❄️



ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Forest Service Clarifies Commercial Photography Permit on Wilderness Areas

On Sept. 25, the U.S. Forest Service released information to clarify the agency's intentions regarding a proposed directive for commercial photography and filmmaking in congressionally designated wilderness areas.

"The US Forest Service remains committed to the First Amendment," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "To be clear, provisions in the draft directive do not apply to news gathering or activities."

The proposal does not apply to news coverage, gathering information for a news program or documentary. However, if a project falls outside of that scope and the filming is intended to be on wilderness land, additional criteria are applied to protect wilderness values. In that case, a permit must be applied for and granted before any photography is permitted.

The agency issued a Federal Register notice on Sept. 4 seeking public comment on a proposal to formally establish consistent criteria for evaluating requests for commercial filming in wilderness areas as it has on national forests and grasslands. The proposed directive on commercial filming in wilderness has been in place for more than four years and is a good faith effort to ensure the fullest protection of America's wild places.

"The fact is, the directive pertains to commercial photography and filming only – if you're there to gather news or take recreational photographs, no permit would be required. We take your First Amendment rights very seriously," said Tidwell. "We're looking forward to talking with journalists and concerned citizens to help allay some of the concerns we've been hearing and clarify what's covered by this proposed directive."

Congressionally designated wilderness areas are protected by the Wilderness Act of 1964 and must remain in their natural condition. This is achieved in part by prohibiting certain commercial enterprises, and the agency is responsible for ensuring its policies adhere to that standard.

The proposal does not change the rules for visitors or recreational photographers. Generally, professional and amateur photographers will not need a permit unless they use models, actors or props; work in areas where the public is generally not allowed; or cause additional administrative costs.

Currently, commercial filming permit fees range around \$30 per day for a group up to three people. A large Hollywood production with 70 or more people might be as much as \$800. The \$1,500 commercial permit fee cited in many publications is

erroneous, and refers to a different proposed directive.

Settlement Agreement Withdraws Restrictions on Motorized Access to Idaho Wilderness Area

A newly-filed settlement agreement would withdraw restrictions on motorized and mechanized access to "Recommended Wilderness" Areas (RWA) in Idaho's Clearwater National Forest. The settlement comes in a lawsuit filed in 2012 by the Idaho State Snowmobile Association and the BlueRibbon Coalition, which alleged that the Northern Region of the Forest Service (FS) created an internal "recommended wilderness policy" that illegally limited management options.

In the settlement, the Forest Service "dispute[s] Plaintiffs' claims" but acknowledges "that regional issuance of documents described as guidance for forest planning, including planning for RWA management, has led to confusion and misperception regarding the role that such documents serve with respect to FS planning, including motorized travel planning ..."

The FS commits in the settlement to issue a new decision that will govern motorized and over snow access management to RWAs. The agreement states the FS will endeavor to implement a new decision before the 2014-15 winter season. In the absence of such a new decision, management will revert "to previous management direction" which has authorized snowmobile, motorcycle and mountain bike access to some portions of these remote areas, particularly including the "Great Burn" along the north central Idaho-Montana border.

"We are pleased by this development," stated Sandra Mitchell, Public Lands Director of the Idaho State Snowmobile Association, the lead plaintiff. "The concern over administratively designated wilderness will likely continue, but at least in this case the Service is agreeing to reconsider what we contend was an illegal expansion of the agency's role," Mitchell concluded.

The settlement is awaiting court approval. Wilderness advocacy organizations have intervened in the case, and court documents suggest they will object to the settlement agreement. "We have on numerous occasions reviewed similar settlement agreements where the parties' roles were reversed," noted Paul Turcke, the Boise, Idaho lawyer representing the recreation plaintiffs. "We look forward to responding to any objections the intervenors may seek to raise," added Turcke. ❄️



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Improved Ski Boots by TracksUSA



The goal of all ski-boots is to protect surfaces from carbide damage; shop floors, driveways, parking lots, bridges and trailer decks. TracksUSA's new product, TrackSki-Boots, is an improved ski boot which also protects carbides from unnecessary wear.

