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2025-2026 www.snowmobilemt.org

Montana SNOWMOBILE NEWS

Protecting Access. Supporting Riders. Strengthening Communities.

BANQUET TICKETS
Buy Early & Save!

Get Tickets By January 21

Montana SNOWMOBILE Association

Upcoming Events

Early Bird Banquet Tickets - Purchase by January 21, 2026

MSA Banquet & Trans-Montana Charity Auction Feb 7

Annual Association Group Ride , Hosted by the Helena Snowdrifters Helena Area - Feb 7

More events - page 8

Join the Celebration—Banquet Registration Has Begun

featuring the Trans-Montana Charity Auction!

Come celebrate with us this February in Helena at the MSA Annual Awards Banquet, hosted by the Helena Snowdrifters! Behind every great ride is a volunteer who made it possible, and this is our chance to honor those who give back to the sport we all love.

Join fellow riders for an evening of storytelling, camaraderie, and both live and silent auctions—packed with great opportunities to score something special—while we recognize the people and clubs who keep Montana snowmobiling strong.

Buy your tickets before January 21 to help us finalize our catering counts—and save $10 per ticket! Visit www.snowmobilemt.org for details and ticket purchase.

Montana SNOWMOBILE Association

Montana Snowmobile Association
P.O. Box 56
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Website: www.snowmobilemt.org
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Anaconda Snowmobile Club (5)
45 Fire Lane, Anaconda, MT 59711
406-563-7789

Beaverhead Sno-Riders (5)
PO Box 867, Dillon, MT 59725
406-925-0501

Big Hole Snowmobile Club (5)
PO Box 141, Wisdom, MT 59761
406-370-2587

Big Sky Snowriders (10)
PO Box 365, Livingston, MT 59047
406-220-0803

Bitterroot Ridge Runners (3)
PO Box 265, Hamilton, MT 59840
406-363-3433 www.bitterrootrr.org

Cabinet Ridge Riders (2)
PO Box 1577, Trout Creek, MT 59874
406-827-3226

Flathead Snowmobile Association (1)
PO Box 5041, Kalispell, MT 59903
406-871-4606
www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com

Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association (10)
PO Box 3164, Bozeman, MT 59772
406-600-6063 www.gvsa.net

Great Falls Snowmobile Club (7)
PO Box 70, Black Eagle, MT 59414
406-899-5126
www.great-falls-snowmobile.org

Helena Snowdrifters (8)
PO Box 5505, Helena, MT 59624
406-202-2044 www.helenasnowdrifters.org

Jackpine Savages Snowmobile Club (5)
PO Box 65, Wise River, MT 59762
406-267-3389

Lincoln County Sno-Kat Club (1)
PO Box 1180, Libby, MT 59923
406-827-0524

Little Belt Snowmobile Club (9)
PO Box 213, Hobson, MT 59452
406-366-8924

Meagher County Little Belters (7)
PO Box 315, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
406-547-3966 www.mclittlebelters.org

Mining City Trail Riders, Inc (5)
P.O. Box 4885, Butte, MT 59702
406-782-4613

Missoula Snowgoers (3)
PO Box 2441, Missoula, MT 59806
406-241-6814 www.missoulasnowgoers.org

Montana Nightriders (2)
PO Box 420242, Haugan, MT 59842
406-544-5416 www.montananightriders.com

Ponderosa Snow Warriors* (8)
PO Box 933, Lincoln, MT 59639
406-475-5786

Scenic Montana Trails (4)
PO Box 174, Seeley Lake, MT 59868
406-677-7777 www.driftriders.org

Summit Snowgoers (6)
PO Box 301 Cut Bank, MT 59427
406-229-0665

Sweet Grass County Recreation Association (10)
PO Box 922, Big Timber, MT 59011
406-459-6769

Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club (1)
PO Box 404, Eureka, MT 59917
406-297-3377

Troy Snowmobile Club (1)
PO Box 1002, Troy, MT 59935
406-295-4322 www.troysnowmobileclub.org

Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club (10)
PO Box 1111 Cooke City, MT 59020
406-223-5428 www.ridecookcity.com

Vigilante Snowmobilers (5)
PO Box 145 ,Virginia City, MT 59755
406-581-1776

West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce (†)
PO Box 458 West Yellowstone, MT 59758
406-646-7701 www.destinationyellowstone.com

( ) Corresponding District
† Community grooming operation. No membership

2024-2025 MSA Snowmobile Club of the Year

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

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DISTRICT 12 13 – VACANT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The new year is underway, and winter is settling in across Montana. Snow has been stacking up in parts of the mountains, groomers are rolling, and riders are gearing up for another great season on our trail systems.

Clubs across the state have been hard at work—wrapping up trail maintenance, hosting safety refreshers, organizing wood-cutting days, and stocking warming shelters for the months ahead. A heartfelt thank-you to the volunteers who put in countless hours before the first tracks are ever laid. Your dedication is what keeps Montana's trails safe, welcoming, and ready to ride.

