



“What can my age group do to improve the quality of our snowmobile trail system?” by Morgan Seleski

Many people who snowmobile don't realize how much MnUSA and their local clubs do to support their sport and even fewer know that there is an association available to join. For snowmobiling to continue to thrive, it's vital for the youth of today to get involved not only in MnUSA but also be active in their local club and to help others to know what their club does each year to ensure that snowmobiling continues to grow.

If everyone who utilizes the trail systems joined a club and learned what a large impact paying a small fee does to improve the trails, the quality of the trails would increase due simply to the increase in funds to better maintain the trails. Though it's only a small fee per family each year it quickly adds up. In addition, the more members we have involved, the less work each individual has to do to maintain the organization and the trail system.

If the general population of snowmobilers were informed exactly how the trails were formed and maintained, perhaps they'd learn to respect the trails more. This includes not only riding respectfully and staying on the trails rather than going through landowner's yards and fields but also by not speeding, not littering and even stopping to clean up polluted areas. There are too many people who are opposed to snowmobiling to allow a few bad riders to affect the public's perspective of snowmobiling. People also don't realize that we wouldn't have trails to ride if it weren't for generous landowners allowing trails to be put through their land and signs to be put into their ground. I feel that if all snowmobilers were aware of the fact that trails run through private land and is not all state or county land, a new respect for the trails themselves would grow. The importance of being involved in MnUSA also spills over to things such as the lobbying efforts that are made on behalf of snowmobilers and the overall preservation of the sport that could not be done if there was not a group effort. The representatives work with lawmakers and the DNR to ensure good, safe, continuous trails.

I believe that the most important thing the youth of today can do to improve Minnesota's trail systems is simply teaching other riders of the efforts that go into making our trail system possible and getting involved by actually going to the farm fields and marking trails and putting up bridges. We need to go with the groomer to maintain the trails throughout the season and follow through with removing the trails in the spring. We need to tell the landowners that they are appreciated, both in words and in action.

It's not that the snowmobilers of today aren't willing to donate or become involved; it's simply that many don't think about it and are ignorant of the facts. I think that by starting out a new generation of riders the right way and instilling in them the respect and responsibility for not only the club, but for the trails, the quality of snowmobile trails will greatly improve and this wonderful privilege can continue.