

Snoflyer

*The official publication of the
Washington State Snowmobile Association*

***April 2020**
Volume 42*

Untracked meadow on White Pass. Pic by Matt Mead.

2019/2020 Season... That's a wrap folks!

***Inside: Legislative Update
Local avalanche - Safety with Jon
New warming hut coming!***



Yakima Ski-Benders' 2020 Kid's Ride - Awesome turnout! Pic by Liz Van Amburg.

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Idaho's Crown Jewel **PRIEST LAKE**

Photo credit: Gary Smith



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WSSA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership valid until August 31, 2021

Annual Dues (circle one): Individual/Family or Club - \$25 Associate - \$50

FAMILY/INDIVIDUAL: (\$25)

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Mail Application and Payment to:
WSSA Membership
2130 Lower Peoh Point Rd.
Cle Elum, WA 98922

Questions about your membership? Contact Wayne or Florence at membership@wssa.us or (509) 674-4401

Questions about WSSA? Contact:
Dean Meakin, President
2928 N. Nevada
Spokane, WA 99207
E-mail: dean.meakin@wssa.us
(800) 783-WSSA or (509) 220-1001

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR SPORT

WSSA MEETINGS AND IMPORTANT EVENTS 2019/2020

International Snowmobile Congress

Pegina, Saskatchewan

June 10th-13th, 2020

Take a vacation to Saskatchewan and become involved in snowmobiling at the international level! Find out how snowmobiling and snowmobile programs differ across the U.S. and Canada. A fun and educational time awaits! Visit www.snowmobilers.org/isc for details.

WSSA Summer Meeting & Campout

Blu-Shastin RV Park, Peshastin (Blewett Pass)

August 14th-16th, 2020

A fun family campout with meals provided Friday night through Sunday morning (for \$20 per person). Meeting starts at 9am on Saturday.



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As I write this article in isolation, I hope all of you and your families are at home and are healthy and safe. Who knew how big this world epidemic was going to be?!

As you may know, we canceled our WSSA Budget Meeting in March. I am working on a 'GoToWebinar' session real soon and the Board will conduct business as usual, only electronically. This is the best we can do under these circumstances.

Our 21st Annual DC Fly-In for 2020 has been cancelled. The American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) is working hard to figure out a plan on how to communicate to our legislators as to the needs of the snowmobilers.

International Snowmobile Congress (ISC) 2020 in Saskatchewan is under review as we speak. The ISC Planning Committee is trying to put together a special meeting on April 14th to discuss whether to proceed or cancel ISC this year. ACSA will have an emergency meeting to discuss the outcome of that meeting. This will take place on April 21st. So, please be patient and I will let you know what happens.

Even with all the turmoil going on out there, we are still supposed to be 'Building Bridges and Not Walls'. Associate memberships are still low and WE, the WSSA membership, are the only ones who can fix it!

I apologize for such a short article as so many events have been cancelled. On the good note, I have completed 90% of my yard work in March instead of May. I am now working indoors, replacing all my trim and some painting. The place is looking great! Let me know what all of you are doing to pass the time.



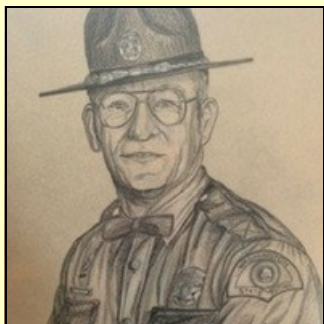
Clint Adamson, member of the Drift-A-Way Snowmobile Club in Yakima, taking delivery of the North Cascade sled deck from the WSSA Legal Action Fund Raffle. Special thanks to North Cascade Sled Decks for the deck and Diesel Werks for the Super Clamps.

Don't miss your chance to win; buy tickets for next year's raffle prize at the WSSA Expo & Swap Meet next October in Puyallup! (Tickets will also be available at the Spokane and Leavenworth shows and from WSSA board members.)

Notes

Walt Gobel was an active member of the Washington State Snowmobile Association and served as WSSA President many years ago. Rest in peace.

Walter (Walt) Bryan Gobel February 20, 1944 - March 19, 2020



Walt Bryan Gobel, passed away in his sleep on March 19th, 2020, at Park Manor Rehabilitation Center in Walla Walla, Washington.

Walt was the 4th born child of 5, to Paul Roy Gobel and Agnes (Brumley) Gobel in Prosser, Washington.

His family lived in Mabton, Washington where Walt attended all twelve years of his schooling and graduated with 42 classmates in 1962. After graduation he worked as a carpenter, as well as, for local farmers as an irrigation specialist. In 1963, Walt was hired by Safeway Food Production company in Grandview, Washington. During his 4 years working for Safeway he worked the night shift setting up the production lines that produced grape juice, mayonnaise, peanut butter, and margarine.

Walt was hired by the Washington State Patrol (WSP) in June of 1967. After his hire, he worked as a cadet in Kennewick, Washington, before attending the WSP academy where he graduated as a Trooper in February of 1968. As a trooper, Walt was assigned to Naselle, Vancouver, and Dayton. He also served on the bomb squad during this time. He was recruited to become an instructor at the WSP academy in 1978; he loved the assignment at the academy. In 1982, Walt was promoted to Sergeant and assigned to Walla Walla, where he eventually retired in March of 1993 with 27 years of dedicated service to the people of Washington State.

After his rewarding WSP career, Walt took a position with Educational Service District 123 in Pasco, Washington, mostly training school bus drivers. In 1995, he accepted a position as Supervisor of Transportation with the Pasco School District. Walt retired again in 2007. In **2008, he accepted a 'temporary' position with the Clarkston School District leading their transportation department.** Finally, in 2011, he officially again retired but continued to substitute bus drive for Waitsburg and Prescott School Districts until his illness.

Walt was a true public servant, always involved in many service clubs and organizations. He held leadership positions as Boy Scout Cub/Troop Master, Little League, and Y Indian Guides, Walla Walla High School Athletic Booster Club, and the Washington State Snowmobile Association. After his kids left the home, Walt held leadership positions in Lions Club, Washington State Patrol Retired Employee Association, Walla Walla Columbia School Retiree Association, Walla Walla RV Club, Membership in BPOE (Elks Club), and Rotary Club. Recently, Walt was the Co-Chair of Waitsburg Celebration Days annual event and volunteered and was elected Mayor of Waitsburg, WA from 2010 until 2016.

Walt enjoyed camping/RV-ing, fishing, white-water river rafting, softball, and snowmobiling; not because of the actual activities themselves, but because of the amazing people he was fortunate to meet while participating in these activities. At home, Walt was an avid reader, often completing **3-4 books per week, enjoyed his yardwork, and being a home improvement guru.** **Walt's most favorite way to spend time** was to be with his family.

Words his grandchildren use to describe him – kind, thoughtful, full of life, caring, brave, strong, real life super hero, dedicated, funny, supportive, encouraging, warm, giving, loving, sturdy, steadfast, welcoming, family man, handy, adventurous, most amazing grandpa out there.

Walt is survived by his wife of 56 years, Gwen (Lutze), and his three children, Paul (Renton, WA), Mike and his wife Mira (Walla Walla, WA) and Rachell (Prosser, WA); Six Grandchildren; Curtis (his wife Mercedes), Victoria, Emylee, Bryson (his wife Brylie), Abigail, and Olivia as well as two Great Grandchildren; Harmony and Victoria. His sisters, Marti Johnson and Patsy Gobel and His brother-in-law and his wife Bill and Johnnie Lutze, and his sister-in-law and her partner Karen Lutze and Patrick Trotter. He is also survived by many cousins, nieces, nephews, and many people who adopted him to be their grandfather, dad, uncle, brother, and mentor.

A Celebration of Life gathering will be planned for later in the year.

In lieu of flowers, or if you would like to be an inaugural contributor to the Sergeant Walt Gobel Memorial Fund via the Waitsburg Lions Club that will benefit local youth educational/summer camp opportunities please send your contributions to the Herring Groseclose Funeral Home, c/o Sergeant Walt Gobel Memorial Fund, 315 W Alder Street, Walla Walla, WA.

Family and friends are invited to view and sign the online guest book at www.herringgroseclose.com.

District Reports



District 1 South

By Glenn Markovits
glenn.markovits@wssa.us
(253) 297-1774

First I would like to say my heart goes out to anyone who has been affected by the corona virus; physically, mentally or financially. I know it's taking a toll on many of our lives and I am sorry for the negative impacts families are going through right now. Snowmobiling seems almost insignificant compared to what's going on in the rest of the world. Nevertheless, we must move forward and hope the future brings us a ray of light and things will get better. I'm sitting here doing my part of social distancing in my home, but I am also doing my part of social distancing by going to the mountains and riding my snowmobile until we run out of snow, or until the government says I can longer do so.

As we bring the season to a close and temperatures rise, we still have lots of snow at higher elevations and there are still many sleds taking advantage of the spring time weather.

I would like to thank the members of the Cascade Drift Skippers (CDS) in District 1 South for trusting in me and voting me into the WSSA District 1 South position to represent members of this area.

The CDS regular meeting location in Issaquah has recently closed permanently, therefore a new location for the club meetings has been found and are going to be held at the Kryptonite Bar and Grill on the north side of I-90 in Sammamish. Except right now we cannot meet anywhere because of the Governor's mandate to close all sit down restaurants. Nevertheless, we held our March meeting there before the ban on restaurants took place and we had great service and great food.