As we move beyond the holidays and into the heart of the season, now is a great time to check a few important items off your list:

• Confirm your membership dues are up to date—both with your local club and MSA

• Double-check your trail pass and registration to avoid surprises on your first ride

• Ride smart: carry avalanche gear, travel with a partner, and refresh your safety basics—especially during early- and mid-season conditions

January keeps us bundled up and out on the snow, sharing miles of trail with friends, family, and fellow riders. We hope the season is off to a strong start with great company, well-groomed trails, and plenty of snow under your skis.

Ride safe, ride smart, and enjoy every mile of winter ahead. Let's make this a season to remember!

Connie Walter
President
Montana Snowmobile Association
406-590-0386
president@snowmobilemt.org

Next MSA Board Meeting

February 6, 2026 - Helena
All MSA members welcome! Join us in person or by Zoom. Helena Wild - 10:00am

Revving Up Support for Students

Please help spread the word—MSA is proud to sponsor a $1,000 scholarship this year!

As educational costs continue to rise, we've increased our annual scholarship from $500 to $1,000 to better support members of our snowmobiling community.

If you know a deserving individual, please encourage them to apply. See page 15 for full details or visit the MSA website to learn more.

ASPEN
Assessment & Counseling Services
Peggy A. Albee,
LCPC, LAC, NCAC-1, SAP, MHPP, CART
505 W. Main St., Ste 316
Lewistown, MT 59457
P 406.366.4134
F 406.538.3283
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Club News

District 10

Sweet Grass Recreation Association

The Sweet Grass County Recreation Association, headquartered in Big Timber, is excited to gear up for another snowmobiling season! Volunteers have been busy prepping trails and equipment to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable time out on the snow. We appreciate the support and enthusiasm from our community as we look forward to a winter filled with adventure.

Upcoming Events: Family Fun Day & Poker Run
Mark your calendars for our annual Family Fun Day and Snowmobile Poker Run on February 28! This year, Camp on the Boulder will serve as the registration hub and the first poker card station, welcoming riders and families as they kick off the festivities.

Whether you're joining for the poker run or just want to enjoy a day outdoors, there's something for everyone.

Main Boulder River Road Access Advocacy
We've continued our advocacy to restore wheeled vehicle access on Main Boulder River Road, which remains closed due to bridge damage from the 2022 flood. The 2023 closure has made reaching favorite summer destination areas more challenging, but our commitment to access and safety remains strong.

Backcountry Shelter Maintenance
Maintaining the safety shelter, the Tin Shack, near Blue Lake has presented its own set of challenges, especially with difficult access. In October, volunteers completed needed repairs to ensure the shelter is ready for winter adventurers seeking refuge in the backcountry.

Grant Partnership and Stewardship
We're proud to partner with the Boulder River Watershed Association and Sweet Grass Conservation District on a Trails Stewardship grant application. If awarded, this grant would help fund critical improvements and could be a big step toward reopening the Main Boulder River Road, benefiting snowmobilers and the broader backcountry community.

Annual Meeting and Governance
Our annual members meeting in mid-December saw the election of new officers and the approval of amended bylaws, helping keep our association strong and responsive to members' needs.

We warmly invite everyone to join us for Family Fun Day in February—bring your sleds, your friends, and your sense of adventure! Best wishes for a safe and memorable snowmobiling season from all of us at the Sweet Grass County Recreation Association.

Special Contribution

From Thimble to Thrill

How I Found My Confidence on the Snow

As the Secretary of the MSA one might think I have experience riding snowmobiles... since all the other Officers are very talented riders... however, what little experience I have would fit in a thimble with room left! Definitely not the epitome of confidence out there in the backcountry. The solution: Octane & Grit Ladies Riding Clinic!

I was gifted a spot to participate in the Octane & Grit Ladies Riding Clinic in Cooke City, MT in early 2025. The two-day riding clinic designed for novice riders and those with more advanced skills was the BEST! With four exceptional instructors (Kristen Yates, Jessica Carter, Dave and Matt) and additional avalanche experts it was an amazing adventure.

Starting with the basics at the "beacon park" learning how the beacons work and their life-saving features to riding the powder trails and meadows, we did it all! Much of the time was spent riding with stops along the way to practice tips and tricks we were taught from balance and foot placement to side-hilling and maneuvering in the powder. The patience, encouragement and skill demonstrated by the instructors made the experience a truly valuable, confidence-building one for all - regardless of their riding level or age.

While I still have much to learn, thanks to Kristen, Jess, Dave and Matt, the Octane & Grit Ladies Riding Clinic was a huge step forward for me and my "thimble" is now overflowing! I would highly encourage any of the lady-riders to sign up for one of next years' clinics – but sign up early as the spots are limited and you don't want to miss out!

Peggy

Wow!

Sleds, Sparkle & Small-Town Cheer

Decked out sleds, festive riders, and small-town cheer—clubs across the state brought the holiday spirit to community parades. Nicely done... you outdid yourselves!

Helena Snowdrifters
East Helena Christmas Convoy.

Sweet Grass County Recreation Association
Crazy Mountain Christmas Lighted Parade, Big Timber.

Great Falls Snowmobile Club
Downtown Great Falls Parade of Lights

District 2

Montana Night Riders

The Montana Night Riders Snowmobile Club operates and maintains three groomers, two of which the club owns and one that the state of Montana owns. We average 200 members and always have many projects in the works.

