

Montana

SNOWMOBILE NEWS

ISSUE 6 • MAY 2023

snowmobilemt.org

2022-2023



**Do Your Part
Get Ready to Bring
It Next Season**
Renew and invite a
friend to join MSA!



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**See You Next Season!
Have a Safe and Fun
Summer!!**

Heck Yeah. Thank you Snow Gods! What a Season!

The temperatures are beginning to rise and the snow is melting and (almost) gone.

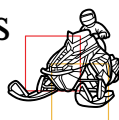
It's a good time to reflect on the season that just passed and plan for the next one. Perhaps you had some great rides and want to explore new trails next season, or maybe you had some issues with your snowmobile that you want to address before the next season starts.

Overall, the end of the snowmobile season can be bittersweet, as it marks the end of a fun winter activity but also the start of spring and the promise of new adventures to come. Before we officially close the season, we kindly remind you to support your club, support your community, thank your groomers and Club Presidents. Encourage your riding friends to join a club and MSA. We are stronger as a group. Join our community to make something happen in yours. We'll see club reps at the spring appropriation meeting in June!



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*2022-2023 MSA Snowmobile Club of the Year



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Fred Bailey



It's hard to believe that this is the last newsletter for this season.

This has been a great snow year and MSA accomplished some great things this season. Mark, Wally, and Connie Walter put together another great Trans-Montana ride, raising money again for NAMI (North American Mental Illness), with all money raised staying in Montana. The new record collected this year was over \$30,000.

Helena Snowdrifters hosted the MSA riding convention with a MSA/Trans-Montana banquet at the Red Fox dinner club. This was a great success with over 100 people attending, earlier that day was the combined group on the Helena trails, this was also very well attended.

MSA also testified on several amendments at the legislature this session with good success. Working with our lobbyists we amended HB99 to clearly define over the snow vehicles so that out of state snow bike and fat tire bikes can be used on our trail systems with a trail pass. HB333 is approved in the house awaiting the Senate hearing. This bill will allow us access to data collected through trail passes and then allow an economic impact study on tourism defining how much fuel tax money the snowmobile program is entitled to receive.

To Club Presidents, board members, and all volunteers, I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the hard work and dedication you have shown to your club and snowmobiling in general. As volunteers, you have given countless hours of your time to ensure that your club runs smoothly, events are organized, and members are supported. Your leadership and commitment have not gone unnoticed, and I want to thank you for all that you do. You have created a sense of community among club members and have provided opportunities for people to come together and enjoy shared interests.

Your passion for snowmobiling and its mission is truly inspiring, and it is thanks to your efforts that it continues to thrive. Your willingness to serve in these roles is greatly appreciated, and your contributions make a real difference.

Fred
Montana Snowmobile Association
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president@snowmobilemt.org



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ALWAYS CARRY RESCUE GEAR and Know How to Use it



Ian Hoyer, Avalanche Forecaster, Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center

When heading out for a day of backcountry riding there is a long list of things you need: jackets, extra layers, gloves, helmet, goggles, extra goggles, backpack, water, food, spare belt, tools, avalanche rescue gear, and more. Some are essential every day, others you can choose to bring or leave, depending on conditions.

Avalanches rescue gear is not optional. Any day you're riding in the mountains – regardless of conditions or your goals for the day – you need to carry an avalanche beacon, shovel, and probe. While the first goal of avalanche safety is to not get caught in an avalanche, accidents happen to the most savvy riders, and you need to be prepared.

If you're caught and buried in an avalanche, you have a decent chance of survival if you're dug out within 10 minutes. After that your odds decrease dramatically. This means you're relying on your partners to find and dig you out quickly. Carrying avalanche rescue gear and knowing how to use it makes this possible.

Avalanche beacons help locate a person buried under the snow (if they have a transmitting beacon) down to just a few square feet. A probe is used to determine the exact location of the buried person and gives a definitive target for digging. A shovel is needed to dig out your partner. Without all three pieces of this rescue gear trifecta, the system doesn't work, and you are unlikely to rescue your partner in time.

This gear needs to be attached to you, not your sled, in case your sled gets swept away in the slide. This means wearing the beacon on your person and carrying the shovel and probe in a backpack or vest.

As important as carrying the gear is knowing how to use it. On snow avalanche classes are the best way to learn. Check with your local avalanche center to find one near you (www.avalanche.org). There are also online resources that can help get you started. You can find links to many of these at www.mtavalanche.com/education. Consistent practice – at least once a season, ideally several times a season – will give you the confidence and experience to find and dig out your buried partners when it matters.

Avalanche airbags are remarkable tools and are a great supplement to the standard rescue gear, but they are not a substitute for carrying a beacon, shovel, and probe. Studies show airbags cut your chances of dying in an avalanche in half. That is truly amazing and makes them a worthwhile investment if you plan to ride in avalanche terrain. But they are not a silver bullet. It is still possible to get buried while wearing one.

Earlier this winter near Cooke City a rider triggered a large slide while wearing an airbag but didn't manage to deploy it. He was buried 5 feet deep. Other riders saw the avalanche happen and began searching almost immediately. Unfortunately, the buried rider did not have an avalanche beacon. It took a probe line an hour to locate him, and he had already passed away.

An avalanche beacon may have made the difference between this event being a scary close call and the tragedy it became. Make a commitment to never leave the trailhead without an avalanche beacon, shovel, or probe, and don't ride with anyone who doesn't have them. The life you save may be your own.



