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Take a Vacation Snowmobiling

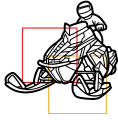
Vacations are synonymous with relaxation, exploration, and the pursuit of unforgettable experiences. Yet, amidst the myriad of options, snowmobiling stands out as a thrilling adventure that promises to invigorate the soul and awaken the senses.

Beyond the thrill of the ride, snowmobiling vacations nurture a sense of camaraderie and shared adventure. Whether you're embarking on a guided tour with family and friends or venturing out solo to explore new horizons, the bonds forged amidst the snowy landscapes endure as steadfastly as the memories created along the way.

As we navigate through the remainder of this snowmobiling season, it's essential that we consider adjusting our routines to allow for a few extra days dedicated to this exhilarating activity. Begin by perusing your calendar and earmarking specific dates for your snowmobile getaway. Holidays, in particular, offer opportune moments for snowmobiling, making it relatively feasible to carve out an extra day before or after the holiday for an extended adventure. It's never too early to commence planning your next snowmobile excursion. Block out some days on your calendar and make provisions for a snowmobiling expedition. While snow may not be abundant everywhere, it's often just a short drive away, ready to be explored and enjoyed.

MSA Officers and Clubs

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Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association
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Great Falls Snowmobile Club
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Black Eagle, MT 59414
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Helena Snowdrifters
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Helena, MT 59624
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Jackpine Savages Snowmobile Club*
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Lincoln County Sno-Kat Club
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Libby, MT 59923
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Little Belt Snowmobile Club
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Meagher County Little Belters
PO Box 315
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645
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Ponderosa Snow Warriors
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Scenic Montana Trails Driftriders
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Seeley Lake, MT 59868
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Summit Snowgoers
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Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club
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Troy Snowmobile Club
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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

***2023-2024 MSA Snowmobile Club of the Year**



Montana Snowmobile Association Districts

DISTRICT 1
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Mark Sverdsten
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DISTRICT 3
VACANT

DISTRICT 4
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Well, winter finally decided to show up a week after our NAMI/MSA banquet and ride, but we'll take it. Snowmobilers are an amazing and generous group of people. We had a great turnout at the banquet, even though we had to cancel the rides. We don't have the final count yet, but we may have exceeded our previous record for money raised for NAMI.

Austin James from the Secretary of State's office presented MSA with an official Secretary certificate, thanking us for our contributions to the public, keeping snowmobiling and public lands open, as well as our contributions to the economy of Montana (which amounts to \$100 million annually).

We also had the pleasure of presenting six Montana Snowmobile Association awards to MSA members who went above and beyond to make snowmobiling in Montana the great experience that it is. Additionally, we presented the first Youth Snowmobile award to a youth who exhibits qualities that will make him a future leader in our program. As we all get older, the youth will become the future of our association.

Happy Trails,
Fred

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



••••• **Winter Up Montana!**
MSA Specialty License Plates •••••

Reminder: Send us your updates, good deeds and events for the MSA Newsletter.
Email: news@snowmobilemt.org

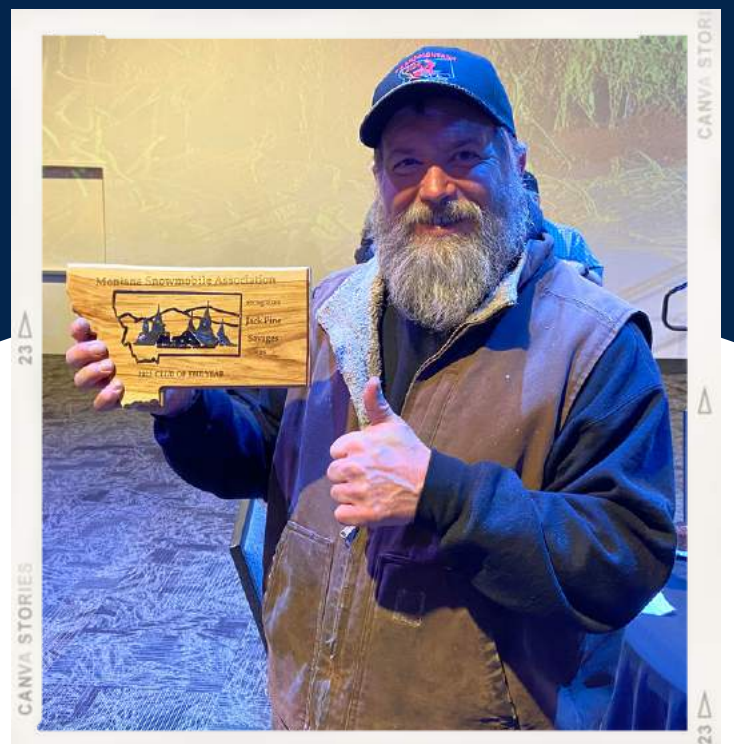
The great sport of snowmobiling is only possible due to the many great, behind-the-scenes volunteers who work tirelessly to create, maintain, and protect the places where we ride.