Thanks to many volunteers last year we added 1,500 square feet to our groomer shed for a total of 3,300 square feet. We now have a meeting room, the ability to keep all three groomers indoors, and additional storage. We also completed miles of safety improvements to our trails, removing rock slides and adding barriers, with grant funds.

Our wood cutting event, for our warming shelter, had many volunteers which made quick work of the project. The club provides food and drink and fun was had by all, including our dogs. We had our annual Christmas party on December 6th for the first time at our groomer shed with 70 members in attendance. Thanks to all who helped with the preparation of food and decorating.

At the time of this newsletter, we have very little snow. The rains have caused flooding with substantial damage. Hopefully we will have plenty of snow for our upcoming Vintage event on January 17th and 18th and our 37th annual Super Poker Run on January 31st. We invite everyone to join us for these events.

MSA Watch Items & Travel Plans

MSA remains actively engaged in travel plans and land use decisions that impact snowmobiling across the state. Listed below are key areas where MSA has provided feedback or continues to monitor developments:

- **Wilderness Study**
- **Economic Impact Study (Winter)**
- **Island Park & West Yellowstone Madison-Gallatin Monument Plan**
- **Clearwater Blackfoot**
- **Lincoln Prosperity Project**
- **Kootenai Forest**
- **Montana Headwaters Legacy Act**
- **Lolo Travel Plan**
- **30 by 30 Initiative**
- **Avalanche Center Budget Reduction**
- **Roadless Rule**

We encourage all members to stay informed and engaged in these discussions. Your voices play a vital role in shaping the future of snowmobiling in Montana.

District 10

Upper Yellowstone

COOKE CITY FUN

What started as a big idea (and maybe a little Sasquatch-sized dreaming) is now reality!

The Sasquatch Snow Pole has officially been installed and is standing watch over the Cooke City backcountry. With the camera now in place, riders can keep an eye on real-time snow levels before heading out.

From vision to installation—this is one more win for the riding community. Big thanks to everyone who helped make it happen!

Out of the Archieves

Fun Fact

The Montana Night Riders have brought their vintage patches out of retirement—circa 1972. Proof that what's old is new again and back in action!

District *Two*

District 2 Position Filled!

Thank you to Aron Dixon for stepping in as District 2 Representative, serving the Cabinent Ridge Riders and the Montana Nightriders.

District Reps serve as the key liaison between MSA and local clubs, sharing needs, offering support, and championing club and MSA initiatives.

Aron has nearly 40 years of snowmobiling experience, enjoys dirt biking and side-by-side adventures, and has ridden across Montana with MSA and local clubs. He looks forward to meeting and riding with more snowmobilers.

📍 Aron Dixon | Haugan, MT

EVENTS

January 10 - 17, 2026 - International Snowmobile Safety Week
January 17, 2026 - Lochsa Loop Ride, Missoula Snowgoers - Lolo Hot Springs
January 17 & 18 , 2026 - Winter Fest, Montana Night Riders - Haugen
January 21, 2025 - Banquet Tickets Deadline (Early-bird savings ends)
January 30, 2025 - Ray Peterson Annual Fun Run, Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club - Eureka
January 31, 2026 - Annual MNR Poker Ride, Montana Night Riders - Haugen
January 31, 2026 - Snowball Banquet - Scenic Montana Trails - Seeley Lake
February 1, 2026 - 2nd Annual Dave Konopatzke Vintage Ride & Family Day - Columbia Falls
February 4, 2026 - Trans-Montana Charity Ride Starts
February 6, 2026 - MSA Board Meeting - Helena
February 7, 2026 - Take a Friend Snowmobiling Kickoff Week
February 7, 2026 - Garnet Ghost Town Ride - Scenic Montana Trails
February 7, 2026 - MSA Annual Awards Banquet & Charity Auction - Helena
February 7, 2026 - MSA Annual Group Ride - Helena
February 14,– Cabinet Ridge Riders Fun Run – Trout Creek
February 14, 2026 - Fun Run, Missoula Snowgoers - Lolo Hot Springs
February 14, 15, 2026 - President's Weekend Poker Run, UYSC - Cooke City
February 20, 2026 - BINGO Fundraiser, Helena Snowdrifters - Helena
February 18 - 22, 2026 - ACSA Mountain Riding Summit - West Yellowstone
February 28 - March 1, 2026 - Lincoln Vintage Rendezvous, Ponderosa Snow Warriors - Lincoln
February 28, 2026 - Family Fun Day, Sweet Grass Rec Center - Big Timber
March 13 & 14, 2026 - Hog Roast Fundraiser, UYSC - Cooke City
March 14, 2026 - St Patty's Vintage Ride, Anaconda Snowmobile Club - Anaconda
June 3 - 6, 2026 - International Snowmobile Congress - Omaha

Send Us Your Events!
Email: news@snowmobilemt.org

The Lodge At Lolo Hot Springs

Plan a Snowmobile Getaway At Lolo!