We also had a special guest from Minnesota; 17-year-old Isaac Sample who is the founder of the 10,000 Lakes Youth Snowmobile Club in central MN. We really enjoyed listening to what Isaac had to say and he is an inspiration to snowmobiling and he leads by example for the rest of us. Thank you Isaac!

When things get back to normal someday, the Cascade Drift Skippers will return to our meetings the second Wednesday of the month at the Kryptonite Bar and Grill from 5:30pm to 8pm.

The Drift Skippers have had a full calendar of riding events throughout this entire snowmobile season. Every weekend we have had a hosted ride by someone, somewhere and we definitely have many committed snowmobilers in the sport.

The Drift Skippers had a joint club ride down at Mt. St. Helens with the Junco Snowmobile Club at the end of February/first day of March. We had great weather, a large group of about 30 snowmobilers, and a fan-

tastic weekend on the snow. I would like to thank Jim Bauer and the Junco club for hosting this ride along with Jon Ferrian. Everyone received a ride event T-shirt and lunch was provided by the Juncos.

The CDS club also had a scheduled ride from south Cle Elum to Whistlin' Jack Lodge on February 29th, but had to return to the sno-park after 12 miles of riding on ICE. Some members loaded their sleds up and drove around to Whistlin'

(Continued on page 7)

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District Reports

(Continued from page 6)

Jack Lodge and stayed the night and rode out of the Boulder Cave Sno-Park. Way to go dedicated CDS members who made lemonade out of lemons and still got to ride their sleds!

Because of the current mandate of no large groups of more than ten people and to do our part of social distancing, CDS has canceled their annual Steak Ride at the end of March.

Everyone, please keep your chin up and I'm sure things will get better at some point in the future and we will put this corona virus problem behind us. The snow will fall again next winter and we will join together for an-



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Club News



other great snowmobile season.

Yakima Ski-Benders

By Liz Van Amburg,
President

The 2019-2020 Yakima Ski-Benders' season is in the books.

Our club ran a Beer Garden at Chinook Fest in September for three days; hosted a Crab Feed for 350+ people in our community in December; hosted a Family Fun Poker Ride for 100-plus riders in January; and hosted a Kid's Ride for 70 kids and a Scavenger Hunt in February. We all did an amazing job and I appreciate all the volunteers, athletes and sponsors it took to pull all these events off. I feel like we grew our sport and supported our snowmobile community!

The snow pack up high was good to us; down low was sketchy at times. We always seemed to be in the eye of the storms.

I want to say thank you to all the parents who packed up their children, loaded up their sleds and attended the Kid's Ride. We had three states represented and families and clubs came from all over Washington State. It took a village to pull it off. We gave out tons of prizes as well as two sleds at the Kid's Ride and another sled at the Poker Ride; congrats to the lucky winners!

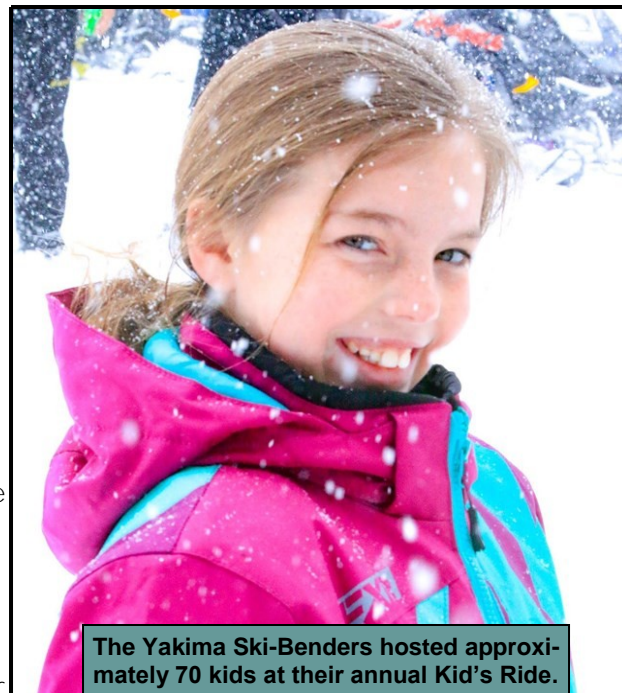
I do not want to start calling out names and business that contributed as I don't want to forget someone. You know who you are and I am very thankful to all of you!

We even handed out the WSSA Snowmobiler of the Year award to Brandy Floyd; congrats Brandy! Well deserved and thank you for all you do for our sport!

I attended this year's WSSA's Military Appreciation Ride. Thank you WSSA and Matt Mead for all you do getting this ride together. We had fresh snow, 10 military riders and several helpers in attendance. Matt Mead I am sure will fill in the rest of the story.

All in all it has been a great season! Stay safe from the Covid-19 vi-

(Continued on page 10)



The Yakima Ski-Benders hosted approximately 70 kids at their annual Kid's Ride. This is an awesome event!



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Mt Baker Moto-Sports LLC	2111 Iowa St	Bellingham	WA	98229	www.mtbakermoto.com	360-676-4096
LLUMIN8 Lighting	18715 95 th St E	Bonney Lake	WA	98391	www.llumin8.com	253-233-7547
Jay's Snowmobile Service	1325 Hanson Loop	Burbank	WA	99323		509-845-2089
Evans Marine	1058 E Woodin Ave	Chelan	WA	98816	www.evansmarine.com	509-682-4402
Mountain Addiction	362 Porcupine Ln	Chelan	WA	98816	www.mountainaddiction.com	509-881-8016
High Country Outfitters & Camp Wahoo!	1780 Nelson Siding Rd	Cle Elum	WA	98922	www.campwahoo.com	509-674-8331
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Bob's Lift Trucks & Equipment	426 Naden Ave S	Kent	WA	98032		253-872-0401
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Greg's Motorsports	5817 184 th Ave Ct E	Lake Tapps	WA	98391		253-380-0558
59er Diner and Cabins	15361 US Hwy 2	Leavenworth	WA	98826	www.59erdiner.com	509-763-2267
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Leavenworth Snowmobile Rentals	15361 US Hwy 2	Leavenworth	WA	98826	www.leavenworthsnowmobilerentals.com	509-763-0333
Mountain Springs Lodge	19115 Chiwawa Loop Rd	Leavenworth	WA	98826	www.mtsprings.com	509-763-2713
Pacific Mountain Services	22745 Brown Rd	Leavenworth	WA	98826		509-670-6665
Loon Lake Marina	41080 Marina Rd	Loon Lake	WA	99148		509-233-2303
North Cascade Sled Decks, LLC	3923 88 th St NE, Unit P	Marysville	WA	98270	www.northcascadesleddecks.com	425-280-6017
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Repin Construction LLC	PO Box 541	Roslyn	WA	98941		509-649-3323
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Procaliber Motorsports	PO Box 1679	Vancouver	WA	98668	www.procaliberbend.com	
G & G Automotive Machine	34 S Palouse	Walla Walla	WA	99362		509-525-2890
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Nob Hill Auto Wrecking	2609 West Birchfield Rd	Yakima	WA	98901	www.nobhillautowrecking.com	509-452-2803
Owen's Yamaha-Suzuki Polaris	1707 N 1st St	Yakima	WA	98901		509-575-1916
Premier Power Sports	1504 Fruitvale Blvd	Yakima	WA	98902	www.premierpowersportswa.com	509-965-9889
VanAmburg Enterprises Inc	2920 River Rd Ste 1	Yakima	WA	98902	www.vanamburgent.com	509-225-6681

Out of State Supporting Businesses

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Hill's Resort	4777 W Lakeshore Rd	Priest Lake	ID	83856	www.hillsresort.com	208-443-2551
Mountain Village Resort	Jct Hwy 21 & 75	Stanley	ID	83278	www.mountainvillage.com	800-843-5475
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Club News



(Continued from page 7)
**Pacific Northwest
 Vintage
 Snowmobile
 Club**

**By Kevin Hancock,
 Webmaster**

Members of our club participated in the West Yellowstone Roundup in West Yellowstone, MT. There were vintage snowmobile rides, an antique and vintage snowmobile show, and in the background, vintage snowmobile racing.

Our members Candy Johnson and Paul Kroger from Columbia Falls, MT, won Best Un-Restored Vintage Snowmobile for their 1974 Johnson JX 400. Woo-Hoo! Way to go Candy and Paul!

The other prizes given were for Best Restored which went to Joel Steffen from Bemidji, MN, for his 1970 Arctic Cat Puma 440; Best of Show to Craig and Debbie Ginder from Kimberley, ID, for their 1964 Bonham Spartan; and finally Jerry Dallal won the Western States Vintage Snowmobile Association's (WSVSA) 2019 Snowmobile of the Year for his 1973 Ski-doo Blizzard. If you want to know more you can visit the WSVSA website: www.wsvsa.com.

We are now shifting to our summer shows. The first show is at the Cool Desert Nights car show in Richland on June 27th.

After that we are hoping to put together a show at the Yakima Antique Tractor Museum in Union Gap. This show will be during their annual Pioneer Power Show and Swap Meet during the weekend of August 15th. We are still working with staff to finalize this event.

Then we meet the first weekend in October in East Wenatchee to show at their annual Wings and Wheels Festival the weekend of October 3rd.

Finally we will be at the best snowmobile expo in the West, the Washington State Snowmobile Association's annual Snowmobile and Power Sports Expo and Swap Meet the weekend of October 17th and 18th. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there and talking old sleds!