MONTANA SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM UPDATE

By Seth McArthur

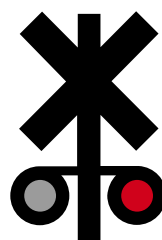
The new state-owned groomer was just delivered to Seeley Lake. It is a PB400 with close to 1000 hours. The Club has struggled this year to keep up with grooming its system of trails without its new groomer. Their old state-owned groomer was shipped to Troy back in November. The club has worked hard to groom this season without the equipment they normally have. Thanks to all the riders out there for understanding their situation this year.

Breakdowns on the groomers seem to be picking up. The clubs are doing their best to find parts and get things running again. The cost of fuel is making clubs make hard decisions on where to groom less. Grooming funds have not kept pace with inflation. I appreciate all the volunteers that are out there working to fix broken-down groomers in the backcountry.



Please be safe this summer 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



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Be Aware!

Upcoming Meetings

The Snowmobile Advisory Committee will be meeting Friday evening at 6 in Helena, **June 23rd**.

The Snowmobile Appropriations Meeting will be Saturday, **June 24th** at the Delta hotel (previously identifying as the Colonial) starting at 9:30 a.m. Rooms are available at a discounted rate.

Details will be sent to clubs soon!



2023 TRANS-MONTANA CHARITY RIDE

The 2023 Trans-Montana Charity Snowmobile Ride benefiting NAMI Montana was a huge success again this year. The Montana Snowmobile Association (MSA) organizes the Trans-Montana Ride and focuses their donations to NAMI for teen suicide prevention and PTSD support for our Vets.

With over 30 full time riders, near perfect weather and snow conditions, and something for every type of rider, the Trans Montana Ride did not disappoint. Raising over \$30,000 made it even better.

This year, the ride started out in Lincoln with stops at Kings Hill (near Showdown), Helena, Wise River, Virginia City and ended in West Yellowstone.

The MSA joined in at Helena hosting their annual awards banquet and benefit auction as well! Over 50 riders took part in the ride Saturday near Elliston.

Riders reported good to excellent conditions in every location. They ended in West Yellowstone with the Chamber of Commerce hosting a dinner for all the riders. Special awards were also given out six lucky riders. Awards included: Long Haul Award (rider that travelled the furthest--Jason Ross, St. Paul, MN); Cheer-man Award (happiest and most helpful rider--Chris Linsley, Bend, OR); Snowed-In Award (stuck the deepest/most often--Otto Johnson, Helena); Dollar Scholar (raised the most money--Wally Deschene, Stevensville); Most Senior Rider (elder statesman of the group--Jon Seaman, Great Falls 75yrs young); and the most popular, The Dog Bone Award usually given to the person that achieves those extra special maneuvers/stucks (Diane Larson, Durango, CO).

The TMR is open to all riders and everyone is invited to join in next year. More info can be found at www.trans-montana.org





Many, many thanks to Mark Smolen and Wally Deschene for making this year's TMR one of our biggest success stories. Your commitment to promoting safe and enjoyable snowmobiling experiences as well as helping raise over \$30,000 for the NAMI program is truly commendable and appreciated by one and all.

DC Snowmobile Fly-In

This year's Fly-In returned to the Nation's Capital with energized support. MSA leaders recently spent a week in Washington DC, attending the Annual Snowmobile Fly-In. MSA met with snowmobile leaders from 17 states to visit congressmen and senators in Washington DC to raise up the sports top public policy issues critical for the continued growth and success of the sport.

MSA also attended meetings with the American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ASCA) and the Mountain States Trails Association. In addition to business meetings, the snowmobilers engaged with speakers from the Forest Service and Transportation Agencies, Legislative Staff & Administration and related partners that provided updates on issues impacting snowmobiling and recreation.

The time in DC was well spent and is heralded as one of the most productive conferences that we have the opportunity to attend as an entity. "We are talking directly to the folks that make the rules," said Fred Bailey, "and this helps how we will progress in the future. It's one of the best things we do as an association. As a \$32 billion industry in the US, it is so important to stay active."



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Upcoming MSA Elections!

Election Committee Chairman: Rowdy Yates

Email: broncbuster48@yahoo.com

Contact Rowdy if you are interested in becoming a member of the election committee.

Positions up for reelection

- **President**
- **Vice President**

The President and Vice President will be elected at the fall business meeting held in the last one half of even numbered calendar years. These positions have a max allowable of two terms each.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AROUND THE STATE

May 24, 2023 - Highway Cleanup, Great Falls Snowmobile Club - Great Falls

June 17, 2023 - ATV Fun Run, Helena Snowdrifters - Helena

June 23, 2023 - Snowmobile Advisory Committee - Helena (See page 7)

June 24, 2023 - Snowmobile Appropriations Meeting - Helena (See page 7)

September 2023 - MSA Board Meeting - TBA

AROUND THE REGION

June 8 - 10, 2023 - 55th Annual International Snowmobile Congress - Moline, IL

Watch the MSA online Events Calendar as we add more summer fun runs to the schedule for area clubs!



Share Your Club News and Events!

Email: news@snowmobilemt.org
Newsletter Deadline: 15th of the month
 MSA Website - No Deadline

Reminder: If we do not hear from you, we
cannot promote your event.



Congratulations!



MSA Scholarship Winners 2022/23 Season

Savannah Withrow, Helena
 Attending: UM Law School, Missoula
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Michael Howell, Helena
 Attending: Montana Tech, Butte
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MSA Membership

Why Join MSA?



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 Montana, we need your support. Help 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 our growing community to make something happen in yours

Join online snowmobilemt.org or complete the application below.

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