- 500 miles of Recreational Trails
- Snowmobile from The Lodge
- Snowmobile Gas on site.
- Natural Hot Springs to warm up

Book directly with code "SLED" and save 20% on your stay

38600 Hwy 12 West, Lolo, MT 59847
Phone: 406-273-2201 www.lololodge.net

Feb 18-22, 2026

ACSA Mountain Riding Summit

Building Tomorrow's Riders

Highlights

- Group Rides - by skill level
- Youth Rides – no age restrictions
- Avalanche Clinic Demos
- Riding Clinic Demos
- Youth Round Table Discussions
- Broom Ball Competition
- (Possible) Freestyle Riders
- Pizza Party
- Sledding Hill
- Kids & Adults Bingo
- Hannah's Chicken Auction

Holiday Inn
West Yellowstone
Enjoy 2 or 3 days of riding

Book your hotel reservations now and bring the family!

CALLING ALL LITTLE SHREDDERS!
The ACSA Riding Summit is taking over West Yellowstone — and this year the KIDS are the MAIN EVENT! Watch Facebook for more details.

Annual Montana Snowmobile Association Awards Banquet with the Trans-Montana Charity Auction

Montana SNOWMOBILE Association

Banquet

Join us as we recognize this years Best Of...

Saturday, February 7, 2026
Delta Colonial Hotel, Helena
Hosted by the Helena Snowdrifters
Everyone Welcome!

Tickets: $40
Youth Tickets (13–18): $20
Kids Tickets (12 & under): $5

Early birds save $10 until Jan. 21st
$10 per ticket at the door!

No-Host Cocktail Hour: 5:00pm
Western Dinner Buffet: 6:00pm
Charity Auction: 7:00pm
50/50 Raffle & More!

Hotel Rates: Ask for Montana Snowmobile Association group rate.
Book early for best availability - Delta Colonial Hotel.
Trailer parking available!

HELENA SNOWDRIFTERS
Helena, Montana

www.snowmobilemt.org | www.helenasnowdrifters.org

MSA Group Ride - Saturday morning, hosted by the Helena Snowdrifters - Everyone Welcome!

Trans-Montana Ride Schedule

TMR Day 1 – Wednesday, February 4
• Ride the Bitterroots/Sapphire Mountains with the Bitterroot Ridgerunners

TMR Day 2 – Thursday, February 5
• Ride Lolo with the Missoula Trail Riders

TMR Day 3 – Friday, February 6
• Ride Seeley Lake with Scenic Montana Trails

TMR Day 4 – Saturday, February 7 (MSA Ride)
• Ride the Helena Area with the Helena Snowdrifters
• Attend the MSA/Trans-Montana Banquet

TMR Day 5 – Monday, February 9
• Ride the Butte/Anaconda Area with the Mining City Trail Riders and Jackpine Savages

TMR Day 6 – Tuesday, February 10
• Ride the West Yellowstone Area with MSA Past-President and International Snowmobile Hall of Fame inductee, Jason Howell

TRANS-MONTANA CHARITY RIDE

About the Ride

Local snowmobile clubs along the route proudly host the Trans-Montana Snowmobile Ride, paving the way for unforgettable group adventures with plenty of time to explore and play.

Everyone is welcome to pick up a day ride. Here's how it works — riders "pay to play" by donating to the cause. This multi-day ride coincides with the MSA Annual Awards Banquet and the Trans-Montana Live & Silent Charity Auction.

Visit www.trans-mt.org

Note: Schedule subject to change based on weather and snow conditions.

Measuring a 30 degrees slope with a small, inexpensive inclinometer. Any slope steeper than this is where avalanches happen. Any slope less steep than this is still a lot of fun but not steep enough to slide.

FOCUS ON 30

Mark Staples, Avalanche Forecaster,
Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center

Deciding when to enter avalanche terrain requires a complicated decision-making process involving the avalanche danger rating, evaluations of recent weather, and an individual slope assessment. However, before we even start that process, we need to be able to identify here avalanches happen. Identifying avalanche terrain is like identifying the door to a casino.

Once you enter that door, you can have a lot of fun but you might lose all your money. Entering the casino is just like entering avalanche terrain, except that the door is invisible, and the stakes are much higher. We're gambling with our life. The good news is that we can learn to see the door. The other good news is that we don't have to go through the door to have lots of fun. We can ride low angle slopes staying out of avalanche terrain and never worry about avalanches.

SEEING THE DOOR

There are many ways to recognize this door. If it looks fun to ride, then it is probable avalanche terrain. If trees are flagged or show damage from frequent avalanches, then it's avalanche terrain. The other sure fire way to identify the door to avalanche terrain is with slope angles. The challenge is that there are many different slope angles used to define avalanche terrain. A quick Google search gives a lot of results: 25–50 degrees, 30–45 degrees, 37/38 degrees, 35–38 degrees. All of which are all correct but confusing. We focus on a single number, we focus on 30. Going on or under slopes steeper than 30 degrees is entering the door. If we avoid walking through the door, we can avoid avalanches altogether. By learning to see this door, we can safely ski and ride every day regardless of the avalanche danger.