Every year, MSA recognizes volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty. Nominations for each category are submitted by fellow members of MSA and awarded during MSA's Annual Banquet. Six category awards are handed out yearly and presented to the Snowmobiler of the Year, Youth Snowmobiler of the Year, Snowmobile Dealer of the Year, Snowmobile Club of the Year, and Groomer of the Year. Award recipients are then further submitted to the ACSA annual awards for consideration.

We are delighted to announce the 2023 MSA award winners...



Snowmobiler of the Year
Wally Deschene, Wise River



Snowmobile Club of the Year
Jackpine Savages



Groomer of the Year
Mike Joyce, Great Falls



Dealer of the Year
Helena Cycle Center, Helena



Family of the Year
Otto and Karla Johnson, Helena



Youth Snowmobiler
Hunter Howell, West Yellowstone

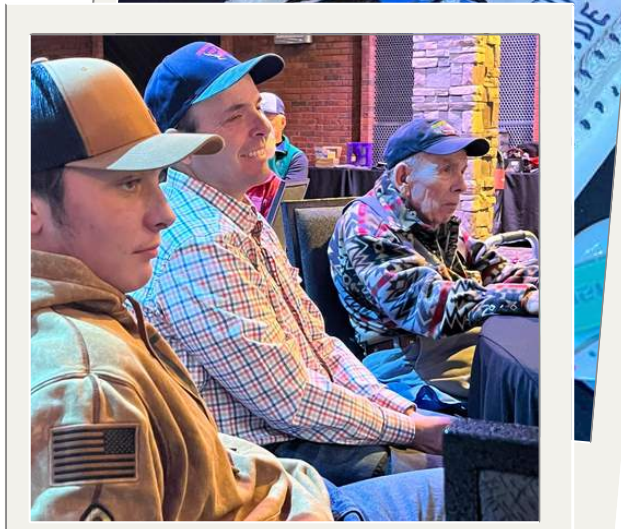
MSA BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS



Gratitude to Julie Bailey: Crafting a masterpiece for our NAMI charity auction!



MSA honored by Secretary of State, Christie Jacobsen: A Tribute Presented by Austin James, chief legal counsel & snowmobile enthusiast.



Generations of Snow: The Howell Family Legacy of Excellence
Hunter Howell, recipient of our inaugural Youth Snowmobiler Award at the MSA Banquet, proudly represents three generations of snowmobilers: Bill Howell, Jason Howell, and Hunter Howell. With a lineage deeply rooted in snowmobiling, both his dad and grandpa are Snowmobile Hall of Fame recipients. A legacy of passion and excellence continues.



Getting ready for an evening of fun and fundraising!

AROUND THE STATE &

- February 28 - Grant Deadline - Off-Highway Vehicle Program
- March 2 - BBQ Potluck - Warming Hut - Missoula Snowgoers
- March 3 - Great Falls 3 Club Cookout - Ant Park
- March 8-9 - Upper Yellowstone 28th Annual Fundraiser, Cooke City
- March 9, SMT Fun Run (Poker Run), Scenic Mountain Trails, Seeley Lake
- June 13 - 15 - 56th International Snowmobile Congress - Green Bay, WI
- June 29 - Annual Snowmobile Appropriations Meeting, Helena
- June 29 - MSA Board Meeting

Avalanche Awareness - Check Avalanche.org for upcoming events.

Send updates to news@snowmobilemt.org.



Chili, Cheers, and Snowmobile Gear: The Great Falls Snowmobile Club's Inaugural Hank Raam Chili Feed Triumphs!

As Hank Raam wisely puts it, 'Even if only one showed up, it was fun to put on.' With their first event under wraps, the tradition will continue every first weekend in January, promising warmth, camaraderie, and the roar of snowmobiles.

The Pictured: John Kline, Steve Lohse, Jon Seaman, and the legendary Hank Raam. Here's to many more snowy adventures ahead!



**\$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 _____ SUBMIT _____

March 31, 2024 Video Upload or Written Essay



APPLY TODAY

 www.snowmobileMT.org



Snowless Saga: The Unforgettable Tale of the Cancelled 2024 TMR

2024 will go down in history as one of the biggest, most well planned TMRs...that never happened! In case you didn't hear, we had to cancel the entire ride as there was literally no snow in virtually every location we had on the docket the week of the ride (one week later, we got snow...ugh!).



To say that we all were gutted is an understatement. But we didn't let that slow us down or stop the important work that TMR stands for—supporting NAMI Montana. We are still collecting money and it looks like we still had a very good fundraising event!

