

**ASSESSMENT OF SNOWMOBILING IN
MICHIGAN BY SNOWMOBILERS WITH MICHIGAN
TRAIL PERMITS, 2009**

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Snowmobiling has been an integral part of Michigan's winter outdoor recreation and economy since the 1970s. Today the state has over 6,300 miles of groomed, designated trails and 200,000 sleds from Michigan and beyond permitted to ride the trail system as well as other public lands and waters. This report summarizes a mail survey of 3,000 randomly selected 2007-08 Michigan trail permit holders who were surveyed during the winter of 2008-09. It was funded by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Michigan State University Extension. The research used questions and format from a previous study done by the two senior researchers in 1998 which provides trend information about Michigan snowmobiling from winter 1996-97 to 2008-09.

Of the sample of 3,000 snowmobilers, 78% were Michigan residents and 22% were non-residents. This is a shift from winter 1996-97 when 63% were resident and 37% were non-residents. A total of 1,092 snowmobilers responded to the survey. After invalid addresses were removed, this resulted in a 38% response rate with 76% of responses by residents and 24% by non-residents. During winter 2007-08, it is estimated that the average resident machine had 11.5 days of use versus 14.5 in winter 1996-97. The average non-resident machine had an average of 6.5 days of use in Michigan compared to 5.5 in winter 1996-97. In total, there were 2 million snowmobiling days in winter 2007-08, a 13% decline from winter 1996-97. Snowmobile use shifted southward as the UP had 35% of the days in winter 2007-08 instead of 39% as in 1996-97, while the southern Lower Peninsula had 14% of the use in 2007-08 compared to 10% in winter 1996-97. The northern Lower Peninsula had 51% of the days in both studies.

Total direct Michigan spending related to snowmobiling was \$239 million for Michigan snowmobile trips and \$173 million for snowmobile equipment for winter 2008-09. The Michigan economy captured \$156 million of direct trip spending and \$98 million of equipment spending. Key factors leaking money out of Michigan's economy were that much of the trip spending was for fuel and that snowmobiles were not manufactured in Michigan. Trip spending supported 1,819 direct Michigan jobs and an additional 672 jobs through the multiplier effect for a total of 2,491 trip related jobs. Equipment spending supported 972 direct jobs and another 510 through the multiplier effect, accounting for 1,482 equipment spending related jobs. In total, Michigan snowmobiling in winter 2008-09 supported 3,973 Michigan jobs. In comparison, total jobs supported by snowmobiling in winter 1996-97 were 6,455.

Total Michigan spending on overnight and day trips of 100 or more miles from home, when adjusted for inflation, declined by 20% over winter 1996-97. The decline for equipment spending was even larger at 45%. Another important economic benefit to Michigan was that snowmobilers with trail permit during winter 2007-08 generated \$6.2 million of state and federal gasoline taxes and additional Michigan sales taxes for fuel for their snowmobiles.

When asked to rate Michigan snowmobiling and the DNR snowmobile program, snowmobilers

gave the program a strong report card. On a scale of 5=very good to 1=very poor, Michigan snowmobiling for winter 2008-09 received an average rating 4.1 and the trail system a rating of 4.2. Specific ratings about trail grooming, trail maps, trail design, staging areas, law enforcement and safety education all received higher marks in 2009 than in the previous 1998 study. The four most commonly suggested improvements for future Michigan snowmobiling were:

- continued improvement in grooming
- more trails with better connections to towns goods and services
- improved trail maps and signs
- wider, straighter trails

When asked if they supported an expanded designated trail system, 79% responded they did. When asked if they supported negotiating voluntary longer term leases for the 50% of the designated trail system that is in private ownership, 72% supported longer term leases held by private non-profits and 64% supported longer term leases held by state government. There was also support for permanent snowmobile trail easements held by non-profits (69%) and government (63%). When asked if they were willing to pay more to improve snowmobiling in Michigan, 70% of the respondents stated they were willing, with 52% of all respondents willing to pay an additional \$10 annually to snowmobile in Michigan.

Interactions among snowmobilers and law enforcement increased in winter 2007-08 over winter 1996-97. Forty-six percent of snowmobile parties reported that one or more members of their snowmobile party were stopped one or more times during winter 2007-08 versus 35% in winter 1996-97. Sixty-five percent reported seeing an officer while snowmobiling in winter 2007-08 compared to 54% during winter 1996-97. The Law Enforcement Division of the DNR reported that in winter 2007-08 there were 24 snowmobile fatalities compared to 42 in winter 1996-97. Considering that snowmobiling declined 15% between winter 1996-97 and winter 2007-08, fatalities declined much more (43%). This suggests that the visible and active presence of officers was associated with the decline in fatalities.

When non-resident snowmobilers were asked about their other outdoor recreational pursuits, many were active in activities where Michigan has outstanding spring, summer and fall recreational opportunities and a supporting tourism infrastructure. This included hunting, fishing, camping, power boating, canoe/kayak use, bicycling and hiking. This information provides a unique opportunity to better market Michigan to non-residents who already visit and have a positive image of the state, but who may be unaware of the non-snow month opportunities for other types of outdoor recreation.

In summary, between winter 1996-97 and winter 2007-08, snowmobiling days declined 13%. This is tied to the poor economy, not the snowmobile program or trail system, which received very high marks from riders. The decline in snowmobiling, especially in spending on overnight trips and in a reduction in equipment purchases, as well as increases in productivity, led to a decline in the overall number of jobs associated with Michigan snowmobiling. However, as

economic conditions and disposable income improves, Michigan is well positioned to capture increased the economic benefits of snowmobiling with its highly rated trail system. Safety in snowmobiling has shown a marked improvement as demonstrated by a reduction in fatalities and associated increased and active law enforcement presence. As in previous studies, snowmobilers have shown continued interest in further improvements in the trail system including better connectivity to towns, goods and services. Unlike previous studies, they have now articulated their support for negotiating longer term leases and permanent easements on the privately owned portions of the designated trail system. Further, they have indicated a willingness to pay additional fees to reach these goals.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1960, when 250 snowmobiles were marketed in North America (Robertson and Bishop 1975), snowmobiling has become an increasingly mature recreation industry. Michigan has long been a leading state in snowmobile activity and registrations. In 1969, the first year of mandatory Michigan snowmobile registration, 68,000 machines were registered. By the mid-1970s, Michigan had more registered snowmobiles than any other state. Registrations peaked in 1980, with almost 470,000. Between 1980 and 1986, registrations declined rapidly, falling to less than 120,000 in 1986. From 1986 to 2008, registrations rose until 2002, when they peaked at 302,000. They have since slowly declined to 262,000 in 2008 according to the Michigan Secretary of State (Michigan Secretary of State 2008).

Besides the number of registered snowmobiles changing markedly over the past 40 years, the technological characteristics of the machines and the opportunities to ride have also evolved. The machines are now manufactured and marketed by a few corporations rather than the one hundred who were involved in the early 1970s. Today, they offer more powerful engines, greater speed, improved fuel economy, quieter exhaust and more comfort through improved technology. A more extensive trail network is in place, with 6,500 miles of groomed public trail available on a typical winter weekend. In addition, the majority of counties in the northern 2/3 of Michigan allow snowmobiles to use the shoulders of county roads. Finally, many trails provide linkages to communities in the northern 2/3 of Michigan and along the Lake Michigan coastline in the southern third of the state, making it possible for riders to travel many miles in a circuit and enjoy comfortable lodging, good food and other amenities.

The funding for state snowmobile programs has also shifted. A snowmobile trail permit has been required for all machines operated on public lands since the passage of Public Acts 98 and 99 of 1994. This requirement includes residents and non-residents. This legislation was enacted in response to increased funding needs for trail maintenance, development and law enforcement. It also improved the equity of the snowmobile program. Non-residents, who generally do not register their machines in Michigan, are now providing a greater share of program funding. In FY 1995-96, approximately 212,000 permits were sold. The record of snowmobile trail permit sales is maintained in two ways. First, those sold through the retail sales system (RSS), the computer based point of sale data entry capture system used by DNR to sell hunting, fishing, trapping and motorized trail licenses and permits, provides detailed information entered by swiping a driver's license about the origin of those purchasing a license or permit. Second, a portion of snowmobile trail permits are sold by vendors who do are not part of the RSS and who only maintain a paper record of the purchasers name and address, which they turn over to the DNR. They tend to be motels, restaurants, chambers of commerce, visitor and convention bureaus and snowmobile dealers. Based on the judgment of the authors, non-residents are more likely to use these sources for their trail permit than they are the retail sales systems, as they come in contact with these service providers regularly on snowmobile trips, whereas they would be less likely to use the RSS unless they purchased a Michigan hunting or fishing license.

In 2007, a total of 200,530 Michigan snowmobile trail permits were sold, with 49% sold through the RSS and 51% with only paper records. Of those in the RSS, 80% were sold to residents and 20% to non-residents. In 2008, 199,592 permits were sold, with 53% sold through the RSS and 47% using paper records. Of those sold in the RSS, 81% were sold to residents, 19% to non-residents (Frances Heffron, pers. comm.).

With the improvements in snowmobiling technology, shifts in participation, more opportunity and better access, management challenges have also changed. The demographics of Michigan's population and that of the surrounding region are also dynamic. Michigan's population according to the US Bureau of the Census was static to declining in 2008 and 2009. The distribution of Michigan's population, which had seen increases in northern Lower Michigan and ex-urban areas has begun to gradually re-concentrate in and near major urban centers. What has remained is Michigan's position of the most long lived and reliable snow in the Great Lakes region, making Michigan an attractive destination for Michigan residents and those who own machines in other states, especially neighboring ones such as Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

While a flurry of Michigan snowmobiling studies were conducted in the 1970s as the industry went through its initial growth phase (Lanier 1974, Michigan DNR 1976 and 1977, Szcodronski (1978), only one comprehensive statewide study (Nelson et al. 1998) and one detailed economic study (Stynes et al. 1998) has been conducted since. This study will provide an update to that 1998 statewide study which was based on sampling those who purchased a Michigan snowmobile trail permit. This provided access to resident and non-resident snowmobilers, which studies prior to 1998 had not.

To facilitate a safer, more effective snowmobile program, the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management of the DNR agreed in 2008 to jointly solicit bids to conduct a motorized trail study, not just of Michigan snowmobiling, but also of off-road vehicle (ORV) use and users. In a competitive bidding process the contract was awarded to Michigan State University's Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies with the senior author as the principal investigator. This project also received financial support from Michigan State University Extension.

Study Objectives

1. Update the demographic and socio-economic profile of motorized trail users based on Nelson et al. (2000) for ORV users and Nelson et al. (1998) and Stynes et al. (1998) for snowmobilers.
2. Update use patterns by frequency of activity type of machine, trip characteristics and fuel use based on Nelson et al. (2000) for ORV users and Nelson et al. (1998) and Stynes et al. (1998) for snowmobilers.
3. Update the segmentation of snowmobile and ORV market by age of permit holder and by residency status based on Nelson et al. (2000) for ORV users and Nelson et al. (1998) and Stynes et al. (1998) for snowmobilers.
4. Assess trends in statewide and regional economic impacts of motorized trail use on

- public lands using comparable economic modeling techniques to Nelson et al. (2000) for ORV users and Nelson et al. (1998) and Stynes et al. (1998) for snowmobilers.
5. Determine public acceptance (riding public) of a range of current and potential motorized trail program efforts and their associated costs.
 6. Assess attitudes in levels of support for snowmobile trail permit and ORV license fees.
 7. Examine snowmobile and ORV fatality records and assess perceptions of risk from a range of potential hazards encountered when riding.
 8. Determine public acceptance (riding public) of a range of current and potential programmatic efforts and associated costs to reduce these hazards identified in number 7.
 9. The overlap in the snowmobile and ORV market will be examined, as will the linkages of these activities to other forms of outdoor recreation managed by the Michigan DNR.
 10. Objectives 1-9 are part of meeting a trails goal of the Michigan State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2008-12). In part, this goal is to “expand and secure the system of land and water trails in Michigan to promote recreational, economic, transportation and health benefits.” (Nelson et al. 2008).

This report will focus on meeting the objectives related to snowmobiling. Where appropriate, comparisons will be shown with winter 1996-97 data to illustrate trends over the past 12 years. Another report, “State and Regional Economic Impacts of Snowmobiling in Michigan, 2009” by senior author Daniel Stynes will focus specifically on the economic impact of snowmobiling. Other reports will focus on ORV use and users when those studies are completed in 2010.

The following information is provided in this report:

1. Profile of the Michigan snowmobiling market by resident and non-resident sectors.
2. Assessment of the patterns of snowmobiling in Michigan by frequency of activity, type of machine, trip characteristics, use of designated trails and fuel usage in snowmobiles for winter 2007-08.
3. Estimate of direct winter 2008-09 household spending for Michigan snowmobile outings and for non-trip related snowmobile expenses over a 12 month period in 2008-09.
4. Snowmobilers' level of satisfaction with the current trail, education and enforcement programs and their support and suggestions for potential changes.
5. Snowmobilers' suggestions to reduce fatalities and their acceptance of selected potential DNR efforts (and their attendant costs) to reduce fatalities.
6. Snowmobilers' interactions with law enforcement and perceptions of risk from a range of potential hazards encountered while riding.
7. Open-ended comments and suggestions by snowmobilers concerning Michigan snowmobiling and snowmobiling programs.

METHODS

To elicit the necessary data to meet these objectives, a mail survey was conducted with a sample of Michigan trail permit purchasers. From the 199,592 trail permits purchased for winter 2007-08, a sample of 3,000 permit sales was selected, with 1,905 (63.5%) from electronic records and 1,095 (36.5%) from paper records. From the permits sold within the RSS, the sample was randomly selected. From the paper records that the authors were supplied with by DNR, the sample of 1,000 was systematically selected with a random start.

The sample size provided data with a margin of sampling error of +/- 1% at the 95% confidence interval. It also provided a sufficient sample from which to assess the distinguishing characteristics of resident and non-resident snowmobilers. This methodology is similar to that used in the previous study (Nelson et al. 1998) to allow comparison of results across identical questions.

The 34-item, 202-variable mail questionnaire was designed by the authors and reviewed by DNR staff from LED and FMD. After two rounds of revisions, the 6-page instrument was finalized and printed. It is found in Appendix A.

Mail questionnaires were sent in three waves to 1,000 members of the sample. The first wave began January 15, 2009, the second February 15, 2009 and the third March 15, 2009. For each wave each subject received the questionnaire with an appropriate cover letter per the safeguards prescribed by the Michigan State Institutional Review Board. This included a description of the research, how the subject was chosen, a guarantee of confidentiality, the voluntary nature of participation, the use to be made of the information, a contact person in case of questions and the time necessary to complete the survey. A postage paid business reply envelope was provided to insure ease of response. If a response was not received in two weeks, a reminder postcard was sent. If after two additional weeks there was still no response a second mailing of the questionnaire was sent with a revised cover letter encouraging response as many others had already responded. All mailings were done by first class mail. Unlike the previous study however, the second mailing of the questionnaire was not sent by certified mail to reduce study costs and irritation for non-respondents. Copies of cover letters, reminder postcard and the business reply envelope are found in Appendix A. The date of May 15, 2009 was the final cutoff for all waves of the survey.

RESULTS

Of the 3,000 Michigan snowmobile trail permit purchases sampled, 131 (4.4%) had invalid addresses (no forwarding order, forwarding order expired or no such person at this address) as reported by the U.S. Postal Service. Of the 2,869 valid addresses, 1,092 (38.1%) responded. A total of 687 (62.9%) of the respondents were from the RSS and 405 (37.1%) were from the paper records. Response rates did not differ between the portions of the sample selected from the RSS and the paper records system. As in the previous study (Nelson et al. 1998) the data were weighted to control for bias in regards to over sampling individuals with multiple trail permits and under sampling those with a single trail permit.

Responses to the questionnaire will be presented in the order of the objectives. They are segmented by resident, non-resident and all. From the sample of 3,000 addresses, 77.8% were Michigan residents and 22.2% were non-residents. In the winter 1996-97 study, the proportions of addresses in the sample were 62.7% Michigan residents and 37.3% non-residents. This suggests the proportion of non-residents snowmobiling in Michigan with their own sleds was lower in winter 2007-08 than winter 1996-97.

Of the 1,092 respondents in the current study, 76% were Michigan residents and 24% were non-residents. Using the above proportion to extrapolate to the 199,592 trail permits sold for winter 2007-08, provides an estimate of 151,740 resident and 47,852 non-resident machines. Further, since this origin distribution is very similar to the distribution of origins from the total, randomly selected sample, it provides a valid representation of the population of snowmobilers purchasing trail permits participating in Michigan snowmobiling.

Results are presented either for winter 2007-08 or winter 2008-09 depending on the specific question. For example, information on a full winter of snowmobiling (e.g. total snowmobiling days, number of stops by a law enforcement officer across an entire winter, etc.) is presented for winter 2007-08 as all respondents were able to provide data on that entire winter. Due to sampling in three waves throughout the winter of 2008-09 to get the most accurate trip spending information across the winter, most recent trip data is winter 2008-09. However this meant some provided data for only a portion of winter 2008-09, making it inappropriate to estimate total winter 2008-09 snowmobiling from data of people who only reported on their snowmobiling that winter up to early February. Respondent opinions about snowmobile program attributes, willingness to pay fees, suggestions for improvements, etc. are related to experiences in winter 2008-09.

Snowmobiler Households, Safety Education and Snowmobile Ownership

Snowmobilers with Michigan trail permits during the survey during winter 2007-08 were most likely to be in a household made up primarily of adults 18 and over (Tables 1- 3). Of households snowmobiling in Michigan, a smaller proportion of non-resident household members snowmobiled versus resident households, as in 1996-97. The greatest change noted is in Table 2 where the proportion of children participating in snowmobiling among non-residents declined.

Table 1. Michigan resident household size and snowmobiling participation during winter 1996-97 and 2007-08 for those with snowmobile trail permits

Age Group	Mean		Percent	
	Number of household members		Snowmobiled	
	1996-97	2007-08	1996-97	2007-08
Adults 18 yr. or older	2.15	2.05	80.5	82.0
Children 12-17 yr. old	0.32	0.34	81.9	79.4
Children 11 yrs. or younger	0.47	0.39	63.1	61.5

Table 2. Non-resident household size and snowmobiling participation during winter 1996-97 and 2007-08 for those with snowmobile trail permits

Age Group	Mean		Percent	
	Number of household members		Snowmobiled	
	1996-97	2007-08	1996-97	2007-08
Adults 18 yr. or older	2.16	2.06	84.7	76.7
Children 12-17 yr. old	0.26	0.26	79.5	57.7
Children 11 yrs. or younger	0.52	0.52	50.2	32.7

Table 3. Household size and snowmobiling participation during winter 1996-97 and 2007-08 for those with snowmobile trail permits

Age Group	Mean		Percent	
	Number of household members		Snowmobiled	
	1996-97	2007-08	1996-97	2007-08
Adults 18 yr. or older	2.16	2.05	82.3	80.5
Children 12-17 yr. old	0.32	0.32	80.9	75.0
Children 11 yrs. or younger	0.47	0.42	58.0	52.4

Non-residents were more likely to have completed a snowmobile safety class than Michigan residents (Table 4). However, relatively few adults have completed a snowmobile safety class, regardless of place of residence. Of concern is that over 1/3 of Michigan youth aged 12-17 who snowmobile have not completed snowmobile safety training.

Table 4. Proportion of those snowmobiling in Michigan in 2007-08 who have completed snowmobile safety class.

	Percent Resident	Percent Non-resident	Percent All
Adults 18 yr and older	19.6	29.1	24.8
Children 12-17 old	63.0	93.3	70.8
Children 11 yrs. or younger	4.3	11.8	4.5

At the time of the survey during winter 2008-09, non-residents who snowmobiled in Michigan were likely to have newer, more powerful machines than residents (Table 5). Compared to winter 1996-97 the number of snowmobiles per household declined slightly and the average age increased. In winter 96-97 the average machine was 4-5 years old, while in winter 2008-09 the average sled was 8-9 years old. The typical household had about two sleds.

Table 5. Selected characteristics of snowmobiles owned by households with one or more snowmobile trail permits during 1996-97 and 2008-09.

	Mean					
	Machines / Household		Model Year		Cubic centimeters displacement	
	1996-97	2008-09	1996-97	2008-09	1996-97	2008-09
Michigan residents	2.14	2.03	1991.4	2000.0	499.3	606.7
Non-residents	2.07	1.94	1993.3	2002.1	547.1	660.8
All Snowmobilers	2.11	2.01	1992.1	2000.6	515.9	622.0

While a majority of the machines owned by households in 2007-08 were permitted, approximately 17% of resident machines and 25% of non-resident machines did not have Michigan trail permits (Table 6).

Table 6. Snowmobiles per household with trail permits and proportion used in Michigan winter 2007-08

	Machines/ household 2007-08	Machine/ used in 2007-08	Machines/ household with trail permit 2007-08
Michigan residents	2.03	1.80	1.68
Non-residents	1.94	1.50	1.46
All Snowmobilers	2.01	1.72	1.62

Snowmobiling in Michigan Winter 2007-08

Snowmobiling Miles and Fuel Consumption

In 2007-08, non-residents on average rode more miles per machine in Michigan (793 vs. 715) than Michigan residents, unlike winter 1996-97 when residents rode more miles per machine in Michigan (Table 7).

