



Montana

SNOWMOBILE NEWS

ISSUE 3 • DECEMBER 2023

snowmobilemt.org

2023-2024



**Not yet a member?
Join MSA
Today!**



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Let's Help the Groomers

Remember when you're out on the trail:

- Groomers may be on the trail anytime of the day or night.
- When meeting a groomer head-on, have patience. The operator may not see you right away.
- When you drive up behind a groomer, get as far to the right as possible, or if you can, off the trail.
- Groomers travel slower than snowmobiles.
- Groomers take up all or most of the trail. If you have to cut away a downed tree, cut far enough back so the groomer can get through on the next pass.

Anytime and every time you have the opportunity, tell a groomer operator how great of a job they're doing. Many love to ride, just like you. They need to hear your appreciation if you truly enjoy riding smooth trails or simply having trails to ride on at all. The groomers are often the ones who help brush and sign the trails as well. They need as much help and appreciation as we can all give them.

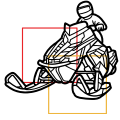
Show your support, join your local snowmobile club

Reminder

**Annual Award
Nominations Due
December 31**

MSA Officers and Clubs

Association Officers



FRED BAILEY
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charity@snowmobilemt.org

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Anaconda, MT 59711
406-563-7789

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

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

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

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

Cabinet Ridge Riders*
PO Box 1577
Trout Creek, MT 59874
406-827-3226

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

Gallatin Valley Snowmobile
Association
PO Box 3164
Bozeman, MT 59772
406-600-6063

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

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

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

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

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

Meagher County Little Belters
PO Box 315
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
406-547-3966

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

Missoula Snowgoers
PO Box 2441
Missoula, MT 59806
406-370-8819
www.missoulasnowgoers.org

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

Ponderosa Snow Warriors
PO Box 933
Lincoln, MT 59639
406-475-5786

Seeley Lake Driftriders
PO Box 174
Seeley Lake, MT 59868
406-677-7777
www.driftriders.org

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

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

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

Troy Snowmobile Club
PO Box 1002
Troy, MT 59935
406-295-4322
www.troynsnowmobileclub.org

Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club
PO Box 1111
Cooke City, MT 59020
406-223-5428
www.ridecookecity.com

Vigilante Snowmobilers
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

SnowmobileMT.org

***2022-2023 MSA Snowmobile Club of the Year**



Montana Snowmobile Association Districts

DISTRICT 1
Rick David
dist-one@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 2
Mark Sverdsten
dist-two@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 3
VACANT

DISTRICT 4
John Zell
dist-four@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 5
Rex Caraker
dist-five@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 6
Gary Blond
dist-six@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 7
Cliff Walter
dist-seven@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 8
Kevin Horne
dist-eight@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 9
Ron Albee
dist-nine@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 10
Rowdy Yates
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DISTRICT 11
Brent Larsen
dist-eleven@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 12
VACANT

DISTRICT 13
Brooke Skoyen
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Margaret Morgan
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NEWS@SNOWMOBILEMT.ORG



Seth McArthur
Montana Fish, Wildlife,
and Parks
Snowmobile Program
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Fred Bailey



What a different year this is from last year. Last year, we had a good amount of snow for a month by Thanksgiving; this year, most of us have little to no snow by the same time. I guess the one constant is that everything changes.

Those of us that have been around for many weather cycles remember when there were more than 70 manufacturers of snowmobiles. Now, with the announcement by Yamaha that they will no longer manufacture Yamaha snowmobiles, this leaves us with less than a handful of snowmobile manufacturers. It is also difficult to purchase new and used snow groomers. Ski hills and groomer operators are hanging on to their equipment longer because of the cost of new ones and the lack of new ones in their inventory; it's too expensive to have many new groomers sitting on their lots. The one encouraging news is that most of the groomer manufacturers are promising to start making 3/4 size groomers that are much cheaper, still with plenty of power and using less fuel due to new technology—more changes.

