ISSUE 2 • NOVEMBER 2026
2026-2027
www.snowmobilemt.org

Montana SNOWMOBILE NEWS

Protecting Access. Supporting Riders. Strengthening Communities.

BRING ON THE SNOW!

The wait is almost over.

MSA AWARD NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

$1,000 MSA Scholarship

Apply Now.

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FIRST THINGS FIRST

GET YOUR Montana TRAIL PASS

Montana's 4,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails are calling! Before you head out, make sure your Montana Trail Pass is current and your snowmobile is properly registered.

Montana residents need permanent registration for riding on public land, with registration decals clearly displayed on the left side of the cowling. Riders ages 12 and older also need a Conservation License when recreating on state trust lands.

Your Trail Pass purchase helps support the grooming and maintenance that keep Montana's winter adventures rolling.

RESIDENTS
Passes available for two seasons.

NONRESIDENTS
Passes available for one season

WHERE TO BUY
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks - fwp.mt.gov

Montana Snowmobile Association

P.O. Box 56
Black Eagle, MT 59414

Website: www.snowmobilemt.org
Contact Us: info@snowmobilemt.org

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COMMITTEES & ADVISORY PARTNERSHIPS

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Safety Officer
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MSA-AFFILIATED SNOWMOBILE CLUBS

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)
1780 4th St., Bozeman, MT 59718
406-539-6959 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 www.littlebeltsnowmobile.org

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

Rev It Up Girls (7)
PO Box 371, Wilsall, MT 59086
(406) 595-7962 www.revitupgirls.com

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.ridecookecity.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
2025-2026 Snowmobile Club of the Year

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT 1
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dist-one@snowmobilemt.org

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dist-eight@snowmobilemt.org

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dist-nine@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 10
Rowdy Yates
dist-ten@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICT 11
Brent Larson
dist-eleven@snowmobilemt.org

DISTRICTS 12 & 13 - VACANT

SAFETY NEWS

SNOWMOBILE SAFETY STARTS

Before the snow flies.

As the mountains begin turning white, snowmobilers across Montana are preparing for another season. Sleds are being serviced, gear is being inspected, and everyone is anxiously awaiting that first opportunity to ride.

Start Them Young, Teach Them Right
Children learn by watching us. The habits we demonstrate today will influence how they ride tomorrow. Properly fitted helmets, appropriate riding gear, safe speeds, age-appropriate avalanche training and respect for other trail users should be taught from the very beginning.

Montana's youth snowmobile education requirements should also be part of every family's preseason preparations.

Avalanche Education: Knowledge Is Your Best Equipment
Not every snowmobiler rides in avalanche terrain, but for those who do, education is essential.

Avalanche Awareness classes are an excellent starting point for understanding snow conditions, recognizing hazardous terrain, and learning how to make better decisions in the backcountry.

Avalanche Level 1 courses provide comprehensive training in terrain assessment, snowpack evaluation, group decision-making, and companion rescue. Level 2 avalanche courses offer additional training.

Carrying a beacon/transceiver, shovel, and probe is important, but knowing how to use that equipment effectively is just as critical. An Avy air bag is another tool but not there to be relied on exclusively. Every member of the riding group should be properly equipped and trained.

Don't ever be afraid to be "that person" to check your groups avy gear.

We encourage riders to take advantage of educational opportunities offered by avalanche centers, qualified instructors, and snowmobile organizations throughout Montana.

Trail Etiquette Is Trail Safety
Montana's groomed trail systems provide incredible recreational opportunities, but sharing those trails comes with responsibilities.

Ride at a speed that allows you to maintain control, especially around blind corners, hills, intersections, and areas with limited visibility. Stay to the right, respect posted signs, and be prepared for oncoming traffic.

Give trail groomers plenty of room, never assume another rider sees you, and remember that groomed trails are shared by riders of varying ages and experience levels.

When stopping, move completely off the traveled portion of the trail and avoid stopping near blind corners or hill crests.

Respect private property, seasonal closures, and designated routes. Responsible riding helps protect the access opportunities that Montana snowmobilers work so hard to maintain.

Safety Is Everyone's Responsibility
Carry appropriate emergency supplies and reliable communication equipment. Never assume that help is just a phone call away, especially in Montana's remote riding areas.

Snowmobiling is about enjoying the outdoors, spending time with family and friends, and creating memories that last a lifetime.

Ride Smart. Ride Safe. Respect the Trails.
Montana Snowmobile Association

Rowdy

RIDER TIP

KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES

Before you head out, double-check where you can legally ride. Use current Forest Service winter recreation maps and closure notices to verify wilderness boundaries and riding restrictions, even when using a GPS or mapping app.

Snowmobiling is prohibited in designated wilderness areas. Know before you go—and help protect riding access for everyone.

Carry the Big Three - Beacon. Shovel. Probe.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Note from the MSA President

It's hard to believe we are already heading into November! With snow in the forecast and the excitement of a new riding season building, I think we are all ready to get those sleds out and start thinking about the trails ahead. Here's hoping Mother Nature has a great winter in store for Montana snowmobilers!