(Continued on page 12)

**Clubs:
 Show us your
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PNWVSC members had a great time in West Yellowstone at the West Yellowstone Roundup.

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Club News

(Continued from page 10)



More from the
PNWVSC in West
Yellowstone.

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- -VACANT- -

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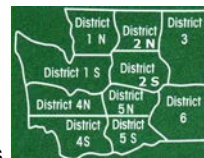
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(Continued from page 12)



Methow Valley Snowmobile Association

By Dan Stanley, Vice President

As our snowmobile season comes to a close I look back on the activities our club provided.

Last April, six members of our club worked along a stretch of Hwy 20 doing a litter pick-up which we do twice a year.

In June we had a fundraiser at 49er Days.

October was the month we towed and set up our warming hut at the Sweetgrass location.

It was November when our club headed for the hills and cut two truckloads of fir bows for the town of Winthrop.

Snow came a little late so the first of our weekly club ride wasn't until December 20th. On Christmas Day our members served a free Christmas dinner to 160 local residents.

In February we put on our annual Bucket Run at a new location and had a huge number of riders attend.

Our club has 130 members but we are always looking to increase that number. This fall we will be having a membership drive. By being a member we offer weekly updates on rides, snow conditions and a grooming schedule sent out by e-mail.

Our blog (mvsnowmobile.blogspot.com) offers items for sale, ride and grooming schedule, membership applications, and other information. COME JOIN US!



Tollgate Trail Finders

By Bob Smith, Former Vice President
&
Brandon Christensen, President

Hi snowmobile friends!

My wife and I have been 'social distancing' from our cabin at Tollgate. We pretty much have the mountain to ourselves and have been enjoying the

bluebird weather and higher temps riding in our 'heated' and tracked side-by-side on the trails. The snow is firm thanks to the higher daytime temps and cold overnight lows. The positives are it's go anywhere snow whether you are boondocking with your snowmobile, snowbike or side-by-side and it's a great time to go exploring off trail. With the firmer snow, boondocking is a blast finding those hidden sweet spots that deep powder makes more difficult and it's a great time to hone your skills on less than perfect powder. We have a great snowpack here at Tollgate and it should last for quite some time even with the warmer afternoon temps. We have around six feet of snow at our clubhouse and about nine and a half in the upper elevations. It's a great time to get out and enjoy our spring like conditions.

Snowmobiler of the Year 2020. At our club meeting on March 7th, Jeff Wagner was honored as the club's 'Snowmobiler of the Year'. Jeff is very active in our club and serves as a board member and groomer operator. In addition, he spearheaded overhauling our club website, making it much more user-friendly. Jeff also volunteered his time hauling and filling the Ruckel Warming shelter

with firewood for the winter. Thank you Jeff Wagner for all you do for our club; it's much appreciated! We encourage you all to check out our new website, Jeff is one of our webmasters and is working to keep the site up to date with current events, groomer reports, newsletters, election results, membership forms, upcoming events and much more. Check it out at www.tollgatetrailfinders.org.

Steak Out Barbecue –

March 7th. We had a well-attended end of the year 'Steak out Barbecue'. We

had a packed house and grills full of steaks. Nobody left hungry. As our President Brandon Christensen put it, "it was a huge success as we didn't burn the building down with multiple barbecues and even a fire pit running".

Elections - March 7th. We proudly present our newly elected set of officers and board members:

Officers

Brandon Christensen – President
Dewayne Harvill – Vice President
Shari Mueller – Secretary
Tammy Christensen – Treasurer
Parliamentarian – Bob Carrell

Board Members

Cody Smith
Dottie Carrell
Cecil Berry
Dino Graham
Donnie Hanson
Catrina Hanson

We also want to acknowledge our current Board Members:

Glenn Warren
Tammy Davenport
Gary Stratton

Jeff Wagner
Kolby Christensen
Jess Thompson –
Grooming Chair

Thank you! We want to thank all the volunteers who make the club a success. From the grooming department which works hard keeping our trails smooth and passable in a season that was most challenging. Our officers who lead our club and plan the events that make our club fun and keep the lights turned on. The board members who serve not only as part of the leadership team but are the core of the work parties during the snow season and summer months and preparing for the upcoming snow season. Also, those who aren't club leaders but still volunteer their time to help with ongoing activities. We finished the season financially sound, with a great team of leaders, wood in the warming shelters, and a brand-new Tucker Sno-Cat to groom our trails with. All in all, it was a great season.

We sincerely wish to thank two of our officers who have given so much to the Tollgate Trail Finders for many years. Bob Smith has served on our Board of Directors and most recently as Vice President. He has spent a tremendous amount of time planning our adventures and events as well as putting together our newsletter. Connie Smith has also served on our Board of Directors, as membership clerk and most recently as Secretary. She has diligently filed paperwork with the Oregon State Snowmobile Association and our insurance carriers, as well as kept excellent minutes at each of our meetings. Connie and Bob have both been an integral part of our leadership. They are usually at every work party willing to lend a hand. Without Bob and Connie our club would

(Continued on page 14)



Board member Glenn Warren (left) presents the Tollgate Trail Finders Snowmobiler of the Year award to Jeff Wagner.

Club News

(Continued from page 13)

not be as great as it is. We wish them luck in their next adventure!

Kids Day. On February 15th we held our annual Kid's Ride. This year it was led by Kolby Christensen. We had 19 participants of all ages. Even Deputy Hayes with the Umatilla County Sheriff's Department joined in for the fun. The group headed to the Chapman Bone Springs Warming Shelter for hot chocolate provided by Bob and Dottie Carrell. Kolby led the group on a ride that lasted over 40 miles of varied terrain including meadows to play in. The



Nineteen participants of all ages joined in during the Trail Finders' Kid's Day.

group split up after lunch so some could head back to the clubhouse and the more advanced riders could test their skills in the back-country.

Backcountry Skills Day. On February 22nd we held a Back-country Skills Day led by Brandon Christensen, Glenn Warren and Brent Mehlenbacher. We had a dozen riders attend. Brandon Christensen taught the group about proper rider position and Glenn Warren put on a clinic about side hilling on ice. Unfortunately,



During the Trail Finders' Backcountry Skill's Day, Glenn Warren showed both what to do and what not to do. In this picture it is the latter...

(Continued on page 16)

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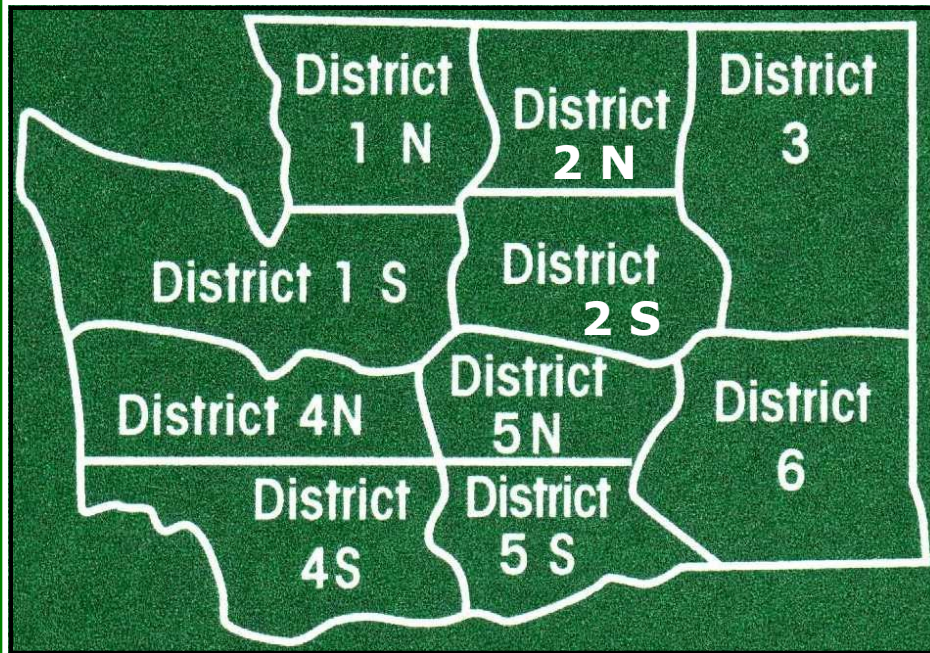
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Snowmobile Clubs



Note: Facebook addresses in blue

District 1 North

(Clallam/Jefferson/Kitsap/Skagit/Snohomish/Whatcom Counties)

Northwest Glacier Cruisers

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Whatcom County Snowmobile Club

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District 1 South

(King County)

Cascade Drift Skippers

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District 2 North

(Okanogan/Ferry Counties)

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Butte Busters Snowmobile Club

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Crawfish Lake Snowmobile Club

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Tri-River Snowmobile Club

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[Tri-Rivers Snowmobile Club](#)

District 2 South

(Chelan/Douglas Counties)

Apple Country Snowmobile Club

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Bavarian Boondockers

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Lake Chelan Snowmobile Club

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Lake Wenatchee Recreation Club

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(Grant/Lincoln/Pend Oreille/Spokane/Stevens Counties)

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Colville Driftiders

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Spokane Winter Knights

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Northwest Boondockers

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Pacific Northwest

Pacific Northwest Vintage Snowmobile Club

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Club News

(Continued from page 14)

Glenn was not planning on the amount of ice on the sidehill he chose; his sled lost traction and rolled over, pinning him under the machine with the throttle wide open. Quick thinking by Brent Mehlenbacher got help to Glenn and everything turned out okay. There were a few scary and tense moments as everyone sprang into action to assist Glenn. Just a lesson for everyone that snow conditions can vary greatly depending on sun, wind, precipitation and temperature variances. The group found some untracked canyons to drop into and climb out of. Definitely a great experience by all that attended.