The one thing that doesn't change is the attack by the non-motorized groups that want to shut us out of our public lands. The Kootenai National Forest has proposed a rule to close higher elevations to snowmobile use on March 31 for Grizzly Bear protection; they will leave the lower elevations open. It doesn't do us much good, as I'm pretty sure the low snow melts out long before the upper elevations. I have been sledding for more than 40 years and can't remember a grizzly bear vs. snowmobile encounter.

The Lolo National is in full travel plan mode. So far, they have started with rivers and lakes, plant and animal species; the trails and roads will be coming soon. They seem to be following their standard operating plan of "closed unless designated open," listing almost everything closed and requiring us to comment and fight to justify why we think something should be open. BLM is revisiting land use plans; this has real potential to limit our ability to use BLM lands.

Follow the link below to see the proposed plan for your area:
www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development
So, please, everyone, take up the fight to keep our public lands open, or before you know it, we will be locked out.



Fred Bailey
Montana Snowmobile Association
406-431-9402
president@snowmobilemt.org

••••• **Winter Up Montana!**

MSA Specialty Plates



Reminder: Send us your updates, good deeds and events for the MSA Newsletter.

Email: news@snowmobilemt.org

WHO'S WHO: Meet This Month's Featured Officers

MSA TREASURER - Kristen Yates

My name is Kristen Yates, I'm your new Montana Snowmobile Association (MSA) Treasurer. My home is a little town in Montana called Gardiner (North Entrance to Yellowstone National Park). My hubby and I have been managing a private guest ranch for the last 14 years. I'm usually out working on the ranch or doing chef duties for guests. However, you will definitely see me enjoying life with the hubby either hunting, fishing, riding horses, camping, riding our SXS and of course, riding my snowmobile at any opportunity I get.

I consider myself as being an active lady in the snowmobile world. I spent most of my childhood in the backcountry and shuttling sleds to and from the gas station for my folks in Cooke City, Montana. I have been involved with MSA for 3 years, our local snowmobile club (Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club - Cooke City MT) for over 6 years. I was elected to the UYSC Treasurer position 4 years ago and still hold that position. I have a huge passion when it comes to sharing and teaching Avalanche Awareness to anyone that will listen. I am a co-host/coach for Octane & Grit Backcountry Ladies Ride & Clinic based out of Cooke City MT. We host a Backcountry Ladies Ride the second weekend of February every year. The last 4 years we have been blessed to be able to coach a 4-day ladies' snowmobile clinic. I love helping women find their independence in the world of backcountry snowmobiling.

I am a Sponsored Athlete for Extreme Realities Design and Oxbow Gear. I'm also a Brand Ambassador for Off Road Vixen as well as Rocky Mountain Sled Conditions. Hope to see some of you fabulous enthusiastic snowmobilers on the snow this winter.....BRAAAP ON!!!



MSA SECRETARY - Peggy Albee

In 1973, my inaugural sled experience on a possible Ski-Doo in Canada left me cold and stranded on a lake near Calgary, courtesy of an unfortunate gas shortage. Fast forward to 2006, when my husband Ron rekindled my interest in sledding, turning it into a lifestyle.

While my passion for the sport took its time to flourish, I embraced it by acquiring my own sled in 2007. Although my initial ride was short-lived, I recently upgraded to a 2022 model, eagerly awaiting my next adventure. My dedication lies in supporting the sledding community rather than achieving mastery on the snow.

In 2016, I found my calling as the secretary of the MSA, ensuring enthusiasts stay informed about state-level events. The highlight was the partnership between the Trans-Montana Charity ride and NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness), aligning with my roles as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and Mental Health Professional Person. NAMI's cause is close to my heart, and I contribute through my private practice in Lewistown and state contracts for mental health and addiction services.

From that initial sled ride in 1973, my journey has evolved into supporting NAMI, providing mental health and addiction services, disseminating information through MSA Board Meetings, and enjoying snow activities with my husband, MSA District 9 Representative. Life is fulfilling, thanks to MSA's role in fostering winter sports, education, safety, and fun for enthusiasts of all skill levels.