Table 7. Number of gallons of gasoline and miles driven per snowmobile in Michigan by households with snowmobile trail permits winter 1996-97 and 2007-08

	Gallons gasoline/ snowmobile		Miles driven/ snowmobile	
	1996-97	2007-08	1996-97	2007-08
Michigan residents	78	73	859	715
Non-residents	59	66	711	793
All Snowmobilers	71	71	810	733

The fuel used per machine across all snowmobilers was similar to winter 1996-97. In winter 1996-97 it was estimated that snowmobiles with trail permits in Michigan used 15,036,083 gallons of gasoline used to go 170,424,436 miles. For winter 2007-08, it is estimated that the 199,592 machines with Michigan trail permits used 14,171,032 gallons of gasoline and logged 146,300,936 miles of riding. Considering Michigan's \$0.19/gallon state gasoline tax, this results in \$2,779,718 generated in state gasoline taxes through snowmobiles during winter 2007-08. In addition, the

\$0.184/gallon federal gasoline tax generates an additional \$2,607,470 for federal transportation funds. Finally, on all proceeds from the sale of gasoline in Michigan, except for the \$0.19 state gasoline tax, all purchasers pay 6% Michigan sales tax. This is not visible to consumers as it is already computed into the price of the gasoline when purchased at the pump. Considering the price of a gallon of gasoline at \$2.00 once the state gasoline tax is removed during winter 2007-08, the state 6% general sales tax generated an additional \$850,262 in state tax revenue on the 14.2 million gallons of gasoline used in permitted snowmobiles. In total, this amounts to approximately \$6.2 million in tax revenue from snowmobile gasoline sales on an annual basis.

Further, this \$6.2 million is a very conservative estimate of gasoline tax revenue generated by snowmobiling. The Michigan Secretary of State reported that on September 30, 2008 there were 262,007 snowmobiles registered in Michigan and only 16% of the non-resident machines from survey respondents were registered in Michigan. This extrapolates to 7,121 non-resident machines that had a trail permit with a Michigan registration. Adding the 155,083 permitted resident machines with Michigan registrations provides a total of 162,204 Michigan registered **and** permitted machines, leaving the fuel tax contributions of the remaining almost 100,000 Michigan registered but non-permitted machines as additional fuel usage not accounted for. These non-permitted machines can be legally used on private lands and on the frozen waters of the state for the sole purpose of supporting ice fishing. While many may not be in use, or the spending better attributed to ice fishing, it is logical to suggest that additional gasoline tax revenues are generated by the use of some of these registered, non-permitted sleds.

Snowmobiling Days

A snowmobile day is defined as “a day or part of a day a snowmobile was operated in Michigan unless it was primarily used to support other activities such as ice fishing”. For winter 2007-08, it is estimated there were approximately 2 million snowmobile days, a decline of approximately 13% from winter 1996-97 (Table 8).

Table 8. Michigan snowmobile days winter 1996-97, 2007-08. (a)

	1996-97	1996-97	1996-97	2007-08	2007-08	2007-08
Category	Resident	Non-resident	All	Resident	Non-resident	All
Snowmobiles with trail permits	133,057	78,943	212,000	151,740	47,852	199,592
Mean number of permitted snowmobiles per household	2.14	2.07	2.11	1.68	1.46	1.62
Number households with permitted snowmobiles	62,176	38,137	100,313	90,091	32,760	122,851
Snowmobile days per household	30.70	11.36	23.30	19.29	9.43	16.66
Total snowmobile days	1,908,037	433,397	2,341,434	1,737,675	308,871	2,046,547
Snowmobile days per permitted sled	14.34	5.49	11.04	11.48	6.46	10.28

(a) Due to rounding at each step, calculations may not exactly tally.

Michigan residents accounted for 85% of the snowmobile days in winter 2007-08 and non-residents 15%. The proportion of resident use increased from 82% in winter 1996-97, while the proportion of non-resident use decreased from 18%. Use per permitted snowmobile declined 7% from winter 1996-97 to 2007-08. It is noteworthy that the number of households with one or more permitted snowmobiles has increased in Michigan since winter 1996-97. However, the typical household with one or more permitted machines has a smaller number of snowmobiles permitted than in the past.

In addition, each respondent was asked if they used any of their snowmobiles to support ice fishing, trapping or some other winter recreational activity in Michigan, which is not counted as a snowmobile day. Nineteen percent of residents and 5% of non-residents reported that they used one or more of their sleds during winter 2007-08 to support another Michigan winter recreation activity, primarily ice fishing. Figure 1 divides Michigan into 5 regions used to segment snowmobiling during winter 2007-08 and the previous 1996-97 study.



Figure 1. Michigan's five regions.

The largest proportion of resident and all snowmobiling days was in the northwestern Lower Peninsula, while the largest proportion of non-resident snowmobiling days was in the western Upper Peninsula (Tables 9-11). A number of shifts have occurred when the data is compared to winter 1996-97. First, the total number of days snowmobiling household has declined, especially for residents. Second, use patterns have shifted somewhat with proportional increases for residents in the northeastern Lower Peninsula and the Southern Lower Peninsula and for non-residents in the Southern Lower Peninsula. When examined for the total snowmobiler population, the northwestern Lower Peninsula had the largest proportion of snowmobile use. The proportion of total snowmobile days across all snowmobiling households declined in the Upper Peninsula and the Northwestern Lower Peninsula and increased in the Northeastern Lower Peninsula and the Southern Lower Peninsula in winter 2007-08 when compared to winter 1996-97.

Table 9. Mean number of Michigan snowmobile days and support days by resident households with trail permits during winter 1996-97 and 2007-08

Region	Snowmobiling Days			
	Mean number		Percent in region	
	1996-97	2007-08	1996-97	2007-08
Western U.P.	4.34	1.83	14.1	9.5
Eastern U.P.	5.04	3.07	16.4	15.9
Northwest L.P.	11.36	6.77	37.0	35.2
Northeast L.P.	6.38	4.64	20.8	24.1
Southern L.P.	3.57	2.94	11.6	15.3
Statewide ^a	30.70	19.29	99.9	100.0

a. Percent may not add to 100.0% for statewide due to rounding.

Table 10. Mean number of Michigan snowmobile days and support days by non-resident households with trail permits during winter 1996-97 and 2007-08

Region	Snowmobiling Days			
	Mean number		Percent in region	
	1996-97	2007-08	1996-97	2007-08
Western U.P.	5.88	5.02	51.8	53.0
Eastern U.P.	2.58	1.74	22.7	18.4
Northwest L.P.	1.74	1.31	15.3	13.8
Northeast L.P.	0.79	0.72	7.0	7.6
Southern L.P.	0.37	0.65	3.3	6.9
Statewide ^a	11.36	9.43	100.1	99.7

a. Percent may not add to 100.0% for statewide due to rounding.

Table 11. Mean number of Michigan snowmobile days per household with trail permits during winter 1996-97 and 2007-08

Region	Snowmobiling Days			
	Mean number		Percent in region	
	1996-97	2007-08	1996-97	2007-08
Western U.P.	4.92	2.68	20.9	16.1
Eastern U.P.	4.12	3.10	17.5	18.6
Northwest L.P.	7.78	4.68	33.1	28.1
Northeast L.P.	4.30	3.85	18.3	23.1
Southern L.P.	2.38	2.35	10.1	14.1
Statewide ^a	23.50	16.66	99.9	100.0

a. Percent may not add to 100.0% for statewide due to rounding.

When extrapolated to total snowmobile days on a regional basis, the largest decline was in the Northwestern Lower Peninsula (Table 12).

Table 12. Estimate of total Michigan snowmobile days by region for winter 1996-97 and 2007-08 for snowmobiles with trail permits

Region	Snowmobiling Days ^a			
	1996-97		2007-08	
	Snowmobile Days	% in Region	Snowmobile Days	% in Region
Western U.P.	489,360	20.9	329,594	16.1
Eastern U.P.	409,751	17.5	380,584	18.6
Northwest L.P.	775,015	33.1	574,113	28.1
Northeast L.P.	428,482	18.3	473,145	23.1
Southern L.P.	236,485	10.1	289,110	14.1

a. Percent may not add to 100.0% for statewide due to rounding.

Snowmobile Trips

When asked what type of trip their snowmobile days were part of in winter 2007-08, respondents reported a majority of days (55%) were during a day trip with no overnight stay (Table 13). Key

shifts noted compared to winter 1996-97 were that the proportion of non-resident trips with overnight stays declined and more participated in both short day trips (100 miles or less from home) and longer day trips (more than 100 miles from home). As will be noted later, this has a significant, negative effect on the economic impact of snowmobiling in Michigan. However, the largest percentage of non-resident snowmobile days was still part of trips involving an overnight stay.

Table 13. Percentage of Michigan snowmobile days by snowmobilers with trail permits by trip type winter 1996-97 and 2007-08

	Percent							
	Overnight trip		One day trip of ≥ 100 miles		One day trip of < 100 miles		All days ^a	
	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08
MI Residents	38.3	37.3	11.3	11.7	50.3	51.0	99.9	100.0
Non-resident	86.8	76.0	7.3	14.0	5.9	10.0	100.0	100.0
All Snowmobilers	47.3	44.7	10.5	12.0	42.1	43.3	100.0	100.0

a. May not add to 100.0% due to rounding.

Table 14 illustrates the total number of snowmobile days and snowmobile trips by type of trip. Of the 1,737,675 days for residents, there were an estimated 680,016 days related to overnight trips and a total of 165,588 overnight trips by residents. For non-residents there were 233,726 days as part of overnight trips and a total of 55,649 overnight trips. For both residents and non-residents, the number of snowmobile days per overnight trip declined by more than 20% compared to winter 1996-97. Further, non-resident overnight trips also declined by 21%. This translates to fewer nights away from home, especially by non-residents. This limits spending in the Michigan economy in many locally owned businesses such as restaurants, motels, etc.

Table 14. Estimate of overnight and one day trips 100 miles or more from home for snowmobiling in Michigan during winter 1996-97 and 2007-08

Trip Type	Mean no. of snowmobile days per outing		Total no. of snowmobile days		Estimated no. of trips	
	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08
Residents						
Overnight	5.1	4.1	731,541	680,016	143,721	165,588
Day ≥100 miles	1.4	2.9	216,181	202,452	151,176	69,811
Non-resident						
Overnight	5.4	4.2	376,189	233,726	70,054	55,649
Day ≥100 miles	1.4	3.1	31,638	43,679	22,124	14,090
All Snowmobilers						
Overnight	5.2	4.1	1,107,730	913,742	213,775	221,237
Day ≥100 miles	1.4	3.0	247,819	246,131	173,300	83,901

To estimate direct expenditures related to snowmobiling, respondents were asked about the characteristics of their most recent Michigan snowmobiling outing (typically in winter 2008-09) that was either a day trip 100 or more miles from home or an outing that involved a stay of one or more

nights away from home. It was conservatively determined that trips of less than 100 miles from home not involving an overnight stay would be a poor measure of economic activity related to tourism. These latest trip results were also used to assess the economic impact of a full winter of snowmobiling reported for winter 2007-08.

The largest proportion of most recent trips involving overnight stays was in the northwestern Lower Peninsula for residents and the western U.P. for non-residents (Table 15). This is a shift from winter 1996-97 where the largest proportion of resident overnight trips was to the eastern UP. Day trips of 100 or more miles from home for residents were most likely to have been to the northwest Lower Peninsula in winter 2008-09 and 1996-97.

Table 15. Destination by region of most recent Michigan snowmobiling outing 100 or more miles from home involving no overnight stay or one involving an overnight stay by snowmobilers with trail permit during winter 1996-97 and 2008-09

Region	Michigan Resident Percent				Non-resident Percent	
	Overnight stays		Day trip \geq 100 miles		Overnight stays	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
Western U.P.	13.2	11.3	19.1	8.0	62.5	57.0
Eastern U.P.	34.6	32.0	23.9	12.2	15.3	22.2
Northwest L.P.	22.7	34.0	38.1	44.3	10.8	10.9
Northeast L.P.	28.9	21.9	19.0	23.9	10.2	7.6
Southern L.P.	0.6	0.9	0.0	11.5	1.1	2.4
Total ^a	100.0	100.1	100.1	99.9	99.9	100.1

a. Total may not add to 100.0% due to rounding.

Overnight trips were noticeably shorter in winter 2008-09 than 1996-97 (Table 16). For both residents and non-residents, there was almost one snowmobile per person in the household party.

Table 16. Selected characteristics of most recent Michigan snowmobiling outing if overnight trip by snowmobilers with trail permit during winter 1996-97 and 2008-09

	Mean					
	Number of days away from home		Number of household members on trip		Number of household snowmobiles on trip	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
MI Residents	4.71	3.37	1.86	1.77	1.78	1.64
Non-resident	4.75	3.90	1.79	1.39	1.69	1.42
All Snowmobilers	4.73	3.55	1.83	1.64	1.74	1.57

Day trips of 100 or more miles from home were primarily done by Michigan residents (Table 17). The party size on these trips increased slightly from winter 1996-97 to 2008-09.

Table 17. Selected characteristics for snowmobilers with trail permits of most recent winter 1996-97 and 2008-09 Michigan snowmobiling outing if day trip 100 or more miles from home

	Mean			
	Number of household members on trip		Number of household snowmobiles on trip	
	1996-97	2008-09	1996-97	2008-09
MI Residents	1.52	1.71	1.57	1.55
All Snowmobilers ^a	1.54	1.69	1.58	1.54

a. Includes very few non-resident day trips greater than 100 miles

The most common type of lodging used during overnight outings was motel/hotel/rental cabin for residents and non-residents in both winters 1996-97 and 2008-09 (Table 18). However, the proportion of residents and non-residents using motels/hotels declined in 2007-08 while staying with friends/relatives increased.

Table 18. Use of selected lodging options by snowmobilers with trail permits during most recent winter 1996-97 and 2008-09 overnight trips in Michigan. ^a

	Percent									
	2nd Home		Motel or hotel or rental cabin		Camped		Friend's or relatives		Other	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
MI Residents	22	23	61	49	2	1	23	29	2	4
Non-resident	6	7	86	81	1	0	10	12	1	2
All Snowmobilers	15	18	72	60	2	1	17	23	1	3

a. Stay may have involved in more than one lodging type hence rows exceed 100.0%

The data from tables 14 – 18 shows that many snowmobilers were economizing on their significant snowmobiling trips by increasing the proportion of longer day trips instead of taking overnight trips or if overnight trips were taken, staying for fewer nights.

Direct Expenditures

Estimating direct expenditures during trips was done by segmenting spending into three phases of the trip. The first phase was at home spending in preparation for the trip. It can be conservatively argued that much of this spending should not be attributed to the trip, as these items may have been purchased, regardless whether the trip had been taken. The second phase is en route spending, both to and from the snowmobiling location. For non-residents, it is challenging to determine what percentage of this spending was in Michigan and what occurred in other states. However, the origin of non-residents was primarily states bordering Michigan, suggesting that a sizeable portion of the en route spending took place in Michigan. The third phase is in the local area where the snowmobiling took place. This is of great interest as this money is spent in Michigan and in northern Michigan is primarily transferred from other regions of the state and from out of the state into Michigan and the local area.

Respondents were questioned about spending in each phase. Questions related to their most recent Michigan snowmobiling outing prior to receiving the questionnaire that was either a day trip 100 or more miles from home or a trip of any distance that involved an overnight stay. Direct comparison to winter 1996-97 data is challenging as inflation in each sector of the economy makes it difficult ascertain the value of spending differences. For this reason, only the data from the most recent winter 2008-09 trip will be reported in Tables 19-23.

Expenditures on Overnight Trips

The majority of expenditures on overnight trips by both residents and non-residents were in the local area where they rode (Tables 19-21). For residents, the typical overnight snowmobiling trip yielded \$584 of expenditures with 59% in the local area. For non-residents, the average overnight trip resulted in \$906 of spending with 63% in the local area. Across all overnight snowmobile trips, the average party spent \$663 of which 63% was spent in the local area. In winter 1996-97, the local percentages of the most recent overnight trip were higher, accounting for 65% of resident spending, 75% of non-resident spending and 71% of the spending by all snowmobilers. Two factors are likely influences: increased travel costs (especially for non-residents increasing en route spending) and more purchases at home in preparation for the trip by residents such as groceries and fuel.

Table 19. Mean expenditures of residents with trail permits if most recent winter 2008-2009 Michigan snowmobiling outing involving an overnight stay

	Mean in Dollars (% Spending Something on Item)		
	At Home	En Route	Local Area
Grocery and convenience store food and drink	33.61 (51.8)	26.13 (65.2)	54.70 (68.7)
Tow-vehicle expenses (gasoline, repairs, etc.)	27.41 (40.2)	61.12 (64.6)	29.44 (41.9)
Snowmobile expenses (gas, repairs, etc.)	30.76 (31.2)	18.53 (24.5)	75.83 (74.8)
Restaurant and bar meals and drinks	NA	21.51 (47.0)	83.02 (75.5)
Sporting goods (bait, fishing tackle, etc.)	1.10 (1.4)	1.14 (1.8)	2.18 (4.2)
Lodging (Motel, campground, rental cabin, etc.)	NA	10.05 (6.2)	83.71 (41.6)
All other items (film, souvenirs, etc.)	5.94 (5.2)	3.11 (7.0)	14.62 (22.5)
Total	98.82 (65.1)	141.59 (88.2)	343.50 (93.8)

Table 20. Mean expenditures of non-residents with trail permits if most recent winter 2008-2009 Michigan snowmobiling outing involving an overnight stay

	Mean in Dollars (% Spending Something on Item)		
	At Home	En Route	Local Area
Grocery and convenience store food and drink	23.32 (44.3)	20.36 (57.7)	68.80 (68.3)
Tow-vehicle expenses (gasoline, repairs, etc.)	22.50 (35.3)	96.91 (75.7)	33.52 (46.1)
Snowmobile expenses (gas, repairs, etc.)	14.61 (21.2)	30.43 (16.0)	131.36 (86.9)
Restaurant and bar meals and drinks	NA	20.72 (45.7)	143.50 (86.5)
Sporting goods (bait, fishing tackle, etc.)	0.14 (0.7)	0.00 (0.0)	7.18 (8.3)
Lodging (Motel, campground, rental cabin, etc.)	NA	9.63 (6.2)	169.64 (70.5)
All other items (film, souvenirs, etc.)	3.94 (3.3)	4.73 (7.1)	18.46 (34.0)
Total	64.51 (57.2)	269.78 (90.7)	572.46 (95.2)

Table 21. Mean expenditures of snowmobilers with trail permits if most recent winter 2008-2009 Michigan snowmobiling outing involving an overnight stay

	Mean in Dollars (% Spending Something on Item)		
	At Home	En Route	Local Area
Grocery and convenience store food and drink	30.13 (49.2)	24.18 (62.7)	59.47 (68.6)
Tow-vehicle expenses (gasoline, repairs, etc.)	25.74 (38.5)	73.13 (68.3)	30.85 (43.3)
Snowmobile expenses (gas, repairs, etc.)	25.31 (27.8)	22.52 (21.6)	94.56 (78.9)
Restaurant and bar meals and drinks	NA	21.23 (46.5)	103.38 (79.2)
Sporting goods (bait, fishing tackle, etc.)	0.78 (1.2)	0.75 (1.2)	3.86 (5.6)
Lodging (Motel, campground, rental cabin, etc.)	NA	9.90 (6.2)	112.58 (51.3)
All other items (film, souvenirs, etc.)	5.26 (4.6)	3.65 (7.0)	16.17 (26.4)
Total	87.22 (66.3)	155.36 (89.0)	420.87 (94.3)

Across the various expense categories in winter 2008-09, lodging and restaurant/bar expenses accounted for the largest portion of local expenditures for residents and non-residents. Considering the percentage that spent something in the local area on an item, snowmobile related spending (gasoline, maintenance, etc.) and restaurant/bar meals and drinks were the most common expenses. Over 93% of residents and 95% of non-residents spent money in the local area where they snowmobiled. The proportions of respondents that spent locally on overnight trips were very similar in winter 1996-97. In addition, the highest level of expenditures was also on meals and lodging in winter 1996-97.

On a per trip basis, non-residents spent considerably more than residents in the area where they snowmobiled. This was influenced by the higher proportion of non-residents staying in commercial lodging and perhaps by the lack of cooking facilities at those lodging sites. Conversely, residents were much more likely to lodge at their own second home or with friends or relatives, lowering lodging costs and having cooking facilities readily available.

In examining en route spending, tow vehicle expenses were far and away the highest expenses for both residents and non-residents. En route spending accounted for 24% of resident spending on overnight trips and 30% on non-resident spending. For residents, at home expenditures accounted for 17% of total spending for overnight trips, while for non-residents it was only 7% of total expenditures. Compared to winter 1996-97, the proportion both residents and non-residents spent en route increased, as did the proportion residents spent at home in preparation.

When these per trip estimates are extrapolated by the number of Michigan overnight snowmobiling trips (Table 14) taken by residents (165,588) and non-residents (55,649) during winter 2007-08, a total estimate of direct spending en route and in the local area is derived. It is estimated that direct spending by residents for local and en route expenditures was \$80.3 million and for non-residents it was \$46.8 million. For all snowmobilers this aggregates to \$127.1 million.

Day Trips of 100 or more Miles from Home

For day trips of 100 or more miles from home, local spending was a similar proportion of total trip

spending than for overnight trips in winter 2008-09 (Tables 22 and 23). Since very few non-resident respondents reported their most recent trip as a day trip 100 or more miles from home, their results are aggregated with those of residents in Table 19. No spending amount was truncated, so the range in some sectors was significant.