Grooming Report. Our grooming chairman, Jess Thompson, reported the past couple weeks had been cold enough at night to tackle grooming the trails. Our grooming team has altered their schedule, coming in sometimes as early as 1am to ensure the temps are cold enough to properly setup the trails to ensure they are smooth. During the month of January the following was accomplished:

<i>Miles groomed:</i>	667
<i>Hours spent grooming:</i>	130
<i>Gallons of diesel used:</i>	800
<i>Trees removed from trail:</i>	50
<i>Maintenance hours:</i>	18.5
<i>Miles driven to/from</i>	
<i>Tollgate:</i>	1,072
<i>Time spent driving to/from</i>	
<i>Tollgate:</i>	24.5

Thanks to the crew for all their hard work and being flexible with schedules to avoid bad weather and temperature changes.

ACSA Scholarship. The American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) Bill Townsend Memorial Access Scholarship is awarding a \$5,000 Scholarship. Applicants must be enrolled as a 4th year/senior college undergraduate, graduate/master's degree candidate or law student. Major area of study must be in the field of parks and recreation management, natural resources management, public administration, pre-law, or natural resources/public administration law. The applicant's area of study must include a focus/emphasis that could potentially be beneficial for motorized recreation management/access that includes snowmobiling. Email Brandon Christensen at Brandon@christensenusa.com for more information.

Get out there – Be safe. We encourage all of you to get out and enjoy our beautiful mountain paradise during this spring season. We also encourage you to invite friends and

family to be a part of the Tollgate Trail Finders' family.

Have a great rest of the snow season and we will keep you up to date on upcoming events for the summer months such as our wood cutting day to fill the warming shelters.



Drift-A-Way Snowmobile Club

By Matt Mead

Drift-A-Way club members have continued their weekly 'Thursday Misfits' rides. And as has been the season norm, most of the rides haven't been on Thursday; go figure. Our rides aren't overly challenging, but they are entertaining and we spend as little time on the groomed trails as we can get away with. Due to the fact it has been a high-elevation snow year, most of our rides have been on White Pass. A few of our 'regulars' this season have been out of commission, but we've also had a few new riders tag along.

Drift-A-Way members, along with members of the Yakima Ski-Benders and Chinook Pass Snowmobile Club, provided support for WSSA's annual Military Appreciation Ride in early March. This is always a great event and a handful of soldiers from the Yakima Training Center had a blast. While this event is normally staged out of the Boulder Cave Sno-Park, dangerous conditions forced a move to Little Naches; this decision was made when three of our members tried to do a recon run at Boulder Cave a few days before and had trucks, trailers and sleds sliding all over the place on ice in the parking lot and first mile of trail. (We won't discuss the author's sled sliding off a 15' embankment down into the rocks and trees below.)

As several Drift-A-Way members are also Ski-Benders, some were lucky to have a chance to help with the Yakima Ski-Benders' Kid's Ride. Moved to Little Naches this season, hat's off to Liz and Mike Van Amburg and their cadre of supporters; it was another great event!

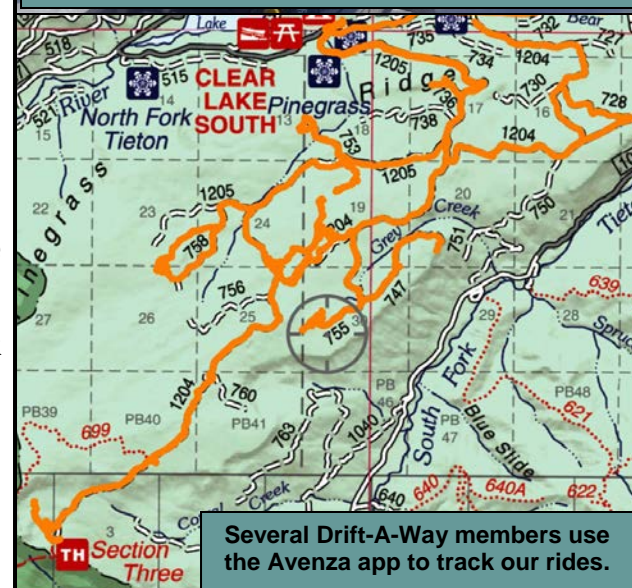
Congrats to our club president, Jim Kingman! Jim was elected as the new District 5 South Rep.

As I type this up, the season

is pretty much a wrap due to the State and Feds shutting down all the sno-parks in an effort to stop the spread of the Corona Virus.



Gray jays/camp robbers were happy to see the misfits on a recent ride to Government Meadows.



Several Drift-A-Way members use the Avenza app to track our rides.



Tree riding? I think they are doing it wrong...



Corona Virus fears shut down colleges across the state; we were able to welcome two college freshmen to a recent midweek 'misfits' ride. They both (mis)fit right in!

WSSA Trail Grant

Warming hut coming to Starvation Mountain next season

By Craig Stahl, MVSA President

The Methow Valley Snowmobile Association (MVSA) in conjunction with the Association of Okanogan County Snowmobile Clubs (AOCSC) and its member clubs submitted a grant requests to build a mobile warming shelter for use by winter recreationists in Okanogan County.

The AOCSC and four of the other clubs have constructed a mobile warming shelter this past late fall that will be placed at Starvation Mountain located in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest approximately ten air miles west of Conconully.

The local telephone company, CenturyLink, has donated the 8 ft x 16 ft fiberglass building to be used in constructing the shelter. This fiberglass structure has been placed on a tandem axle trailer for transport to and from its location on Starvation Mountain. Association of Okanogan Snowmobile Clubs and the Methow Valley Snowmobile Association both received \$1,000 grants towards the hut. Mountain Trails Grooming, Butte Busters and the Tri-Rivers Snowmobile Club received \$500 per organization. MVSA purchased a trailer for \$4,300 to be used for the project. We have our permit in hand from the Methow Valley Ranger District but due to snow levels early this season, we were unable to get the hut in place. We

have a stove that was donated by a local member who is a non-snowmobile recreationalist. The building is placed on the trailer and is just waiting for benches, a few windows, a stove and a table to be installed. As a group we decided to wait until summer to take our time and do a good job on the hut. More funds are needed to finish the hut. We are way under budget for the project so far and it is time for our final push this summer.

I would like to personally thank WSSA for helping with making this project happen. Association of Okanogan Snowmobile Clubs, Mountain Trails Grooming, Butte Busters, Tri-Rivers Snowmobile Club and the Methow Valley Snowmobile Association are very thankful for receiving these grants to help reach a common goal of a Starvation Mountain warming hut.



Safety with Jon

Avalanche! It could happen to you...

By Jon Ferrian — wssasafety101@gmail.com

Hello Washington Sledders!

The season is pretty much at a point where many people are done or at least the end is near. With that I want to thank you who take the time to read this message each month as the new Snoflyer comes out. We have covered a lot of fantastic topics over this past year to help drive safety and education here in the backcountry of Washington while snowmobiling. Just recently as I am writing this article there was a significant local avalanche up in the very northwest part of the state in a riding area called Bear Paw. This is a very steep and deep riding terrain area in the winter months and the riders who are smart, pick their days to ride this area carefully as you would not want to go to this riding destination if the avalanche conditions are high.

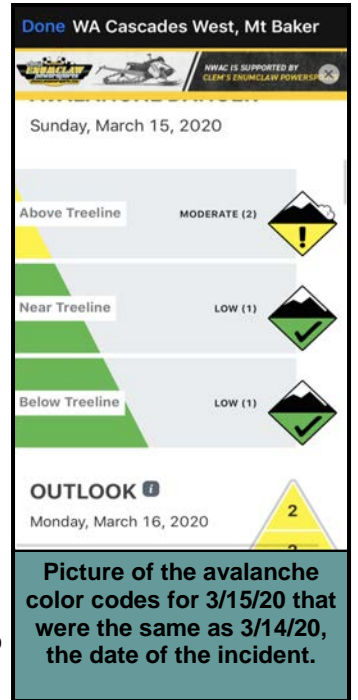
#LiveLARGE
Jon Ferrian LIVE



The last few weeks in this area there had not been a lot of fresh snow and it was very windy. As the weekend approached, Chris from Snohomish and his buddy Chris, both looked at the Weather forecast which showed a sunny and clear day and they also researched the avalanche forecast at www.NWAC.us and saw what they believed to be pretty low risk conditions.