What's In Your Pack?

- 1. Avalanche Beacon/Transceiver.** This is a must, no exceptions here in Montana. Get a current 3-antenna beacon.
- 2. Probe.** If you don't have an avi-bag, carry a probe so you can assist in a search if needed.
- 3. Shovel:** Metal with an extendable handle, preferably one that can be configured as a hoe for moving snow efficiently. If you only have one shovel, it should be on you—it does no good if it's on a buried sled.
- 4. Communication Device / Two-way Radio.** This makes communicating (and finding your stuck buddy) so much easier. Educate yourself on FRS/GMRS signals, power, rules, and what channels actually transmit at higher power settings. You can also legally get and operate higher-power radios with a simple \$35 FCC license.
- 5. Avi-bag backpack.** If you ride regularly in Avalanche-prone areas, please consider getting and wearing an avi-bag. If you don't want/need a bag, please have a beacon, probe, and shovel.
- 6. GPS/Satellite Communication Device** Some Apple iPhones and soon some Android phones will enable 911 calls via Satellite. However, Garmin, Zoleo, and others now offer great solutions at competitive prices.
- 7. Phone w/GPS Mapping App.** Good idea to have a paper map and compass for backup.
- 8. Headlamp:** make sure it can work with your helmet as a second light source. The strobe feature is nice as a signaling device.

9. Waterproof Matches and Firestarter. Starting a fire when you are cold or hypothermic is nearly impossible if you don't have the right stuff.

10. Extra Clothes: Gloves, dry layer like a poly puffy coat, socks and a wool hat.

11. Emergency Space Blanket Bag: I like the "bag" that you can slip a person into. Trying to keep a mylar blanket wrapped around a person is nearly impossible (esp in the wind). A true Bivy Sack is great too.

12. Spare batteries/Charger. Make sure they are charged/healthy. A small battery pack/charger is great to recharge your phone (keep it warmer in your pack or glovebox).

13. Cyalume Sticks. Backup for flashlight and great for night rescue situations.

14. Eye Drops. Riding an eye-down sucks.

15. Backcountry First Aid Kit with Quick Clot Dressing. A hemostatic dressing that will help stop bleeding. One sharp stick or piece of broken plastic can cause a bad day.

16. Protective Vest. If you can ride the tight trees, it's a good idea.

17. RECCO Rescue Reflector. Allows S&R to find you more easily if you ride in an area where they have/use the detectors (Flathead-Two Bear Air).

18. Toilet Paper. When ya gotta go, you'll be glad you brought it!

19. Chemical Hand or Body Warmers. The iron oxide kind. Useful to warm up a person awaiting rescue too, esp the larger size.



Looking for Recommendations? Mark's Shopping List

Here's an Amazon Shopping List with many of the items I carry or similar items to what I and others I ride with carry: (https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/FF65CZ8TM710?ref_=wl_share) I've also found things like headlamps at

Costco recently, so shop around! Harbor Freight has decent tools, siphons, etc. Don't scrimp on shovels and avalanche gear. Avy gear is personal—choose what fits you and your style. Same with your mapping app. We have a couple great Montana-based companies to choose from: Trail Treker and OnX are both Montana based! Avenza is another option (not US based). (Mark is a long-time avid rider and serves as Co-Chair of Trans-Montana.)

Club News

KIDS NEED HELMETS THAT FIT

KEEP THEM SAFE. MAKE IT FUN.

This message brought to you by the American Council of Snowmobile Associations
www.snowmobilers.org



Annual Snowmobile Award Nominations Deadline Ahead

The great sport of snowmobiling is only possible due to the many great, behind-the-scenes volunteers who work tirelessly to create, maintain, and protect the places where we ride. Every year MSA recognizes volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty. This year we've included a new nomination category for Youth Snowmobiler of the Year. Submit your nominations for that special person or club who strives to make the sport more enjoyable.