These new ski boots lock on to snowmobile skis three ways:

1. TrackSki-Boots have taller sides which trap all ski widths and ski designs from a 1973 TX to modern sleds-this includes wide mountain skis.
2. The nose has a dedicated cut-out design which locks on to the ski loop and ski tip.
3. 1" wide adjustable nylon straps loop behind the snowmobile spindle and force the boots forward into the cut-out front end for greater holding power. The straps have quick release buckles which are 'squeeze-to-open' even with gloves in the coldest temps.

This three way holding system is an improvement over ski boots with no locking nose and ski boots with shallow or no sides.

TrackSki-Boots have a deeper keel bottom. This does two things:

1. Carbides are held away from the boots and can't wear through over time and,
2. the keel provides more positive, slow speed steering control on snow pack. The rear keel is tapered for snag-free reversing.

Effective ski boots like these will be appreciated by racers who have to negotiate expansive graveled pit areas. Instead of dollyng their sleds all the way to staging, they can just drive there with these ski boots. USA made TrackSki-Boots in black are \$149. Blue, yellow and green are \$159

TracksUSA is the largest stocking Camoplast track dealer in America. For more information, visit www.tracksusa.com ❄️

NEWS NOTES

Car Show Held to Benefit MSA

During this year's Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) Snow Show, members of the snowmobile club MichCanSka hosted a car show, with proceeds to benefit MSA. The event was organized by Bill Bradfield and Dave Low. Mary Schwab from Wayland was a tremendous help in getting the trophies and helping at the show. The day's weather wasn't the best, which kept a lot of people from bringing out their classic cars. Sixteen classic car owners did bring their cars to the show. Organizers stated that some of those cars could compete on a national level.



ABOVE: Dave Low and Bill Bradfield with their trophies (Dave won two. He had two cars in the show).

Still Time to Join Snowmobile World Tour

The MichCanSka Adventures World Tour will start on Feb. 5, 2015 in the Cadillac area at the Coyote Crossing.

There are four Russians who are now MichCanSka members who will be flying to Michigan in order to participate in the ride.

After the Cadillac ceremony, the group will drive to Sault Ste. Marie. On the morning of Feb. 6, they will meet the mayor and all city officials at the tunnel under I-75. After a brief ceremony they will ride to Paradise.

On the morning of Feb. 7, the group will assemble at the I-500 race track. They will do one lap around the famous track before the world's best and fastest snowmobile race begins. Their day ride will then take them to Hulbert.

On Sunday Feb. 8, the group will do a day ride to Cedarville and back. That evening they will caravan by truck to Aubrey Falls, Ontario.

The next day they will ride to Duebreville. On Feb. 10, they will ride to Hearst. On the next two days they will ride back to Aubrey Falls and return to their homes.

Two days later the Americans, Canadians, and Russians will depart on flights from different cities and fly to Bodo, Norway. On Feb. 16, they will start their ride on snowmobiles in Norway, riding into Sweden.

For the next five days they will be riding in Sweden and into Finland. On Feb. 21, they

will meet the Russians at the border station of Kelloselka, Russia. The group will then ride on a three day loop, which will take them north of the Arctic Circle to the city of Murmansk.

They will then take a short flight to St. Petersburg for a grand finale and banquet. This is the official end of the ride.

Along the way, MichCanSka will be promoting diabetes research and awareness, along with organized snowmobiling. The group's motto, "Dream it, Plan it, Do it."

This trip will be another Epic Adventure organized by MichCanSka International Adventures. For more information, visit www.michcanska.com.

MSA All Sports Show & Am Snow/Aeroquip Super Sled Shoot Out 2014

Friday, Sept. 19, started out as a beautiful day for setting up displays and putting the finishing touches to make every vendor booth look special at the Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA) Snow Show. Attendance for the two days was 3,938 paid admissions.