They headed out from the sno-park and rode through the first bowl of the day with no issues and even dug a small snow pit to get a look into the snowpack to see if they saw any issues. Their snow pit didn't expose any obvious issues, so they continued to ride. They even discussed the day's ride etiquette to ensure nobody was riding above anyone and to ensure there were not multiple people exposed to avalanche terrain that

(Continued on page 19)



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Drinks until closing

Safety with Jon

(Continued from page 18) day. After about an hour and a half into their ride they decided to climb a hill and eat some lunch. As Chris started to ascend the slope in a side hill, the hill broke underneath his sled. He pinned his throttle to try and escape the avalanche that was starting to pull him downhill and he was able to climb out of and above the avalanche. At the same moment he escaped the avalanche he looked down and heard his buddy Chris on the radio screaming "avalanche!" Chris witnessed his buddy getting im-

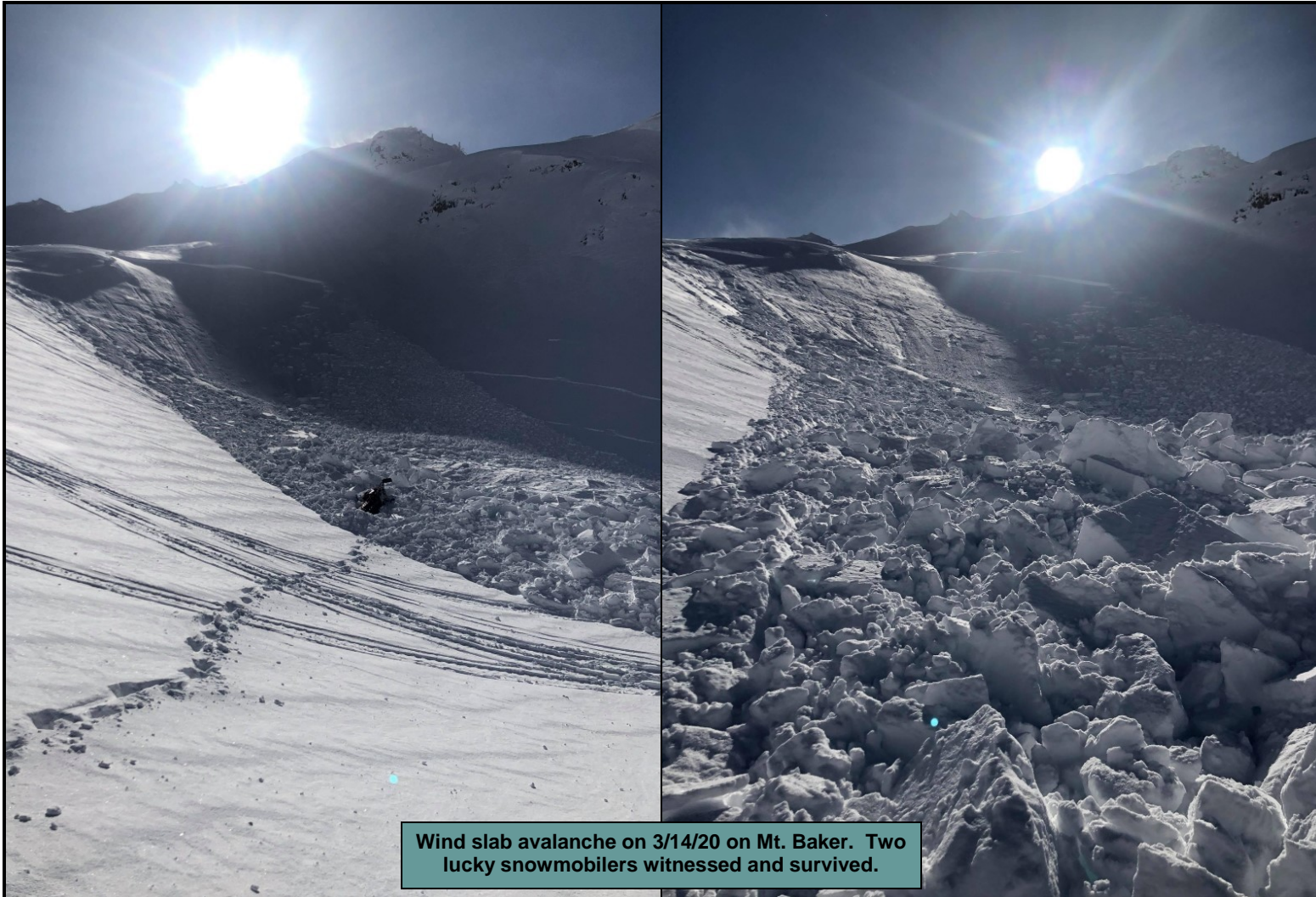
pacted by the avalanche and his friend was able to abandon his sled and work his way across the top of the very large chunks of avalanche debris that had overwhelmed his sled.

Thank God both Chris and his buddy made it out of that situation alive and unharmed. Both left the mountain immediately and headed home. As they got home, they started to reflect on what went wrong and with a passion to give other people in the area a heads up of the hidden dangers. That is when they called me, and

I was able to put them in touch with the staff of the Northwest Avalanche Center to report the avalanche and to help to confirm and improve the available data the avalanche center had on the current snow pack in that area. That night we shared out some pictures of the avalanche to help spread the word about the potential risks.

What went wrong? In discussions with Chris the next day, we discussed what happened with hindsight being 20/20. Chris admitted to making the same mistake and assumptions I believe many other sledders

(Continued on page 20)



Wind slab avalanche on 3/14/20 on Mt. Baker. Two lucky snowmobilers witnessed and survived.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO! - Avalanche Forecasts



Cascades (Canadian border to Mt. Hood) - www.nwac.us

Idaho Panhandle - www.idahopanhandleavalanche.org

WA/OR Blues - www.wallowaavalanchecenter.org/forecast/blues



Safety with Jon

(Continued from page 19) make all the time. They missed reading the details of the forecast calling out at high elevation there were wind slabs in the snowpack that were at risk to be triggered. Many snowmobilers simply look at the map of the avalanche forecasting zones and see the color and look no further. In their mind they have ridden these areas so many times and have seen the same results so many times and have seen the same colors so many times they make up in their head and assume what the conditions are going to be in the mountains without actually double clicking into the forecast and reading and understanding the exact avalanche problems they are dealing with. On this day Chris saw

green and yellow in the forecast but didn't see there were wind slabs in alpine areas that were the main concerns for probable avalanches in his zone. Ultimately that is exactly what they uncovered that day... they triggered a wind slab. There was a very high likelihood both guys could have been caught and buried on the hill that day and with only the two of them riding together they would not have lived to tell this story.

Do you read the avalanche forecast before every ride? Do you know what the avalanche problems or the bottom-line summary says for your riding area this weekend? If not, you may also have bad surprise in your future!

#LiveLARGE

8:24 LTE

Done WA Cascades West, Mt Baker

THE BOTTOM LINE

Strong solar radiation may overcome cold temperatures and easterly winds to create small wet loose avalanches on sun-exposed slopes. Move to shaded or lower angled terrain if you notice snow surfaces becoming wet and weak. If you venture into the alpine, identify and avoid large wind loaded slopes steeper than 35 degrees and steer clear of cornice formations.

Done WA Cascades West, Mt Baker

AVALANCHE PROBLEM #2

Wind Slab

Avalanche Problem

Aspect/Elevation

Almost Certain

Very Likely

Likely

Possible

Unlikely

Historic (D4-)

Very Large (D3)

Large (D2)

Small (D1)

Look beyond the initial map graphic on the NWAC page and dig into the avalanche forecast before every ride!

www.wssa.us

April 2020 • 20

Membership

Membership Matters & Other Hot Topics

**By Wayne & Florence Mohler,
Membership Co-Chairs**

As we approach the end of the 2019-2020 snowmobile season we decided to provide some membership facts and figures and share a few thoughts for next season. Our membership year runs from September 1st through August 31st; however, our fiscal or budget year runs from March 1st through the end of February. It has been a long-standing practice that anyone joining after March 1st gets the remainder of the current year as well as the following full year of **membership for \$25. If you've been thinking about joining, this is a good time to go ahead and do it.** Overall, there was a slight uptick in membership as compared with last year. Our current membership as of March 1st was 1,045 (Family/Individual, Clubs, and Associate members) as compared with 1,036 last year. The good news is we gained 26 new Family/Individual memberships. The not-so-good news is our Associate memberships dropped by 10 (from 94 to 84). When you consider there are over 23,000 snowmobiles registered in Washington, which probably represents 10,000 to **11,000 households, it's pretty easy to see we have a lot of room to grow as our paid membership only represents about 8 to 9% of the snowmobilers in the state.** To be effective in representing the interests of snowmobilers we need more members. With maintaining access to riding areas being our most important priority, we need snowmobilers to get involved with WSSA and to **represent snowmobilers' interests on a wide variety of committees, councils, boards, and clubs.** Various agencies, land managers, and legislators are making decisions that will impact whether or not we will have riding areas in the future. As snowmobilers, we need to be involved in those decisions. No one will do this for us.

If I-976 (reducing snowmobile registrations from \$50 to \$30) is implemented, will the snowmobile program have a 'softer landing' than other budgets that depend on vehicle registrations? Basically, yes. Since the snowmobiles registered in FY-19 (July 2018 thru June 2019) paid for the snowmobile program for the 2019-2020 season, we

experienced no I-976 impact for the season just ending. For the 2020-2021 season, the program will experience an estimated hit of about \$20,000 based on the total registrations remaining flat – at about 23,000 – and that approximately 1,000 of the snowmobiles registered during the period December 2019 – June 2020 are new snowmobiles. All of the renewals this past year were at the old rate of \$50, because they had all expired before December 5th, 2019 (when the initiative was to go into effect). Thus the 2020-2021 snowmobile account budget should not be drastically reduced. However, the major impact – a 20% reduction of \$450,000 to \$500,000, will occur in the 2021-2022 season as the snowmobiles registered during the period July 2020 through June 2021 will generate the funding for the 2021-2022 season. WSSA is actively watching this situation and we should know more about I-976 later this spring/summer. We will then have to decide if and how we want to fill that gap. Stay tuned on this issue! And if you have thoughts on this, please communicate with WSSA President, Dean Meakin (dean.meakin@wssa.us).