To submit a nomination for the MSA top honors, visit snowmobilemt.org to download the application forms. Nominations must be received by MSA no later than **December 31**. See entry form for details.

These prestigious awards will be presented at the MSA Annual Snowmobile Banquet in Butte this February. Event category-winning nominations will go on to further compete at the national level hosted by American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ASCA).

Trail Groomer Etiquette

If you come upon a groomer working on the trails and absolutely must use that route, try to minimize your impacts by observing the following groomer etiquette:

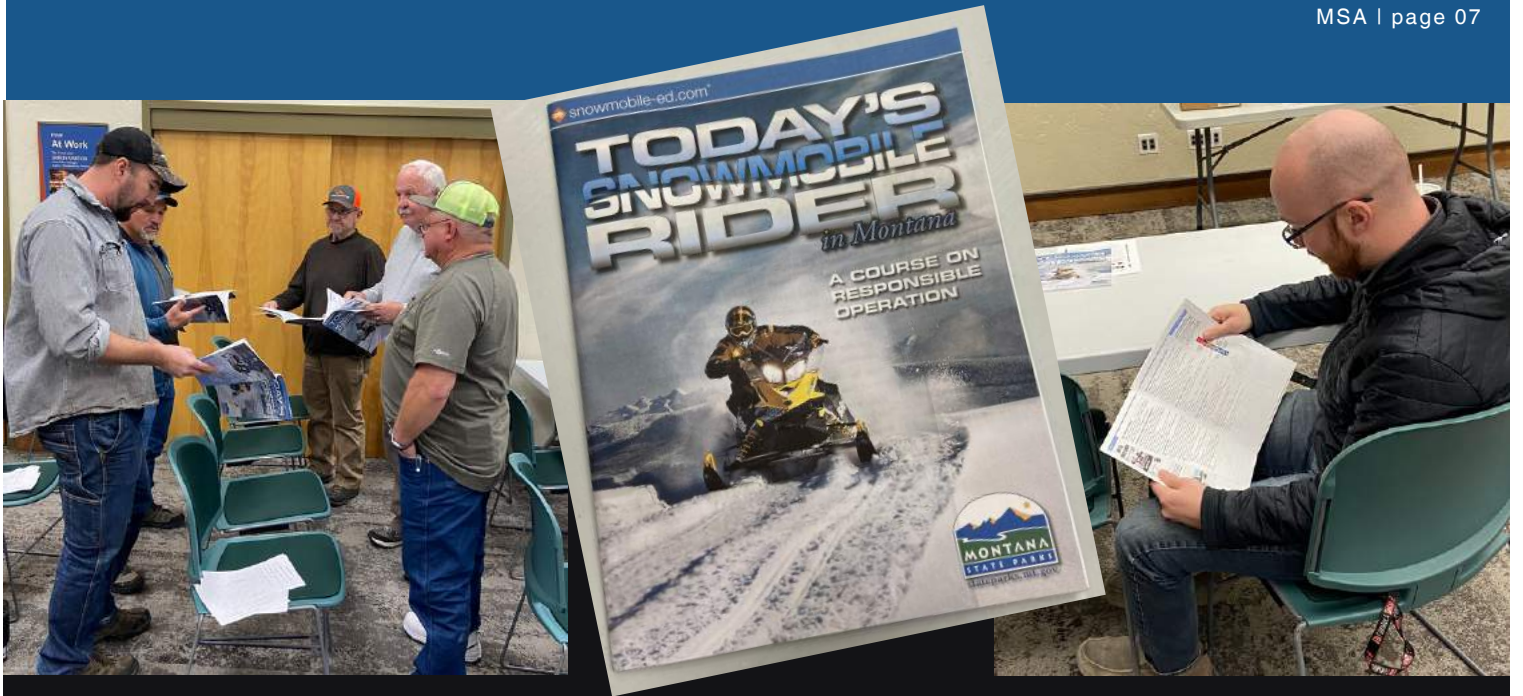
- Slow down!
- Try to stay off the fresh grooming if the trail or adjacent area is wide enough to safely and legally do so
- Operate only at the far outside edge of the fresh grooming if your only option is to ride upon the newly groomed trail
- Keep your group in single file versus allowing everyone to take a different path on the fresh grooming
- Don't be purposely disrespectful (and damaging) by intentionally fishtailing or powering through the soft snow