Table 22. Mean expenditures of residents with trail permits in most recent winter 2008-2009 Michigan snowmobiling outing involving no overnight stay but 100 or more miles from home

	Mean in Dollars (% Spending Something on Item)		
	At Home	En Route	Local Area
Grocery and convenience store food and drink	9.16 (35.2)	9.78 (32.2)	12.86 (38.1)
Tow-vehicle expenses (gasoline, repairs, etc.)	9.29 (15.0)	9.35 (18.2)	38.26 (16.1)
Snowmobile expenses (gas, repairs, etc.)	12.46 (39.6)	11.15 (29.7)	24.90 (57.7)
Restaurant and bar meals and drinks	NA	8.18 (28.3)	21.08 (48.9)
Sporting goods (bait, fishing tackle, etc.)	0.00 (0.0)	0.18 (1.1)	0.00 (0.0)
All other items (film, souvenirs, etc.)	2.49 (1.9)	1.74 (3.3)	5.02 (4.7)
Total	33.40 (54.0)	40.38 (52.3)	102.62 (75.5)

Table 23. Mean expenditures of snowmobilers with trail permits in most recent winter 2008-2009 Michigan snowmobiling outing involving no overnight stay but 100 or more miles from home

	Mean in Dollars (% Spending Something on Item)		
	At Home	En Route	Local Area
Grocery and convenience store food and drink	11.72 (35.2)	11.72 (35.4)	11.46 (42.4)
Tow-vehicle expenses (gasoline, repairs, etc.)	8.83 (18.9)	11.19 (22.3)	36.36 (17.9)
Snowmobile expenses (gas, repairs, etc.)	10.77 (38.8)	9.62 (29.3)	27.54 (59.4)
Restaurant and bar meals and drinks	NA	6.21 (29.5)	17.47 (51.3)
Sporting goods (bait, fishing tackle, etc.)	0.00 (0.0)	0.17 (1.0)	0.28 (1.0)
All other items (film, souvenirs, etc.)	3.34 (4.3)	3.22 (5.2)	2.45 (7.4)
Total	34.66 (56.9)	42.13 (61.3)	96.56 (76.9)

For residents, 58% of their trip expenditures were local, while for all snowmobilers 56% were local. However, even though this proportion of total expenditures is lower than for overnight trips, 3/4 of residents and all respondents on these day trips spent something in the local area. The most common expenses were tow vehicle and snowmobile related expenses and restaurant/bar meals and drinks. This is a significant change from winter 1996-97 where only 32% of spending by residents on 100 mile or more day trips was in the local area and only 40% of spending by all snowmobilers on such trips was in the local area. Considering the data in Table 10, the number of snowmobile days on the average day trip of 100 or more miles doubled for both residents, suggesting that households teamed up to save on travel costs and were more likely instead to spend money in the local area on food as well as vehicle expenses.

Annual Expenditures for Non-Trip Snowmobiling Expenses

Resident snowmobilers spent on average slightly more than \$2,000 during 12 months in 2008-09 for

snowmobiling expenses not related to trips (Table 24). Non-residents spent slightly more, averaging \$2,183. The greatest amount of spending was for snowmobiles. However, only 20% of respondents actually spent something on buying a snowmobile. It is unknown what percentage of the sleds purchased were new or used. The second largest category was for equipment other than snowmobiles. This included trailers, clothing, helmets, etc. The most common non-trip expense for both residents and non-residents was repair and maintenance of their machines.

Table 24. Mean household expenditures for snowmobiling not related to trip expenses during 12 months 2008-09.

	Mean in dollars (% spending something on item)					Total
	Snowmobiles	All other equipment	Repair and maintenance	Insurance	Storage	
MI Residents	1,100 (20.7)	376 (57.4)	274 (79.6)	155 (62.2)	11 (7.9)	1,917 (96.5)
Non-resident	1,384 (17.7)	433 (58.0)	229 (60.1)	152 (58.9)	8 (6.0)	2,206 (87.4)
All Snowmobilers	1,168 (20.0)	390 (57.6)	263 (74.9)	155 (61.3)	11 (7.4)	1,987 (94.3)

Insurance spending was difficult for respondents to quantify. Some had insured their machines on their homeowners policy without a separate rider, thus hampering itemization of snowmobile insurance costs. Off season storage was the least common expenditure, averaging less than 1% of non-trip expenditures. Over 96% of residents and 87% of non-residents purchased non-trip related snowmobile items or services over the 12 months prior to the survey.

State-wide and Regional Economic Impact of Snowmobile Related Expenditures

The statewide and regional economic impact of snowmobiling are reported on by Stynes et al. 2009 in a separate report entitled “State and Regional Economic Impacts of Snowmobiling in Michigan”.

Snowmobile Program Attributes

When rating Michigan snowmobile program attributes, residents and non-residents provided the most favorable ratings for DNR snowmobile trails in general and public trail grooming (Tables 25-27). For residents and non-residents, no attribute received a mean rating of less than 3.5 (between OK and good) and every attribute had at least 50% of respondents rate it as very good (highest rating) or good. Compared to winter 1996-97, the rating for every attribute by residents and non-residents improved during winter 2008-09. The attribute that was rated in both studies that showed the greatest improvement was public trail grooming, for both residents and non-residents. In summary, this is a significantly improved report card for the DNR snowmobile program.

Table 25. Rating of selected Michigan DNR snowmobile program attributes by resident snowmobilers with trail permits winter 1996-97 and 2008-09 ^a

	Mean Rating	Percentage Rating as Very Good and Good
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Service or Situations	Mean Rating		Percentage Rating as Very Good and Good	
	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08
DNR Maps of snowmobile Trails	3.74	3.89	65.4	73.2
Public Trail Design	3.70	3.91	64.7	74.5
Trailhead Parking or Staging Area	3.65	3.90	60.0	71.5
Snowmobile Safety Education	3.28	3.67	42.6	59.2
Public Trail Grooming	3.23	3.97	42.7	76.2
Snowmobile Law Enforcement	3.20	3.63	41.2	60.7
DNR Snowmobile Trails in general	NA	4.11	NA	83.8
DNR Snowmobile Website	NA	3.59	NA	55.1
DNR Snowmobile Trail Signage	NA	3.91	NA	71.8
Overall Satisfaction with MI snowmobiling	NA	4.00	NA	78.3

a. Rating scale 5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = OK, 2 = poor, 1 = very poor.

Table 26. Rating of selected Michigan DNR snowmobile program attributes by non-resident snowmobilers with trail permits winter 1996-97 and 2008-09^a

Service or Situations	Mean Rating		Percentage Rating as Very Good and Good	
	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08
DNR Maps of snowmobile Trails	3.94	4.12	76.6	81.6
Public Trail Design	3.85	4.14	71.9	83.6
Trailhead Parking or Staging Area	3.63	3.77	57.3	64.3
Snowmobile Safety Education	3.61	3.68	57.7	62.8
Public Trail Grooming	3.48	4.24	54.3	87.6
Snowmobile Law Enforcement	3.40	3.57	43.3	51.7
DNR Snowmobile Trails in general	NA	4.35	NA	91.9
DNR Snowmobile Website	NA	3.74	NA	60.3
DNR Snowmobile Trail Signage	NA	3.95	NA	74.1
Overall Satisfaction with MI snowmobiling	NA	4.28	NA	89.9

a. Rating scale 5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = OK, 2 = poor, 1 = very poor.

Table 27. Rating of selected Michigan DNR snowmobile program attributes by non-resident snowmobilers with trail permits winter 1996-97 and 2008-09^a

Service or Situations	Mean Rating		Percentage Rating as Very Good and Good	
	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08

DNR Maps of snowmobile Trails	3.80	3.97	69.7	76.5
Public Trail Design	3.78	3.96	68.1	76.2
Trailhead Parking or Staging Area	3.64	3.86	58.9	69.5
Snowmobile Safety Education	3.37	3.64	47.9	61.3
Public Trail Grooming	3.34	4.05	47.6	79.3
Snowmobile Law Enforcement	3.32	3.65	42.9	57.5
DNR Snowmobile Trails in general	NA	4.17	NA	86.1
DNR Snowmobile Website	NA	3.64	NA	56.7
DNR Snowmobile Trail Signage	NA	3.92	NA	82.4
Overall Satisfaction with MI snowmobiling	NA	4.08	NA	81.5

a. Rating scale 5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = OK, 2 = poor, 1 = very poor.

When asked in an open-ended format the reason for their ratings, relatively few respondents provided a range of rationale (Tables 28). Because of this low response rate to these questions, residents and non-residents were grouped in one table. Further, it is most appropriate to focus on issues that were raised, rather than on comparing percentages between closely ranked concerns.

Going down through the table, a few respondents noted rough trails and recommended more weekend grooming, but most were very pleased with current grooming. Regarding DNR trail maps, key concerns were availability, accuracy and ease of use. About the trail system, key concerns were to have wider trails and better connect to towns and services. While many noted they don't use trail heads, others felt there should be more. Enforcement concerns were that officers were rarely seen or that they were overly aggressive. Conversely, others felt the level of enforcement was appropriate and that they had a positive encounter with an officer. Lack of knowledge about snowmobile safety courses was the most common rationale noted in rating education. Trail signs were criticized for being absent or inaccurate, while others felt signage was appropriate and signs were accurate and easy to read. Not using the DNR snowmobile website was the most common rationale for its rating.

Table 28. Rationale for attribute rating of Michigan snowmobile program by snowmobilers with trail permits ^a

Attribute	Percentage ^b
Public Trail Grooming (15% provided rationale)	
Rough trails, poor grooming, need more grooming on weekends	35.5
Some trails better than others	19.5
Smooth trails, few bumpy miles, seen improvements	38.2
Clubs do better job than the DNR	3.9

DNR Maps of Snowmobile Trails (10% provided rationale)	
Useful, easily understood, accurate	31.4
Not available or hard to find	14.7
Poor quality, hard to read and follow, confusing, not accurate, missed trails	34.7
No experience with, use local maps, do not use DNR maps	15.5
Need maps on trail	2.1
Expensive	1.4
Public Trails (4% provided rationale)	
Need more trail, connections to other trails and towns, loops	32.8
Too many blind and tight curves	2.1
Rough/ moguls	18.9
Reduce speeds	2.1
Good access to towns	0.8
Trailhead Parking or Staging Area (9% provided rationale)	
No experience with, do not use	73.0
Poor bathrooms	1.2
Lack of availability/ need more	22.5
Poorly signed, hard to find	3.4
Snowmobile Law Enforcement (11% provided rationale)	
Want more enforcement	7.2
Proper level enforcement now	8.5
Rarely, never seen	55.3
Officer was not nice, rude, overzealous, felt like a criminal, felt harassed	23.4
Officer was nice and helpful	5.6
Snowmobile Safety Education (8% provided rationale)	
No experience with/ did not take/ did not know available	73.6
Need more	17.4
Good, quality education	9.0
Trail Signage (7% provided rationale)	
Lack signage	40.0
Inaccurate/ hard to read	24.2
Accurate/ easy to read	16.6
Trails well signed	17.0
Use numeric signs	2.2
DNR Snowmobile Website (17% provided rationale)	
Not seen/ used	92.9
Not up-to-date	3.8
Helpful/ easy to use	3.3

a. Open-ended responses categorized by researcher

b. Percentage of those who provided rationale.

Referring back to the overall satisfaction rating of Michigan snowmobiling shown at the bottoms of tables 24-26, which was not asked in 1996-97, resident respondents mean rated it as 4.00 (good) and non-residents at 4.28 (between good and very good) for an overall rating of 4.08. Rationale for these ratings was provided by 64% of the respondents (Table 29).

Table 29. Single most important reason for rating of overall satisfaction with Michigan snowmobiling in 2008-09 ^a

Reason	Percentage		
	Residents	Non-resident	All Snowmobilers
Well groomed/ maintained	29.0	35.7	31.1
Well designed/ safe trails	25.0	25.4	25.3
Poor grooming/ maintenance	11.3	5.6	9.4
Enjoyed/ good time/ satisfied	9.6	11.2	10.2
Good snow conditions	7.9	13.4	9.7
Too expensive	4.0	1.5	3.2
Need more trails/ connections	3.7	1.2	2.9
Just enjoy riding	3.0	1.2	2.5
Poor/ dangerous trails	2.4	1.2	2.0
Poor signage	1.8	1.1	1.5
Support DNR efforts	1.2	1.5	1.3
Convenient	0.8	0.9	0.8
Unfriendly communities	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total	99.8	99.9	100.0

a. Total may not add to 100.0% due to rounding.

Well maintained, safe trails were the primary factors in positive ratings, along with good snow conditions and enjoying the opportunity to snowmobile. Key negative factors were concerns about maintenance and grooming, cost and concerns about trail safety and signage.

When asked if the snowmobile trail system was overcrowded, 25.7% of residents and 16.2% of non-residents rated it as crowded. This was a significant decrease from the rating in winter 1996-97 when 56.5% of residents responded it as crowded as did 34.7% of non-residents. This may be at least partially influenced by the estimated decline in snowmobile days of 13% between 1996-97 and 2007-08 and the increase of over 200 miles in the trail system between the two studies.

When asked in an open-ended format what one action was most important to improve the trail system, better grooming, better trail marking/signage, developing more trails/connections to towns and services, and widening trails were the most common suggestions, just as they were in winter 1996-97 (Table 30).

Table 30. One most important improvement snowmobilers with trail permits want in the Michigan snowmobile trail system ^a

Suggested Improvement (made by 76% of respondents)	Percentage ^b		
	Residents	Non-resident	All Snowmobilers
Better grooming	22.6	20.0	21.9
More trails/ connection to towns	20.6	15.4	19.2
Improve on trail signs/ maps	14.6	25.9	17.6

Wider/ straighter trails	10.4	8.4	10.0
More law enforcement/ rider assistance	4.6	1.6	3.8
None/ keep as it is	3.0	7.4	4.2
More/ better trailheads and warming areas	2.7	1.1	2.3
Allow more riding on roads	1.7	1.1	1.6
More control/ funding to snowmobile clubs	1.3	0.9	1.2
One way trail systems	0.8	2.3	1.2
Better safety education	0.4	0.2	0.3
All other	17.2	15.6	16.8

a. Open ended responses. If respondent provided more than one suggestion, only first one reported.

b. Percentage of those who responded.

In new questions not asked in winter 1996-97, respondents were asked to rate their support of new initiatives to secure and expand the snowmobile trail system in the long term (Table 31).

Table 31. Rating of selected long term alternatives for the Michigan snowmobile trail system, 2008-09. ^a

Alternatives	Residents		Non-resident		All Snowmobilers	
	Mean Rating	Percentage Supporting	Mean Rating	Percentage Supporting	Mean Rating	Percentage Supporting
Increase MI designated snowmobile trail mileage	4.3	77.2	4.4	82.2	4.4	78.6
More long term leases held by non-profits org.	4.1	70.6	4.2	75.5	4.2	71.9
Permanent trail easement held by non-profit org.	4.1	68.4	4.2	70.4	4.1	69.0
More long term leases held by State of MI	4.0	63.3	4.1	65.0	4.0	63.8
Permanent trail easement held by State of MI	3.9	62.7	4.0	64.3	4.0	63.1

a. Rating scale: 5 = strongly supports, 4 = moderately supports, 3 = neutral, 2 = moderately oppose, 1 = strongly oppose.

Respondents were supportive of all the initiatives proposed, with each proposal being supported by more than 63% of respondents, with support from residents and non-residents. While the strongest support was for increasing trail mileage in general, respondents also specifically supported both long term leases and permanent trail easements to secure the trail system. Considering that approximately half the system is secured on private lands with short term leases and agreements, this approach is a departure from “business as usual” for the snowmobile program. It has been driven by the fragmentation of major private land holdings, especially those once held by the forest products industry in northern Michigan. It is also designed to secure a long term system almost solely on private lands in southern Michigan, especially in the southwestern Michigan snowbelt. While there was a slight preference for non-profit organizations to hold such leases and easements, having them held by the state of Michigan was also strongly supported.

Fatality Reduction Initiatives

When asked to rate their level of support for selected fatality reduction initiatives, support among both residents and non-residents declined for every suggested initiative that had been asked about in winter 1996-97 (Tables 32 - 34).

Table 32. Rating of support for selected fatality reduction initiatives by resident snowmobilers with Michigan trail permits ^a

Fatality Reduction Initiative	Mean rating		Percent strongly or moderately supporting	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
Mandatory training required for all first year snowmobile operators regardless of age	4.01	3.72	72.1	60.1
More intensive enforcement of existing snowmobile regulations	3.71	3.16	60.9	40.8
Mandatory personal liability insurance or all snowmobile operators	3.23	2.88	46.1	37.8
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on public lands, trail, and water	3.16	2.85	45.8	34.8
Licensing required of all snowmobile operators	3.02	2.75	40.8	32.1
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on designated public trails only	NA	2.94	NA	37.8
Enforced snowmobile speed limit where speed limit posted on designate trail only	NA	3.46	NA	57.8
Trail closed hours on designed system	NA	1.97	NA	13.8

a. Rating scale: 5 = strongly supports, 4 = moderately supports, 3 = neutral, 2 = moderately oppose, 1 = strongly oppose.

Table 33. Rating of support for selected fatality reduction initiatives by non-resident snowmobilers with Michigan trail permits ^a

Fatality Reduction Initiative	Mean rating		Percent strongly or moderately supporting	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
Mandatory personal liability insurance or all snowmobile operators	4.33	3.89	80.9	67.8
Mandatory training required for all first year snowmobile operators regardless of age	4.03	3.63	71.7	59.3
More intensive enforcement of existing snowmobile regulations	3.67	3.15	57.6	39.3
Licensing required of all snowmobile operators	3.16	2.87	41.5	34.2
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on public lands, trail, and water	2.85	2.69	38.9	31.2
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on designated public trails only	NA	2.74	NA	34.5
Enforced snowmobile speed limit where speed limit posted on designate trail only	NA	3.32	NA	53.7
Trail closed hours on designed system	NA	1.91	NA	14.0

a. Rating scale: 5 = strongly supports, 4 = moderately supports, 3 = neutral, 2 = moderately oppose, 1 = strongly oppose.

strongly oppose.

Table 34. Rating of support for selected fatality reduction initiatives by snowmobilers with Michigan trail permits ^a

Fatality Reduction Initiative	Mean rating		Percent strongly or moderately supporting	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
Mandatory training required for all first year snowmobile operators regardless of age	4.02	3.69	72.0	59.8
More intensive enforcement of existing snowmobile regulations	3.69	3.16	59.6	38.3
Mandatory personal liability insurance or all snowmobile operators	3.68	3.16	60.5	45.2
Licensing required of all snowmobile operators	3.08	2.78	41.2	32.6
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on public lands, trail, and water	3.04	2.80	42.9	33.8
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on designated public trails only	NA	2.88	NA	36.9
Enforced snowmobile speed limit where speed limit posted on designate trail only	NA	3.42	NA	56.6
Trail closed hours on designed system	NA	1.95	NA	13.8

a. Rating scale: 5 = strongly supports, 4 = moderately supports, 3 = neutral, 2 = moderately oppose, 1 = strongly oppose.

Residents were most favorable about mandatory training for all first year snowmobile operators, regardless of age, just as they were in 1996-97. This situation is similar to that for hunting in Michigan and looks to the positive reinforcement of education to encourage good behavior. Non-residents, as in 1996-97, while also supportive of this education initiative, were even more supportive of mandatory personal liability insurance for all snowmobile operators. This option focuses on market forces in the insurance industry to financially discourage bad behavior. Residents and non-residents were much less supportive of an enforced speed limit on all public lands, trails and waters or mandatory licensing of all snowmobile operators. Both residents and non-residents had decreases in support for more intensive enforcement of existing regulations.

Looking at the percentage that strongly or moderately supported these initiatives, a majority of respondents only support two initiatives, mandatory training of all first year operators and enforcement of snowmobile speed limits as posted on designated trails. However, there was little support for a general speed limit on trails or on public lands and frozen waters in general. The initiative with the most difference in support was mandatory personal liability insurance. As in 1996-97, it has the support of over 2/3 of non-residents but only 1/3 of residents.

Interaction with Law Enforcement Personnel and Rating the Danger of Behaviors

As in winter 1996-97, over 45% of the households responding had one or more household members stopped by a law enforcement officer while snowmobiling during winter 2007-08 (Table 35).

Table 35. Number of law enforcement stops and visibility of officers in Michigan to snowmobiler households with trail permits during winter 1996-97, 2007-08

Percent

	Mean number of stops		One or more members stopped		Saw one or more officers other than during stop	
	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08	96-97	07-08
	MI Residents	0.85	0.86	36.3	45.5	61.0
Non-resident	0.67	0.73	33.3	45.7	44.7	59.9
All Snowmobilers	0.78	0.83	35.0	45.6	54.3	64.7

This is an increase in the proportion stopped in winter 1996-97. Also, snowmobilers were more likely to report seeing officers other than during a time they were stopped in 2007-08 than previously. For all snowmobilers of those stopped in 2007-08, 53% reported the stop by a DNR conservation Officer and 47% by county sheriff department officer or other local unit officer. This data was not available in the previous study. Many households reported more than one stop, leading to the mean number of stops of more than 0.8 per household for the winter of 2007-08.

In rating the danger from selected snowmobile situations/behaviors, encountering machines operated by intoxicated persons, drivers lacking skill in operating their machines and speed were rated as the most dangerous again in 2008-09 as they were in 1996-97 (Tables 36 - 38).