The day was beautiful and dry. The vendors and swappers opened to a small but steady crowd. Friday night had the largest "Run What Young Brung" Friday night racing crowd the track has ever seen! Cars new and old, trucks, motorcycles, snowmobiles, and other vehicles with motors ran the 1/4 mile track and kept it

hopping until 11 p.m.

Saturday the twentieth dawned to a little rain with sunshine and partly cloudy 60 degree weather dominating the morning. The crowds were waiting for the 9 a.m. opener, and filled the parking lot by 10 a.m. A steady crowd continued, even though they knew the rain was coming. This helped keep the vendors happy. A hard rain at 2:30 p.m. caused most shoppers to exit. The newly expanded swap area filled to its assigned spaces -- with many deals being made. Yamaha Power Generators, supplied power to all the vendors at the show.

Enhancing the show this year was a great display of vintage sleds that was arranged by the POC Vintage club from Yankee Springs. The displays of over 50 sleds were all judged and awards given for the Best in Show, Best Original, Best Restored, and the Loudest. This display really had the crowd going back to what sled they started snowmobiling on.

Over on the track side things, they were real busy on Friday with Test and Tune numbers hitting 316 entries. The AmSnow/Aeroquip Super Sled Shoot Out started right on time Saturday with more than 115 snowmobile, and 78 motorcycle entries. Race Director Jamie Bellman again puts on the top asphalt drag race in the country, on the fastest drag strip in the Midwest. Snowmobile racers came from all over the country and Canada to test their metal on the asphalt track.

TOP 10 Mistakes Made by Trailer Shoppers

by Robert Baker, Beck's Trailer Super Store & Service Center

Editor's Note: The first five mistakes that trailer shoppers make appeared in an article of the same name in the October edition of the *Michigan Snowmobile News*.

Sunday spawned more rain and the races were once again called due to weather.

MSA, its vendors, and racers look forward to a bigger and better 2015 MSA Snow Show & AmSnow/Aeroquip Super Sled Shoot Out

Yamaha Snowmobile Race Team Supported

By Elka Suspension

The Yamaha Snowmobile Race Team is excited to announce a new shock absorber sponsor, Elka Suspension, Inc. The team will be using Elka's ultra-lightweight Stage 5 coilover shocks on both the cross country and hillclimb circuits.

"What we are most impressed with is the Elka team's level of commitment in helping our racers get on the podium," said Yamaha Snowmobile Product Manager, Rob Powers.

"Our goal in working with the Yamaha Snowmobile Race Team is to push our Stage 5 platform development even further in the snowmobile market. The Stage 5 is a proven winning product in other sports," said Elka's President Martin Lamoureux, himself an offroad racing champion. "We know it will be a winner in snowmobiling as well."

Patrick Tellier, Elka's marketing director, added, "We will be continuously developing and improving our products with the Yamaha Snowmobile Race Team, then offering those products to the general public so they can have access to the same high-performance suspension as the factory riders."

Both race team crew chiefs, Brian Strawsell and Troy Johnson, recently paid a visit to Elka's facility outside of Montreal to meet with the engineering team and begin building shocks. You can catch a glimpse of that trip in the first episode of The Yamaha Racing Show on [youtube.com/user/YamahaSnowmobilesUSA](https://www.youtube.com/user/YamahaSnowmobilesUSA)

For more information about Elka Suspension, Inc, visit elkasuspension.com. Keep up with the latest Yamaha Snowmobile Race Team information on [facebook.com/YamahaSnowmobilesUSA](https://www.facebook.com/YamahaSnowmobilesUSA). ❄️

#6 BAIT Fishing

All sales of any product can be compared to fishing. It's kind of sad, but true. First, there's a fisherman (sales person). Then there's a fish (a consumer). Then there's the bait (a sale, promotion, superior product, hype, unique item, or free incentives). Of course a good place to fish is important (trade show, radio, TV, dealer, etc.). Fishing gear is needed (products, financing options, inventory, marketing, sales force, and technology). All of these items are as important to buying and selling trailers as a fishing rod and reel or a net is to fishing. But today, a growing trend of organizations advertising extreme discounts with little or no inventory is common today. Small disclaimers may adjust the price in the end.