The past month has been a busy and productive one for the Montana Snowmobile Association. We had a great board meeting with Kerry White and Margaret Morgan, our lobbyist, as we discussed important issues and the work ahead for MSA. With the upcoming legislative session approaching, we are moving forward with contracting with Margaret to represent our interests and help us stay engaged on issues that affect snowmobiling, recreation, and access throughout Montana.

We have also been working with the Bitterroot and Missoula snowmobile clubs on planning for our upcoming MSA banquet. Thank you to these clubs for stepping up and helping with the planning. Our annual banquet is a wonderful opportunity to get together, recognize the people who make a difference, and celebrate our shared love of snowmobiling.

More details will be coming as plans take shape! Be sure and nominate those deserving people in your snowmobiling world.

MSA will also be representing Montana snowmobilers at upcoming snow shows in Colorado and Kalispell. These shows are a great opportunity to promote our sport, share information about our association, and encourage more people to support our 27 clubs across the state.

A quick reminder: Our membership year began October 1! If you haven't renewed your membership yet, please take a few minutes to do so. Your membership matters. It helps strengthen MSA's voice when we work on legislative issues, public land access, and the future of snowmobiling in Montana. Please encourage your friends, family, and fellow riders to join or renew as well. Strong clubs and strong membership make a strong association!

As we look toward winter, I want to thank our club officers, volunteers, groomer operators, board members, and everyone who gives their time to keep snowmobiling alive and well in Montana. So much work happens behind the scenes, and it is truly appreciated.

Let's hope for plenty of snow, great riding conditions, safe travels, and lots of good times with family and friends this winter. Get those sleds ready, renew your membership, and let's make this a season to remember!

Some areas already have snow, and Montana snowmobilers are ready!

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

MSA UPDATES

Attention Members

Voting on the bylaw revisions will NOT take place on December 5, 2026 as previously announced. The Bylaw Committee continues to work to revise the bylaws to more accurately reflect the core elements of the MSA.

The Bylaw Committee would like to thank those members who reviewed the current revisions and offered suggestions for additional amendments. The voice of the membership is vital in representing MSA moving forward.

Upcoming Board Meeting

December 5, 2026 - Montana Wild, Helena, MT
Attend via Zoom or in person. Everybody welcome.

Represeting MSA!

Thank you to everyone who stopped by the MSA booth at the Colorado Snomo Expo and Montana Snowmobile & Powersports Show! It was great connecting with fellow riders and sharing our excitement for the season ahead.

It's what we're all about—making connections, growing our community and strengthening MSA.

Annual Snowmobile Award Nominations

Behind every great ride are volunteers who help maintain our trails, protect riding access, and keep our snowmobile clubs going strong. Each year, MSA honors those who go the extra mile for our sport.

Know a deserving volunteer, outstanding club, or inspiring young rider? Help give them the recognition they deserve by submitting a nomination for MSA's annual awards.

Visit snowmobilemt.org to view requirements and submit nomination forms online. Nominations must be received by December 31.

Awards will be presented at the MSA Annual Snowmobile Banquet in Missoula this February.

Recognition Categories

- **Snowmobiler of the Year**
- **Snowmobile Family of the Year**
- **Snowmobile Club of the Year**
- **Youth Snowmobiler of the Year**
- **Groomer of the Year**
- **Dealer of the Year (Powersports)**
- **Winter Business of the Year** **(New Award Category!)**

Requirements

- Nomination deadline - December 31
- Both the sponsor and nominee must be MSA members.

$1,000 Scholarship

MSA MONTANA SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION

Montana Snowmobile Association SCHOLARSHIP

The Montana Snowmobile Association offers a $1,000 scholarship to a graduating high school senior or a student enrolled in a college, technical, or vocational program. The applicant or their family must be a MSA member to apply.

DATE

December 31, 2026

College-bound? Scan to apply.

APPLY TODAY

SUBMIT **Video Upload or Written Essay**
www.snowmobileMT.org

Big ADVENTURES
Every Season.

MONTANA RIDGERUNNERS YOUTH

Calling All Young Riders!

As we head into another snowmobile season, Montana RidgeRunners Youth (MRRY) is looking to get more youth involved from across the state! We encourage local snowmobile clubs, parents, and families to help spread the word and get our younger generation involved.

In September, our youth representative, Zandria Bancroft, attended Haydays, where she represented Montana RidgeRunners Youth and had the opportunity to meet other Youth Ambassadors from across the country!

We want to see what our youth are up to! Whether it's snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, camping, or any other outdoor adventure, tag us in your social media posts so we can share them on our pages!

We're also working on some new ideas for our youth memberships, so current members, keep an eye on your mailbox for upcoming information!

Not a member yet? We'd love to have you join! If you need a membership form, email us at youth@snowmobilemt.org or find the form pinned to our social media pages.

Let's get more Montana youth involved and keep the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts growing!