Table 36. Rating by resident snowmobilers with trail permit of danger from selected snowmobiling behaviors/ situations ^a

Dangerous Behaviors or Situation	Mean rating		Percent rating as extremely or highly dangerous	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
	Operating of snowmobiles by intoxicated persons	4.63	4.40	90.6
Drivers lacking skill in operating their machines	3.98	4.09	69.7	74.2
Speed of snowmobiles	3.65	3.81	53.5	61.8
Cars or trucks on seasonal roads	3.26	3.09	41.4	36.4
Operation of snowmobiles by persons who have been drinking, but are not intoxicated	3.23	3.24	43.2	43.6
Other uses of snowmobile trails (e.g. dog sledding, X-C ski)	3.07	2.77	41.3	28.4
Public trail conditions	2.49	2.37	15.9	14.1
Snowmobiling on county or state roads	2.29	2.25	11.5	10.1
Public trail design	2.15	2.16	10.2	10.5

a. Rating scale: 5 = Extremely dangerous, 4 = Highly dangerous, 3 = Moderately dangerous, 2= Slightly dangerous, 1 = Not dangerous.

Table 37. Rating by non-resident snowmobilers with trail permit of danger from selected snowmobiling behaviors/ situations ^a

Dangerous Behaviors or Situation	Mean rating		Percent rating as extremely or highly dangerous	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
Operating of snowmobiles by intoxicated persons	4.51	4.18	87.3	77.5
Drivers lacking skill in operating their machines	4.02	4.03	70.8	73.9
Speed of snowmobiles	3.30	3.60	42.3	48.7
Other uses of snowmobile trails (e.g. dog sledding, X-C ski)	2.96	2.68	35.3	27.1
Operation of snowmobiles by persons who have been drinking, but are not intoxicated	2.89	2.94	30.1	33.9
Cars or trucks on seasonal roads	2.82	2.73	24.5	22.4
Public trail conditions	2.27	2.24	11.6	12.6
Snowmobiling on county or state roads	2.18	2.39	10.1	14.3
Public trail design	2.04	2.14	7.4	10.0

a. Rating scale: 5 = Extremely dangerous, 4 = Highly dangerous, 3 = Moderately dangerous, 2= Slightly dangerous, 1 = Not dangerous.

Table 38. Rating by snowmobilers with trail permit of danger from selected snowmobiling behaviors/situations ^a

Dangerous Behaviors or Situation	Mean rating		Percent rating as extremely or highly dangerous	
	96-97	08-09	96-97	08-09
Operating of snowmobiles by intoxicated persons	4.58	4.33	89.2	81.4
Drivers lacking skill in operating their machines	4.00	4.07	70.2	74.1
Speed of snowmobiles	3.51	3.75	48.8	58.2
Operation of snowmobiles by persons who have been drinking, but are not intoxicated	3.09	3.15	37.8	40.1
Cars or trucks on seasonal roads	3.07	2.99	34.4	32.6
Other uses of snowmobile trails (e.g. dog sledding, X-C ski)	3.02	2.74	38.9	28.0
Public trail conditions	2.40	2.33	14.0	13.7
Snowmobiling on county or state roads	2.25	2.29	10.9	11.3
Public trail design	2.10	2.15	8.0	10.4

a. Rating scale: 5 = Extremely dangerous, 4 = Highly dangerous, 3 = Moderately dangerous, 2= Slightly dangerous, 1 = Not dangerous.

As in the previous study, residents were likely to rate situations as slightly more dangerous than non-residents, especially in the case of speed of snowmobiles and operating by persons who have been drinking but are not intoxicated. Snowmobiling on county or state roads and the design of public trails were rated as the least dangerous, with mean ratings indicating slight danger.

Unlike the previous study where the authors reviewed fatal accident police reports in an attempt to better understand snowmobile fatalities, the DNR Law Enforcement Division now investigates every snowmobile fatality and completes a supplemental UD-10 accident form. This has led to outstanding tracking of the rate of snowmobile fatalities, the causes of those fatalities and efforts to reduce such.

In the previous study, the authors' review of police fatality reports concluded that "of the 146 snowmobile fatalities that occurred in winter 1993-94 through winter 1996-97, 46% occurred on a state or county roadway, while 2% occurred on a road shoulder. In the majority of instances related to roads, the victim came to rest off the roadway after being ejected from his/her machine. Accidents on snowmobile trails accounted for 25% of fatalities, while accidents on private lands or frozen waters accounted for 27%. The location of these fatalities is at odds with the perceptions of snowmobilers, who see little danger in riding on state or county roads.

The majority of fatalities (61%) involved one snowmobile. Multiple snowmobiles were involved in 19% of fatalities and road licensed vehicles (cars, trucks, road graders, snowplows, etc.) were involved in the final 19% of fatalities. Alcohol was a factor in 55% of the fatalities and excessive speed in 16% (Nelson et al., 1998).

The rate of fatal accidents has significantly declined since as clearly document by the DNR Law Enforcement Division providing detailed accident investigation of every fatal snowmobile accident. During the snow seasons of 1995-96 thru 2002-03, there were 319 fatal snowmobile accidents, with an average of 40 per year (Michigan DNR 2009). Since 2002-03, the number of fatalities has substantially declined. For winters 2003-04 through winter 2008-09, there were 146 fatal accidents, with an average of 24 per year. While there has been improvement, it is important to note that further reduction and elimination of fatal snowmobile accidents is the ultimate safety goal.

Based on this current study, two key changes in law enforcement activity are apparent over winter 1996-97. First is that there is more visible presence of law enforcement during snowmobiling as a higher proportion of respondents reporting seeing an officer while riding. Second is that there is a more active presence of officers with more riders reporting being involved in a stop by an officer.

Willingness to Pay for Improvements in Michigan Snowmobile Program

When asked if they were willing to pay more to snowmobile in Michigan to receive one of three selected benefits: longer term leases/permanent trail easements; their own suggested program improvement; fatality reduction initiatives, the majority of respondents were not supportive in the current study (Table 39). Of the three groups of benefits, the strongest support was for longer term leases/permanent easements.

Table 39. Willingness of Michigan snowmobile trail permit holders to pay more to snowmobile in Michigan to receive selected benefits.

Program Area	Percent								
	Residents			Non-residents			All		
	Yes	No	Undec.	Yes	No	Undec.	Yes	No	Undec.
Longer term leases/ permanent easements	43.7	31.1	25.2	50.3	25.9	23.8	45.5	29.7	24.8
Own suggested program initiative	40.6	36.9	23.5	47.3	31.7	21.0	42.3	34.9	22.9
Fatality reduction initiatives	24.1	45.8	30.2	30.0	39.7	30.3	25.7	44.1	30.2

When asked to consider all potential improvements to the Michigan snowmobile program including all those above in Table 39, respondents were asked how much more they would be willing to pay to snowmobile in Michigan (Table 40). More than 70% were willing to pay at least \$5 additional on an annual basis to snowmobile in Michigan in future years with more than half willing to pay \$10 additional annually. Residents were less willing to pay more to snowmobile in Michigan than non-residents.

Table 40. Maximum amount respondent willing to pay to snowmobile in Michigan for all snowmobile program improvements.

	Percent willing to pay maximum additional amount							
	\$0	\$5	\$10	\$15	\$20	\$25	\$30	Total
Residents	32.2	16.1	21.4	8.0	11.4	4.3	6.6	100.0
Non-residents	23.9	19.4	24.7	9.5	14.1	3.7	4.7	100.0
All	29.9	17.0	22.3	8.4	12.2	4.1	6.1	100.0

Snowmobiler Permit Purchaser Demographics

Of the respondents 2008-09 respondents, 72.8% were Michigan residents and 27.2% were non-residents. The distribution of Michigan residents was 63.4% from the Southern Lower Peninsula, 15.6% from the Northeastern Lower Peninsula, 12.5% from the Northwestern Lower Peninsula, 4.9% from the western UP and 3.7% from the eastern UP. As in the past study, those from the northern 2/3 of Michigan are overrepresented in the snowmobiling population compared to their proportion of Michigan's population.

Of the non-residents, 25.7% were from Wisconsin, 22.1% from Illinois, 16.4% from Minnesota, 13.9% from Ohio, 13.7% from Indiana, 3.3% from Pennsylvania and the remaining 4.9% from the rest of the states. Of the five top states, four are directly adjacent to Michigan and Illinois is within 40 miles of Michigan.

A minority of respondents had a membership in a snowmobile related organization with 22.7% of Michigan residents and 35.6% of non-residents being snowmobile organization members. Across all respondents, 26.1% were snowmobile organization members.

Residents on average had snowmobiled for 27.1 years and non-residents for 26.3 years. For residents, 7.2% had begun snowmobiling in the past five years and 4.8% of non-residents had started during that same time period. The mean and median age of respondents was in the mid-40s, with more than half the respondents starting snowmobiling by their 16th birthday.

Snowmobilers tend to be active in many other outdoor recreational activities. When asked about their activities in the past 12 months, more than half participated in hunting, open water fishing, camping, ORV riding and power boating (Table 41). Michigan residents tended to be more likely to participate in the listed outdoor recreation activities than non-residents with the exception of mountain biking. Activities in which the participation of Michigan residents was substantially higher (15% or more) than non-residents included hunting, picking wild mushrooms/berries and canoeing/kayaking.

Table 41. Participation by snowmobile trail permit holders in selected outdoor recreational activities in past 12 months, 2008-09.

	Percent		
	Residents	Non-resident	All Snowmobilers
Snowmobiling	97	99	98
Hunting	61	38	55
Open water fishing	61	59	61
Camping	55	46	53
ORV riding	55	43	52
Power boating	53	52	53
Wildlife viewing	49	40	47
Canoeing/ kayaking	40	23	35
Pick wild mushrooms/ berries	38	18	33
Paved trail/ road biking	37	35	37
Ice fishing	31	23	29
Hiking	31	31	31
Mountain biking	19	21	19
Cross country skiing	10	6	9
Horseback riding	8	8	8
Trapping	3	3	3

Open-Ended Comments

In addition to their responses to the questions on the survey, snowmobilers were also given an opportunity to provide any additional comments they had concerning Michigan snowmobiling. Forty-four percent of the respondents to the questionnaire provided such additional comments, indicating their strong interest and opinions concerning Michigan snowmobiling. These comments are provided verbatim with the exception of persons who are named and expletives. They provide

valuable insight for program managers and law enforcement personnel and are found in Appendix B. Many focus on the enjoyment of snowmobiling and provide a range of complements about the Michigan snowmobile trail system and its operation. Others are more critical, providing specific suggestions for improvement or opposing additional fees for snowmobiling in Michigan.

CONCLUSION

Michigan snowmobiling has changed considerably since its inception in the 1960s, explosive growth in the 1970s, decline in the 1980s and rebound in the 1990s. It is a Michigan outdoor recreation activity that attracts a major proportion of its participants from out of state, bringing critical tourism dollars to a state with a battered economy. Noting the other outdoor recreation activities that snowmobilers engage in from table 41, there are significant opportunities to market Michigan on a year round basis to non-resident snowmobilers for water-based recreation, trail activities, camping, hunting, etc. This potential would be greatly enhanced if all snowmobile trail permits were sold using the RSS, which provides instant point of sale data entry capture about those who participate in Michigan snowmobiling. A better data base of snowmobilers would also enhance the ability of the DNR to better communicate with snowmobilers and to more regularly listen to and assess snowmobile use, users and economic contributions to Michigan's economy.

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Appendix A – Questionnaire and Cover Letters

1. Please complete the following table to describe the people in your household and their involvement in snowmobiling. If there are no people in a certain category, please write 0 for that category.

	# in household	# who snowmobiled Winter 2007-08	# who snowmobiled Winter 2008-09	# who have completed a snowmobile safety class
Adults 18 or older				
Children 12-17				
Children 11- younger				

If no one from your household snowmobiled in Michigan during Winter 2007-08 or Winter 2008-09, please skip to Question 7.

2. For each snowmobile your household owns, please complete the table below about last year's and this year's snowmobiling. Please circle the correct y=yes or n=no regarding use, trail permits and registration and be sure to fill in the number of miles each machine was driven in MI.

Model year	CC	Used in MI		Had 2008		Has 2009		Current MI Registration	Approx # MI miles driven winter 07-08	Approx. # MI miles driven so far winter 08-09
		winter 2007-08?	winter 2008-09?	MI Trail Permit?	MI Trail Permit?					
		y n	y n	y n	y n	y n	y n			
		y n	y n	y n	y n	y n	y n			
		y n	y n	y n	y n	y n	y n			
		y n	y n	y n	y n	y n	y n			
		y n	y n	y n	y n	y n	y n			

3. Please estimate, using the table below, how many Michigan SNOWMOBILE DAYS you and household members operated your snowmobile(s) in Michigan last winter and so far this winter. A SNOWMOBILE DAY IS EACH DAY OR PART OF A DAY ONE SNOWMOBILE WAS OPERATED in Michigan unless it was primarily used to support other activities like ice fishing. For a region or winter in which your household did not snowmobile, leave that spot blank. Please add the total days for each year on the last line, even if it is 0.

Region (see map)	MI Snowmobile Days Last Winter (2007-08)	MI Snowmobile Days This Winter (2008-09)
1 Western UP		
2 Eastern UP		
3 NW NLP		
4 NE NLP		
5 Southern LP		
Total Snowmobile Days		

3a. Did you use any of your snowmobiles to support ice fishing, trapping or some other recreational activity in winter 2007-08? ___yes ___no ... or winter 2008-09? ___yes ___no

4. How many of these TOTAL SNOWMOBILE DAYS from Q3 were mostly spent on the Michigan designated snowmobile trail system (trails marked with orange diamonds)?

Last winter (2007-08) ____ # days

This winter (2008-09) ____ # days

5. How many gallons of gasoline did your household use in all of its **snowmobiles in Michigan** during winter 2007-08 _____ # gallons and so far this winter (2008-09) _____ # gallons.

6. Of the total MI SNOWMOBILE DAYS last winter and this winter (last row in Q 3 above), how many were from which type of trip?

Type of trip	Last Winter (2007-08)	So far this winter (2008-09)
Days involving overnight stays away from permanent home	# days	# days
Days not involving overnight stays away from permanent home but with travel of 100 or more miles one way to snowmobiling site/area	# days	# days
Days not involving overnight stays and less than 100 miles from home	# days	# days
ALL SNOWMOBILING DAYS (should equal "Total Days" from last row of Q3)	# days	# days



Now, for your **most recent** Michigan snowmobiling outing when you stayed overnight away from home **or** snowmobiled more than 100 miles from your permanent home, please answer questions 7-13. This outing likely occurred during winter 2008-09.

7. When did the MOST RECENT outing begin? Month ____ Date ____ Year ____

8. In which region of the state was it ___ Western UP ___ Eastern UP

___Northwestern LP

primarily focused? (Please check one) ___Northeastern LP ___Southern LP

9. How many people from your household _____# and how many of your snowmobiles _____# were involved during that **MOST RECENT** outing?

10. How many total snowmobile days were your machines used for snowmobiling (not as support for fishing) during that **MOST RECENT** outing? _____# days

11. Did the outing involve an overnight stay away from your permanent home? Yes No (go to Q 12)

11a. If you stayed overnight away from home, where did you stay? Please check all that apply.

- Own second home Motel/hotel/rental cottage or cabin
 Camped At friend's/relative's
 Other (please explain _____)

11b. In total, how many nights did you spend away from home on this trip? _____ # nights

12. How much money did your household spend on the entire trip during that **MOST RECENT** outing? Please complete the table below for spending at home in preparation, traveling to and from the snowmobiling area, and in the area where you rode. If you spent nothing on an item, please leave it blank.

	At Home	En Route	Local Area
Grocery & convenience store food/drink	\$.00	\$.00	\$.00
Tow vehicle expenses (gasoline, repairs, etc.)	\$.00	\$.00	\$.00
Snowmobile expenses (gasoline, repairs, etc.)	\$.00	\$.00	\$.00
Restaurant and bar meals and drinks	NA	\$.00	\$.00
Sporting goods (bait, fishing tackle, etc.)	\$.00	\$.00	\$.00
Lodging (motel, rental cabin, etc.)	NA	\$.00	\$.00
All other items (clothing, souvenirs, etc.)	\$.00	\$.00	\$.00

13. Whom did these expenditures cover? _____ # from your household + _____ # others?

14. What were your household's MI snowmobiling related expenses in the last 12 months in the following categories? If there were no expenses for a category in MI, leave category blank.

Expense Item	Dollars spent in last 12 months
Purchase of snowmobile	\$
Purchase of snowmobile equipment other than snowmobile (trailer, clothing, etc.)	\$
Snowmobile repair/maintenance	\$
Insurance on your snowmobile(s)	\$
Off-season storage costs	\$

Now, I'd like to ask some questions about Michigan snowmobiling and its management.

15. Please rate the following services/situations regarding the Michigan DNR's snowmobile program. Use a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as very good, 4 as good, etc. **Please CIRCLE the appropriate number for each item.**

Very Very

Services/Situations	Good	Good	OK	Poor	Poor	Why your Rating?
Public trail grooming	5	4	3	2	1	_____
DNR snowmobile trail maps	5	4	3	2	1	_____
Snowmobile trails	5	4	3	2	1	_____
Snowmobile trail signage	5	4	3	2	1	_____
Public trail design	5	4	3	2	1	_____
Trailhead parking/staging	5	4	3	2	1	_____
Snowmobile law enforcement	5	4	3	2	1	_____
Snowmobile safety education	5	4	3	2	1	_____
DNR snowmobile website	5	4	3	2	1	_____

16. Overall, how satisfied are you with Michigan snowmobiling on a scale of 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 5 (highly satisfied)? ____# rating

What is the ONE most important reason for your rating? _____

17. Is the public snowmobile trail system in Michigan overcrowded? ____ Yes ____ No

18. Please list the ONE improvement you would most like to see in the Michigan snowmobile trail system.

 19. Would you be willing to pay more to snowmobile in Michigan to pay for this suggested improvement?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Undecided

19a. If yes, please check the highest **additional** amount you would annually be willing to pay per snowmobile for **this** suggested improvement? __\$5 __\$10 __\$15 __\$20

20. It has been proposed that the State of Michigan acquire permanent easements or invest in longer term leases for the portions of the designated snowmobile trail system that are on private lands if the current owners are willing. It has also been proposed that such an approach should be used to expand the current snowmobile trail system. Please circle your level of support for each of the following options on a scale of 1-5, with 5 as strongly support, 4 as moderately support, down to 1 strongly oppose.

Action	Strongly Support	Moderately Support	Neutral	Moderately Oppose	Strongly Oppose
More long term trail leases held by non-profit snowmobile organizations/clubs	5	4	3	2	1
More long term trail leases held by State of MI	5	4	3	2	1
Permanent trail easements held by non-profit snowmobile organizations/clubs	5	4	3	2	1
Permanent trail easements held by State of MI	5	4	3	2	1
Expand the mileage of the designated MI snowmobile trail system	5	4	3	2	1

21. Would you be willing to pay more to snowmobile in Michigan to pay for longer term leases or permanent

easements for more of the snowmobile trail system?

Yes No Undecided

21a. If yes, please check the highest **additional** amount you would annually be willing to pay per snowmobile for long term leases/permanent easements? \$5 \$10 \$15 \$20

22. Over winter 2007-08, 25 snowmobilers were killed during Michigan snowmobiling. The DNR is considering potential ways to reduce fatalities. **Please circle your level of support for each of these on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 strongly support, 4 moderately support, etc.**

Fatality Reduction Initiative	Strongly support	Moderately support	Neutral	Moderately oppose	Strongly oppose
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on all public lands, designated trails and waters	5	4	3	2	1
Enforced snowmobile speed limit on all designated trails only	5	4	3	2	1
Enforced snowmobile speed limit where posted on designated trails only	5	4	3	2	1
Mandatory safety training for all first year snowmobile operators regardless of age	5	4	3	2	1
Licensing required of all snowmobile operators	5	4	3	2	1
Mandatory personal liability insurance for all snowmobile operators	5	4	3	2	1
Snowmobile curfew/closed hours on designated trail system	5	4	3	2	1
More intensive enforcement of existing snowmobile regulations	5	4	3	2	1

23. Please list any other ideas you have about ways to reduce fatalities? _____

24. Would you be willing to pay more to snowmobile in Michigan to have fatality reduction initiatives?

Yes No Undecided

24a. If yes, please check the highest **additional** amount per snowmobile you would annually be willing to pay to have fatality reduction initiatives? \$5 \$10 \$15 \$20

25. In total, considering all potential improvements to the Michigan snowmobile program discussed above including the one improvement you would most like to see, efforts to make a more permanent and perhaps larger designated snowmobile trail system and fatality reduction initiatives, how much **more in total** would you be annually willing to pay per snowmobile?

\$0 \$5 \$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 \$30

26. How many times during winter 2007-08 in Michigan were you or members of your household checked or stopped by a law enforcement officer while snowmobiling? _____# Winter of 2008-09? _____#

If you or another household member were stopped or checked by an enforcement officer one or more times, please check which type of officer(s) was involved.

DNR Conservation Officer
 County/City/Other local unit officer/deputy

27. Did you or members of your household see, but were not stopped or checked by a law enforcement officer while snowmobiling in Michigan during winter 2007-08? ___ Yes ___ No
 winter 2008-09? ___ Yes ___ No

28. Please rate the level of danger to snowmobilers from the following, based on your snowmobiling experiences. Use a rating scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being extremely dangerous, 4 highly dangerous, etc. and **circle the appropriate number for each.**

Behavior/Situation	Extremely Dangerous	Highly Dangerous	Moderately Dangerous	Slightly Dangerous	Not Dangerous
Operation of snowmobile by person who has been drinking but is not legally intoxicated (0.01-0.07 blood alcohol)	5	4	3	2	1
Operation of snowmobile by a legally intoxicated person (0.08 or higher blood alcohol)	5	4	3	2	1
Speed of snowmobile	5	4	3	2	1
Driver lacking skill in operating machine	5	4	3	2	1
Cars/trucks on seasonal roads	5	4	3	2	1
Public trail conditions	5	4	3	2	1
Public trail design	5	4	3	2	1
Other uses of designated snowmobile trails (e.g. dog sledding, cross country skiing)	5	4	3	2	1
Snowmobiling on county/state road shoulders	5	4	3	2	1

29. List other behaviors/situations that you feel are extremely/ highly dangerous. _____

I would like to finish with some general questions about you.