Over the years, The Recreation Trails Program has provided significant funding for the snowmobile program, various clubs, and county, state and federal agencies to help keep trails open for both winter and summer recreationists. In Washington, the funds (from the federal highway gas tax) are dispersed through the Recreation and Conservation Office. We want to recognize two WSSA members for their representation of snowmobiling on the Recreation Trails Program Advisory Committee. Sandy Sternod, Covington, recently completed serving two terms on this committee, and Norris Boyd, Newport, who was recently selected as the new representative. A big thank you to Sandy for volunteering her time on this committee and welcome to Norris!

Remember, this is still a great time to join a club, (many have summertime activities), join WSSA, and volunteer to work on one of the many committees, and to enjoy the remainder of the snow season.



SNOWMOBILE RENTALS IN WASHINGTON

Adventure Powersports Rentals

(Ronald/Roslyn)

(509) 933-1737

www.adventurepowersportsrentals.com

Cascade on Site Rentals LLC

(Leavenworth/Wenatchee)

(509) 423-3828

www.cascadeonsiterentals.com

Chewack River Guest Ranch

(Methow Valley/Winthrop)

(509) 996-2497

www.chewackranch.com

CJ Marine

(Lake Wenatchee Area)

(Lake Wenatchee Area)

(206) 878-8668

www.cj-rentals.net

Leavenworth Snowmobile Rentals

(Leavenworth)

(509) 763-0333

www.leavenworthsnowmobilerentals.com

Motor Toys

(Cle Elum)

(509) 674-6807

www.motortoysofcleelum.com

Mountain Springs Lodge

(Lake Wenatchee/Leavenworth)

Tours Only

(800) 858-2276

www.mtsprings.com

Redline Recreational Toys

(Seattle Area)

(206) 424-4FUN

www.seattle.redlinerecretoys.com

Sharkey's Watercraft & Snowmobile Rentals

(Chelan)

(509) 687-2312/9819

www.lakechelanonline.com/rentals.html

The Last Resort

(Ronald/Roslyn/Cle Elum)

(509) 649-2222

www.thelastresortwa.com

List compiled by Florence Mohler, WSSA Tourism Chair.
Please call (800) 784-WSSA (9772) with tourism
questions or updates to this listing.

Note: WSSA does not endorse any business listed. WSSA provides this list only as a courtesy. Please report any errors in listing to Florence Mohler at (800) 784-9772.

Notes

WSSA recently took the opportunity to thank the Forest Service for it's support of winter recreation in Washington. Here is a letter sent to the Naches Ranger District. If you know of a Ranger who would appreciate such a letter, please let President Dean Meakin know.

Washington State Snowmobile Association
P.O. Box 668
Yakima, WA 98907

March 25, 2020

Kelley Lawrence
USFS District Ranger
10237 Hwy 12
Naches, WA 98937

Subject: Appreciation for USFS Support of Winter Recreation

To Whom It May Concern,

The Washington State Snowmobile Association (WSSA) would like to affirm our appreciation for the United State Forest Service in regards to the agency's support of winter recreation, with an emphasis on snowmobiling, on Federally-managed lands in Washington State.

Washington State enjoys a large economic benefit from outdoor recreation year round with a large percentage of activities occurring on our Forest Service-managed lands; winter recreation is an important part of this, boosting the economies of local businesses and small towns near winter recreation hubs. Winters in Washington are a special time and the need to get outdoors is especially important and snowmobiling and other snow-related activities provide a chance to reenergize the mind and body and spend quality time with family and friends.

The Forest Service's partnership with Washington State Parks is critical, necessary and applauded. We would have a severely diminished winter recreation program without this cooperation. In an effort to maximize our motorized (and non-motorized) program dollars, having the Forest Service provide services in select locations is very cost-effective. While services performed by the Forest Service vary by location around the State, we appreciate the sno-park plowing, sanitation services, grooming and on-the-snow education and enforcement provided.

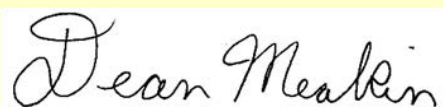
WSSA's relationship with the Forest Service is an important one and is a two-way street of cooperation. WSSA's recent involvement in the USFS Sawyer Program has provided significant benefits to both groups; WSSA members have been certified and worked on projects benefiting both motorized and non-motorized winter recreation, saving the Forest Service dollars and manpower. WSSA also provides our member snowmobile clubs with insurance benefits which protect both the club and the Federal Government if a mishap occurs during an USFS-permitted event.

Our local snowmobile clubs around the State depend on a solid relationship with their local USFS land managers as well. The Forest Service helps our clubs obtain the necessary permits to host family-friendly events on the National Forest including Fun Runs, Scavenger Hunts and Kid's Play Days. In addition to permitting such events, Forest Service personnel are typically on hand to meet with the public, verify registrations and sno-park permits, answer questions, and assist with Search and Rescue or other on-the-snow needs.

Outdoor winter activities are expanding in both the motorized and non-motorized world with new technologies (snowbikes, tracked ATVs/UTVs and fat bikes as examples) and we hope the involvement and assistance from the Forest Service will grow as well.

In conclusion, WSSA would like to reiterate our appreciation for the USFS in Washington State and the continued need for the Forest Service's strong commitment to winter recreation.

Sincerely,



Dean Meakin,
President, Washington State Snowmobile Association



Notes

Legislative Update prepared for the Washington State Snowmobile Association

**Written & Distributed from the Offices of Gjurasic, Kohl & Baldwin
Public Affairs Consultants**

ISSUES OF THE 2020 SESSION

As of Thursday, March 12th, 2020, the last day of the 2020 60-day session, below is an updated list of top priority bills we have been tracking on behalf of WSSA to include the Transportation Budget (HB 2322). If the Governor decides to veto any of the budgets that impact snowmobilers, we will let you know. The Governor has 20 days to sign bills into law.

2020 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES: STATE

1. HB 2592/SB 6363 - Concerning tracked and wheeled all-terrain vehicles. This legislation was introduced by the Washington State Snowmobile Association.
 - **Directs the Department of Licensing to permit the owner of a wheeled all-terrain vehicle (WATV) to license the vehicle concurrently for use as a tracked all-terrain vehicle (TATV) and for off-road and/or on-road use.**
 - **Requires a person who applies for a concurrent vehicle license for a WATV and TATV to submit a one-time declaration providing that, while in use upon public roads, the vehicle will conform with all federal and state motor vehicle safety standards.**

The bill simply ran out of time in the short 60-day session and we will be reintroducing the legislation in the 2021 105-day session.

Sponsors: Representatives Barkis, Doglio, Hoff, Eslick; Senators Takko, Warnick

STATUS HB: DEAD – House Floor

STATUS SB: DEAD – House Rules
2. HB 2447 - Categorizing certain new entrants to the vehicle market as wheeled all-terrain vehicles.
 - **Modifies the definition of "wheeled all-terrain vehicle" to increase the maximum weight and tire pressure for regulated vehicles.**
 - **Amends the WATV maximum weight from 2,000 to 4,000 pounds.**

Sponsors: Representatives Schmick, Barkis, Shea

STATUS: DEAD – House Transportation Committee
3. SB 6245 - Limiting state and local taxes, fees, and other charges relating to vehicles.
 - **Adopts provisions similar or identical to law as amended by Initiative 976.**
 - **Provides backfill for the state impacts from Initiative 976 from the sales and use tax on motor vehicles.**
 - **Snowmobile Registration Fee. I-976 reduced the initial and renewal registration fees for snowmobiles from \$50 to \$30.**

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, Becker, Braun, Honeyford, Padden, Warnick, Zeiger, Holy, Short

STATUS: DEAD – Senate Transportation Committee
4. HB 2723 – Addressing off-road vehicle and snowmobile registration enforcement. WSSA originally had concerns on this bill and worked with Grant Nelson to eliminate the changes in Sec. 3(2)(b).
 - **Modifies the reciprocity provision that allows a person that has properly registered an off-road vehicle (ORV) in another state to use the vehicle in Washington without registering it here, such that the provision does not apply to residents from a state that does not impose a sales and use tax on transactions involving ORVs.**
 - **Allows a person that is a resident of another state to register an ORV in Washington without paying a fee, if the person presents an unexpired driver's license and a current ORV registration from the other state when registering.**
 - **Requires the Department of Licensing and the Department of Revenue to jointly send out a letter to a Washington resident who purchased an ORV or snowmobile warranty in the preceding year, but who has not registered the vehicle in Washington, notifying the owner of the obligation to register and of the penalty for failure to register.**
 - **Establishes a gross misdemeanor for registering an ORV or a snowmobile in another state to avoid sales and use taxes and, for second and subsequent offenses, requires a fine equal to four times the amount of avoided taxes and fees be paid.**

Sponsors: Representatives Wylie

STATUS: Speaker Signed on Way to the Governor

(Continued on page 24)

Notes

(Continued from page 23)