Youth Ambassador
Alec Manseau

Youth Representative
Zandria Bancroft

Youth Advisors
Kristen Yates (406.366.2686)
Stacy Deupree (406.366.6691)

Email: youth@snowmobilemt.org

Developing Responsible Youth Riders

"Snowmobiling is a great activity to do together as a family," says Kristen Yates, MSA Youth Advisor. "It's very important to have all family members, especially kids, well-prepared and knowledgeable about safe snowmobiling. When a new rider, no matter the age, has a great first experience on a snowmobile, they will be fans of the sport for a long time."

Right ride—Accidents can happen when children aren't riding a properly-sized snowmobile. Multiple manufacturers produce smaller vehicles with additional safety features including a high visibility whip flag for notification, easy to adjust governor to control the top speed and acceleration of the vehicle, kid-friendly controls, and a removable ignition key.

Right gear—Before you let your child get on a snowmobile, make sure they are wearing properly fitting snowmobile gear that have no dangling scarves, laces or straps. It's particularly important that their helmets are properly sized.

Right education — Many manufacturers also have safety and training videos online. In Montana, youths under 16, without a driver's license who will be riding on dual-use roads must complete a Montana-approved Snowmobile Safety Course and obtain a Snowmobile Safety Certificate. Riders under the age of 16 are also required to be under the direct supervision of a licensed adult. Visit snowmobileinfo.org.

Right speed—Take it slow for the first few rides over various conditions for the novice rider to get used to handling a sled. Never override your lights with a new rider (or anytime!), as it is unsafe and not a good lesson to impart.

"When a new rider, no matter the age, has a great first experience on a snowmobile, they will be fans of the sport for a long time," said Yates.

MSA CHARITY RIDE

Ride the Rockies. Give back and raise money for charity!

By Mark Smolen | Trans-Montana Co-Chair

Rider Sign-up is OPEN!

First, I have to make a quick apology to anyone that may have gone to the sign-up page and read that we were full. That text block was erroneously left in there and I apologize for the confusion. The site is up and we are accepting rider sign-ups now. Visit Trans-Montana to sign up. Many of you soldiered on and signed up and I thank you! But we have plenty of spots open so please sign up! We are nearly one-third full as I write this.

All of the hotels are booked with a block of rooms for the riders. You can find the hotel info under the route page on the website with contact info, etc. Just a reminder, you have to make your own reservations (the block of rooms will expire mid-January). If we can't ride, they will allow you to cancel.

The deadline for rider signup is November 15. So please don't delay–I need the sign-ups so I can order clothing.

This year, we're re-enacting the early days of Trans-Montana (to a point). While not riding from the Canadian border directly to West Yellowstone, we are starting near the border in Eureka and riding four more places, then ending in West! We will be seeing and visiting places that haven't seen a TMR rider in some twenty+ years! Just like our logo!

Looking forward to seeing you all soon!

Did You Know?
Snowmobilers in Canada and the United States spend over $35 billion on snowmobiling each year!

Source:
International Snowmobile Association

TRANS-MONTANA 2027

www.trans-montana.org

TMR Ride Schedule

Feb 11 - Eureka
Feb 12 - Haugen
Feb 13 - Missoula/Lolo Pass
TMR Charity Auction and Annual MSA Awards Banquet
Feb 14 - Skalkaho Pass
Feb 15 - Travel Day
Feb 16 - Butte
Feb 17 - West Yellowstone

Trans-Montana is MSA's premier charity ride and signature fundraiser.

Each year, riders come together for a week-long adventure through Montana's Rocky Mountains—sharing scenic trails, small-town hospitality, and a commitment to giving back.

Funds raised support NAMI Montana and its work to improve the lives of Montanan teens and veterans affected by mental illness.

Your choice:
Ride for a day or the week!

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

HELENA SNOWDRIFTERS

Helena, Montana • MSA District 8 • Founded: Late 1970s

250 MILES OF TRAILS - 180 GROOMED

ABOUT

Based in Helena, Montana, the Helena Snowdrifters Snowmobile Club supports the state's second-largest snowmobile riding area, with groomed trails across three trail systems and countless miles of ungroomed trails to explore.

We're proud to have the support of three local snowmobile dealerships: Mount Helena Motor Sports, Helena Cycle Center and Montana Boat Center.

Come for the trail conditions. Stay for Mike's commentary! Follow us on Facebook for grooming updates that are as entertaining as they are informative.

RIDING AREA:

Southwest Montana
Greater Helena area & surrounding mountain trails.

TRAIL SYSTEMS

Marysville-Austin Trail System
Rimini-Elliston-Basin
Magpie Trail System

SIGNATURE EVENTS

Winter Fun Run & Poker Ride & Father's Day Weekend ATV/ORV Poker Ride
Super Bowl Sunday Morning Ride
Christmas Convoy Parade

Website: www.helenasnowdrifters.org
Social: On Facebook & Insta

President: Anna Glueckert - (406) 202-2044

District Rep: OPEN

Great Falls Snowmobile Club

Great Falls, Montana • MSA District7 • Founded: Early 1970s

MILES GROOMED: 300 - Supported by the King's Hill Grooming Association

ABOUT

Easy riding for beginners and families. Fairly deep snow found in many places, Lots of parks to play in. Excellent trails all day long. Beautiful large snowmobile parking lot Beacon checker.