30. Please check **all** of the recreation activities in which you participated during the past 12 months.

- Snowmobiling ORV riding Open water fishing Hunting
 Camping Canoeing/kayaking Power boating Horseback riding
 Hiking Wildlife viewing Ice fishing Mountain biking
 Cross country skiing Paved trail/road biking Pick wild mush./berries Trapping

31. What is your 5 digit home zip code? _____ 32. What is your age? _____ years

33. At what age did you begin snowmobiling? _____ years

34. Are you a member of a snowmobiling association or club? ___No ___Yes (please list each organization

_____)

Please write any other comments you have about Michigan snowmobiling here.

Please mail the completed questionnaire back to me in the postage paid envelope provided. Thanks for your assistance in helping to improve Michigan snowmobiling.

Dr. Chuck Nelson
131 Natural Resources Building
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
(517) 432-0272

Initial Survey Cover Letter

January 15, 2009

Dear Michigan Snowmobile Trail Permit Purchaser:

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Michigan State University (MSU) are cooperating to better understand Michigan snowmobile use and users. This research study is a follow-up to one done a decade ago by MSU for the DNR. Using that baseline information, it provides the opportunity to track trends in snowmobiling since the late 1990s. You have been randomly selected as one of the 3,000 trail permit purchasers to be sampled from the winter 2007-08 list of almost 225,000 snowmobile trail permit purchasers.

The enclosed questionnaire asks about your household's snowmobiling during last winter (2007-08) and this winter. It also asks about your most recent snowmobiling outing (most likely this winter). In addition, it provides the opportunity for you to evaluate Michigan's snowmobile program, suggest program improvements and enhance snowmobiling safety. Please take the 15-20 minutes needed to complete the questionnaire and mail it back to me in the postage paid envelope.

Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw or refuse to answer any question without penalty. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study. Rather, your participation in this study will contribute to a better understanding of Michigan snowmobiling and provide guidance for future program direction.

Your responses will be kept confidential and your name will not be associated with any results. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. If you have any questions about this project at any time, please call Dr. Chuck Nelson, Associate Professor at MSU by phone (517) 432-0272 or by email at nelsonc@msu.edu.

Thanks for helping to better understand and improve Michigan snowmobiling.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chuck Nelson,
Associate Professor
Enc.

Second Mailing Survey Cover Letter to Non-Respondents One Month After First Mailing

February 15, 2009

Dear Michigan Snowmobile Trail Permit Purchaser:

About a month ago I sent you and some other randomly selected snowmobilers a survey about your experiences and opinions on Michigan snowmobiling. While I have received completed surveys from many others, I have not received yours. If our correspondence has crossed in the mail, please accept my apologies for contacting you again. If you have not yet responded, please do so using the enclosed survey. Your opinions are important. My goal is to be able to accurately represent the collective views of those who snowmobile in Michigan in my report to the DNR. Let your voice be heard. Please take the 15-20 minutes needed to complete the survey and then mail it to me in the postage paid envelope. I will not be contacting you again about this matter.

Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw or refuse to answer any question without penalty. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study. Rather, your participation in this study will contribute to a better understanding of Michigan snowmobiling and provide guidance for future program direction.

Your responses will be kept confidential and your name will not be associated with any results. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. If you have any questions about this project at any time, please contact Dr. Chuck Nelson, Associate Professor at MSU by phone (517) 432-0272 or by email at nelsonc@msu.edu.

Thanks for helping to better understand and improve Michigan snowmobiling.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chuck Nelson,
Associate Professor
Enc.

Appendix B – Open Ended Comments

Comments:

- Although I am glad to be one of the 3000 selected to fill out this survey, I don't feel my answers represent a lot of riders because I've only rode in Michigan 1 time in 8 years and for only 1 night. I just got back into sledding last year (07-08), so I hope to be in riding in Michigan more in the future.
- Moneys from the purchase of trail permits should be going to the local clubs for grooming and maintenance purposes. The local clubs can handle most trail related issues. Official DNR "oversight" should be minimal.
- I think some riders needed to think more about safety on the trail, like stay on the right side of the trail, especially on curves and hills. All so high and low beams on sleds. I talked to one rider that did not know his sled had high and low beams.
- We enjoy riding in Mich. We hope the state will continue to provide good trails.
- Without looking at the stats I would ask when are most accidents occurring, is alcohol always involved or do we just blame it on that because it's the easiest way, when actually lack of respect for a snowmobile is really the blame. Speed kills, but not having safety training and experience riding whether drinking or not are the major cause of death. Have you not heard of the "weekend warriors" I knew a guy who arrived at his cabin unloaded his sled and went for a quick blast, hit a tree and broke his neck- dead. Not too smart
- Keep up the good work. Thanks
- I think snowmobiling in the U.P is great! I have ridden trails in lower MI and found the ones around Grayling-Gaylord very traveled and I don't care for that. A sidenote- my companion rides his snowmobile to work in the winter and his 4 wheeler in the other months (July)(just kidding!) I didn't include his work travel in the questions
- Please do not ban 2-stroke engine snowmobiles ever! As long as they are below the noise requirements, then they should continue to be enjoyed forever! We love Michigan!
- Enjoy riding state trails! Keep up the good work!!
- Price of gas is up, trail permits are going up and up as like everything else keep raising the prices and the sport will suffer. Some of the business that are hard to reach from the normal trail should try to make an effort with the DNR to make access to there business

- Machines/trails/sport has gotten very “fast”. No room for alcohol. Our group does NOT drink when riding. Only way to stay safe. We’ve come across two accidents in the last 3 years in WUP. Both broken legs-both caused by lack of experience-newbies to sport. (No drinking however). You have a gold mine in the UP-promote it!
- I love snowmobiling but I am very concerned about taking my 5 yr. old because of the number of jerks riding to fast or drunk. I have already watched one friend die snowmobiling due to some drunk rider.
- Maybe single day pass for trail permit?
- Trails are great. Groomer operators are cool. Fix some trail signs. Help some of the poor gas stations at least one pay at the pump. Store closes at 9:00 pm you break down at night you are screwed. Over all Michigan is awesome.
- Please make trails in Buckley MI 49620!!
- No more fee raises! Not for trail permits, registrations or licensing. Nada, nothing, enough already.
- Really like to snowmobile, hope the trails never close up
- I am opposed to increasing trail permits and registrations. This is not a good time in Michigan to be asking for more money although I understand it is needed. I do believe if you have volunteered so much as my family, you should have a discounted trail permit.
- We have some of the best trails and most beautiful countryside which was a factor in our moving here. We do enjoy the trails. We’ve had quite a few visitors come and stay because we are so near the trail. But on the downside we’ve had enough bad experiences with mr. overzealous DNR that we usually head for the Wisconsin border. In my opinion the young agent that feels a need to prove himself who seems to be above the law himself is a bigger deterrent than a bad economy.
- This is one of our favorite activities! Thank you.
- Why is it that Michigan snowmobile trail permits cost out of state snowmobiles the same price as Michigan residents? I believe in all other uses of our national resources of Michigan, State Parks, hunting, fishing, etc. out of state or non-residents pay more other then trail permits and some states don’t pay a snowmobile registration fee. Should have to show drivers license to purchase trail permits. Vendors who sell trail permits get nothing from the state for selling them so most vendors all that is needed to purchase a trail permit is the amount of money for permit.
- I enjoy the trail system we have in Northern Emmet Cty. However the trail near Cross Village is a lot of county roads and is dangerous at times. Also, I see quite a few intoxicated riders as most of the stops up here are at bars.
- I think over regulation on the trail system may hurt our sport. Some sort of safety course or training may help curb some of the negative problems with our sport, especially for renters or these new sledders. Our safety program in UL works well for the young sledders, however the 20 something that drink and break many of the sledding laws are not reached.
- I enjoy Michigan snowmobiling. We have a great and extensive trail system. I used to spend all my time in the lower peninsula near Manistee. I now pretty much ride exclusively in the UP. Less people, more trails, wider, safer, and more scenic. Except for trips to Wyoming the UP is awesome. We need to just educate and pursue active riders to do the correct thing. People need to realize that just because one can afford a snowmobile, boat PWC that does not make them invincible. Training and education is the key. There is no substitute for time spent on the trails with safe qualified drivers.
- Love it! This sport pumps a lot of money into Michigan’s economy. It should be advertised more out of state to draw more \$\$ here.

- Considering becoming a member to help or donate where I usually snowmobile
- If all of the users were charged to use snowmobile trails, i.e. bikers-hikers-etc. via user fee - & registration fee – trail permit fees etc. were dedicated to trails in permanent fund instead of gen. fund I feel fees would not have to keep rising.
- I have a problem with people using their snowmobiles without considerations for others property i.e. stay on trails unless permission is given. Just because tracks are seen does not mean you can ride there. We all love the sport but if leases are cancelled none of us can ride! I am torn between wanting things enforced and the ability to afford the sport – man hours are expensive. I live 100 yards from the Petoskey trail but between fuel, main. And permit/registration costs I can only ride 30% as often as I used to! I can only hope whole heartedly that the sport does not become over governed and priced out of most participant's means – I am happy to see interest in this form but think the fatality reduction initiative is a gross misappropriation of funds. Thrilling sports have risks. I make the choice to ride NO ONE ELSE! Let us enjoy the sport. If anyone thinks the sport is too dangerous take up snowshoeing. Don't ride. Don't turn snowmobiling into a 10 mph parade!
- This is the absolute poorest survey I've ever been asked to complete. The only reason I took the time to complete it was to identify some of the areas the survey really blew it in. If you even get 10% return you'll be doing super, but that means you'll send the state info to create policy and make decisions based on a minute fraction of the statistical pool. As you can probably surmise from my comments this survey really upset me because it was so poor and will have a large potential impact. Finally – we sold 2 snowmobiles and trailer last year because the state made noises about raising the trail permits to double. This was on top of the higher trailer plates and other discussed fees. We like to snowmobile and have extra sleds to share/teach friends how to ride safely but decided 5 was enough vs. 7 (especially since 3 are 2-ups)
- Please note that we visit MI once a year to ride in the U.P. We live in Northeast Ohio so I was unable to answer some of your questions from the 09 season. We ride mainly in Western NUP were as of Feb. 1st they have had 230" snow.
- Keeping fire roads and back country open is a key to success. We ride these areas for the powder and safety away from trail riders that are drunk or out of control. Making designated trail routes thru towns more clear. Keep all loud pipes off the public roads.
- Overall. Sweet. But too short.
- We live in the country and ride mostly farm fields. We are planning a trip to the UP at the end of January. Thank you for the survey.
- We need more trails
- Our son, age 14, rides our snowmobile on state land behind our house. There are no designated snowmobile trails there, just snow covered 2-track trails. We don't use the snowmobile anywhere else.
- We need to crack down on loud pipes on sleds that run the trails, that is what is closing trails across private property. If the people with loud pipes are off trail riding that is fine.
- It seems that young people get into snowmobiling without knowing how to ride, how sleds handle, what laws are in place, no safety training and no respect for the area surrounding them. A lot of people do not know north from south or east from west or how to read a map. Snowmobiling has been a major part of my life and the only hobby I have had for over 30 years. It is a great thing to do to see nature's splendor in the winter and be with friends who enjoy the same thing.

- In the past few years, I have not used the Michigan trail system much because I have 2 young children. This year, we started to use them a little more. With each coming year we will continue to increase our usage. As my children get older and begin riding their own sleds, it would be nice to be able to get a family discount on trail permits. Especially if the prices of permits increases. Also, I don't think it is fair to require a "trail permit" for me to ride my girls around on the lake, or to go ½ mile down the road to my private property. The trail permit should be for the trail period.
- Stressing respecting private property will help gain or maintain private property access. Stressing snowmobile courtesy helps the image of snowmobilers. The trail permits and registration fees have increased a lot over the last few years. I no longer keep "guest" sleds current unless I'm sure they will be used more than 1x a year
- I used to be a member of Michigan snowmobiling club. I quit because I felt they don't use the funds to the fullest vale waste to much money on outings parties and speaker at meetings etc.
- I ride off trail most of the time but pay for permits when the trails get beat up from out of towners. Since I live in Alger county I think I should not have to pay for trail permits.
- Great fun but getting expensive for amount of use!
- Snowmobiling is vital to the economics of many northern Michigan communities. As communities grow, planning needs to incorporate routes for snowmobiles' through congested cities. I live in the city of Traverse City, but have no legal way of driving my sled from my house to a trail system off road which allows shoulder travel. I would snowmobile more if I could simply drive from my house to a trail system (only 10 miles away). I am passionate about snowmobiling safety. My father struck a tree and was killed 2/13/2006 in Crawford county. He was not drunk, but speed may have been a factor. He was driving a brand new snowmobile which he was not used to driving yet. Education should include info regarding diff. riding experience with diff equipment. Get used to our new sled before pushing the limits.
- The biggest problem I see is riders traveling on wrong side of trail. As out leader I see this often and have to correct for their failures. I see (20-30) young riders on private property on loud machines which give all snowmobilers a bad name. Control of noise would help snowmobilers image
- This should not be against the law 200' off trail. (See diagram on 108) See no. 23. When sleds stop on turns other have to go around them into oncoming traffic blind by the curve.
- I love to snowmobile in the UP because of the open trail system with longer uninterrupted stretches and way fewer riders to contend with. Main concerns are fueling stations are closing all over and its hard to plan out routes as a result. Riding in the LP is okay, but trails are too broken-up and not convenient to ride in some areas like Alanson and around Indian River or Petoskey which prohibits snowmobiles completely.
- I love to pleasure ride and greatly appreciate all you do to keep our trails open and nice. I can't stand to see the hotshots who go up there with no understanding of what a privilege those trails are. I hope to sled till I'm dead. It inspires us to see retired people still enjoying the sport.
- Thank you!
- We're new to snowmobiling, so we go slow. Some people go way to fast (to us). We feel they can't possibly navigate at those speeds. Maybe they're just confident or know the trail well. An officer available to help at a booth, etc would be helpful and out in sigh to prevent hi-speed or drinking. An officer's presence simply reduces dangerous behavior.
- I'm not willing to pay more for sled permits until everyone who uses the trails start contributing (horseback riders, bikers, hikers) I am tired of the financial burden being placed on certain user

groups while other pay nothing. I would support a system that requires that everyone who uses public owned land, trails or facilities to purchase a use permit. This permit should have to be displayed when riding a bike, sled or just picking mushrooms.

- Safety is my biggest concern. Too many 15-40 year old guys that get too aggressive. We'll be back snowmobiling in Michigan, we have a cabin on a couple lakes in UP, but our little girls and other vacations made it tough this year
- I loved riding during the week. The weekends are becoming so crowded with riders, it is not fun to ride on weekends anymore.
- Some grooming problems. Would pay more for more grooming. Pay groomer drivers min wage. Ticket (riders) that take a "break" on trail and impeded traffic, very dangerous.
- I love to snowmobile in the upper peninsula of Michigan as they have the best trails anywhere. I ride with friend "uppers" who no the trails. I usually feel safe on MI trails compared to WI. They are wider. Could use better signs however.
- I live in Grayling (Crawford County) over the last 2 to 3 years. They have done a really great job maintaining the trails around Grayling.
- It has improved greatly over the past 15 years since I started riding in MI. Continue to expand trails, and keep them smooth and I will keep coming. P.S. If you put on a speed limit I will be quite disappointed. Guys that get killed are generally bad riders with too much machine. Or they are drunk. I like to drive fast, but safe and I don't drink-ride. Please don't punish me for someone else's poor judgment by imposing speed limits day-night. That is the main reason I do not ride extensively in Minnesota.
- I feel that the state has come a long way on improving the trail system. Grooming is the number one way to improve more people riding and lowering the dangers of riding. Over enforcement and high prices would discourage me from riding as much as we do. Most fatalities come from somebody who has never rode a sled and goes out and buys a 200 mile an hour machines gets drunk and hits a tree. More safety guidelines for beginners.
- I enjoy using southern snowmobile trails in Mich. Keep up the good work.
- Too expensive & too many laws the more laws the less fun
- Would like to see trails going through the Village of Roscommon
- I know of 4 people who were killed or seriously injured by snowmobiles. 3 of the 4 had been drinking heavily. My order of importance are 1. no drinking 2. should have a good driving record 3. have skills to operate 4. speed Stop focusing on stopping good people, doing the right things and enforce the 1st 3 1st
- I have to pay for trail permit where we live in farming country. Trail is over 30 miles from home don't mind to pay for them when we go to U.P but cost is too high for what you get out of them. \$50.00 a year to ride in hay field cannot justify that. When we go to U.P. trails are not groomed we don't ride them anyway to fast & stupid people! On them cannot see where 25.00 permit is going but to somebody's pocket?
- We are all worried that our snowmobile dollars are not being stolen by other state of Michigan departments. If I was sure all my money was only being used for snowmobile uses, I would be willing to pay more.
- My trip to Michigan was most likely a one-time experience. I very much enjoyed it but the time and distance to get there will most likely be cost inhibitive in the future.
- I would love to see the Sheriff outside the popular bars/restaurants on a Saturday afternoon checking those riders coming out about to get on their sleds

- With the very, very, very BAD economy we need to reduce the permit fees to \$5.00 to help out Mich. Residents.
- Please keep dog sledders off the trail, very dangerous situation. I have first hand experience with this and seems as though they do not respect us even though we pay for the trails and they do not. Trails & trail conditions have greatly improved in years, keep up the good work and try to get the trail done by the Chassell area.
- Thank you for great trails
- My friends and family and I try to ride safe and smart. We may consume alcohol and ride but we all know how to be smart about it! If you stopped it all together it would take away from the have fun and loosen up part of it. We are always going to have bad eggs out there. Let's try to make us more aware and to look out for the bad eggs. My family & friends show our kids how to ride safe and be aware of the bad eggs all 12 months of the year. This is where I would like to see some of our money go. You can't stop it, so show people how to look out for it. Thank you
- L.P. trails are too narrow & people drive too fast & they don't stay on their side of the trail
- Thank you!
- I think that limiting horsepower (cc's) would help. The newer machines are too fast, too big, etc. Trail fees should be based on cc's. Those 600 and up should pay more
- The two major issues on the trails today are sleds with studs and sleds with big engines. This is a recipe for disaster for young people with limited riding experience. Combine that with alcohol and you've got real problems. Studs should be outlawed on all Mich trails and sleds should be no larger than 700-750 cc. Studs tear up trails and make more work for the groomer. Sleds with studs and large engines should be limited to drag strips and race tracks only.
- It is the greatest revenue draw to northern Mich and the UP that we have in winter. Maybe all year?
- Snowmobiling is a very expensive sport! If they can afford a 8,000 sled – 4X4 pickup-trailer then they can afford to pay for their own trail grooming – public trails?
- Getting very expensive to snowmobile!
- I would love to see improvements for all who are involved in snowmobile or ATV riding. But please DON NOT limit me because of a few dumb people. I have no problem following to rules, and I DO NOT live in a community country for very good reasons.
- Let it snow
- The higher cost of the permit the less people will snowmobile with the economy as bad as it is & will be for a while
- You have a good safe program. I love it and so does my kids.
- I love snowmobiling in Michigan, if weather and the economy would cooperate, then I would go every weekend somewhere! Arctic Cat rider, GO GREEN! GO WHITE!
- I would like to speak on behalf of my brother. He is an advocate of continued improvement of our trail systems. He frequently discusses his willingness to pay more (higher) trail fees for improved trails.
- The trail system in Michigan needs some work the signage at intersections is terrible most signs are hand written with marker and it is all worn off. We also need more maps on bulletin boards at key intersections. More trail numbered markers and diamonds.
- We have had 2 great seasons for riding (current and previous yr) the UP has excellent signage, trail conditions, accommodations etc. The lower has improved greatly but could still use a little

more work (move trail markers, expand trails) – we’ve had lots of fun and continue to be great supporters. Thanks you!!