Watch out for BAIT AND SWITCH tactics. We have all heard the cliché, "The devil's in the details." Terms like "buy factory direct, all aluminum with torsion axle" may sound good at a ridiculously low price, however people may be surprised after taking a 10-hour trip that a number of disclaimers, optional upgrades, additional fees, taxation in your home state, or change in product quality or inventory create a different result than what they were expecting.

#7 Buying for the Short Term

Buying for the short-term makes sense if you want a cheap trailer and plan on using it for a short period of time. However, when I ask people how long they want their trailer to last, they often look at me with a dazed-and-glazed look as if it's assumed it should last forever. I ask because many consumers spend a few thousand dollars, expecting it to be the last trailer they will ever buy.

A great quality trailer should last decades, not a few years. Consumers are usually motivated by a need they have now, but fail to look at the long-term utilization. Like building a pole barn, they often buy too small, too short or too light. Future projects such as remodeling the house, or maybe moving

the kids off to college, and quite possibly relocating your whole family are such long-term examples of how peoples needs change and how they might be better served by a different trailer.

Buying a clam shell trailer is a cost-effective way to haul snowmobiles, but have you ever tried hauling an appliance, deck boards, canoe or house full of furniture with a clam shell? When you buy a quality trailer designed to outlast the next four or five tow vehicles you'll own, think a bit longer. Anticipate these other uses and size your trailer up accordingly. Don't shortcut yourself. The most common regret people have when buying a quality trailer is like building a pole barn ... they just didn't buy one big enough.

#8 Buying the Wrong Thing Is Always the Wrong Thing

We said earlier, "The pain of buying the right thing only happens once." But buying a trailer and replacing it every three to five years whether you wanted to or not, is crazy, unless of course money is no object. Most people who settle for something less than what they wanted or needed can count the days before the remorse sits in ...

There's no substitute for happiness regarding anything you purchase and sometimes considering a consumer friendly financing option is the difference between settling and not settling. If you were planning to buy a trailer for \$5000, but the one you want is \$7,000 the difference in a loan payment may be less than the cost of a simple gumball or soda a day, or maybe even a soda a week.

Interest rates are still at record lows from the early 1980s time frame when the prime rate was 22.5 percent. Yes that's right over 20 percent. Money is still cheap for those who qualify, but even poor credit applicants can often secure rates much more friendly than they could in recent decades. If you were ever going to leverage other people's money, it

Continued on page 18

Top 10 Mistakes

makes sense to do it when rates are still low, and if giving up a soda a week is budget-able option, maybe that makes more sense to get the trailer you want, and not settle for some tin-can on wheels you have to hide behind your barn in a few years.

Consider getting the size you'll need to expand, the weight you need to haul, with the options you want. If you need to finance a few bucks or negotiate a good deal, do so before wasting money on something you'll be unhappy with and possibly trade in at a loss later.

#9 Top to Bottom, Tongue to Tail

If you don't truly know the difference between a full perimeter frame and a stack-on design, you are at a loss. Understating the difference between a glued exterior wall, screwed exterior wall, and an epoxy exterior wall may save you a hundreds to thousands of dollars in repairs.

Not all axles are the same, and buying a cheap unknown foreign axle may be a costly replacement in terms of time and money. A solid roof when compared to a seamed roof is an important difference in design. Basically, if there's no place to leak, there's no place to leak. Steel versus aluminum is much more than just having a lighter weight trailer. Once you eliminate much of the corrosion from rust, a manufacturer can actually build a trailer with a 25-year roof and floor warranty, though most do not.