Powered by Partnership

Working together with the Meagher County Little Belters and King's Hill Grooming Association.

RIDING AREA:

Central Montana
Little Belt Mountains

DESTINATION TRAILS

Both sides of Highay 89, Trails starts near Showdown ski area.
Williams park, Eagle park, Island Park, Divide road, Harley park, Spur park, Jefferson Bowl

SIGNATURE EVENTS

Chili feed, Three-Club Cookout

Website: www.great-falls-snowmobile.org
Facebook: Great Falls Snowmobile Club

President: Liz Bohn
Email: contact@great-falls-snowmobile.org

District Rep: Cliff Walter

Rev It Up Girls

Montana • MSA District 7 • Founded: 2023

Montana is our playground, community is our foundation, and empowering women is at the heart of what we do.

Empowering Women. Building Skills. Creating Community.

ABOUT

More Than Just Riding

Rev It Up Girls Montana was created to give women a place where they can learn, grow, ask questions, challenge themselves, and develop confidence both on and off their machines.

Our rides welcome a variety of experience levels and encourage women to continue developing their riding and backcountry skills in a supportive environment. Experienced riders have the opportunity to mentor newer riders, while everyone gets the chance to learn from one another.

But our mission extends beyond days spent on the snow.

Stewardship, service, education, safety, and community involvement are important parts of who we are. Through service projects, partnerships, club events, educational opportunities, and collaboration with other organizations, we want to leave the places we ride—and the snowmobile community itself—better than we found them.

RIDING AREA:

Statewide Montana!
We aren't limited by a single trail system or riding area and support local clubs.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

Club rides, skills development, backcountry education, mentorship, stewardship projects, service projects, social events, and collaborative rides

Website: revitupgirls.com
Social: Facebook & Insta

President: Janice Enos, 406-595-7952

District Rep: Cliff Walter

CLUB NEWS

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Hey Clubs—send us some club love!
Share your events, articles, ads, photos and Club Spotlight details by the 15th of each month for inclusion in the next newsletter.
Early submissions are always appreciated!

Send to: news@snowmobilemt.org

District 8 Representative Selection Underway

The process is underway to select a new MSA District 8 Representative for the **Helena Snowdrifters** and **Lincoln's Ponderosa Snow Warriors**. Representatives are nominated and endorsed by the clubs they serve and must be approved by the MSA President before accepting the role.

THANK YOU, KEVIN HORNE!

A heartfelt thank-you to Kevin Horne for his outstanding service, dedication and support of our clubs. Kevin set the bar high, and we're grateful for everything he brought to the role!

Reminder to All Clubs

Please track and report all volunteer hours—every meeting, event, grooming run, event setup, trail work, even website management. If you put in the time, log the hours! It's simple, and it's vital for association management, grants, and reporting. Don't undervalue your time & efforts. Report up!

Forms available on snowmobilemt.org.

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**
- **Island Park & West Yellowstone Madison-Gallatin Monument Plan**
- **Clearwater Blackfoot**
- **Lincoln Prosperity Project**
- **Lolo Travel Plan**
- **Avalanche Center Budget Reduction**
- **Roadless Rule**

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

SGCRA Volunteers Reopen Historic Independence Road

Sweet Grass County Recreation Association — Club News

The Sweet Grass County Recreation Association (SGCRA) celebrated a major accomplishment in September when volunteers completed a bridge detour on the upper Main Boulder River Road, restoring vehicle access to the historic Independence mining district and Blue Lake Trail south of Big Timber.

The road had been closed to wheeled vehicles for three years following the devastating June 2022 flood, which damaged two bridges and washed-out portions of the route. After two years of coordinating with Park County and State and Federal agencies to secure necessary approvals, SGCRA organized a volunteer work weekend September 11–13.

Using chainsaws, hand tools and a mini-excavator, volunteers cleared and constructed a detour around a damaged bridge, including a low-water crossing of the Main Boulder River. By September 12, the route was open to high-clearance vehicles, and Park County subsequently canceled its road closure ordinance.

The accomplishment reflects SGCRA's longstanding commitment to preserving recreational access to Montana's public lands.

SGCRA is about more than snowmobiling. Based in Big Timber, the association supports year-round motorized recreation, responsible public-land access and stewardship of the trails and roads that connect people with Montana's backcountry. during winter, SGCRA supports snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance in the Boulder River drainage, helping provide access for snowmobilers and other winter recreationists. The association also promotes snowmobile safety, organizes social activities and brings together members and supporters through its annual Boulder Ambler fundraiser, poker run, banquet and raffles.