We also had an impromptu gathering of those riders that could make it to Georgetown Lake on Friday evening before the banquet. About 20 of the 50 riders were able to make it and we had a ball enjoying each other's company.

The Mining City Trail Riders and the Wise River Jackpine Savages went above and beyond hosting one of the best MSA Awards/TMR Benefit Banquets ever! Thank you all that worked so hard to put that on. A couple memorable moments included our very own Wally Deschene (co-chair of TMR with me) was awarded Snowmobiler of the year—I can't think of a more fitting award—congrats Wally! And then there was the quilt that Julie Bailey lovingly sewed. Watching her face as the bids just kept climbing past \$700, 800, 900, 1000 and eventually ending at \$1100 was priceless. A very happy full-time TMR rider (Jim Krell) ended up going home with a very special memento. And finally, just seeing how many riders still showed up from all over (and we understand if you couldn't make it) was really special. One rider that came from the twin cities (yes, he still flew out), said he just couldn't stand not seeing everyone for two years. But that's the kind of people the TMR attracts... the best of the best and for that, I'm so thankful and blessed.

We can't control the weather, but we can make sure we have fun and enjoy our time together. And that's what we did. I can't wait to start working on next year's schedule (in fact, we already are!). I hope to see you soon!

Mark Smolen, Co-chair TMR



AVALANCHE SAFETY



Historically Weak Snowpack Requires Caution

Alex Marienthal, Avalanche Forecaster, Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center.

In 9 years of avalanche forecasting I have not seen a snowpack so weak. When I thought the snowpack was bad in past seasons, it wasn't this bad. Almost every season we have weak, sugary faceted snow near the bottom of the snowpack, and at least half the time the weak snow is a problem all season. Professionals with longer careers have seen few, if any, winters with as poor stability as this winter. Doug Chabot, director of the GNFAAC, wrote the following in late January:

“This year’s snowpack is not to be trifled with. Unusual weather leads to unusual avalanche conditions, and that is certainly the case this year. This year is unique in my 29 years of avalanche forecasting in southwest Montana. Large avalanches are being triggered from hundreds of feet away long after the most recent snowfall. Even a few inches of new snow is causing us to elevate the danger. This is not like other seasons, and it’s making our entire forecasting team nervous. We are recalibrating our risk and notching back our travel plans due to a great deal of uncertainty about what it will take for things to become more stable.

Typically, the snowpack begins to adjust to new snow within a few days after a storm, avalanches and obvious signs of instability like whumpfing decrease, and we can start notching down the avalanche danger. This year is different. Our current snowpack is stabilizing at a rate that is agonizingly slow. The only real solution to our current snowpack situation is patience. With our current weak layers, every small storm is likely to raise the avalanche danger, and instability will lurk on many slopes long after the snow falls.”



A small, but mighty amount of snow fell in January and formed a slab on top of the weak layers that formed during an exceptionally dry early season. This created a very unstable snowpack and considerable to high avalanche danger. Avalanche activity was widespread, and many avalanches were easily triggered remotely, from a distance away on flatter terrain. It seemed like any steep slope would avalanche with the added weight of a person. The large amount and type of avalanches in January are strong evidence that these weak layers will be a problem all season.

As I write this at the end of January, temperatures are seasonally warm, above freezing in many locations. This warm weather could melt or strengthen weak layers, but on most slopes they will remain a problem. This season it is important to remain diligent with cautious travel and conservative route selection, especially during snowstorms and for a few days after.

The safest plan is to choose routes that avoid travel across or underneath slopes steeper than 30 degrees. When it snows, don't let the excitement of fresh powder distract you from proper planning and safe decision making. Make sure to read the avalanche forecast for daily updates, especially each day before you head into the backcountry.



MONTANA SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM UPDATE

By Seth McArthur

I had the opportunity to attend the Montana Snowmobile Association's annual awards banquet in Butte. It was wonderful to see all those who received awards and were in attendance. I deeply appreciate the clubs and all they do to make grooming possible. The partnership between the MSA Trans-Montana Charity and Montana's Chapter of NAMI is truly special. The funds raised by all you snowmobile enthusiasts are helping youth, military personnel, and their families deal with suicides. I want to express my gratitude for your generosity toward this cause. Together, we are making a difference in people's lives. If you haven't already, please ask MSA how you can help with this charitable endeavor.

There are several forest plans and other travel planning processes underway. Please make an effort to attend these meetings and express your thoughts and opinions. We all need to play an active role in this process to protect access and the ability to use motorized equipment in the forest.

Please stay safe this winter season and cherish your time with friends and family. Feel free to 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.
<https://ols.fwp.mt.gov/>

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

Montana Snowmobile Association

Membership Application

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



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

Business/Club Name
For Club/Business Membership Level

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