Respect the work trail groomer operators do by never following directly behind their grooming equipment, since it immediately destroys their work. If possible, try to avoid riding a snowmobile on freshly groomed trails for at least two hours after the groomer passes by either waiting or choosing an alternate route. Showing this respect can help improve the quality and durability, as well as the safety, of your snowmobile trails.

Grant Application Trail Grooming SCORP Benefits

In the past few years, funding for snowmobile trail grooming in the state of Montana has come under funding pressure. In an effort to support the groups applying for grant funding, we have sent every club a document that may be used in the funding narrative to support your local grooming efforts. One of the initiatives/sets of goals that state agencies are striving towards is the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP. SCORP set down six key initiatives. By defining how trail grooming helps meet the SCORP initiatives, your grant application may be scored more competitively and have a better chance at full funding.

By pointing out that you have SCORP in mind as you carry out your operation, you show those that oversee the programs that you are helping them achieve their goals as well by funding your operation. Contact Fred Bailey for more details on SCORP benefits.



Thank you to everyone who volunteered their Saturday this month to attend the FWP Instructor Certification Safety Class for Youth Snowmobilers. Club delegates from around the state were well-represented!

Thank You!

In Montana, individuals aged 16 and under without a valid driver's license, riding on multi-purpose municipal roadways, such as those in Lincoln, Seeley, or West Yellowstone, are required to complete a Montana-approved Snowmobile Safety Course and obtain a Snowmobile Safety Certificate. #SnowmobileKidsSafety



**\$500
Scholarship**

Montana Snowmobile Association

SCHOLARSHIP

The Montana Snowmobile Association is offering a \$500 scholarship to either a graduating high school senior or a person enrolled in a college, technical or vocational program. Must be a MSA member.

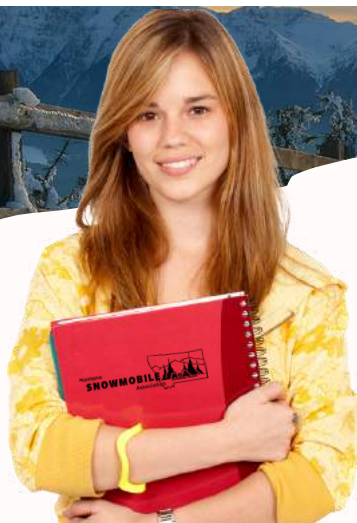


ENTRY DEADLINE

March 31, 2024

SUBMIT

Video Upload or Written Essay



APPLY TODAY

 www.snowmobileMT.org



TRANS-MONTANA UPDATE - DEC 2023

As the co-chair of the TMR, I'm humbled every year by the excitement shown for our charity ride and it keeps me coming back for more every year. Your excitement and enthusiasm is infectious!

And it seems to be working! This year looks to be the largest ever group of riders for the Trans Montana Ride! That does bring some challenges (herding cats is often cited), but we're ready and planning the rides so that we have a good time for all levels of riders. But many riders go home and tell their friends and they end up coming the next year-I'm no different, my buddy Jason is coming for the eighth year from MN!

It also means we will likely set a new record for fundraising which is just fabulous. Again, I'm just astounded by the level of support we get. Case in point, we have two long time riders who just had orthopedic surgery this year and won't be able to do the normal ride. But they've been out raising money from their normal donors all the same and raising even more money! It's that kind of belief in what we're doing that really makes a difference.

Please remember that we can take donations to auction off as well at our banquet, so don't be afraid to collect those kinds of donations as well and bring them to Butte!

Finally, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and happy holiday season. I look forward to seeing everyone out on the snow this year (still doing my snow dance!).