Beyond winter recreation, SGCRA advocates for maintaining public access to historic routes and recreational destinations. The association has pursued grant funding for drainage improvements and maintenance along the Main Boulder River Road, while working with local officials and organizations to address deteriorating road conditions and flood-damaged infrastructure.

The Independence detour is a significant victory, but more work remains. Replacement of the damaged bridges and long-term maintenance of the upper Main Boulder Road remain priorities.

SGCRA thanks its volunteers, donors, partner organizations and government agencies for helping keep Montana's backcountry accessible for future generations.

SGCRA, Inc., incorporated in 1973. For information about SGCRA activities, membership or opportunities to support its work, contact SGCRAclub@gmail.com; on the web www.sgcra.club and Facebook.com/SGCRASnowFun.

Lloyd H. Rue, President Sweet Grass County Recreation Association, Inc. Big Timber, Montana

UPCOMING EVENTS & DEADLINES

November 6, 2026 - Meet & Greet Pint Night - Bar 3 BBQ, Rev It Up Girls, Belgrade
November 13, 2026 - Helena Snowdrifters Bingo Fundraiser, Helena
December 1, 2026 - Grooming can begin! Snow dependent.
December 4, 2026 - GVSA Christmas Banquet - Gallatin Valley
December 5, 2026 - Christmas Party - Montana Night Riders, Haugen
December 5, 2026 - MSA Board Meeting, Helena
December 5, 2026 - Groomer Operator Training, Helena
December 12, 2026 - East Helena Christmas Convoy - Helena Snowdrifters, East Helena
December 31, 2026 - MSA Awards Nominations Deadline
December 31, 2026 - Scholarship Entry Deadline
December 31, 2026 - Banquet Hotel Reservations Due for Best Rates
January 2, 2027 - Frozen Bogie - Montana Night Riders, Haugen
January 9 - 17, 2027 - International Snowmobile Safety Week
January 15 -17, 2027 - Winter Fest - Vintage Snowmobile Show - Montana Night Riders, Haugen
January 30, 2027 - Poker Ride - Montana Night Riders, Haugen
February 6-15, 2027 - Take a Friend Snowmobiling Week
February 11, 2027 - Trans-Montana - Eureka, Hosted by Ten Lakes SC
February 12, 2027 - Trans-Montana Ride Haugen, Hosted by Montana Nightriders
February 12, 2027 - MSA Board Meeting
February 13, 2027 - Trans-Montana & MSA Group Ride Lolo Pass, Hosted by Missoula Snogoers
February 13, 2027 - Montana Snowmobile Association Annual Awards Banquet & TMR Charity Auction, Missoula
February 13, 2027 - Sweetheart Poker Run, Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club, Cooke City
February 14, 2027 - Trans-Montana Ride, Skalkaho Pass, Hosted by Bitterroot Ridgerunners
February 16, 2027 - Trans-Montana Ride, Butte, Hosted by Mining City Trail Riders and Jackpine Savages
February 17, 2027 - Trans-Montana Ride, West Yellowstone, Hosted by the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
February 17-22, 2027 - ACSA Mountain Riding Summit, West Yellowstone
February 20, 2027 - Glow Ride - Montana Night Riders, Haugen
February 27, 2027 - Boulder Ambler Family Fun Day Poker Run, Sweetgrass Rec Center, Big Timber
March 12-13, 2027 - UYSC Hog Roast Fundraiser, Cooke City

Grant Applications - Check websites for dates!
AVY Training - Check websites for dates & locations.

Clubs—Share Your Upcoming Events!
Submit by the 15th of each month for inclusion in the newsletter.
Email: news@snowmobilemt.org

ACSA Mountain Riding Summit

The American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) will host its Mountain Riding Summit in West Yellowstone again this February with the Montana Snowmobile Association. Enjoy several fun-filled days of riding, roundtables, hands-on clinics, and youth connections.

February 17-22, 2027 - Make your reservations now.
Holiday Inn, West Yellowstone

MSA Awards Banquet

JOIN US IN MISSOULA!

ANNUAL MSA AWARDS BANQUET

Featuring the Trans-Montana Charity Auction supporting NAMI Montana

Saturday, February 13, 2027
Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown
200 S. Pattee St., Missoula, MT
406-721-8550

Special Room Rate - Book by Dec 31
Room code: "MT Snowmobile Association & Trans"
Trailer parking available.

www.snowmobilemt.org
www.trans-montana.org

Event Highlights

- **MSA Group Ride - Lolo Pass**
- **Dinner & Charity Auction**
- **MSA Awards Presentation**

Banquet Tickets
Advance: $45
At the door: $50

Doors open at 5:00pm

Purchase tickets by January 31 to help us plan for catering.

Hosted by the Missoula Snowgoers and the Bitterroot Ridge Runners.

Some of Montana's best sledding is right outside our door—and so are the hot springs.

Vice President's Corner

"It Never Ends...Does It?"

As another Montana winter approaches, snowmobilers across the state are preparing for the season ahead. While many are waiting for the snow to fly, countless volunteers have already spent months making sure we're ready when it does.