FOCUS ON ONE NUMBER: 30°

Can we accurately measure slope angles? We can, but it requires education and practice. There are many essential skills needed to safely travel in the mountains, and they all require education and practice with no shortcuts. It's even more important to practice measuring slope angles because it's easy to misjudge. 30-degree slopes feel totally different in different situations. Slope angles look different on a cloudy day compared to a sunny day. They feel different on a hard icy slope compared to a slope with soft powder. Mapping apps can help, but they can't tell you exactly where that door is. There's no substitute for taking measurements in the field and practicing a lot. All my field partners and coworkers practice measuring this slope angle more than we practice avalanche rescue.

One important point - You don't have to be on a slope steeper than 30 degrees to be in avalanche terrain. If you're under a slope steeper than 30 degrees, you're in avalanche terrain because that's where avalanches run. Many people have died thinking they were "playing it safe" but were actually under a steep slope, thus in avalanche terrain. A good example happened near Cooke City on Dec 11 of this year. Two riders were crossing under Crown Butte in relatively flat terrain, but they triggered an avalanche that crashed down on them. One was buried for 12 minutes, but luckily found and dug out alive. Entering the door to avalanche terrain means crossing onto a slope steeper than 30 degrees OR going underneath a slope steeper than 30 degrees.

Buy a simple inclinometer or use an app on your phone to start measuring the slope angles of small slopes. Ask your partners to do the same and compare measurements. Getting it right is a matter of life or death, but you can do it. Practice and you'll get better. Don't get confused with all the numbers. Focus on 30 and ask "is that slope steeper than 30 degrees or not?" As I mentioned at the start of this article there are other ways to identify avalanche terrain, but knowing if a slope is steeper than 30 or not is the most basic and most important.

MONTANA SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM UPDATE

With the recent weather, I know the clubs are dealing with thousands of downed trees and washed-out trails. I ask the public to be patient as we try to get the trails back in shape. If you have a little time, please volunteer with a club to get the trees removed from the trails.

Grooming won't be able to happen until the trees are removed and the snow conditions improve.

I would like to explain the reasons why the groomers must not go out until the snow depths and conditions are right. If the clubs take the groomers out with little to no snow, the track components are worn way faster than in the snow. To replace the tracks on a groomer it costs over to $40,000. There are three different groomer manufacturers that the state runs with a total of 28 large groomers in the program. The program does not have the funds to replace tracks due to running them in poor snow conditions.

The clubs do an excellent job keeping the equipment maintained.

See you on the trails.

Sincerely,
Seth McArthur
Montana Snowmobile Program Manager
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406-444-3753

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Paulsen's POWERSPORTS
200 57th Street North
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-761-0303

Fun fact

Snowmobiling generates over 26 billion in annual spending across the United States, and much of this spending occurs in rural areas.
Source: American Council of Snowmobile Associations

A celebration of mechanical heritage and family adventure

THE JOY OF SNOWMOBILING

Finding, Fixing, and Riding Classic Sleds Through Winter Wonderlands

TOM MULLINS

There's something magical about the sound of a vintage snowmobile coming to life after months of careful restoration. The distinct two-stroke engine note, the smell of pre-mix fuel, and the gleaming chrome details transport you back to snowmobiling's golden era of the late 1960s and 1970s. For enthusiasts across snow country, vintage snowmobiling isn't just a hobby—it's a passion that brings together history, mechanical craftsmanship, and cherished memories with loved ones.

The hunt for vintage snowmobiles has become a treasure-seeking adventure in itself. Seasoned collectors scan online marketplaces, visit estate sales, and explore old barns where forgotten sleds sit beneath decades of dust. Finding that rare Arctic Cat Panther, classic Ski-Doo Olympique, or distinctive John Deere Liquifire sends adrenaline rushing through any vintage sled enthusiast's veins. Each discovery comes with its own story—perhaps it belonged to a grandfather who once ran a trapline, or a family that used it for winter camping trips decades ago. These machines represent more than metal and fiberglass; they're tangible connections to winter recreation's past.

The restoration process becomes a labor of love that often spans entire winters. Garages transform into workshops where generations gather around vintage sleds, teaching younger family members the lost art of points-and-condenser ignition systems, carburetor tuning, and track alignment. Fathers and sons bond over seized engines that need patient coaxing back to life. Mothers and daughters share quality time sourcing authentic decals and carefully applying period-correct paint schemes.
Online forums buzz with advice about where to find obsolete parts, how to fabricate unavailable components, and which modern upgrades can improve reliability without sacrificing authenticity.

The satisfaction of successfully rebuilding a vintage snowmobile cannot be overstated. That first successful pull-start after months of work, watching blue smoke curl from the exhaust as the engine settles into a steady idle, makes every scraped knuckle and late workshop night worthwhile. These machines, which once seemed destined for the scrap heap, roar back to life ready for new adventures. The mechanical simplicity of vintage sleds means owners truly understand every system, creating deeper appreciation and connection to their machines.