Mark Smolen
TMR Co-Chair

Get Your Local Avalanche Forecast

www.mtavalanche.com -
 www.missoulaavalanche.org -
 www.flatheadavalanche.org

Trans-Montana Snowmobile Charity Ride (TMR)

The Trans-Montana Snowmobile Charity Ride is MSA's annual premiere charity event! Every year a group of dedicated riders take off and spend a week enjoying some of the best places in Montana. All while raising money and awareness for a great cause...NAMI Montana.

Full-Time Rider Sign-up is now closed. But feel free to show up and ride with us (we ask for a \$50/day donation from each rider).

Visit www.trans-montana.org to learn more about this great event.

2024 Trans-Montana Route

January 31

TMR Riders Arrive in Georgetown Lake (2 Nights)

Feb 1 (TMR Day 1)

Ride the Skalkaho Ridge Guided by the Bitterroot Ridge Runners

Feb 2 (TMR Day 2)

Ride the Georgetown Lake guided by the Anaconda Snowmobile Club

Day 3 (TMR Day 3)

Ride the Butte / Wise River Area guided by the Mining City Trail Riders and Jackpine Savages. (MSA Riding Convention & Banquet)

Day 4 (TMR Day 4)

Travel Day - Travel to West Yellowstone)

Day 5 (TMR Day 5)

Ride West Yellowstone area with the Yellowstone Chamber

Day 6 (TMR Day 6)

Ride the West Yellowstone area with the Yellowstone Chamber

Day 7 (TMR Day 7)

Ride West Yellowstone area with the Yellowstone Chamber



www.trans-montana.org

You're Invited to Join the Fun!

We ask that riders try to raise or donate \$50/day towards the ride to help support our fundraiser.



Lakehouse has 5 rooms @ \$117/nt



Nights of Feb 2 - 3
\$139 for a King Bed/nt
\$149 for 2 Qn Beds/nt



Nights of Feb 4 - 7
Rooms are blocked under
TransMontana @ \$64/nt



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CONTACT US

Tyrel Taylor
O 406-677-2848
C 406-690-6679

3363 Highway 83
Seeley Lake, MT 59868

AVALANCHE SAFETY

New Avalanche Forecast in Island Park, ID

Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center
Ian Hoyer

The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center (GNFAC) is excited to announce that this year the mountains near Island Park, ID will have daily avalanche forecasts with avalanche Danger Ratings. This is exciting news for Montana riders, as Island Park is right on the Idaho-Montana border, less than a half hour drive south of West Yellowstone, MT (you can even ride between the two via a groomed trail network).

Snowmobile and snow bike use in the Centennial Mountain Range near Island Park area is growing. The need for more avalanche information was driven home in 2018 when there were two avalanche deaths only ten days apart when the GNFAC had issued avalanche warnings for the Lionhead area (only around 15 miles away).

These deaths galvanized the local riding community to reach out for help and the GNFAC began working to bring more avalanche awareness to the area. The following season the GNFAC began issuing avalanche warnings for the Island Park area and added a dedicated page to its website to collect and share observations specific to Island Park.

Expanding into a new forecast region is a big task and developing partnerships has been crucial to its success. GNFAC forecasters are visiting the area regularly to gather snowpack data.

Building relationships with local riders and guide services to get more field observation has been a huge help. An Avalanche Alliance grant funded two new remote weather stations (one measuring wind speed and one measuring snow depth). The Fugowee Snowmobile Club has put out seven avalanche beacon checking stations. The Caribou-Targhee NF, Idaho State Parks, Idaho State Snowmobile Association, the Anderson Avalanche Project, Klim, and a number of local businesses have also been key supporters of these efforts.

Avalanche forecasts are a collaborative effort between forecasters and the riding public. You can help improve the forecast by submitting observations at www.mtavalanche.com. Simply telling us that it snowed more than we are reporting or letting us know that winds are blowing hard and resulting in large drifts is very helpful. You could say, “We rode around all day with good visibility and didn’t see any avalanches,” or “We were riding and triggered an avalanche.”