Clearing downed trees, brushing trails, maintaining grooming equipment, and installing signs to organizing poker runs, fundraisers, safety classes, and club events, volunteers are the backbone of Montana snowmobiling.

Behind the scenes, volunteers spend countless hours attending meetings, reviewing land management proposals, working with local, state, and federal agencies, and representing snowmobilers in discussions that help shape the future of our sport. We are building relationships and maintaining open communication with land managers and decision-makers.

The volunteer clearing a trail and the volunteer sitting across the table from a land manager are working toward the same goal.

As Vice President, I have the opportunity to see the dedication that goes into our sport beyond simply riding. Much of that work happens without recognition, but its importance cannot be overstated.

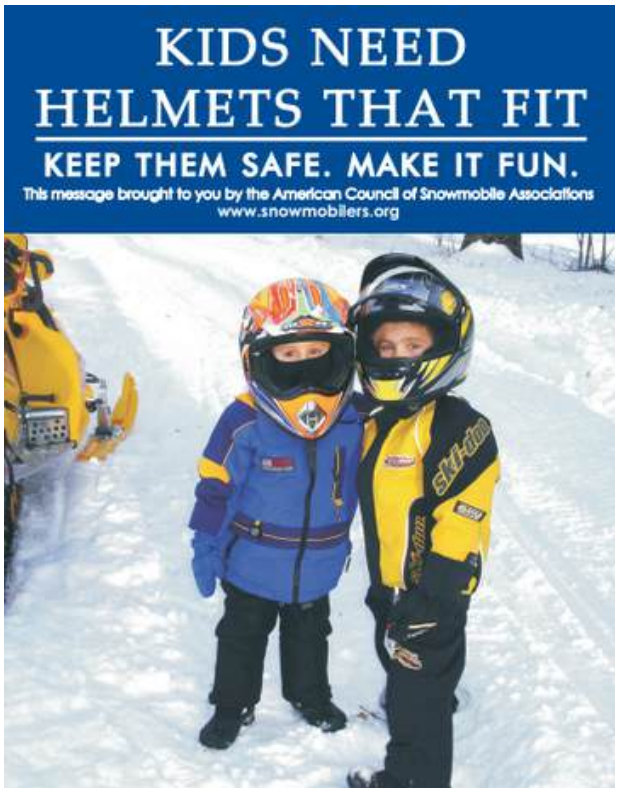
To our club officers, trail volunteers, groomer operators, event organizers, committee members, and advocates, thank you. Your time and dedication make a difference.

To our fellow snowmobilers, I encourage you to get involved. Attend a meeting, help organize an event, volunteer for trail maintenance, groomer maintenance, or simply support your local club. You don't have to hold an office to make a difference. Sometimes all it takes is showing up and lending a hand.

From the VP Corner
Rowdy

Rowdy Yates
Vice President
Montana Snowmobile Association
406-223-5428 | vp@snowmobilemt.org

Did You Know?
There are over 3,000 snowmobile clubs worldwide. Snowmobile clubs are nonprofit and volunteer-driven; they are grassroots groups based in local communities. In addition, there are 25 state associations in the U.S. and 13 provincial and territorial snowmobile organizations in Canada.
Source: International Snowmobile Association



MONTANA SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM UPDATE

We are almost upon a new season of grooming and all the hard work it entails for the many of you who volunteer to allow grooming to occur in Montana. I have spent this summer working to repair and upgrade grooming equipment for the upcoming season. These upgrades are due to the funding from the Snowmobile Trail Pass revenues. Thank you for your support of the Snowmobile Clubs and their grooming efforts by purchasing the Snowmobile Trail Pass.

If your club needs funding for trail maintenance, there are new grant programs available to help.

One of the biggest issues all clubs face is overgrown trails. Grants are now available that will allow you to rent equipment and get this taken care of. If any of you have questions, please call and we can come up with a plan to assist in getting funding for these activities. The grant process does take some effort, but it is worth it when the work is complete. I will do my best to guide you through this process. There are both state and federal funds that can be used.

Please take some time to thank those in your life that have selflessly served in your local snowmobile clubs. The clubs are full of these individuals who are not able to be active anymore.