5. HB 2362/SB 6652 – Addressing local transportation revenue options. Provides cities and counties with various councilmanic taxing authority to be used for transportation purposes.
Sponsors: Representatives Ramos, Callan, Ryu, Chapman, Doglio, Senn, Kloba, Gregerson, Pollet; Senators Nguyen, Saldaña, Lovelett, Das
STATUS HB: DEAD - House Transportation Committee
STATUS SB: DEAD - Senate Transportation Committee
6. HB 2913 – Concerning transportation revenue. Increases motor vehicle fuel taxes by 0.7 cent on July 1st, 2020, and by 1 cent each year for the next nine years.
Sponsors: Representatives Fey, Chapman
STATUS: DEAD - House Transportation Committee
7. HB 2278 / SB 6115 - Concerning off-road vehicle registrations.
 - Eliminates the registration exemption for an out-of-state owner of an offroad or wheeled all-terrain vehicle under certain conditions.
 - Changes laws dealing with failure to register an off-road vehicle.
Sponsors: Representative Wylie; Senators Takko, Warnick, Hobbs, Van De Wege, Wilson, L. and Sheldon
STATUS HB: DEAD – House Transportation Committee
STATUS SB: DEAD – House Transportation Committee
8. HB 2322/SB 6497 - Making supplemental transportation appropriations for the 2019-2021 fiscal biennium. The Transportation budget passed concurrence in both the House and Senate and is now on its way to the Governor's desk. <http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2020/2322-S.PL.pdf>
The budget keeps the current language regarding snowmobiles as follows:
Sec. 208. 2019 FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING
(((21))) (13) \$31,000 of the motor vehicle account—state appropriation is provided solely for the implementation of chapter 262 (((Substitute House Bill No. 1436))), Laws of 2019 (snow bikes). If chapter 262 (((Substitute House Bill No. 1436))), Laws of 2019 is not enacted by June 30, 2019, the amount provided in this subsection lapses.
The budget inserts new language as follows:
Sec. 208. 2019 FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING
(30) \$14,000 of the motor vehicle account—state appropriation is provided solely for the implementation of chapter . . . (Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2723), Laws of 2020 (off-road vehicle enforcement) or chapter . . . (Senate Bill No. 6115), Laws of 2020 (off-road vehicle enforcement). If neither chapter . . . (Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2723), Laws of 2020 nor chapter . . . (Senate Bill No. 6115), Laws of 2020 is enacted by June 30, 2020, the amount provided in this subsection lapses.
Sponsors: Senator Hobbs, Saldaña; Representatives Fey, Wylie
STATUS HB: Speaker Signed - On Way to the Governor
STATUS SB: Negotiated with House

Snowmobile registrations through February 2020.

We were down 710 registrations compared to last year at that time. It is reasonable to assume March and April numbers will not bring us up to last year's level. Can you help? Did you not register a machine or two you usually do? Register them now! Remember, we are funding NEXT season's program. If you plan to ride next year, don't you want as much money in the program as possible to cover trail grooming and sno-park plowing?

Snowmobile Registrations							
	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY 19-20 Difference
July	166	149	145	134	148	166	18
August	1,142	531	676	782	2,307	222	(2,085)
September	3,546	2,968	3,145	2,946	1,682	2,974	1,292
October	2,544	1,662	2,139	2,489	1,882	3,357	1,475
November	2,870	3,129	3,362	4,360	2,960	2,372	(588)
December	6,656	11,575	13,170	6,973	8,320	6,726	(1,594)
January	2,741	3,528	3,196	3,358	3,433	4,514	1,081
February	381	1,164	1,513	1,166	1,602	1,293	(309)
March	68	298	686	674	958		
April	42	82	181	175	258		
May	22	32	93	93	90		
June	23	30	84	71	83		
Total:	20,201	25,148	28,390	23,221	23,723	21,624	(710)
		24%	11%				

Feature

2020 Military Appreciation Ride

By Matt Mead, Military Ride Leader

A less-than-stellar weather pattern required a change-up in location this year. Icy conditions at Boulder Cave had us going back to our roots; yes, we launched this year's ride out of Little Naches.

Going back to early February, I contacted the Yakima Training Center and offered up rides for a handful of soldiers. We'd provide the sleds, gear, meals and fun, and they'd supply the smiling faces!

On March 6th, our group gathered in the Bi-Mart parking lot and once everyone was accounted for, we convoyed to the Little Naches Sno-Park. Once there, we provided our guests with gear, assigned sleds, and held an orientation and safety briefing.

On the trail around 10am, our destination was Raven's Roost to enjoy the spectacular views of Mt. Rainier. Of course Mother Nature wasn't playing and instead we enjoyed a cloudy, foggy snowy local landscape. It's the thought that counts!

The Chinook Pass Snowmobile Club, our annual chili and dogs cooks, had easily adapted to our change of venue and agreed to meet us in Lost Meadow and prepare lunch. We arrived right at noon and the spread was waiting! While the meadow not as accommodating as the Little Bald warming hut, everyone enjoyed a hearty lunch and had a chance to warm up around a big campfire.

After lunch our group headed out to the cabin at Government Meadows. Here our new riders were cut loose and had a ton of fun racing around the meadows. We were lucky the groomer had recently filled in all the water holes that had appeared with the recent rains and warm weather, so we didn't have any mishaps with snowmobiles or snowmobilers! Our soldier guests were also treated to visits from the local gray jays/camp robbers; they swooped down for food and were literally eating out of the palms of our hands.

By mid-afternoon it was time to start our retreat and taking a different route, looped back to the Little Naches Sno-Park where everyone de-gear'd and loaded up.

While the riding event was over, the camaraderie was not! Gold Creek Station was expecting us for dinner at 5pm where our group of riders and volunteers enjoyed their 'world famous fish and chips' and other fine fare.

A special thanks Fred Pitzer, Ron and Dee Alred, Frank Lamb, Rudy Classen and Devin Dekker, members of the Drift-A-Way and/or Yakima Ski-Benders for providing loaner sleds for this ride. Thanks to Ron and Shannon Lind of R and R Grooming for making sure we had smooth trails and safe meadows for play. And a hats off to Dan Wallbaum and Doug Mason and their crew for adapting to the last minute venue change and cooking lunch for the group.

Plans are already underway for the 2021 event and



ACSA E-News

**Contact: Christine Jourdain, Executive Director,
ACSA, (517) 351-4362**



The Annual Washington DC Snowmobile Fly-In!

Because of our concern with health and the well-being of the snowmobile leadership, and the uncertainty of Congress' schedules and availability, the 21st Annual DC Fly-In has been cancelled.

We had started the scheduling of hundreds of legislative meetings. We also had a great line up of speakers, from the offices of the Chief of the Forest Service, Under Secretary of Natural Resources in the USDA, House Minority Leader, Fish and Wildlife Services, Legislators and our valued partners.

As in past years, they all knew the snowmobilers were going to be in town and were looking forward to meeting you! It is always exciting to receive such warm receptions from these leaders when we start working on the annual Fly-In.

We have issues that are important -- and time will be of the essence once the Coronavirus is under control and a new normal settles in. Our plan is to prepare some summaries on the issues along with a schedule. This will help us, all of us, keep our issues in the forefront of Congress and remind them what is so very important to us as winter recreationists.

When this crisis is under control, we will begin making plans for the 2021 ACSA Fly-In. It will be more important than ever with a new administration in place and changes in many Senate and Congressional seats.

Colorado Man and Insurer Pay \$500K for Starting 2017 Wild-fire

We often hear charges may be filed, but most often do not hear the outcome of unfortunate situations like this.

A Colorado man and his insurance company paid \$500,000 to the U.S. government for a wildfire that burned federal land. Dale Owns and Grange Insurance Association made the payment to resolve liability for the blaze that became known as the Dead Dog Fire, The Denver Post reported.

Owens started a campfire in June 2017 and the fire spread while he stepped away to gather more wood, a statement by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado said. The Craig resident called 911 and tried to put out the fire but was unsuccessful.

Thank You Corn Growers!

For companies that make ethanol for fuel, these may be the worst of times. But another ethanol-based product - hand sanitizer - is booming.

Spurred by the spread of the new coronavirus, hand sanitizer is in such demand that the Corn Refiners Association, a trade group, reassured the public that its members are keeping pace providing a key ingredient, while urging consumers not to hoard the product.

"America's corn refiners are producing trainloads of industrial alcohol on a daily basis," said the CRA president.

Did You Know?

* Corn-based ethanol is a common ingredient in sanitizers. It's produced by converting cornstarch to glucose and combining it with yeast. Toiletries and cosmetics, including sanitizer, account for almost a quarter of U.S. end markets for industrial alcohol.

* Corn-based ingredients also account for a quarter of hand soap's ingredients, according to the Corn Refiners, representing

companies such as Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill and Grain Processing Corp.

Missing the Sneak Peeks???

The video tour of the new Ski-Doos will be found by watching here: www.facebook.com/SkiDoo/photos/a.286359908066868/2903042666398566/?type=3&theater

The new line up of Polaris sleds can be seen by clicking here: www.snowmobiles.polaris.com/en-us/sleds

Arctic Cats can be seen if you click here: www.arcticcat.txtsv.com/snow/trail?gclid=EAIaI QobChMIg9_0y5676AIVzCCtBh0JQg4rEAAAYASAAEgJLMfD_BwE

See the new Yamahas in an action video by clicking here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtN8mSB7Zc8

In Case You've Missed This Tidbits....

Department of Treasury: The deadline for filing tax returns has been moved from April 15th to July 15th. All taxpayers and businesses will have this additional time to file and make payments without interest or penalties.

BLM's Rocky Move From DC

There are questions being asked by the House Natural Resources Committee as well as the GAO on the move of BLM headquarters and many other positions from Washington, DC, to the West.