Tube post that may be less than .060" thick vs. something that is .125" - .180" thick is significant difference in the quality of a trailer. A weld penetration, one may last decades and the other ... well not likely long at all. Zinc coating isn't comparable to stainless steel in terms of trim or cam bars. Torsion axles are sold to be better than spring, which may be true, but can you really argue with something that's been a successful design in millions of automobiles for maybe 100 years?

A torsion axle is better for commercial use, but only if your frame can withstand the impact. Many torsion axles will stamp like a die press right into the bottom of a weak frame. Inspect your trailer and look for the weak link. This article gives you many things to look for. While this may take some time, it's much less-time and money than what it may cost you to replace or repair your trailer.

#10 Paying For Your Trailer

Cash is still king! However, not everyone has a few rolls of Benjamin's laying around. The cliché, "You get what you pay for," is exactly true in the trailer industry.

So what is the best way for you to pay for your trailer? Obviously, this question is really a personal financial decision each person must make.

However, here are a few guidelines.

Look for a fair deal, but remember no one works for free and chances are if you get something for nothing, there is a reason.

Trade-ins are a great way to make a trailer more budget-friendly. A trade-in alleviates the hassle and risk associated with selling your existing trailer to strangers on Craigslist, not to mention dealing with an unfamiliar public who may or may not show up. It will also free up your valuable time.

Checking out your financing options may be your solution, but because there isn't a KELLY BLUE BOOK for cargo trailers, many lenders won't offer a loan for trailers.

Beware of hidden costs in any loan. Too often people think zero-percent interest means no payment and no interest. Common sense tells you no one works for free and a lender is no exception.

Watch for loan-dock fees, variable interest rates, buy-back fees, prepayment penalties and unfavorable loan terms that may be costly in

the end. A good loan will have a budget-able payment, no prepayment penalty, and a fair interest rate.

Flexibility in loan terms with minimal fees is important too. Credit unions seem to be unilaterally friendlier than big banks regarding loan rates and terms.

Avoid the trailer dealer with one lender. It's most likely not going to be your most favorable rate. Buying a trailer from a place that has multiple lenders to suit your needs may have a distinct advantage over the one-loan fits all dealers.

Always protect your credit score by not applying for credit everywhere you shop. Share your credit information only with reputable people or businesses with good administrative practices.

Credit cards may work, but if you are not paying it off right away, this can be a costly error. Getting preapproved before traveling hours to pick up your trailer is a great solution.

If doing a loan, you may want to roll-up any accessories or customized options, such as track matting, aluminum wheels, a new hitch or even a brake controller in the cost of the loan so you are not out of pocket much or any upfront. Of course, it never hurts to negotiate, particularly if paying with cash or with a certified check.

I hope this article helps you in your trailer pursuit. If you have questions, feel free to e-mail me at rtbaker00@gmail.com.

Make a List to Guide You

Remember that "Knowledge is power!" Getting an education is usually less expensive when you do a little homework upfront, which is best done when you can look, touch, and ask questions.

Like being in school, homework without attending class isn't recommended for a science class. Take the time to visit reputable places and take notes. Make a list to guide you and set boundaries on what you will and will not want to purchase. It's always cheaper to buy right, than to buy twice after fixing multiple repairs. Try to separate the difference between a good bargain and a cheap trailer. There isn't a replacement for quality manufacturing. If you do these things, there's a good chance you won't be the next trailer road-kill stranded on your winter vacation. Good luck and let me know how I can help.

If you have questions, feel free to e-mail me or come see me at the Novi Snow Show this year. For a great model to review, check out the NEW 2015 MSA Track Master Tri-axle Trailer provided by LEGEND Manufacturing, Inc., and donated for MSA use. ❄️

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A snowmobile may be operated on the right-of-way of a public highway (except a limited-access highway) if it is operated at the extreme right of the open portion of the right-of-way and with the flow of traffic on the highway. Snowmobiles operated on a road right-of-way must travel in single file and shall not be operated abreast except when overtaking or passing another snowmobile.



