



**The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts was formed in 1969.
"Committed To Enhancing Safe Snowmobiling in Massachusetts"**

The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM) strives to develop and maintain an expanding interconnected snowmobile trail system, allowing snowmobile enthusiasts to travel from Worcester County to the Berkshires, in a safe, efficient manner. There are approximately 9,000 members of SAM, of which 70% are married and over the age of 36 years--a mature responsible group of citizens. According to a 2003 study conducted by the University of Massachusetts, snowmobiling has an economic impact of \$54.7 million per year in our state alone! That's taxable dollars.

Simply put, the forty clubs, which are the backbone of SAM, pool their resources to better the sport of snowmobiling. Each club selects a delegate to represent their interests as a Board of Director of SAM. The club delegates attend monthly meetings and make all final decisions regarding the association; from selection of officers to policy, budgets, bylaws and strategic goals of the organization.

The officers (president, vice president, treasurer and secretary) are elected by the delegates at an annual meeting held in April. In addition to our state association, several SAM members sit on the boards of regional, national and international snowmobile associations. These organizations hold yearly and quarterly meetings to develop plans to better the sport of snowmobiling all over the world.

Currently we have two active committees. A trails & safety committee and a legislative committee. The trails & safety committee researches and makes recommendations to the body about trail standards, possible links, grooming, and safety-related issues. SAM has several Vermont certified safety course instructors who train hundreds of snowmobilers every year. SAM is very pro-active in all matters of safety. The legislative committee works hand in hand with the membership to file bills and promote snowmobiling on a state level. At this time there is a bill pending that will close a loophole in the DUI law that does not cover trails on private property. Representative Anne Gobi is the primary sponsor of this bill.

There are a few snowmobilers who do not understand the need to join a club and obtain SAM membership. First, let's talk about the trespass law. Before the law was enacted there were a considerable number of non-member snowmobilers riding on private property without permission of any kind. These individuals were indeed trespassing and frequently were unregistered as well. Although the local club had secured landowner permission for its members, they were powerless to control non-members from trespassing. Since the law has been enacted, one must either obtain written permission from each individual landowner, or join a SAM affiliated club that has obtained permission. This law mirrors that of Vermont and the VAST trail system.

Second, let's discuss the subject of joining both a club and SAM. If one chooses to become a member of an affiliated club, they must also join SAM, as stated in the SAM bylaws. You cannot become a SAM member without first joining a club. This unity of snowmobilers is necessary to fund, promote, enhance and maintain the sport in our state and on a nationwide basis.

The cost of a SAM membership, which is set by the delegates, is \$25. A trail pass is proof of SAM membership. Club memberships, on the other hand, are decided by individual clubs, and the rates vary between \$15-\$30. Some clubs have a flat fee, say \$50 per sled, which includes both the club and SAM membership fees. Others have separated the club fees from the SAM membership fee. In this case, club fees can vary from individual rates of \$15, to family rates of \$40. The club then charges an additional \$25 for each SAM membership trail pass. There are other variations to club membership fees, but most fall under the above structures. Again, this is like Vermont and other state associations.

The clubs use the majority of collected funds to maintain and groom trails. The annual cost can be in the tens of thousands of dollars for a large club, not including capital costs such as groomer purchases. Club volunteers donated over 11,500 hours of trail work on public and private property in 2003-2004. Snowmobiling on groomed trails is a pay-as-you-play system, membership dues are used by associations throughout the U.S. and Canada to raise the necessary funds to maintain quality trails.

The dues collected by SAM are used for many budgeted items including the major purchase of a liability insurance policy that protects the landowners and the clubs, as well as contracting for the services of an executive director, legislative advisor, and newspaper editor. In addition, over twenty thousand dollars are contracted annually from SAM back to clubs to help cover the overhead cost of grooming, which is performed by volunteers. This system of fund distribution assists the clubs who maintain a trail system and groomer fleet, a very costly endeavor. Members of clubs that do not have a trail system to maintain are paying, via a trail pass, to help groom the trails where they actually ride. Many states in the snow belt enjoy the benefit of state supported funds for snowmobiling through gas tax and registration fees. We, on the other hand, do not receive state funds and are completely dependent on the membership for income. Maintaining trails is expensive and those who play should support the costs.

Funds are also used for the new SAM "Trails Safety Grant," announced this season to hire additional patrols of SAM snowmobile trails by the Massachusetts Environmental Police Officers. This \$5,000 grant is being used by clubs to provide additional trail enforcement and safety checks throughout the 2005 snowmobile season.

SAM publishes a monthly newspaper seven times during the season that is used to communicate with the membership at large. We do accept outside submissions and commentary. We also host a website, www.sledmass.com.

Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts 2004/2005 Officers

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