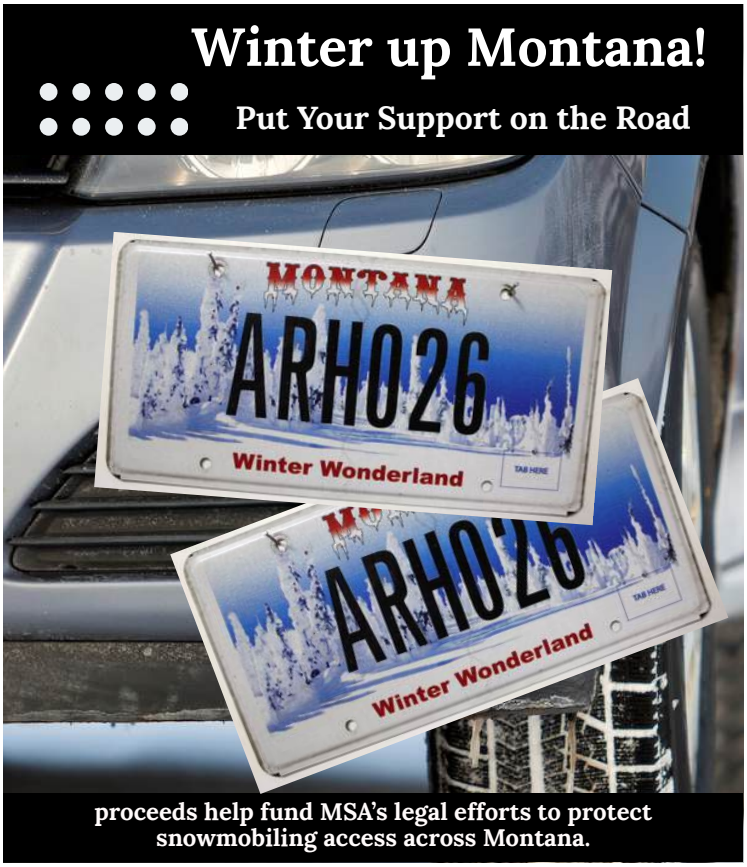
Reach out and say thanks and offer a helping hand if so needed. Join a club and share your talents. Help us all promote safe snowmobiling in Montana.

Sincerely,
Seth

Seth McArthur
Montana Snowmobile Program Manager
smcarthur@mt.gov
406-444-3753

Groomer Operator Training
December 5, 2026 - Helena, MT

ATTENTION! IMPORTANT



AVALANCHE SAFETY

I'VE BEEN PUTTING OFF THE TRAINING, SO LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Photos & Story: Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center

After 20 years working as an avalanche forecaster in Utah, Idaho, and Montana, I've seen it far too often: passionate snowmobilers with the best mountain sleds and avalanche rescue gear, but who are untrained for an actual rescue. Sadly, when avalanches happen, the consequences are often tragic. It sounds like a simple problem to fix. Who's against safety training? The reality however, is different—and it hit close to home for me this summer.

Snowmobilers are really good at problem-solving; it's the nature of the sport. When a machine breaks, we work with our riding partners to improvise a fix and make it back to the trailhead. But with avalanches, there is no time to figure it out. When someone is buried, the clock starts ticking, and we have to perform an immediate rescue. As the saying goes: we don't rise to the occasion; we fall to our level of training.

More Than Rescue Skills

Over the last few years, my wife, our three sons, and I started running rivers and whitewater rapids. My teenage son led the way; he just finished his third year in a multi-week kayaking program and is getting really good. My wife, who kayaked in college, returned to the sport alongside him. Meanwhile, I learned to row a raft so I could take our two younger sons through the rapids with them. We've made priceless memories together as a family on rivers like the Yellowstone, Snake, and Salmon—crashing through big waves, lazily floating along flatwater sections, and spending time outside disconnected from the digital world.

This summer, I realized I was in the exact same situation as so many sledders, just in a different sport. I was investing time and money into rafting and kayaking, but completely neglecting the safety training. When weather, schedules, and free time align, we prioritize getting out on the water or snow over getting trained. Despite our best intentions, life is busy. After all, nothing bad has happened... yet.

My realization of being in this untrained position was eye-opening and terrifying. What will I do if something goes wrong on the river? As a father, I feel a responsibility to keep my family safe, but I'm still learning this new sport, and often feel lucky getting through rapids upright. I bought all the safety gear—helmets, PFDs, and throw bags. But is that enough?
It's a stark contrast to my winter career as an avalanche forecaster and avid snowmobiler. On the snow, I have substantial training to fall back on. Years ago, while working as a ski patroller, I did weekly rescue drills until the response became second nature—a privilege I took for granted.

A Wake-Up Call on the Water

Safety training is critical in the backcountry, where we have to be our own rescuers. Beyond rescue techniques, proper instruction teaches two vital lessons:

- Prevention: How to avoid accidents in the first place.
- Positioning: Where to be before an incident occurs so we can respond effectively.

Just like defensive driving, preemptive actions can drastically reduce the severity of a crash, if not avoid it entirely. The same principle applies to avalanches; there is so much we can do before a slide happens that can mean the difference between life and death.

Back to the water, my fear is amplified because I don't know what I don't know. How many times have we narrowly avoided disaster purely by luck? How would I have responded? The answer is through the training that I've put off.

Let's Make a Deal

The good news is that I'm not starting from scratch and neither are you. All our life experiences are the foundation for the training. Snowmobilers often have years of riding experience that helps them master avalanche rescue once they get formal instruction on the snow. Time and time again, I'm amazed at how quickly snowmobilers perfect avalanche rescue with just a little hands-on training.