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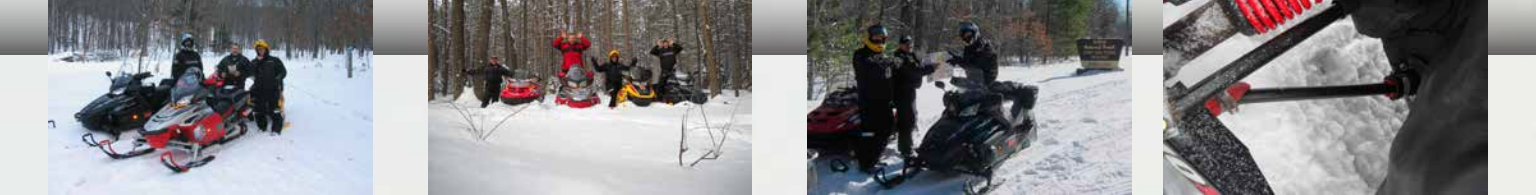
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Boyz Trip 2014



We circled the mitten. We know there are many trails that go closer to the shoreline, but they all end. We followed a loop that took us from Grand Rapids to Mackinaw to Oscoda to Grayling.

by Jim Haist

For many years now, we have taken one trip a year that we call the “Boyz Trip” or the “1K3” (1,000 miles in three days). This trip has traditionally been in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, leaving the truck/trailer at one location and saddle bagging from point A to B, then B to C, and finally from point C back to the truck at point A. The riders this year were Paul Bryant-Ott, Jim Haist, Mike Rock and Wesley Wood.

With the abundant snow throughout the state, this year we decided to take a different approach to the 1K3. We decided to try and “circle the mitten.” With this type of trip, we were not going to be returning to the truck, so we contacted a great friend and former snowmobiler Rob McCartney to drive us to our starting point, and drop us off.

Hawley. I told him of our plans, and wanted to confirm the route we were taking was going to be legal and acceptable. He told me I could take the route, of which I told him ...

“But it’s not legal and I’ll get a ticket if I do?” I asked.

“No” he said, “You could take it, but Pine Island Drive is a better route with a bit more snow, and far less traffic.”

What a great help he was. With plans made, and maps in hand, we set out for our adventure.

The Adventure Begins

Seven in the morning on Thursday, Feb. 13, found the four of us waving to children on school busses as we found our way to the trail head near U.S.131 and M-57. This is the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail that runs from Comstock Park all the way to Cadillac.

It Takes Some Planning

A lot of planning was put into this, and after several hours of trying, we could not figure a way to get through or around Grand Rapids on snowmobiles. With that said, we decided to start in Comstock Park in the Grand Rapids area, just north of the corner of U.S. 131 and I-96. Our planning was not done here. This was the closest hotel that we could get to the start of the trail. Well, we could have stayed at a place in Rockford. However, it is illegal to ride snowmobiles within the city limits there, so that was not an option.

Deciding to stay at Comfort Suite had its own challenges. It is approximately 16- miles from the snowmobile trail. Wanting to keep things legal, the Kent County Sheriff’s Department was contacted, where I spoke with Officer Gale

Now before you wonder why we didn’t take that trail all the way, you must realize that snowmobiles are prohibited on the White Pine Trail on the south end, until Rockford. From here, our plan was simple. Ride to Indian River for the night. The White Pine proved to be a very nice trail, putting us in Cadillac for lunch.

From there, we headed towards Mesick for the next part of our journey, finding a way to get from Mesick to Manton, to pick up the trails again. North in the ditches of M-37, in all the local tracks found us at 14 Mile Road; east to the north side of Manton. (Let me tell you, just because internet maps and a GPS tell you the road is there, does not mean the road is open. One section of that road is closed to through traffic. There were multiple snowmobile tracks there to follow, the 1/2

mile of closed road, with all the snow, was easily traversed).