Your observations, both simple and complex, will help us provide lifesaving information to the community.

If you’re going riding near Island Park, check www.mtavalanche.com/island-park for the most up to date snowpack, weather and avalanche conditions. Avalanche forecasts are published by 7:30 AM each morning during the winter recreation season.

CALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST
AVALANCHE CENTER

ISLAND PARK

GET THE FORECAST
Avalanche Conditions
at mtavalanche.com

SNOWFALL, AVALANCHES, TRIP PLANNING

[@mtavalanche](https://www.instagram.com/mtavalanche)


 RSVP

www.snowmobileMT.org
FEBRUARY 2-3, 2024


Nights of Feb 2 - 3
 \$139 for a King Bed/nt
 \$149 for 2 Qn Beds/nt
 Limited availability.
 Ample truck & trailer parking.
 Book now.

Support a great cause.

Get Started...

RSVP for Banquet
 Book Hotel Room
 Purchase Raffle Tickets

MSA Ride

Join the fun and sign up for MSA's annual guided club ride. Choose from one of three unique riding areas hosted by the Mining City Trailriders and Jackpine Savages. Everyone welcome.

Auction Fundraiser

Donation items are appreciated and can be dropped off prior to the awards banquet.

**Door Prizes. Raffle,
 and More!**



Banquet RSVP
www.snowmobileMT.org

Annual MSA Awards Banquet and Club Ride

Featuring the Trans-Montana Auction in support of NAMI Montana

Welcome Reception - Friday, February 2 at the Cooper King in Butte

- Guest Speaker - Jason Howell
- Hors d'Oeuvres & No Host Cash Bar

Live music from FOG (Freakin Old Guys) features a versatile mix of rock and country.

MSA Club Ride - Saturday, February 3

Annual Club Ride. Everyone Welcome!

- Ride the Butte/Wise River area guided by the Jackpine Savages and the Mining City Trail Riders
- Choose from three guided rides. Rider signup Feb 2.

MSA Banquet and Charity Auction - Saturday, February 3

Join us for an evening of fun starting at 5:30 p.m. with cocktail hour followed by dinner, awards and charity auction to support NAMI Montana.

- Banquet Tickets: \$40 in advance / \$50 at the door
- Deadline for Advance Ticket Rates: January 25
 - Dinner buffet, Rib & Chop House, Copper King Convention Center
- Charity auction (Drop off auction items Feb 2 at the welcome reception.)

Reserve your hotel room early. Ask for the MSA rate.

Dinner reservations - RSVP online today. See website for details.

Banquet and Riding Convention Club Hosts:

Jackpine Savages (Wise River) and the Mining City Trailriders (Butte)

UPCOMING EVENTS

AROUND THE STATE

- December 17, 2023 - Membership Drive & Steak Fry (Missoula Snowgoers)
 - December 31, 2023 - Annual Award Nominations Due**
 - January 13 - 21, 2024 - International Snowmobile Safety Week
 - January 13, 2024 - Skalkaho Ladies Ride, Missoula Snowgoers
 - January 13, 20234 - Vintage Ride Miracle of America - Polson
 - January 15, 204 - Grant Deadline - Off-Highway Vehicle Program**
 - January 20, 2024 - Lochsa Loop Ride -Missoula Snowgoers
 - January 20 & 21 - Winterfest Vintage Event - Lolo
 - January 31 - February 7, 2024 - Trans-Montana Charity Ride (See page 9)
 - February 1- 19, 2024 - Take a Friend Snowmobiling Campaign
 - February 2, 2024 - MSA Riding Convention Welcome Reception & Guest Speaker - Butte
 - February 3, 2024 - MSA Awards Banquet and Riding Convention - Butte
 - February 3, 2024 - Garnet Ghost Town Vintage Ride, Garnet
 - February 8-11, 2024 - Octane & Grit Backcountry Ladies Ride, Cooke City
 - February 18, 2024 - Almost World Famous Family Ride - Lolo Hot Springs
 - February 22-25, 2024 - ASCA Mountain Riding Summit, West Yellowstone
 - February 28, 2024 - Grant Deadline - Off-Highway Vehicle Program
 - March 2 - BBQ Potluck - Warming Hut - Missoula Snowgoers
 - March 8-9, 2024 - Upper Yellowstone 28th Annual Fundraiser, Cooke City
- Avalanche Awareness - Check Avalance.org for upcoming events.**