So, let's make a deal: sign up for an avalanche training course this winter, and I'll sign up for my swiftwater rescue course.
Mark S.

I already belong to a local club. Why join MSA, too?
Your club supports riding close to home. MSA brings clubs and riders together to strengthen snowmobiling's voice across Montana. Both memberships matter!

Does one membership really make a difference?
Yes! Every member adds weight to our collective voice. More members mean stronger representation when decisions affect our trails, riding areas and access.

Do I have to own a snowmobile to join?
No! Families, businesses and anyone who supports snowmobiling can help make a difference through MSA membership.

I only ride a few times a year. Should I still join?
Absolutely! Whether you ride every weekend or once a season, your membership helps support the access and opportunities we all enjoy.

Why should a business join MSA?
Snowmobilers support lodging, restaurants, dealerships and other local businesses. Joining MSA helps support the riding community that supports you.

What's one simple way to support snowmobiling's future?
Join MSA—and encourage a friend to join, too. A stronger membership today helps build a stronger future for Montana snowmobiling.

JOIN AT SNOWMOBILEMT.ORG

Montana Snowmobile Association

Membership Application

snowmobilemt.org

1. SELECT MEMBERSHIP TYPE

☐ **Single/Family - $25 annually** ☐ **Business / Club Membership - $40 annually**

Montana RidgeRunners-Youth is free with Single, Family or Business membership

2. CONTACT INFORMATION

Primary Account Holder: _____

Business / Club Name: _____

Mailing Address _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone _____

Email Address _____

3. Family Members (if applicable)

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

4. Montana RidgeRunners-Youth - Free Add-on

List each youth member's name and date of birth.

	YOUTH MEMBER NAME	DATE OF BIRTH
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

5. COMPLETE AND SUBMIT

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mail application with payment

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

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

BRANDIN' IRON INN

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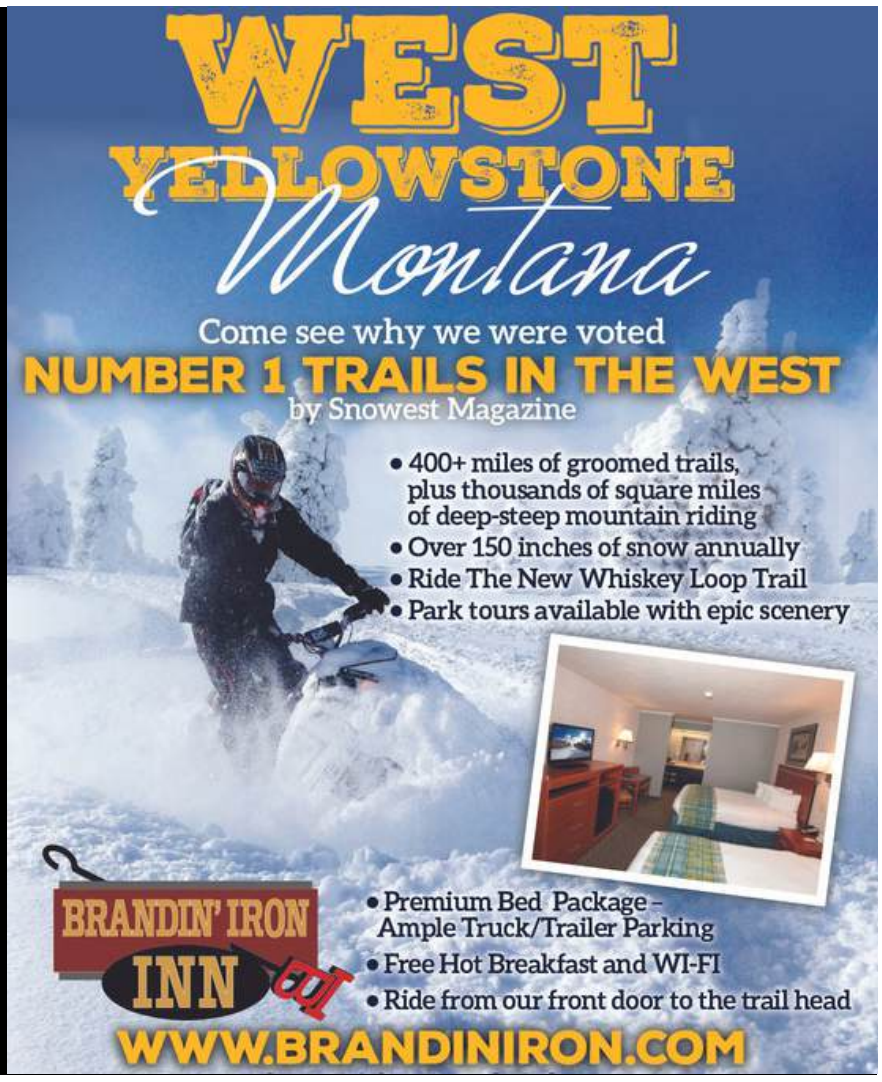
Ask for Montana Snowmobile Association Special Rates and Packages!