The camaraderie of vintage snowmobile events

But the true joy of vintage snowmobiling reveals itself when you finally hit the trails with friends and family. Vintage snowmobile groups organize regular rides where classic sleds parade through pristine winter landscapes, their riders bundled in period-appropriate gear. These aren't high-speed thrills—vintage sleds cruise at leisurely paces that let you appreciate snow-draped forests, frozen lakes, and mountain vistas. The slower speeds create perfect opportunities for conversation, for teaching children to ride, for stopping to enjoy a favorite beverage with friends and family or warm hands around a lunch-break fire

Vintage snowmobile show

Weekend rallies and shows have become highlight events where the vintage snowmobile community gathers to display their prized machines, swap parts and stories, and celebrate their shared passion. Children climb aboard restored sleds for photos while adults discuss restoration techniques and remember their own childhood winter adventures. These events preserve not just the machines themselves, but the culture and memories surrounding snowmobiling's formative years. Friendships forged through vintage sledding often last lifetimes, bound together by mutual appreciation for mechanical heritage and outdoor recreation.

Vintage snowmobiling offers something increasingly rare in modern life: an excuse to slow down, work with your hands, and share meaningful experiences with those you love. Whether you're carefully adjusting a carburetor in your workshop, teaching your grandchild to operate a classic sled, or carving fresh tracks across a frozen lake with longtime friends, vintage snowmobiling connects us to simpler times while creating new memories that will be treasured for generations to come. In a world of disposable technology and digital entertainment, these restored machines remind us of the enduring value of craftsmanship, patience, and shared adventure in the winter wonderland.

Statement: During the preparation of this work, the author used Claude AI to generate the rough content. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

VINTAGE *EVENTS*

January 17 -18, 2026
Winterfest
Montana Night Riders
The largest Vintage snowmobile show in the Pacific Northwest.

February 1, 2026
Dave Konopatzke Vintage Ride & Family Day
Flathead Snowmobile Assoc
Columbia Falls

February 7, 2026
Scenic Montana Trails
Garnet Ghost Town Ride

February 28 - March 1, 2026
Lincoln Vintage Rendezvous
Ponderosa Snow Warriors
Lincoln

March 14, 2026
St Patty's Vintage Ride,
Anaconda Snowmobile Club
Anaconda

Fun *fact*

In the late 1950s, the invention of smaller gasoline engines led to the first lightweight, one- and two-passenger snowmobiles—sparking the birth of snowmobiling as a recreational sport.

$1,000 Scholarship

Montana Snowmobile Association

SCHOLARSHIP

ENTRY DEADLINE

March 31, 2026

The Montana Snowmobile Association is offering a $1,000 scholarship to either a graduating high school senior or a person enrolled in a college, technical or vocational program. See website for details.

APPLY TODAY

www.snowmobileMT.org

MSA Membership Application

Join online snowmobilemt.org or complete the application below.

Select Membership Type

- ☐ Single/Family Membership - Annual Cost $25
- ☐ Business / Club Membership - Annual Cost $40

If Business or Club Membership

Business / Club Name:

Primary Account Holder:

If Single / Family Membership

Primary Account Holder:

Family Members (If applicable):

Contact Information

Email Address

Phone

Mailing Address

Do You Belong to a Local Snowmobile Club?
List Primary Club:

Mail completed application with payment

Montana Snowmobile Association
P.O. Box 56 | Black Eagle, MT 59414

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello….Montana Winter Enthusiasts!

Since this is the January edition, I hope that you had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year! This snow season is well on its way to being great for some and maybe not so much for others..yet. Did you get new gear or even better a new sled?

The avalanche conditions have hit “High” across many areas of our state already and that makes for a scary scenario but means there’s snow. I want to thank our forecasters across the state that work hard to keep us all safe. I also want to thank you for staying safe and heading the warnings..stay low and stay out of runout zones.

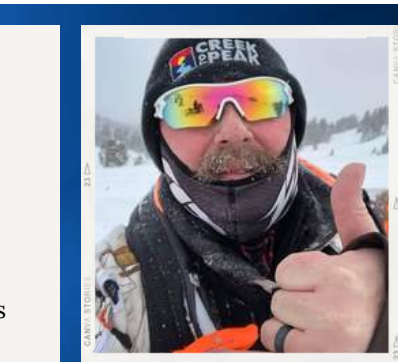
There are a plethora of snowmobile enthusiast events happening across our state this season. I do hope you have some in your schedule to attend. This year especially, is being geared towards our snowmobiling kids and that should mean a lot to all of us!
Help them kids out when it’s possible.

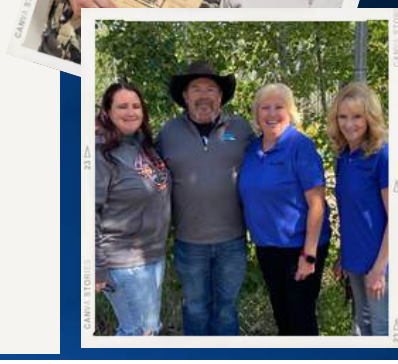
The MSA banquet is looming ahead and we sure want to see you there! Get your tickets bought up! We want our banquet to grow, be family friendly and a ton of fun for everyone. If you have any questions please reach out and we will be happy to help.