Manton proved more road riding, as we back tracked for fuel, then back to the trail again. North of Manton found us in some freezing rain that really slowed us down. Dinner at Starvation Lake proved worth the stop, because when we came out, the rain had stopped. Our original plan was to follow the west loop of Alba/Elmira up to Indian River, however due to some delays, finding our way on roads to connect trails, and an already late night, we elected to take Trail 7 straight north to our awaiting hotel.

A Short, But Welcomed Rest

Checking into the Hometown Inn at 12:35 a.m., Indian River was a welcome rest. The rest was short, and soon we were on the sleds again. Today's trip was to be filled with adventure as well. From Indian River to Alanson proved a beautiful ride, as the 3 inches of overnight snow was hanging perfectly on the trees. Just prior to

comment, "We're closed." Thinking she was joking also, we ordered and had a fantastic meal. As we ate, the other tables cleared out, and we were soon the only customers there. Asking why, we were told, "I told you, we are closed. We closed at 2 p.m."

WOW! We felt terrible, but were reassured it was all okay. They not only gave us excellent food, but went way above and beyond to do it. I would highly recommend visiting there, as the food and the service were excellent. How can it get better?

Heavy Snow – Great Ride!

South out of Mackinaw on our way to Cheboygan we made a stop at a friend's, where we borrowed a pop rivet gun to finish putting the right parts on Mike's sled. Thanks again Boo, your kindness was much appreciated! After a short repair, we found ourselves in a heavy snow on our way to Millersburg via trail 99. With dinner time upon us, we decided to eat after we gassed up in Millersburg. I asked the lady at the gas station if there was somewhere other than a bar to eat, and she asked me to wait a second. She made a call, and the staff at the North Trail Diner would stay open for us to eat.

"Burgers and Fries is all she'll make for you because she is closing, but she said she'd stay open for you if you hurry down there."

Located right on Trail 9, just west of the 9/99 intersection we went. Mike had been there before and told us it was very good. He lied. It was fantastic! We thought nothing could top lunch, but this certainly tied it for the gold medal. We even got to finish off the desert bar as she was cleaning up. I would recommend visiting

there with an empty stomach too, you will not be disappointed.

Millersburg was not it for the night. Alpena was, so off we went. The wind had really picked up, and the rail grade to Alpena went by at a good pace. 11:30 p.m. found us checking in for the night.

Morning found us heading south to the Devil's Lake Trail. From there, the trail stops going south. We needed to get to Barton City to pick the trail up again. Spruce Road took us south to Cecel Road west to Hubbard Lake Road. We decided with all the trucks on the ice that the ice was safe, and we took Hubbard Lake

from the north to the south. Exiting the lake, we got back onto Hubbard Lake Road and took it to Trask Lake Road, which took us right into Barton City.

Picking up the trail on the next trail system, we headed to Oscoda. So far, we had approximately 650 miles on our trip. Until we got to Oscoda, we had yet to hit one single bump, not to mention bad trail. Oscoda trails were nice, but with the traffic of a typical Saturday, we were done being spoiled.

The St. Helen area proved to be very icy in the corners slowing us down to remain safe. Dinner was in Prudenville at a diner called Shakers. This place made the bumps in the trail worth the ride! We ended our last night on the trail with another place being closed by the time we left. Again we were apologetic, but couldn't believe how good the food was. When we gassed up in Prudenville, I asked four different people at the station where we could eat. All four said "Shakers." How can you go wrong with that? If you go to Shakers, everything from the smiles of the wait staff to the fresh hot food will bring you back.

With dinner behind us, and the last leg of the trip in front of us, we had a choice to make. Take the trail, or the "short cut" up the lake. Due to the time, we elected the Houghton Lake route, which took us back to the trail. Trail 7 took us right to our waiting rooms at the Super 8 on 4 Mile Road.