- MI trails have improved in recent years. Need consistent quality grooming from area to area
- I love snowmobiling!! Lot of fun for friends and family.
- I am flying home to MI just to go snowmobiling from Florida in March because the trails in MI are great. Happy snowmobiling and stay safe! ☺
- Please let this information help you, but not hurt (us) the snowmobiler.. and or limit even more riding areas...
- I snowmobile in Michigan 1 week a year. I would like to see a trail permit for 7 days or less for around \$10.00. Why should I have to pay for a \$25.00 permit for a few days out of the year. It gets expensive to put trail permits on multiple sleds for just a short weekend.
- The cost of trail permits is already high. For us it is already \$75 plus gas and food. I am not happy that the price is already going to go up. It is going to get to the point that people just wont use the trail system.
- I am opposed to public monies being used to support snowmobiling. The only beneficiaries are a small number of supporting business NOT the general public. Excuse me, the other beneficiaries are the governmental entities that use the monies to stay employed.
- I am not willing to pay more for snowmobiling because I feel the charges are high enough and there is plenty of waste! Just as we are required to live within our budget or pay the penalties, the government should have to do the same. Get rid of the waste and maybe I’d be willing to pay more!
- I feel there should be other means to “raise” monies for snowmobiles other than permits and registrations – such as lottery, raffles etc at other sporting events. Share the wealth. Also, that the governor doesn’t use the snowmobilers’ money to bail out “other” Michigan departments that HAVE NOT raised, saved or budgeted their own department.
- Need more money for grooming and operators need to be paid on regular dates, to clubs
- The biggest danger is not being able to see an oncoming machine or oncoming machine is in wrong lane.
- Better indicators on trail signs. When you come out to a “T” intersection on the trail; the sign should indicate the direction NESW of travel, the next town in that direction, the mileage to that town. What good is a sign out in the middle of who knows where, if it doesn’t tell/give some vital information?
- Should have a lifetime registration and trail permit for MI residents
- Michigan snowmobiling is the absolute best! Trails are awesome, scenery spectacular and plenty of opportunities to stop for food and gas. Keep up the good work!
- Overall very pleased with trails. Blind corners need to be cleaned up (trees cut down or trimmed up). Have random stops to check if snowmobilers are drunk maybe around the bars. Have gas stations post hours on maps. Have crossroads marked on trails better. Rode trails by South Branch, they had warming stations. Maybe have warming stations on trails north of Luzerne. Law enforcement could do trail permit and registration check, also random alcohol checks.
- I am an active member with Les Cheneaux Club. The DNR does a great job with the clubs but there is always room for improvement. We volunteer many hours of hard work to sign, brush and maintain trails. The DNR could help us in many ways to get the job done better.
- Your format sucks. It’s difficult to fill out.

- Trails need to be marked & groomed better. Mich. Residents should not be required trail permits within a set mile radius of residence. Out of states fees for permits should be more (they will still come). DNR should have better equipped emergency equipment etc. Frozen lake driving should be ban for all sleds. Higher cc engine sleds should cost more to register & for trail permit. We gave up sledding because of too many high-speed under the influence drivers on the trail. Relocated north on 20 acres & sled our own property only. Planted new trees along roadside last year to have sledders ride over them & kill them. Good luck!
- Don't ask again not interested! Too much info – to provide. You should simplify this questionnaire!!!
- I've noticed a marked increase in groomers and grooming activity, but on busy weekend the trails are shot by mid afternoon on Saturday. I realize the safety concerns of groomers being out on busy days, but our riding is usually over by 3 pm on Saturday because of terrible trail conditions and even Sundays can be tough if they don't hit the groomers hard late Sat nite/early Sun am. Thanks.
- I apologize for losing your first questionnaire
- The DEQ and the DNR need to quit fighting each other in order to finish new trails & get snowmobiles off the shoulders of co. roads. This has been a problem on the Silver Creek Trail from Black Lake to Millersburg. Getting this trail done would keep snowmobiles off 8.5 miles of co. roads. This trail could have been in service for 3 – years now if the DEQ & DNR were not having a power struggle
- Should not need trail permit for fishing
- Grading and conditioning of the trails before freeze up would greatly improve them during the season. All new snowmobiles should be required to have 4 cycle engine to reduce pollution
- Our cabin between Oscoda & Glennie is very close to the trails. We enjoy them very much. More restaurant signage and details on how to get to businesses off the trail needed. Thanks!
- Drunk people after 12 am are not dangerous to me. I will be off the trails
- I feel this is nothing more than a feeler for increasing the trail permit. Trail permit should only be needed for those using a trail that is groomed. A two tier permit system would be best. One permit for us who use our machine to get to lakes for fishing and another permit for those who with to snowmobile on expensive groomed trails. We who use our machines for fishing should only pay a smaller amount for law enforcement not for all the expense of grooming trails
- Coming back to Michigan this year to x-country ski. Thanks!
- It is good to see others concerned about our trail systems.
- Money is tight – we went to MI twice a year until my sled was stolen from Calumet – Bad taste! Got it back weeks later – now stay in a different area. Not a good time to charge more!!
- This has been the best year for snow depth so far. Just have not gone much because of other expenses. Winter is my time of year. Very enjoyable! Thank you Chuck
- I have mostly great memories of snowmobiling in Mich., the trails, the people and hospitality. The bad experiences have all come from DNR & local sheriffs. I have yet to get a ticket but when treated poorly by officers for no real reason or the lack to provide help when needed leaves a bad taste for that area. I don't often see people abusing the right to snowmobile nor do myself or my kin. This is a sport for fun & when I get pulled over every time I see an officer it takes some of the fun out of it. I've only been pulled over in a car a few times in the last 10 years so why so frequent on a snowmobile unless its to try & collect revenue or prove bordem are same with DNR & boats. If it's the money raise the trail permit & reg. & find something more useful for the officers to do.

- I think we need more signs for precautionary reasons. Bigger signs and more of them. I once ran out of gas because there was no sign telling me where to turn off for gas. Thank you, I hope this helps.
- Glad to see this study asking for input. However it was a little lengthy
- Let it snow! Lots of fun, great trail systems need more in my area.
- Grooming trails at night, versus the day improved visibility of groomers lights. Trail by Michigamme (UP) need to be re-route. Poorly groomed & too many hills following power lines (Impossible to groom effectively)
- Michigan is a great place to snowmobile. But, I feel as more riders use snowmobiles it is getting more dangerous, The new snowmobiles handle better and are very fast, perhaps too fast for younger riders. I feel these younger riders on faster machines are making the trails much more dangerous. I wish I had an answer to fix this problem, but I think a speed limit is too hard and expensive to enforce, and would only have minimal effect. I used to average 1,500 miles a year snowmobiling but have recently cut back because of this reason.
- Good survey. Sorry if it's sloppy.
- I was extremely concerned last year when I read a possible proposal by Michigan Snowmobile Association to raise registration fees to \$30 per year (\$90 for 3 years), and a substantial increase in annual permits. (Can't remember the number). This would stop myself & family from snowmobiling, as we could not afford it. I'm sure it would affect other families as well. Retirees (like us), and low income families. It would significantly reduce the number of snowmobilers.
- We need to change the way we receive our funding. The DNR has too much control over everything. It makes it very difficult to operate when you don't have funding to run your equipment.
- Snowmobiling in Michigan is a great sport. Trails are kept in great shape. However it takes a few to ruin it for everyone on the trails. Speed on the trails is a factor that I have seen time & time again especially during poker runs when drivers hurry to get to the next checkpoint and drive like animals disregarding safety for others on the trails, passing on curves, speed and some that do not know how to run a snowmobile. They just get on & ride!!
- Our trail system is very good, but having to pay for it even if you don't use it is absurd. With six snow machines, it get very expensive putting a trail permit on them all. One is used solely for grooming dogsled trails, none of which even touch the trail system. Two are used for cutting and hauling firewood, again never going on the trail system. Another is used for scouting hunting spots, firewood trees, new dog trails, and an occasional ice fishing date. This sled may go on the trails, but only because we are paying anyway. The remaining two are used on the trails and buying a permit is justified. We used to ride into Kalkaska for lunch and dinner occasionally now its just too much hassle getting stopped by the police every time, riding into town for food or fuel is just not worth one to these registration checks. We are already paying road tax on fuel not used on the roads, buying permits for trails we do not use and getting stopped by law enforcement too often. Charging more for permits we don't need and giving more opportunities to be stopped by law enforcement may drive us out of the sport.
- I think it is wonderful to have a sport the whole family can enjoy. I do think that the bike trails in the state should be open to snowmobiles. I would also like to see more trails and more grooming. The high volume on the trails on the weekend makes them very bumpy.
- Trail permits cost enough. We only ride once in a while for shorter trips and since we purchased our sleds the only really good years we've had to ride was last year & this year - \$25 a sled is enough

- Private clubs and volunteers really make the difference. Granholm & DNR were a joke on serious monetary issues and funding. Lot of administrative time wasted before adequate education of DNR members was facilitated and if I'm not mistaken escrow funds were either mishandled or withheld. Government personnel or not, this should not be tolerated.
- The reason I haven't ridden in "09" is I'm a fireman and tore my meniscus in my right knee on a call just before the start of the "08/09" season. I would love to continue to ride in the UP, when I ride I have a beer occasionally 2 or 3 per day over an 8 or 9 hour day. I also don't ride recklessly but I don't want speed limits all the time either, Minnesota does this and I'll never go there because of it. I take 3 or 4 trips per year to upper Wisconsin, and the U.P.. My family and I love the sport. PS. With any sport where you are on a machine, you understand you are taking on a certain amount of risk, it's inherent with all motor sports.
- I feel that there are many opportunities for quality snowmobiling in Michigan. Our cabin is in Indian River, right on the railroad trail. My family & I mostly play in the fields around the cabin or perhaps a trip into town to get gas or go to a restaurant. We avoid the main trails, especially on the weekends, due to overcrowding and people just going too fast. It doesn't feel safe.
- Do not raise sticker costs during this economy.
- The DNR seems to be a big let-down. The officers I have talked with have nothing good to say about snowmobiles/or the sport. What a shame that a few people can ruin it for everyone. DNR want all the money we have, but do nothing for the sport. When they did groom, the trails they maintained were the worse ones I rode. I bought a 4 place trailer some year back. I take day trips from Flint area to Drummond Island, or anywhere in between. Leave my house at 5:00 am, with 2 buddies, drive to our destination unload and ride. Ride 150-300 miles, load up and drive home. Home before 11 pm. Have done this for years! Less meals, no hotel cost, and less time from the family. We divide the truck gas evenly, and I normally get lunch bought for me, because my truck, my trailer. To us, its about the ride! The ride up in the truck with your best friends, the snowmobile ride, and the ride home. We try to save as much money as we can, to do what we love! Sorry it took so long to return! I normally have 1500 miles by now, this year 400.
- Every year I bring 1 or 2 extra sleds (ie 2 people with 3 or 4 sleds) and I always get a trail sticker for the extra sleds. If the trail stickers went up too much, I'd leave the extra sleds on the trailer (without a sticker) and only use the sled as a backup if needed.
- Like no place on earth like the UP!!! Go Red Wings!!!
- Snowmobiling is a great family winter activity. I mainly snowmobile with my 3 children, my brother and his 2 children. We have introduced them by safety courses and safe riding practices. I hope they can enjoy snowmobiling throughout their lives like I have been able to.
- It was a great experience.
- I feel you do a fantastic job on keeping the trails groomed, nice and wide. Business owners are very nice and helpful. Keep up the good work! Thanks for all your hard work!
- Many people go there to ride in the backcountry or off trail. These areas that are open to ride in could be listed on the maps to help keep people off private or closed land.
- Trails are much better since sticker was increased to \$25 – seems worth it now – Thank you! I think the biggest reasons for accidents are people having more power than they are responsible or experienced enough to ride and there is way too much drinking and riding. My personal motto is I won't drink and ride, and I will not ride with anyone in my group who doesn't do the same.
- We usually only get 1 or 2 long weekend trips north of the state line. We always see more wild life than expected to as well as see things we have missed in years past. The one thing that will eventually stop these trips will be the cost of a visitor pass. I don't think it should be free but as it

gets closer to \$40/\$50 per sled and if gas starts going back up, it will get harder to justify those couple long weekends. I will not be doing a trip this season due to a work injury but am planning on 09-10 season already.

- Please keep our trails open!!
- Too many youngsters don't care about the tracks. They tear them up with spinning their tracks & riding too aggressive. We need more permanent trails. Thank you for this opportunity to speak up. We live in Downriver area. But have a second home-cabin in Gaylord. We spend 2 out of 3 weekend in winter their snowmobiling.
- I have a second home in the Gaylord area and do most of my snowmobiling there. I think there is a problem between the DNR and groomers in this area, and also equipment maintenance. I know they get plenty of traffic, but they should be prepared. I have rode in the UP those trails are the best – Luce County area. Between myself, son & son-in-law we have 4 snowmobiles.
- Better listings on local clubs to get more involved in trail system
- Certain trails in Gaylord MI NEVER got groomed
- On question #12, we have a second home, so sometimes we go not do not snowmobile, when we are there
- We have a great trail system, always get lots of snow. There should be a snowmobile endorsement attached to your driver's license...like a cycle endorsement.. so a test have to be taken & passed so some of these yee-haa's will learn & obey the rules, laws & common courtesy. No endorsement – no ride...
- Personal family responsibilities have precluded out opportunity to participate in many “snowmobile activities” in the last 2 years. We normally ride 1000 to 2000 miles per year, in both the UP and northern lower Michigan. Many “off season” hours are devoted to this safety instruction, I have conducted or participated in 5 classes this season, and 4 last season. Also maintain 3 organizations (clubs, council) web sites and participate as a board delegate to the MSA (Mich Snowmobile Assn), officer of regional council (past president, secretary), active in 2 local clubs (past president of one, current “trustee” of a second)
- More education should be done by communities where snowmobiling is important to their economies relative to: safety violations being enforced, how to travel in their cities, where to park snowmobiles, hours of operation that are legal, what constitutes a violation in regards to traveling on the side of a road way (which is the right (legal) side of the road to travel if there are no trails on both sides of a road?), there should be only 1 license required (not a trail permit and a license!) signage should be improved that indicates where it is lawful or unlawful to operate a snowmobile, the only license requirement should cover 3 years or be permanent like a trailer permit.
- I already have to spend too much to ride. Fatalities are always going to be part of snowmobiling. It's the nature of the beast. Riders should keep in mind current and changing trail conditions. Keep in mind that following at safe distance is safer than leading.
- The trails are unsafe to use on weekend (everyone thinks it's a race track). The trails are torn up and not groomed again until Thursday or Friday for the next weekend crew. The people who live here near the trails have to put up with bad trails until they are groomed for the weekend. They should be groomed on Sunday or Monday. Speed needs to be enforced. Also, 4-wheel ATV's use the trail and tear them up, but they pay less to use the trail year round. Snowmobile pay almost twice to use the trails for four months. All ATV snowmobiles and vehicles should pay the same for trail permits this will bring in the extra money needed. IF ATV and vehicles use the trail in winter month they should pay the same amount to use the trails and they cause more damage on the trails.

- Not necessarily directed for snowmobiling, but for allowing ORV's in our area during the summer. Guarantee that 99% of the people that snowmobile, would purchase ORV and ORV permits, causing economic growth. Now opening these trails, would bring a lot of business to these small town, and provide financial stability in there slower months. In the U.P. you can go town to town all over the state, utilizing the same trails as sleds. Now instead of going thru the counties to adopt this plan. The state should step in and pass the law, helping economic stimulus.
- DNR groomers are not knowledgeable about how to groom the trails. Any monies collected for such by the DNR should be given to the non-profit snowmobile organizations/club because they do a much better job. Also, any monies collected for extending leases and/or easements should go to the snowmobile organizations/clubs. The DNR needs to work at developing a better relationship with the snowmobile organizations/clubs. The volunteers and members of such clubs do most of and better maintenance of the trails with little or no monetary help from the DNR.
- Try to not over-regulate the sport! Try to keep annual cost's (permits) reasonable. Why two registration, make one (state reg.) permanent.
- Would like to be able to ride the road shoulders in Ottawa County
- Snowmobiling in Michigan is a freedom you have to experience. Let's keep the government out of it as much as possible.
- Trailhead just north of downtown Newberry (UP East) has a great display of a wrecked sled with a message about speed/staying on your side & dangers of NASCAR-ing. Why good: 1) very impactful, 2) real, 3) hits the problem crowd – I always see the young guys standing there looking at it, 4) cheap – just an acrylic windowed bow with a free sled. Just a suggestion. Thanks!
- Great sport, needs more support from state and local governments, the state might not have the best interest of the snowmobilers in mind when it comes to permanent trails, snowmobilers are much more concerned about the environment than in past years. But hold a common sense approach.
- Out of state snowmobiles should pay more for permits
- I do not believe a safety class is necessary to snowmobile in Michigan as I have already participated in one in Wisconsin & have ridden for a number of years. I do support a class for someone with less than 5 years of riding experience. I certainly hope that Michigan does not go the same way as Wisconsin and raise fees for trail passes. If you want people to come & support local business, there needs to be alternatives considered, rather than just raise fees.
- Good luck. Would like to see results. Sorry I didn't put more time into this.
- Don't mind paying more money if it stays in the snowmobiling fund not general fund! Questions on speed should be more understandable. Driving should follow car driving rules
- I would like to see, when u come up to a trail intersection you sometimes see in a big trail map in a big stand boxed in and it shows you where you're at on the trail. I have got turned around and that would have helped.
- Not related to snowmobiling, but would like to see some kind of tie in on snowmobile trails for ATV usage, and include trail permits to maintain, and lease thru summer months & access to town for food, lodging. Allow shoulder usage on M roads to get to towns & trail connectors
- You may call me if you need any additional info. Thank you.
- We have 15 other snowmobiles from the 1960's and 1970's would be nice to be able to purchase a one-time only registration and trail permit for vintage and classic machines, similar to historic license plates for cars. Obviously these machines are not used a lot but at least once a year. Take the grooming back from the local clubs, it is too expensive, and they are not good groomers. Why furnish them with a tractor and groomer for five yrs then pay them money to groom with

equipment purchased from DNR funds. To put it simply kind of goofy and very expensive for marginal quality of work. We need to keep the cost of snowmobiling down. It is an excellent family activity, but is getting to expensive for working families.

- #24 need more info to make my decision. Need emergency location signs on all trails. Need trails into Mason County. Need trail from Cadillac to Mesick.
- Michigan overall does a very good job, on my old sled @ 7,000 mi, 500 were in MN. I live in MN. My concern for the UP is other people doing stupid things. I wish I had the answer to cure that. Keep up the good work.
- Have had numerous situations/close calls with snowmobilers on/or alongside roads. One came flying around a corner in the center of the road, nowhere to go, he jumped off the machines & snowmobile crashed (totaled) into my plow. He survived serious injury. I still feel the impact. But for every dumbbell there are many more responsible drivers or snowmobilers and ATVers. The jerks give the sport a crummy reputation. If they want to drive like a bat out of h--- it should be out in the middle of nowhere & que sera sera. Not on public trail enjoyed by families, children, etc.
- I would like to see less public & state shoulder riding. The snowplows always seem to take all of the snow off the shoulder even though it's a marked part of the trail system. On the west side of MI Allegan Co there is too much trail on public roads we have to ride that are usually bare but there is plenty of snow on the trail. The trails need to be rerouted.
- Keep up the good work
- Great sport, # killed small for # of people involved when the trail permit goes to \$50.00, I'm done. It seems the more the permit goes up the less we get. Poor law enforcement, rough trails. If asked for a permanent lease thru my property I will no longer let the trail be routed there. Yearly basis, ok.
- Great trail system. Wish they were groomed a little more often. Would love to see the gun lake trail system connected to the Sparta/NW lower system.
- It's great, are family spends most of its time boondocking rather than stay on the local trail system because it can be dangerous for my son's and me!
- I'm a property owner with both systems above
- Michigan is a great place to snowmobile. We have to make sure that a few and very few people don't destroy it for everyone. Bottom line we need more speed and drinking enforcement on our trails to keep them safe for everyone.
- We have a great state with lots of trails but they should be at least 12' wide & groomed on a regular basis. Drinking should not be allowed.
- I would like to see law enforcement concentrate on behavior they witness, vs. stopping everybody on the trail.
- I have heard rumors about increasing trail fees next year. With the economy that is happening now, you would definitely detour tourists from your area and also local people would quit riding. This would definitely hurt the Iron Range Club. They rely on memberships and donations. The businesses would also suffer. You seem to want to raise all fees, while we are in a bad economy with a lot of people out of work. We have friends from Wisconsin that won't ride in the UP now because of the price of the trail sticker. If you would like to respond to this, I would be happy to listen. PS This is why we quit our annual trip to Canada, because they raised the price.
- It's a great sport. I wish I had more time to do it.

- My wife and I love Michigan and the sport of snowmobiling. Our winters wouldn't be the same without this sport. Unfortunately speed and the use of alcohol has given our sport a bad name. We love to ride but spend a lot of our energy watching for the unsafe snowmobiler.
- Snowmobiling is generally good. People are becoming somewhat safer. O tolerance is good for snowmobiling. Parents training children need to be more responsible. I would like to see more money going into the sport. The DNR is a good organization, but I think the head of it should be elected so they would not have to work under people who appoint them from legislature.
- Dr. Nelson, 1) sorry for the delayed response on this important survey. I hope your result will be available for me to read upon completion. 2) If trail safety in total, doesn't improve dramatically soon, I'm quitting & will go back to snow skiing. I like to ride & love exposing others to the sport but always have a knot in my stomach from being concerned we'll encounter out of control riders on the next curve. A mandatory, web based training program & personal liability insurance will help IF backed by a major improvement in the enforcement. My hope for the sport has been elevated just from your survey. I remain available to assist in whatever capacity you may need, please don't hesitate to ask. Bust of luck with your research!
- Michigan has a great trail system!
- When trail permits started = \$5.00 now \$20.00 This was to improve grooming and signs. Very little done where I ride, but now lots of DNR with weapons stopping sleds looking for tickets. I have never got one but don't enjoy the experience. No longer comfortable after stories I have heard. If it continues I am getting out of it. I'm getting too old to mess around with that. It is a winter sport I enjoy very much, and abide by all rules so I shouldn't have to feel threatened when I ride.
- Trails cannot be multi used, ORV, Logging. The trails become rough. I have never seen a groomer in my area where is that money going? My area raises gas prices currently as of today 2/20/09 87 octane is \$2.14 elsewhere in EUP \$2.05 – in Sault St. Marie. Road crews clear the shoulder of the road to gravel thus making it hard to get to gas stations, restaurants etc. without ruining your carbides. Nothing seems to be near enough to trail heads without driving 2-3 miles off trails for gas food. Most towns limit when where you can ride to get these things. Not user friendly. Trail passes are getting too expensive when you have to purchase more than 2. How about group discounts?
- Thanks for the survey. Hopefully the results will help trail design.
- The Lake County sheriff stopped my group 2 times for petty things and treated us like serious criminals. Both times the threatened to through us in jail because we questioned them. Each time someone in our group got 120 tickets. One was for not coming to a complete stop. The other was for riding in the ditch where the snow was better. As a result I stopped riding near Baldwin & Irons
- Most of our riding is from our home on existing farm roads & seasonal roads because it's close to home and there are not any "trails" groomed N. of Maple City. When we do trailer away we park at family/friends homes and ride from there. Usually we have 20+ sleds with us and have rode all over the state form here. In 2000 and before we have rode in Minnesota and Canada from Grand Traverse County. Have rode to Muskegon, Alpena, Mt. Pleasant. We love to ride and I do not think we should pay more \$ for trail permits for less service on the trails. We have a collection of snowmobiles containing 20 sleds in my barns. At \$25.00 each how many would you get legal w/ trail permits. 6 sleds are full blown race sleds land 5 are collector/antique sleds that I won't put stickers on.