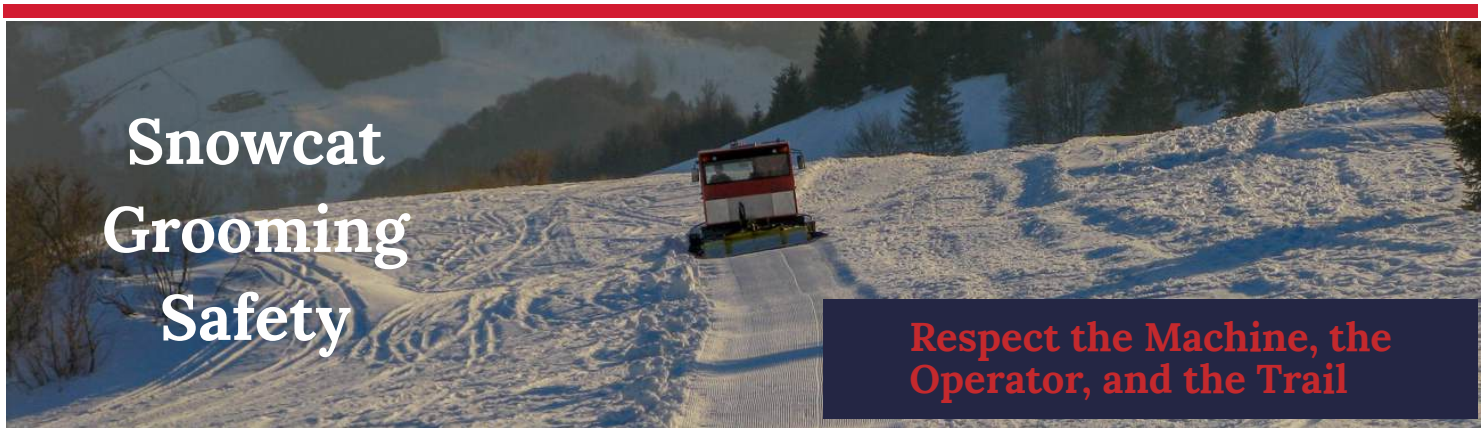
Hope to see you there!

As always, support your sport by supporting your state and local associations! Tips up Track Down!

Rowdy Yates
VP, Montana Snowmobile Association
406-223-5428 | vp@snowmobilemt.org







Snowcat grooming is the backbone of Montana’s snowmobile trail system. Those smooth, rideable corridors exist because dedicated operators run heavy equipment, often at night, in cold temperatures and limited visibility.

Do Not Follow Grooming Equipment

Snowcats are large, slow-moving machines with limited rear visibility. Operators are focused on trail conditions, terrain, and the grooming equipment behind them. A snowmobile following too closely may not be seen and creates a serious safety risk.

Making the Operator Aware Before Passing

Encounters with groomers do happen. When a rider needs to pass:

- Stay well back
- Flash headlights to alert the operator
- Wait for clear acknowledgment
- Pass only when directed, when the operator stops or pulls over, or when it is clearly safe
- NEVER assume the operator sees you. Snowcats pull drags and equipment that extend well beyond the tracks and can cause severe injury.

Riding Freshly Groomed Trails

Freshly groomed trails need time and cold temperatures to properly set up. Aggressive throttle use and “whiskey throttling” on soft groomed snow can undo hours of grooming in minutes. Ruts and trenching quickly refreeze into hard, icy hazards.

Smooth, controlled riding helps preserve trail quality and keeps conditions safer for everyone.

Shared Responsibility

Trail grooming in Montana is made possible through partnerships between Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, clubs, land managers, and volunteers. Unsafe behavior around grooming equipment or damage to freshly groomed trails threatens rider safety, trail quality, and continued access.

Respecting groomers, giving trails time to set, and riding responsibly ensures safer conditions today and helps protect Montana’s snowmobiling future for seasons to come. A huge thank you to those that know and take care of the trails they use.

Montana Snowmobile Association
www.snowmobilemt.org
P.O. Box 56
Black Eagle, MT 59414