Sunday morning, Rob came up to get us with the truck and trailer. With nearly 800 miles behind us, we did something few have done. We circled the mitten. We know there are many trails that go closer to the shoreline, but they all end. We followed a loop that took us from Grand Rapids to Mackinaw to Oscoda to Grayling.

With friends like this, Zero Tolerance, the best trails around, and a winter like we've had this year, I don't know how anyone can complain. ❄️



Alanson, Mike's sled broke a sway bar bushing. With Spanky's on the itinerary, this should not be a problem. That is, until we learned it was a dealer item only. As Mike made the sled ride able with heater hose and clamps, I searched for the nearest dealer. Calling County Wide Polaris in Harbor Springs, I found they had the part.

When we arrived, we put one of the two parts needed on Mike's sled. We traveled north to Pelston, to Mackinaw. We arrived in Mackinaw at 2 p.m. We decided to eat at the Pancake Chef for lunch. After sitting down and being served our Zero Tolerance drinks and having fun with the wait staff, she made the



SAFETY FIRST, SAFETY ALWAYS!

SAFETY CLASSES 2014-15

Saturday, Nov. 1: The class is being sponsored by the Cadillac Winter Warriors. It will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Tustin, Mich., location to be announced. For more information, call Donna Thompson (231) 768-4069.

Saturday, November 1: The class is being sponsored by the East Jordan Sno-Mobilers, Inc. It will run from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Please contact Gerry Argetsinger at (231)582-7970 or Don Massey at (231)536-2944. The class will be held at the clubhouse located at 5586 Mt. Bliss Rd., East Jordan.

Saturday, November 8: The class is being sponsored by the Sault Ste. Marie Snowmobile Association. It will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the clubhouse, 1205 W. 9th Street, Sault Ste. Marie. You must pre-register for the class and complete the pre course workbook. The class is free and lunch will be provided by U.P. Tire & Leitz Sport Center. Students must be turning 12 years or older this upcoming snowmobiling season to take the class. Parents are encouraged to attend, but not required. To register and pick up the course booklet call (906) 635-6161.

Saturday, November 8: The class is being sponsored by the Snomads Snowmobile Club. It will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It will be held at the Suburban Collection Showplace. To register online visit SnomadS.org.

Saturday, November 15: The class is being sponsored by the Snomads Snowmobile Club. It will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It will be held at the Ira Township Parks and Recreation, 7065 Meldrum, Ira. To register call (586) 725-0263.

Saturday, November 22: The class is being sponsored by the Snomads Snowmobile Club. It will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Livonia Parks and Recreation, 33000 Civic Center, Livonia. To register call (734) 466-2200.

Saturday, November 22: The class is being sponsored by the Antrim County Snowmobile Club. It will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Darrel Mitchell at (231) 676-1202.

Saturday, Dec. 6: The class is being sponsored by the Newaygo County Snowmobile Association. It is being held in Newaygo, 4684 S. Evergreen Drive, Newaygo. Pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Dale Johnson at (231) 924-5643.

Saturday, Dec. 6: The class is being sponsored by the Frankenmuth Snowmobile Club. It will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Frankenmuth Conservation Club, 8415 E. Curtis Rd., Frankenmuth. For more information, call Ed Roedel at (989) 823-2225.

Saturday, Dec. 13: The class is being sponsored by the Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club. Class will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. It is free of charge and will be held at the Club House near the corner of Fairview & Rose City roads. Lunch, snacks, and drinks will be provided at no charge. Parents are encouraged to attend. To register call Jim Kelts at (989) 473-3062 or e-mail jkelts@yahoo.com.

Saturday, Dec. 26: The class is being sponsored by the LeCheneaux Snowmobile Club. The class is free, and will be held at the clubhouse in Cedarville. Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration is required. For more information, contact Stu Volkers at (906) 297-3060.



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