- Again, I would like to talk about trails that go through private land of township. Those land owners must be snowmobile friendly and not plow roads down to pavement. For example, there is a new trail system just north of Blue Bear trail that goes to Mancelona, MI. The trail is great except when it goes through private lands, the land owners plow down to the pavement. In addition, the trail also goes through part of Antrim County before connecting with main trail system on M-131. The county plows the road that is the designated trail down to pavement. We do not take this trail anymore because of this and the new trail is not being used heavily because of this! Someone must notify private-public land owners that have trails not to plow down to pavement. Lost revenue by snowmobiles avoiding trail.
- There needs to be more grooming. Especially on the weekends when the trails are used the most. Law enforcement & DNR are not visible. We have only seen the DNR twice in the last 3 seasons (25 outings). Please feel free to contact us if you would like to discuss anything. We plan on retiring to our Antrim County home in several years.
- Trust of DNR is a big issue, it appears that of all the money collects in user fees & taxes that only a small percentage comes back to benefit snowmobiles.
- I think if you are not riding on a groomed trail why should you have to have a trail permit. When they come out they were to pay for trail grooming. Yet 4-wheelers don't need an extra permit.
- Too much wasteful spending in Gladwin County: gates, rails, signage, etc. To raise cost of riding would mean less machines available at my home. At our home my wife and I own 4, my son owns 2 – we would not register or permit all machines. Gladwin County has 1 mile of groomed trail – trail permits should NOT be required to ride under these conditions. I can't express enough negative feelings concerning the RV/ORV treatment in Gladwin County by the DNR/County law enforcement.
- Too many people out in a bar, doing a lot of drinking and then get back on the snowmobile trails with all the other people are riding. Speed and alcohol do not mix.
- Cabin in Vanderbilt, reduces costs of overnight stay/food. Lack of snowmobile days this year due to other obligations not economy or other events
- There is not a reason trails aren't open to ATV's, spring, summer, fall
- Banning of ALL aftermarket exhaust systems should be strongly considered. I know of a number of key trail segments on private land that have been closed due to landowners annoyed by the inconsiderate use of "pipes"
- If a county allows snowmobiles on road right of ways, they should have room on shoulder for travel, so riders do not have to ride in the road or on an uneven surface, such as a bank on the edge. Overall, my years of enjoying the sport has always been enjoying what Michigan has to offer as scenery and the people you meet while enjoying the outdoors. I work outdoors year round in all types of Michigan's climates and still am amazed on how beautiful this state is, no matter what the season. Thank you!
- I ride only on my farm that is why I did not fill out your first questionnaire. Put a limit on H.P we don't drive at 100 MPH
- The trails up north are excellent. There should be licensing for snowmobiling and a required class to ride. It has taken me a few years to see the dangers of this sport. If you come into a bar or restaurant and you come in on a snowmobile, there should be a 1 drink maximum and no tolerance if there is a tolerance. More trail maps should be added @ trails that split and emergency phones installed. Most cell phone don't work up north.
- Quieter snowmobiles can only be a good thing.

- Snowmobiling is a great economic benefit to Michigan. I live in the Northern Lower Peninsula and the expansion of the trail system here has been a real recreational and economic boost. Without the advocacy of snowmobilers I am convinced that much of Michigan's rail trail system would not exist to the detriment of hikers, walker and bicyclists.
- Very enjoyable – how – but if they try to regulate too much will hurt the enjoyment – everything can be dangerous all it takes is common sense – and that can't be regulated.
- Need to get out and groom trails. A lot more than they do.
- I wish I didn't live so far south of MI so I could get up and ride more.
- Would it be a savings to have local trail organization take over the grooming by hiring area farmers with their tractors. It seems like a wasted to have these expensive tractors sit around for most of the year and get used at a time when farmers generally do not use theirs. This could also be income for area farmers.
- Please don't make it cost so much that lower income families can't enjoy it. Most family's have 3-4 or more machines. It cost as much to operate a older machine as a newer one. There are fewer & fewer things that families can afford to do together. The families that do a lot of things together are usually families whose children are not in trouble.
- Questions 19 & 19a I cannot think of improvements however I would if I had to pay more to use such a resource.
- I love the sport and Michigan is a great place to enjoy the outdoors. Anyone with sense can operate through the trail system safely. I have been the accident and I have seen fatalities and near ones in my years of riding. My family has been riding for about 50 years. My 79 year old father stopped going up this year, my aunt rode last year at 82 and my mom at 74. My cousin still goes and depending on who was riding dictated what speed we traveled. Even if your averaging 45 mph you can still be safe, but turns and trail conditions or intersections demand respect/our attention. Drugs of any nature give people a sense of control that rarely works to their advantage. A respect for what today's machines can and can't do is also necessary. Keep the freedom of snowmobiling. Enforce current laws and speed limits for congested areas would be fine. Unfortunately common sense doesn't grow on trees and fatalities will always be a part of the sport. Don't let a few ruin it for all. Thanks for asking & keep up the good work.
- Snowmobiling is more and more expensive. The cost of sleds, oil, gas and repairs is all most riders can handle now. More fees and enforcement will kill the sport.
- As a resident of Florida for 21 years, I have continued to ride snowmobiles in Michigan on an annual basis. I have passed this passion on to my children. I recognize the challenges of making our sport safer without the hassles of over-regulating and the related concern of keeping this activity affordable. Trail enhancements and safety regulations are welcome considerations provided they do not come at the expense of affordable cost and ease of participation. Requisite classes and exorbitant fees would leave me with too little time and budget to justify continued trips to Michigan.
- Without groomed trails we would not ride. We must travel to the UP to get good grooming.
- Use when snow is poor in MN. Very good experience. Trails, people, facilities. Will not use this year due to cost of trail pass. That is, we will stay in Minnesota. Same for Wisconsin where trail pass is now \$35. While not excessive cost we often only use it for 1-4 days.
- I have been snowmobiling for 40 years, along with family & friends. My father of 80 years old & my mother of 76 years old just returned from the UP. They have a ball snowmobiling. We have a lot of great memories and stories to tell about past trips, & things we have seen in this beautiful state. It is too bad that a few bad apples have to spoil the sport for others. But like with everything

else we do in life, there are always those apples. Please do not impose so many laws & regulations on our sport, for the many of use that use common sense, respect others on the trail & love it. Also I have snowmobiled a lot in Canada in the past. There trail system is great. But they priced themselves right out of most of us being able to afford to go there. Please don't do the same thing here. I believe that it brings a lot of revenue to our great state.

- I moved to the Upper Peninsula Keweenaw County 4 years ago from Wis. The trail system is awesome. However, Wisconsin does not have trail permits. Please do not increase permit, stay at \$25.00. Have random checking of alcohol limits on weekend Fri-Sun.
- I love snowmobiling in Michigan, I just returned the other day from riding from home to the Mackinaw Bridge a 600 mi trip what a beautiful state. We need a trail connector from Cadillac to Houghton Lake somehow. I ride approx. 2500-3000 miles a year and I think this might open way more possibilities. My hat off to the thankless job of the volunteers and law enforcement of snowmobile trails. Thanks for a great year.
- Beautiful state, we enjoy our time there
- While I love snowmobiling in Michigan
- We rarely get a chance to use them. When we do we rarely need to use the trails.
- We come to the UP because of trail conditions (grooming) and no speed limits. Minnesota has poor grooming and speed limits. We spend \$1500-2000 a year in MI and if the grooming stops or I get tickets for speeding we'll stop coming. I have a lake home in Northern MN and will just go there instead.
- Overall, pleased with my experiences in Mich. Trails in the UP are excellent. NW LP trails are pretty nice. Trails are a little narrow in spots & gets crowded on weekends all though this year was good. Trail permits don't stick very well.
- I have loved snowmobiling in MI since I was a child. It is a privilege to me. I appreciate the freedom with snowmobiling. If there were more people on trails/density, I would go to more remote areas. I hope that more rules & regulations are not coming as the freedom is what I enjoy most. I don't care how much money I spend per day as I only ride 10-15 times per year. If regulations increase, I would ride less in MI & go to mountains more.
- Over all I love Michigan snowmobiling as you can see I've been doing it a long time. I'm sure you can see my concerns like trails on roads. People who live on these roads get mad because we drive in their yards or over their banks, but what are we to do the plows leave no snow. My carbides are gone & they cost a lot of money. I try to be as respectful as possible on roads and in the trails and hope I set a good example. The trails them self are just fine. They get bumpy once in a while, but the groomers are doing the best they can without a doubt. There gets to be so many sled in one spot it just happens. I don't know what percent of the 25 deaths last year were alcohol related, but I'm sure it was most. I saw one last year that was not and I felt bad about it. It was purely an accident, maybe a little speed factor. Bottom line is sleds are fun but can be very dangerous at all times. I can only speak for myself as the way I ride. Anything can happen at times but it's the right time. Hopefully. Anything can happen and no one can prevent that.
- I will no longer come to Michigan if a speed limit is implemented. The wide, straight, smooth trails that can be ridden safely at high speeds are the primary reason that many come to Michigan. Speed limits in some of the more dangerous areas would be ok. There needs to be a trail from South Range to Chassel! This is a huge gap in an otherwise excellent trail system, there has to be a way or many ways this could be accomplished!

- Interesting how the legislature will listen to snowmobiles in re: to raising fees. However, legislature won't even give time to consider increasing park, other trail, fishing or hunting fees. I spend more money on these sports in re: to supporting local economies.
- Snowmobiling is one of the most fun things I have ever done. Unfortunately a few bad riders hurt the sport for the rest of us. This usually is a result of drinking. I would hate to see more restrictions on this sport sue to some people's lack of common sense.
- Continued increases in fees will result in not being able to use all 3 sleds & will or could reduce the # of trips. Law enforcement could benefit from spending time at "watering holes" and trail heads/staging areas. My observation: more enforcement needs at later hours 11 pm – 2 am.
- Snowmobilers fund their sport. It used to be a \$10 trail permit, now \$25 – approved by us! For our trails – no other group supports their activity the way snowmobilers do. We have non-profit volunteer snow clubs throughout MI and the one complaint I hear is "The DNR" overregulating, dictating how we spend our funds, groom our trails. Making a fun sport into a bureaucratic mess, trying to "hijack" our trail funds (permits, reg.) for other purposes.
- If the trail permit rate is going up then the trail system should be groomed every day on the weekend. Why spend the time and money grooming 3 days thru the week for a small amount of use. The UP does a better job on the weekends than the lower.
- I feel that snowmobiling in Michigan is good. I would like to see more family involvement. Places where children can ride the smaller sleds with family on trails. Like the arctic cat kitt kat on 120s. Types of sleds to help build the Michigan snowmobiling crowd. Same way with places for younger ORV'ers that's what helps keep families together and Michigan growing. My son is 7 years old I currently purchased 1 snowmobile and 1 dirt bike and 1 go cart for him with no real place for him to go out and enjoy them. Se we can't really ride together. By the way I've been riding motorcycles since I was 4 years old and back then they didn't have smaller sleds so I had to wait till I was eight years old. I think if the parent is there and the child can ride let them ride. At a reduced price of course. Or free, our future yes is in the children.
- Michigan weather dictates on how much snowmobiling I do personally. The UP of Michigan is 9 times out of 10 better and I only wish it was a little less crowded in LP. Also, possibly an adjoining trails system from Michigan to Canada or Michigan to Minnesota would be a fun family adventure?! ☺
- Had best friend die in snowmobile accident in Mancelona. He hit a tree while driving the way he enjoyed driving. Fast. No program can stop that. Love the sport, great way to enjoy the outdoors, family enjoyment in the great state of all it has to offer is wonderful.
- My only question is to you. Why would you think I keep track of miles, only expenses. I think this survey is ridiculous & unnecessary expense. It will prove nothing.
- I would like to see accountability for the money spent on trail permits. DNR seem to have high administration cost versus the money given to clubs.
- This is a great place for recreation. Putting more limits and regulations will drive away more important tourists/revenue. When taking more money out of people's pockets for permits/registration, you force them to spend less on other things.
- As a groomer operator (volunteer-not paid) I would like to see our southern area get it's "fair share" of money for updating and purchasing new equipment. More dollars to local law enforcement for new equipment (some of their sleds are very old) and money for patrols. Lastly, punishments of people who refuse to stay on the trail. Thank you.
- Grooming: groomers should be paid to groom. I know I wouldn't want to volunteer my time to ride a machine that travels 5 mph for hours. I think some counties find funding for them

(Keweenaw) & their trails are awesome. I think the groomers in Charlevoix County aren't paid, and there grooming isn't enough. I think all money from trail permits should be untouchable by the state, and must go for only snowmobile initiatives. Why do semi trailers get to buy a permanent plate/registration one time and they tear up the majority of the roads. Snowmobiles have to renew & pay registration, buy a permit, and get little in return.

- Making trails wider puts people to work, make more money for the state, makes trails safer.
- There are less kids going. Parents don't teach or take time to teach. Don't know answer.
- What I have heard about or seen with the DNR is that it is too big, expensive & has too much power over the natural resources. I believe that trail passes are not needed & the added expense every year is reducing the number of people that are interested in snowmobiling. Cost of trail passes have increased, but I have not seen any improvement in the trails. What is all the money obtained from 225,000 passes used for. $\$25 \times 225,000 = \$5,625,000.00$ Most problems that occur with government people is if you give them more money they can always find more things to spend it on. Lastly, if the DNR continues on the same path they are on it won't be too long before snowmobiling will die because of the cost and the restrictions.
- With kids now, Don't get out nearly as much as I used to. Wife is a stick in the mud about enjoying the beautiful winter scenery that is so serene in Hiawatha National Forest areas of Eastern UP. PS I usually get paid for surveys/market research. I would not be opposed to receiving a small donation in exchange for my time.
- It's fun for the whole family. Don't ***** this up we don't need more rules to have an enjoyable weekend.
- I have a cabin on Pine Acre Rd. off M-65 next to the AuSable River. The state trail is a mile N of my road. No riding along M65. The DNR has stopped us twice last year, full of threats. My Son 23 yr old is not going back to ride as he is sure tickets will come. The extra enforcement is coming it seems because of the problems finishing the trail head at 5 channel dam & 65 (200 yards from my cabin). It seems the state & the feds are fighting over something for the past 5 years. They have cleared the area for parking but all has stopped and now the DNR is in it.
- I would like to see the DNR more proactive in the grooming process. I seems like it's always "clubs" or organizations who groom/voluntarily at that. I spend \$50.00 alone between 2 trail permits this season with is 3-month long!! I have to believe there's at least 4000 permits bought and that # could be 8000??? At 4000 that's \$100,000.00 it doesn't cost \$100,000 to mark upper and lower Michigan. Why am I still riding on rough trails!
- I have been riding for 28 years and pretty much seen it all. If you have any questions or comments or would like to talk in detail, feel free to contact me.
- Does the money from the snowmobile trail permits go to the state or DNR general fund? My experience with snowmobiling was started with family that who taught me to ride safely. If there's money involved the politicians need to be kept far away. Seems they have sniffed another bundle of money from the snowmobilers. I'm sick of paying more for stuff that used to be free!!
- Snowmobiling is a sport I have loved and enjoyed for many years. My hope is that the great trail system we have in Michigan can be retained, improved and expanded in the years to come.
- On I-75 north some of the worst drivers are those traveling sleds. Weekend snowmobiling can be very challenging due to the high volume of sleds and alcohol. People should exercise caution and use "mirrors" for seeing what's behind them.
- I think DNR should lower price of trail permits for residents and increase fee non-residents pay. I seldom ride trails by religiously buy permits. I feel I get the least and pay the same. Out-of-staters

primarily ride trail system and pay the same as I do. I feel I am getting screwed on that. The fine is so steep it is not worth getting caught without one, so I buy them.

- The bottom line is people need to stop drinking and driving like fools. Daytime riding and early evening riding are very safe, it is the people that stay out late drinking and then try to go home that cause all the problems.
- I like out trails but some trails in Eastern Lower get beat up quickly might need it groomed more and the sides of the road need snow left on them for the sleds can have some traction/control. The trails in some spots used to be a little wider.
- I do not understand why I need a trail permit if I do not use the trails! I used them last season because I had to pay.
- I'm in favor of an increase in the price of trail permits. I know the numbers are falling. Those of use left will have to pick up the slack to save our sport. To be honest, if Michigan snowmobiling because too restrictive, I'll just quit.
- Improve trail maps, conditions & long term leases to ensure long term use. The fatalities due to alcohol occur at night which you cannot control unless you set up stop/check points for all riders. Then you begin to infringe on all riders rights and begin modifying. Just do not see that working. Nice survey thanks. PS The increase from \$25 permit to what ever should on be used for the snowmobile designations. Do not want to see the politicians get their hands on it. Explain where it will be designated at people will be happy to pay extra. We spend a lot of money to ride and very much enjoy it. Please do not try to over regulate it and destroy one of the only fun free sports.
- In general, the trail systems in Michigan are pretty good. I just feel that some of the trails should be widened. Some corners are so tight that you can hardly make the turn with the trail groomer.
- Love it!
- Up keep on the trails should funded by the trail permits – I hope that this money is used for that and not spent on other areas – this is a sports (such as boating) is done only for a short time (seasonal) and is expensive. Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts.
- Government taxation on responsible snowmobiles is high enough already. To tax responsible riders in order to keep those that drink/use excessive speed/drive like idiots form hurting themselves is ridiculous and un-American. Law enforcement resources are stretched thin enough combating crime that affects others other than the law breaking individual. Higher regulation and taxation would make me consider abandoning the sport. My donation of \$25/sled every winter to maintain trails I do not use else risk a ticket is ridiculous enough. Suspect you liberal academic types won't be happy until the county sheriff is riding “*****” on my sled, with one hand in my wallet.
- The registrations expire at a convenient time for the state. Why not expire at the end of the season instead of expiring in Sept. (summer). This has nothing to do with DNR, but the snowmobile manufactures only warranty the snowmobile for one year which is about 600 miles max for me. (By the time you have snow and the time to ride) It's a rip off . If there were no snow to ride, then what? 0 miles ridden in warranty coverage.
- Our family enjoys riding our snowmobiles on our own wilderness property. Here we won't worry about the speed of sobriety of others. We can take the time to enjoy the view.
- I can't stress enough there are far too many areas where we share our trails with the road & that's fine but you must please get the word out to Michigan county & state road commissions to not plow the shoulder so far back. It's not good for Michigan snowmobilers.

- Contribute- do not attend meetings. Do volunteer work in marking & removing trails in SW MI A/C private farms & orchards 95% of our trail system.
- Pretty good trails around Mio-Oscoda. Could always use more snow! More frequent grooming would be nice. More trails whenever possible, please. No drinking.
- As a motorcyclist, I used to really hate winter in Michigan. I would have moved to a warmer state but for my wife wanting to be close to her family. After discovering snowmobiling, I actually enjoy winter. Michigan has a wonderful trail system. I guess the main thing lacking, is a lack of riding in Southern Lower Mich. I realize that would be difficult with very little state land available.
- I live in Ohio. Michigan is a great place to come snowmobiling & have fun.
- We only get to go north once a year for a long weekend and always ride near Hale/Oscoda. I think it is a beautiful area along the AuSable River and enjoy my family seeing the river in the winter. We ride a lot when the weather permits here at home in the fields and woods around out home. It is a good way for kids to become experienced with their sled, and with supervision I believe safety can be instilled at an early age. Then on a trail, following simple markers like signs for turns, stop, and intersections promotes this further.
- This is a great sport & hobby that I've been part of for many years and gives me the opportunity to enjoy time with my son. For the most part the sport & the people involved are very good folks and safe folks. I would say as a whole even though the speed has increased over the years speed hasn't really had any negative concerns on my part. I would like my comment under #15 to be considered.
- I am a snowmobile rider and horse rider the DNR is not my friend nor are they non-biased in their approach to both. I want the DNR to have far less (none) interaction with snowmobiles. Most DNR officers are unfortunately ill equipped with professional skills to be non-biased in their approach to snowmobiles. The regulating of the industry should be by local police. ETOH is the issues, and DNR officers should not be a large part of the enforcement.
- Lower the trail permits back to original \$15. Wait for good base before you start trail grooming!!
- Being from Indiana, I love going to Michigan to ride. Great trail system. I have fun on every trip. Michigan has made snowmobiling my favorite outdoor sports event. Thanks.
- I love the adventure of going to different towns. I like to go wherever the snow is & see different scenery & towns & "spread the wealth". I would prefer to ride exclusively in the UP for the scenery & typically better trail conditions but it is too far & too expensive to do on a regular basis. The other biggest factor opposing snowmobiling is gas prices. It was much more affordable this year at \$2/gallon vs. last year @ \$4/gallon.
- I think by raising the permit price you will drive people out of snowmobiling. We spend a lot of money now and you want to raise trail permit up to \$50. How about leaving it at \$15 for in state and \$50 for out of state riders.
- Southwest lower trails run on too many roads that get plowed right down to the asphalt. I make some trails not able to be ridden when conditions off road are perfect. Many areas in the Allegan, Wayland area also Muskegon trail system are affected by this. An agreement with the county road commission to leave some snow on these areas or for them to make a pass with their extendable blade to create a level bank on the shoulder would allow more snowmobiles to access businesses and connecting trails
- The DNR in MI does not have to be belligerently rude when pulling over an individual or group! Treat them with respect!