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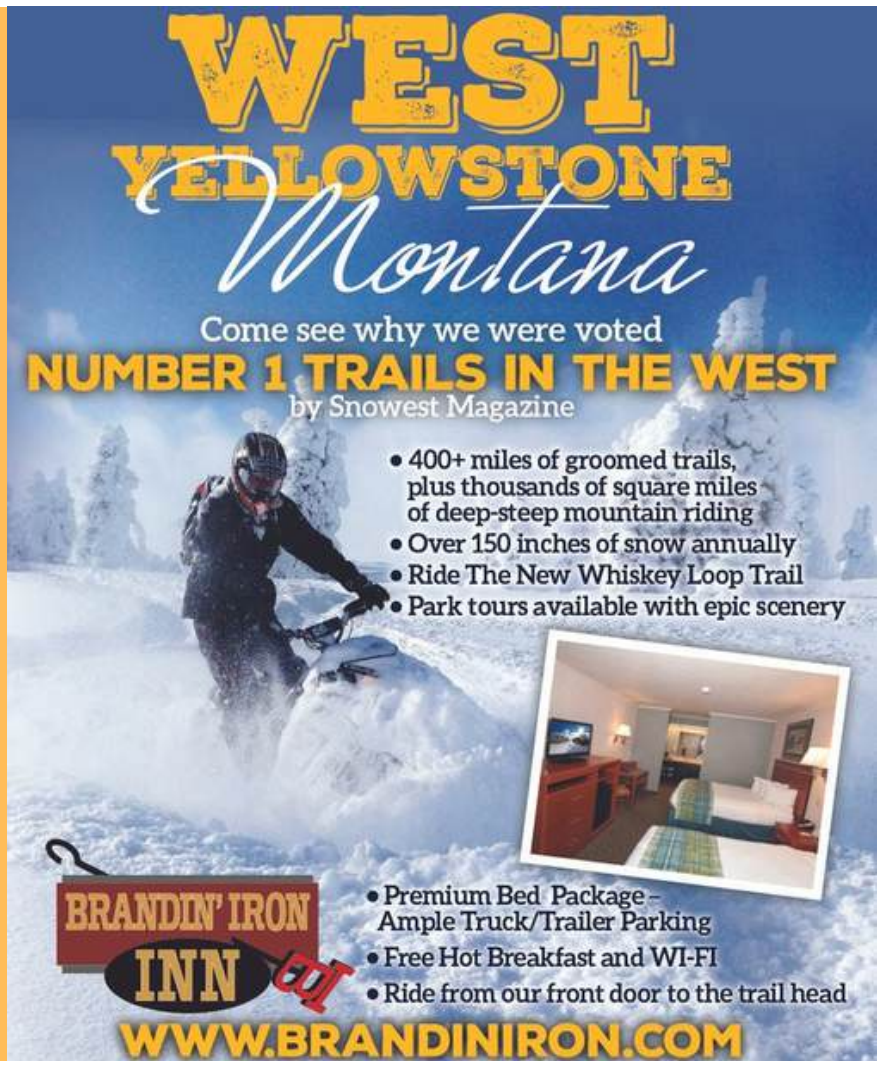
Ask for Montana Snowmobile Association Special Rates and Packages.



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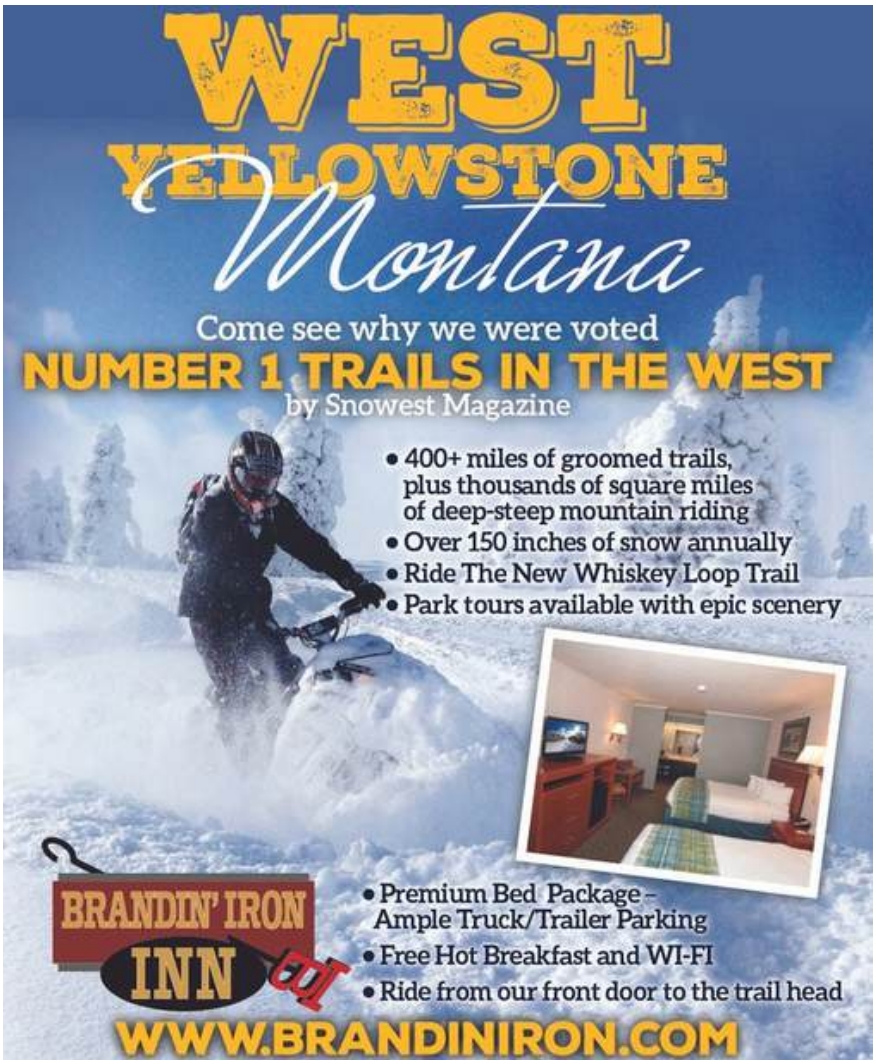
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