Watch the MSA online Events Calendar as we add more events! Send updates to news@snowmobilemt.org.

Winter up Montana!

●●●●● MSA Specialty Plates




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MONTANA SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM UPDATE

By Seth McArthur

Snow totals for December so far have been minimal around the state. I have asked clubs not to groom until there is snow throughout the trail system. When the clubs run their groomers on little to no snow, it causes expensive repairs to the equipment. Repair funds for the 26 state-owned groomers are minimal. There is a possibility that a club will not be able to get the funding to repair their groomers from the early season breakdowns, and the trails may not be groomed all year. As snowmobilers, please be mindful of the trail conditions due to the low snow totals this early season.

Missoula is in the process of receiving a Bison groomer from Prinoth this season. We've seen equipment costs increase with every year. New equipment manufacturers must meet tougher governmental emission standards which has raised the costs to us.

As the cost of new machines has increased, the availability of good quality, used groomers has shrunk. More and more owners are holding on to their equipment longer, which also raises the cost of replacement.

Please inform others to purchase a trail pass. All the revenues from the trail pass go directly to grooming grants and equipment.

Please find an avalanche class to take this December or January. Your life or those you ride with may depend on it. There are many classes being offered all over the state by snowmobile clubs and avalanche centers. Make the effort to practice using your transceivers as a group. Most of the people we lost in avalanches last year had avalanche gear on, but those they rode with did not know how to use it. Make sure you know the avalanche conditions where you are riding. These can change daily.

Please be safe this holiday season and cherish your time with friends and family. You can contact me with any questions or comments at smcarthur@mt.gov or 406-444-3753.

Montana Snowmobile Program Manager
Montana FWP | 406-444-3753

Montana Trail Pass

Montana Trail Pass Snowmobiles operating on public land must be registered and display decals placed in a conspicuous space on the left side of the cowling. Registration is different for Montana residents and nonresidents. Montana FWP maintains a complete site with all the rules and regulations.

Montana Conservation License

Anyone recreating on Montana State lands (State Forest) must purchase a Conservation License for all persons 12 or older. Each person must have their own License. This is the same license that you purchase with your Fishing/Hunting Tags. Be aware that it expires at the end of February.

Visit: <https://fwp.mt.gov/>

Join MSA - Why Become a Member?

Join our growing community to make something happen in yours

You already know MSA is the state organization uniting the local snowmobile communities to promote safe and responsible snowmobiling. Are you aware of the many reasons why you should become a member of MSA? MSA employs a lobbyist to represent our interest during the legislative session held every two years. MSA helps fight for public land access and helps clubs financially in their pursuit of keeping riding access.

MSA works closely with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks along with local clubs to develop and maintain a quality snowmobile trail system for all riders. But did you also know, these two parties help administer grooming funds, support costly repairs, administer grooming program insurance coverage for your local club as well as provide the required resource-environmental damage insurance, for three hosted events, per club?

MSA gives back to the communities of Montana in any way possible and sponsors an annual scholarship program.

To support MSA, we need your support. Help us defend your riding areas. If you are a member - THANK YOU! If you're not, we invite you to join online or by mailing in your Club, family, or business membership application today. **Visit:** www.snowmobilemt.org.

Join online snowmobilemt.org or complete the application below.

Membership

Type* New *Renewal* **Level*** Club/Business: \$40 Individual/Family: \$25

Past Member? You have an online account. Just retrieve your password, if needed.

Montana Snowmobile Association

Membership Application



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