Many critics continue to question the Department of Interior's plan, especially given the significant loss of employees. Rather than relocate, many employees either declined the reassignment or separated from their position. While 80 employees made the move, 100 retired or left the BLM.

Additional reports are expected to be released this spring.

About That TP Flying Off the Shelves

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) members are committed to the safety of the workforce and the end-users. This situation is highly dynamic and changing daily, and the industry is working diligently to respond to the spike in demand for tissue products due to coronavirus (COVID-19) purchases.

Rest assured, tissue products continue to be produced and shipped - just as they are 52 weeks each year as part of a global market. "AF&PA members operate a safe and highly automated process to create and maintain tissue supply, and the paper and wood products industry remains committed to providing customers and businesses worldwide with these essential, everyday products."

Clean Snowmobile Challenge

The first SAE Clean Snowmobile Challenge was held in Jackson, Wyoming in 2000. In 2003 the Challenge was moved to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where it is hosted by the Keweenaw Research Center, a research arm of Michigan Tech University.

The Challenge was recently held and the results are:

OVERALL WINNERS:

1st Place (Sponsored by ISMA): Michigan Tech

2nd Place (Sponsored by Yellowstone): University of Maryland - Baltimore County

(Continued on page 27)

(Continued from page 26)

3rd Place (Sponsored by ACSA): Ecole De Technologie Superieurer

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A look at some of the competition sleds



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All hands on deck!



Close Call!

Snow filled the cab of a Montana State Parks PistenBully 100 groomer that was swept about 165 feet downhill on February 27th when it was struck by an avalanche. Luckily the driver was not injured in the accident.



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www.facebook.com/AmericanCouncilofSnowmobileAssociations

(Information pulled from weekly e-mail blasts and edited for publication in the Snoflyer.)

So, you're a mountain rider
and don't need trails?
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Matt's Misc.

By Matt Mead, Publicity Secretary

Tracked ATVs/UTVs legislation died in Committee.

An anti-climatic ending to our legislation this session. If you read the Legislative Update in this issue, you already know our Senate bill died in Committee in the House. We flat ran out of time in this short session. We knew going in it was going to be tough, but we had a shot. We'll do it again next January and with a longer session, we'll have a better chance. The Tracked ATV/UTV Committee appreciates all the support we received from land managers, clubs and individuals.

Lakemaster - How did I miss this?

Last fall there was an article about a concept snowbike called the Lakemaster. Billed as "an ultra-fast snowmobile powered by electric sprocket motors". The idea is from Charles Bombardier and he harkens back to when he was a teenager blasting across Quebec lakes on a black Ski-Doo Mach 1. Envisioned to be powered by lithium-sulfur batteries driving sprocket motors and equipped with a self-balancing system to remain stable. The seat and footpegs would slide around with help of electric motors offering a variable ergonomic seating position. Probably not coming to a mountain top near you anytime soon.

WSSB Ride.

Last month I mentioned helping out with the annual ride for students of Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) hosted by the Mt. St. Helens Trac Riders. The local paper, The Columbian has a little slideshow of pics here: www.columbian.com/photos/galleries/2020/02/28/wssb-goes-snowmobiling



Tension in West Yellowstone following union protests.

That seemed like a weird headline. Turns out there is some tension between local guides and the company operating most of the area's tours. One snowcoach guide complained she works over 20 hours a week at \$12 an hour and one week received a \$65 paycheck. Another complained of unsafe working conditions noting she was asked to guide alone in a part of the park known for dangerous conditions before her training was complete.


Guides are concerned this non-local company is monopolizing snowmobile travel in the Park at the expense of local business owners. Some guides believe they have recently been let go after attending local union protests. What's the goal? Local guides are

hoping by bringing attention to this, Yellowstone National Park will not renew the company's license to operate in the Park when it expires in a few years.

Delaware North is the tourism company, based out of New York, and they claim to have invested over \$3 million into Yellowstone Vacation Tours since 2016, one of the businesses

(Continued on page 29)





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LARGEST TRITON DEALER IN THE WEST!

(Continued from page 28) they own in town. The company points out they have made significant investments in local hotels and donated roughly \$60K to local charitable causes. They also noted not all guides are unhappy and claims a 66% annual return rate for seasonal guides.

Spaghetti supper to celebrate Madawaska (Maine) snowmobile fan. The article was published before the event, so I'm assuming it happened... but with the virus and all, who knows?...

Anyway, the back-story... It came about when a 14-year-old boy named Bobby, who had lost his dad and snowmobiling partner, posted on a snowmobile club Facebook page that he'd like to "tag along" for a ride with anyone willing. A group of volunteers offered to bring him out for a fun-filled weekend. The spaghetti dinner is a fundraiser with donations going to Bobby and his mom.

Taiga Motors - One step closer to production. I've mentioned this electric snowmobile company before. Here is a news video showing one on the snow. It is undoubtedly cool! For western riders, range continues to be the limitation. At the time this video was published, the company had 600 reserved orders. Check the video here: www.barrie.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1919911&jwsSource=cl

And now for something gimmicky... The tagline was 'watch A Tesla Model 3 drag race an EV snowmobile'. The e-sled was built by Aurora Powertrains. Do I need to tell you who won? You can watch the video here: www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=378&v=F2x418VTjc0&feature=emb_logo

Beware the wolverine! There is still a push to restrict snowmobile access, not to mention human access, due to concerns over wolverine habitat in Northern Idaho. Sandra Mitchell, Director of Public Lands for the Idaho State Snowmobile Association, has been tracking this issue for more than 10 years. Wolverines are solitary animals that live in remote, cold places including Idaho. They are stocky creatures with long coarse fur, sharp claws, and remarkably strong for a 40 lb animal. They have very low-density populations with home ranges of up to 600 square miles and can travel up to 15 miles a day. Their range is the problem for us; if 'critical habitat' areas are closed to snowmobiling, we have the potential of losing huge swaths of land. Research published a year ago concluded winter recreation displaces wolverines as female animals require deep



snow between February and May to give birth and keep their offspring safe from predators and protected from frigid temperatures. It is estimated wolverines only number 250 to 300 in the Lower 48. Wolverines have been reported in 77% of Idaho's counties, including pretty much all of the area snowmobilers frequent. Extreme environmental groups are suing the Forest Service to protect the wolverine, but interestingly, their big argument for protection isn't snowmobilers, but climate change. They want snowmobilers out too, but one wonders how they expect the government to stop climate change?...

Family time! Ask yourself, "have we lost touch with our snowmobiling roots?" Some have. Others though are doing it right!

A couple of weeks back a group of us were riding up on White Pass. As we pulled into a meadow, we smelled smoke. In other places I would have thought a warming hut was nearby, but I know there isn't one there. So it had to be a campfire. We rode all around searching and came up empty. Upon leaving the meadow and coming back in, we smelled it again. I quickly stopped and looked back the way we had come and through the trees I saw a family hanging around a campfire. Mom, dad, a couple of kids and another friend had built a fire to keep warm and maybe cook a few hot dogs. We stopped in and chatted for a bit; great family! I found this heartwarming. Another ride about a week later, we stumbled across the remains of another campfire in a completely different location. I wouldn't be surprised if it was the same family.

So next season this is going to be us! Not on all of our rides, but on a few of them. We'll slow the pace, find a spot off the beaten path, build a fire and roast some dogs. The Methow Valley Snowmobile Association has this as a key feature of their weekly club rides already; I guess they knew something we didn't!

My shortest snowmobile ride ever! A couple of days before WSSA's annual Military Appreciation Ride, I was concerned about the conditions at the Boulder Cave Sno-Park and first mile or two of the trail, so three of us decided to check things out. My first clue of a problem should have been when I pulled into the sno-park and tried to stop. The parking area is angled downward and when I tried to stop, my truck and trailer slid from one end of the lot to the other. Undeterred,

I unloaded my sled and we left the sno-park. The first section of trail was icy, but I hopped from traction spot to traction spot and made it up around the switchback corner to a patch of snow. I waited a minute or two for the others to show and when they didn't, I figured I should go back and help as they were likely stuck on the ice. Coming around the corner I saw them working to get their sleds off the ice and as I slowed to help, my sled spun 180 and drifted towards the edge of the trail. The trail was slightly off-camber and the ice ran clear to the edge where there was a 15' drop down to rocks and stumps (and no snow); I stepped off the sled, tried to stop it, but in the end, I watched helplessly as it went over the edge track first and tumbled, coming to a stop nearly upside down against a couple of stumps. Ouch. With help, I pushed the track up against the stumps, fired it up and used them for traction until the sled got past them and plopped back on the skis/track. Luckily I could ride it through the trees and pop back up in the sno-park.

Smart people would have loaded up and gone home. We aren't them. We ended up going up the trail about a mile, only to find there was no end in sight to the slick ice. Learning our lesson, we hooked a strap to the back of one of the other machines and pulled when it was at risk of sliding off the edge of the trail; it was a lot farther down where it would have landed! The trip back down resulted in bumper cars once, but was otherwise uneventful.

I'm not a complete idiot; at this point we figured 10+ trucks in an angled and icy sno-park, not to mention 20+ snowmobilers, half of which had never ridden before on a sheet of ice masquerading as a groomed trail, probably wasn't a recipe for a safe and fun Military Ride... (My sled? Right side is pretty scraped up from side panel to headlight. Right hand grip ripped, deleting the hand-warmer function on that side. Runs and drives just fine, thanks!)

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