- If you're going to ask to fill out a survey why not offer a discount to those who fill it out! For the money spent you would probably get a better response
- MI has a wonderful trail system but if the cost of an annual trail permit continues to rise, I will probably stay in northern Wisconsin and not venture into MI.
- Love to ride in the UP beautiful country and trails. If I was guaranteed good snow conditions from January to March I would not hesitate to purchase permits for both of our sleds but to pay for 2 seasonal trail permits for possibly only on weekend or one trip is too much considering the price of everything else that is involved. IE travel to, food, lodging, fuel. Again love the sport but it's getting to be a very expensive sport at that!
- Have some trails for advanced riders. All in all the trail system in MI is great (in the UP) the trails in the LP need to be wider. The people are friendly and my experience in Michigan is always great. I live in Indiana but plan to retire in the UP.
- I feel most people today can't afford more money for trail permits. I think it will stop people from coming to our state.
- Awesome winter time activity for the family. Groomed trails – critical for family enjoyment.
- As you can tell by some of my answers I believe that the SNR has too much control over our trail system. I think that they and the MSA should be equal. Hopefully this would keep honesty and our best interest to maintain and improve snowmobiling long after I'm gone.
- We haven't snowmobiled as much as we would like the last few years, but as our children get older will get back into it. Hear comments from all over (other areas in MI and other states) we have great trails. The grooming is a huge influence on where people ride – if the trails aren't smooth they will go elsewhere.
- If an enforced speed limit were to be put in effect for snowmobiling, trail conditions should be a factor for the limit. Such as highway speeds of 55 to city speeds of 25 with limits being posted. While taking in consideration that too low of a speed limit might create more problems than solving. I believe that automobile speed limits are the more appropriate guidelines to follow to reach a happy medium.
- Would love to see more trails throughout the state to help the local economy.
- Some of the questions here seem complicated by not surprising since it was written by the DNR and MSU. There is not enough space here to elaborate about story's & facts of events told about DNR's involvement in our natural environment and snowmobile decision. Where are you coming from & why do you make the decisions you do????
- Don't snowmobile anymore
- We are not big snowmobilers. We would rather kayak, hike, or mountain bike. We have 3 older sleds mostly for the kids & to go w/ friends. We probably won't use them much as we have lost 2/3 of our income & can't really afford gas.
- Thanks to the MSA they work hard and fight for us.
- It is sad to go to some of the most popular snowmobile spots (Grayling-Gaylord area) (Newberry-Paradise Area) and pay all the money to travel there to ride some of the most terrible moguled trails every weekend. Makes you want to save your money and stay home. I really enjoy sledding with my family but to go 2 hrs away from home and spending a considerable amount of money to enjoy winter with no grooming gets a little old after about 10 years. Bad thing is I have not seen any improvement in trail conditions in 10 yrs and now the state of MI wants to increase the amount for trail permits – I already spend at least 100.00 for permits plus registrations. Whose pocket is this money going in? Sure won't be for grooming.

- I think the best thing that could happen is a one way trail system. I think a lot of fatalities could be prevented this way. I do love the sport but it needs to be respected.
- Something need to be done in Munising. These guys get paid to groom and do not do their job. Why can the volunteers take better care of their trail system and Muni groomers suck? When the guy is bragging about it being a business and the more the groomer runs and the faster it runs the more he makes. Therefore the higher he keeps the drag, the less resistance the faster the machine moves, the more miles he covers, the more money he makes! The worse the trails are for those of us using his system and paying his salary along with staying at his hotels. This guy is a crook.
- Truly enjoy Michigan trail system. I would be willing to pay more in trail permits to keep trails groomed. We got to Indian River because of the great trail grooming system. The rest of the state should follow their lead. One other suggestion, in areas where there are numerous trails that interconnect – consider one way trails.
- It's great – I think we need to keep up the trail systems & police them or a speed limit!
- We love to ride and see speed as the biggest issue for safety. In the past 10 years the use of hand signals has changed and I think not for the better. My feeling is that the leader and the final sled should be the only ones signaling and maybe no need in open areas where all the sleds are visible. I have taken snowmobile safety at least 6x's myself when I was 12 then with nieces and nephews and now with my wife and kids. Everyone needs to take it. I also feel that fees should be reduced on 2nd, 3rd, & 4th snowmobiles. It makes it tough to keep this a family sport. I would not mind paying more for the first sled. Should be based on who sled is registered to.
- Has almost no negative effect on the environment
- I would like to see more local county trails connected to other counties, trail system to the bridge. Thank you.
- I think it's very important for small business in Michigan to make snowmobilers to feel welcome in their area the UP really need the help.
- I really enjoy snowmobiling. I don't know how much I would pay. If I thought the money would get used in the best interest of snowmobilers.
- Always enjoy the beauty form the snowmobile trails in MI.
- \$25 trail permits are high enough if they increase we will quit snowmobiling.
- It makes me sick that my tax dollars pay for the DNR or police to ride & drive in the woods pulling people over for nothing while a real nut is breaking in a cabin or stealing!!! The people that pay for them to have a job they mess with while the people that don't work or pay taxes go free! What a waste of my tax dollars. Let the everyday Joe enjoy his little bit of off time.
- Michigan currently provides one of the most rewarding snowmobiling experiences anywhere and if no changes were made it would still be the best places to snowmobile and any changes/improvement would just be icing on the cake.
- How are people going to be able to afford snowmobiling when they raise our trail permits to \$45.00 each on top of gas prices.
- It's wrong to charge for permit when trails aren't used. Try charging everyone in the stae for state park sticker if they don't ever use the parks. Then everyone will know how it feels. Hunting & Fishing license for those who don't! Bridge fees even if you don't use it! \$ for flu shots even if you don't get one! The conservation officers in this county (Missaukee) are totally out of control. Come on up & go in any restaurant to see what people are doing.
- I would like to see this survey also done in conjunction with a "snowmobile association/council". Many times the question(s) is leading to the opinion/desire of the asker or organization asking.

For example, questions on speed can easily be seen as hypocritical as I know that speed (actually sudden stopping) is extremely dangerous but don't want "universal" speed controls in place. It's made Wisconsin snowmobiling very undesirable! So I would happily spend the time to fill out a DNR/MSU AND an MSA/MSU (or whatever university) and use the "comparison" of those results as a more representative accounting of Michigan Snowmobiler wants/needs/desires/issues and potential ideas and solutions to them.

- Snowmobiling is in our opinion one of the best hobbies in MI. We are lucky to have the great trails to ride on. With the economy unfortunately we haven't been able to be out as much. This sport has to remain to fuel the economy of MI.
- 25 fatalities isn't so bad, considering that the majority deserved a Darwin award. Very few of the deaths were women; primarily young men, charge with testosterone, going too fast with too much drink and too little judgment. Don't make the middle aged and seniors suffer for the sins of the screw-ups.
- I believe Michigan is a great state to snowmobile in. I found some of these questions subjective & hard to answer IE the questions about speed – a safe speed is determined by conditions & operator skill level.
- We live in Keweenaw County and with all our snow the trails here are fantastic! We ride mostly in Keweenaw & Houghton Counties. Mostly the Western UP of Michigan. We have not rode as much as we would have liked the past few years as we had some health issues. We are ready to ride for next year. We never travel to ride as the best riding is right outside our front door. We leave from out front yard. The groomed trail is only 2 blocks away; the groomer comes by our house!
- Thank you for your interest in this great family winter sport.
- Need more trail access from Lower Western Michigan to the trails near White Cloud.
- Trails need better visibility in corners to see on-coming traffic. Zero tolerance drinking should mean zero drinks. We never drink anything until done snowmobiling for the day. Law enforcement should check people after bars. Trails should all be wide enough to meet oncoming traffic safely. Trail registration stickers should be reduced in size or eliminated. Law can check your registration. Maybe offer a permanent registration sticker or tab that could be placed on hood that is not so large and ugly. Something like Michigan trailers.
- My wife and I really enjoy it.
- As we prepare for retirement, we fear that consistent price increases, associated with our favorite sport, could make it too costly for us when we are on a fixed income. How about senior discounts on trail permits?
- I believe we should outlaw 2-stroke like in Yellowstone Park. We should all drive 4 strokes.
- My friends and I are quite pleased with the trails in recent years, however we feel out of state riders should be required to pay more for trail permits.
- Glad to see this activity. I have spent over \$250,000 supporting this activity in Michigan and brought many friends to area 3 of whom have 2nd homes. No injury accidents of myself or any ride in group I am leading in 37 years.
- As you know the economy has less people sledding and the people who drive up north and spend on gas lodging food are just getting along barely so if you start raising prices for trail permits – registrations you will put a lot more families out of this recreation which means less tax money from gas hotels food and other business's which will put these places out of business witch = less tax money for the state of Michigan. Please think before you raise prices.

- Even though it was a better snowmobiling year for 08/09. We were a busy family. The price for everything has gone up considerably for the year. We had to slack off a little especially for the sport we love the most. When the trail permits go up for 2010. We are not sure if we can afford the big increase.
- I don't like the idea of curfew but I would support a restriction on riding alone after a certain hour. Such as 11 or 12 pm. During the prime snowmobile season its dark by 5:30. Operators riding during darkness should have a cell phone & a trail map, but after a certain hour they should be buddied up or home.
- Wider trails needed!
- Do not raise snowmobile trail permits, please! Your taking away family time with price of trail permit & registration increase. I have not seen trail improvements when we raise trail permits \$10-15-20-25. With increase to snowmobilers will lower profits to business. This will hurt the state of Mich.
- Mich is my ultimate favorite place to ride but pricing of lodging is very high.
- Questionnaire is to long!
- I think it is good what you're doing about expanding trails and trying to keep people safe and need more enforcement on alcohol like random checkpoints on the trails!
- Volunteer trail groomers do a very good job grooming and are very kind to us/snowmobilers on the trails especially with letting us pass. With recent budget cuts in the state, law enforcement should not always let people off the hook if they break the rules but should be given tickets. This might help not only to support themselves but the people breaking the law might get the message to stop breaking the law.
- Thanks for doing this! Hopefully the grooming in the Gaylord and northern Michigan areas will continue to be good. Even though I'm leery of the government in my life the DNR has done a nice job in its role of grooming. I hope more of my money from permits and registration will go to the trails themselves or to the clubs at the local level to maintain their trails. Go BLUE!
- It is not worth it and the fees are too high for one week or two weeks of use weekly trail fees or daily reduced rates. Free snowmobiling for just ice fishing. My 88 year old father in law can't afford to ice fish, snowmobile, regular fish (trout stamps) or hunt since licenses have doubled or more. He is a water front owner and can't use it. He complains of no trout in Higgins Lake. Too small of stocking for a 10,000 acre lake. Trail conditions have not kept up with the fee increases. Grooming machines are not keeping up with trails in Lower Mich. The UP Trails are fine.
- In the western UP we have large problem with trespassing the sleds are made today with ISO & HP and long 161' tracts. They can go anywhere even 4 ft of powder and off threw the woods and streams there becoming almost as bad as 2/wheeler abuse. In this area we have large commercial forest tracts in which our trail systems cross threw these power sleds cross our trails at right angles at high tract speed and create problem for other riders. Trespassing laws in the state are to liberal. The law should be if it's not posted open its closed for snowmobiling. We are currently seeing signs posted saying (stay on trail or stay home). We need more law enforcement and speed limits. Also stronger trespassing laws. I been snowmobiling all my adult life, I collect and restore many snowmobiles. I have at the present time 7 snowmobiles including a 1957 model. I am a big snowmobile supporter. I am not a big snowmobile supporter of high speed drinking and driving. You might consider looking at Wisconsin snowmobiling laws. We would enjoy seeing families again on the trails not 18 to 35 year olds at high speed no respect for anyone's property, adolescents!

- There have been improvements in trail systems since the clubs have taken over the trails. Registration & permit fees money that is collected for snowmobiles & trail permits fees are actual used for snowmobiling & trails. Increase in fees are not minded as long as we see the money being used wisely not going to general budget or DNR other programs and clubs are getting reimbursed in a timely manner for grooming and trail expansion & expenses.
- I use my snowmobile for hunting only. Other people in my group do the same. We would be very reluctant to pay higher trail permit fees so other people could ride hundreds of miles a day on trails we use very little.
- I feel that snowmobile market dealers are selling a better safer snowmobile each year. The problem is people who have never driven a sled before go in and by a 700cc or 800cc sled and get hurt or killed. This in turn gives the real sledder who was brought up in the sport a bad rap. I myself have grew up sledding and have owned every sled from a 300 cc to a 1200cc race sled and raced on the MSPRA circuit. There is a lace for fast sleds and a place for trail sleds, but the riders experience tells all. If the buyer is a first timer they should have to take a course to learn how to ride safe and be restricted on cc size of their first sled.
- After completing your Michigan Snowmobiling Questionnaire, I decided to write you this letter which includes my thoughts. Please understand that I feel snowmobiling is a a family oriented sport which needs to remain affordable. With the economy in Michigan being so poor at the present time, adding any additional cost to this sport is not appropriate or necessary for any reason. I feel we all need to be courteous to others at all time and even though some people are more comfortable at higher speeds, this does not mean that they are not being cautious and safe. Keeping this in mind, everyone can still enjoy snowmobiling in Michigan at their own pace, while co-existing with other snow sport enthusiasts. Currently all snowmobiles are required to be registered by the State of Michigan, which renews every three years. I feel that any snowmobile older than 25 years should only be registered once, as a vintage or historical machine, because they are ridden so infrequently. This also includes a one-time purchase of the Michigan Trail Permit.
- Hopefully the cost of trail permits will not increase much past the \$25. Five years ago they were \$10. I know there are expenses to keep up the trails but if the cost keep going up you are going to drive away potential snowmobilers. Is a great winter activity which allows people to enjoy themselves during the winter months. Northern Michigan depends on the snowmobilers to help their economy so I hope the trail systems keep thriving for many years in the future.
- In our area of NW Michigan, the Manistee-Benzie Snowbirds did a wonderful job grooming the trails. I rode with my granddaughter, who is 16 and took the snowmobile safety course (also taught by the Snowbirds). I did not see any discourteous or dangerous situations.
- We love snowmobiling in MI. We come from NE-IN to ride because there is nowhere to ride at home. 95% of all snowmobiles are sensible. Don't get carried away trying to regulate the fools who don't follow rules anyway.
- I know the state doesn't have any money but the residents don't have any either! Don't raise snowmobile costs or I will sell my rarely used machines. Don't raise our taxes either. Cut your wasteful spending!
- Sorry, haven't sat down. Way to busy little late. Overall I have a great time snowmobiling. I am satisfied with the trail system. But I do not get to go enough.
- We ride on private property a lot because trails are not open in this area. I believe retired railroad track should be open to snowmobiles and if possible ORV use as well.

- It seems trails close because of private property problems when locally I think some trash pick up & other yard work offered would solve the problem. Also some snowmobiles crossing onto ski trails & private property don't help.
- I think teaching our young at home the responsibility of operating a snowmobile safely is the key. Our kids learned when they watched a total stranger wipe out his new snowmobile on the trail going too fast, thus ruining his weekend & owing \$ for something that was no longer useful. We also told the young man he was sharing the trail with new riders. Our kids now respect every curve & straight-a-way with caution.
- The reason I snowmobile is to enjoy the woods, sick of being hassled by wardens who are very rude! If the trail permits increase by 1 cent you will not get it from me or 3 others I ride with. The WI trails are just as nice. Tell your wardens out of Crystal Falls to have some respect for others.
- The snowmobiling is great, the people are all friendly! By my group is one of the many groups that don't like to ride the trail system because of the dangers of other, inexperienced riders, usually of which are seemingly always riding skidoos, I don't know why, but I think they are the most rented brand. The only real fun we have is back country riding, and that is because we get to explore, and also stay away from the people that don't know how to ride or vast majority of people that drink and ride their sled on the trails while they bar-hop from town to town.
- Do not use DNR trails. Should not need a trail permit to go from motel to camp using camp road. If you use trails you should pay (user fees). Thanks for the survey. PS Have older sleds – some are late 60's & 70's can't afford to register them. Need a vintage registration like a old car so I could take them out at least a couple time a year.
- I would like our trail permit money stay out of the general budget of the state. I would like our trail permit money stay for the clubs and the groomers, not for Jennifer Granholm.
- Snowmobiling in MI is great. We have a good trail system, well market and a overall community that supports the sport. We lost 25 lives last season due to the most part stupidity. To much power and to much beer! Part of snowmobiling is the freedom of "flying" across the snow and it would be a shame to take that trill away. I think the most important thing to get across is to be responsible for your actions.
- Michigan is such a beautiful place – let's not abuse it.
- The trail permits started out for the trails let's make them that way again. I think it is stupid to register your sled when you can't ride it without a trail permit off you own property so I have 8 sleds that are not registered. If I ride myself through the woods 2 miles to the gas station and it sits there for 15 minutes. It gets checked for registration & trail permits every time. One DNR cop told me to get a newer sled & I wouldn't have that problem. Nice guy?
- We did have one near miss on Drummond Island- a group of riders came from town (new that they came from a bar) at a high rate of speed down a single trail and forced 2 of our 7 sleds into the brush (woods) and they never looked back to see if we were ok (very childless).
- What bothers me is seeing people riding way over their head and out of control on many occasions I've had people just miss me on corners. Yes, I ride hard and know I am in control 100%. Just too many people out there that are not in control of their machines.
- Michigan has the most wonderful wildlife for snowmobiling. Expand trail system as much as possible.
- I think this survey is not needed if tax payers money is being used.
- We feel that some of the gas taxes should be redirected to the snowmobiling trail. This should happen before we have to pay for more expensive trail permits. We buy a lot of gas for snowmobiling. Also alternate routes for sleds in logging areas.

- Good system overall. Slow down trail speeds & raise awareness of safe driving. We almost got lost on a trail near Seney that wasn't well marked & had changed on the map. The trail from Grand Marais to Seney is always in bad shape and needs better grooming.
- Each year gets a little better
- Most dangerous is 2-way traffic.
- The one time, this year I was stopped by law-enforcement, he was young, I was given a ticket for improper display of registration, even that the MI registration was there and legal. The paperwork the state of MI gives you about placement does not allow for current hood design. My sled has 3 large vents where they say to put them, no other info is given about second location. 85.00 fine. This should be looked into, what other vehicle in MI has to have two license plates to be operated in MI-cars-no cycles-no boats-no bike-no This is a problem
- Trails are in great shape last 2 years.
- 1. Trail permits should be issued differently; I own & ride several snowmobiles, but I can't ride them all at once, yet I must buy multiple permits. Perhaps they should be issued to each rider. Also, if they must be issued to the sled, make them available at Sec of State or incorporate into registration fee. 2. Create a vintage registration & trail permits for sleds > 25 years old; some of us like to ride an old sled for special occasions, but all the fees exceed the value of the snowmobiles. Thank you.
- We should not be required to buy both trail permits and registration
- Have been riding in Michigan for 9 year went to Maine this year I be back next year. Keep up the good work.
- When trail permit is issued a small hand out should be given to riders with trail regulations on it. I have been pulled over 2X for dumb things that I was never taught. A verbal warning was given both times, now I know what I did wrong. But it took being pulled over to find this out. I am in the Paradise area and law enforcement is very good/strict. I am always polite to an officer.
- You can't legislate common sense. When the media talks about # of snowmobile deaths they have knowledge of how many sleds are out on the trails or the miles being driven. On the roads they expect more accidents on major holidays. Just going off of the # of fatalities is only 1/2 of the formula of how many sleds driven & miles driven. I think if someone could show the # of sleds from years ago and miles driven compared to now the trails are actually safer now. 7025 miles on 07 sled.
- This questionnaire is too long and too precise for someone to fill out accurately
- The biggest concerns I have is the drunk driving. Too many people are getting hurt and I rarely see any law enforcement. Also I feel that state trails, esp the trails in Grayling MI shouldn't be named after someone who killed himself by being drunk and hitting a tree. I have to look at the sign all year long and personally think it leaves a bad message. Would like to see the sign taken down and that will not promote the drink and driving in Grayling.
- Thanks MSU
- Enjoy snowmobiling in Mich. Trails are not over crowded in the areas I snowmobile. In general, they are safe!
- I would hate to see a rate increase on trail stickers. 25 dollars is a lot to pay when I rarely ever use a public groomed trail. Sometimes I have to use a trail to reach a section of area for riding, but I have no choice but to purchase a trail sticker. This is pretty much a waste for me.
- What % of snowmobilers that ride trails are from out of state (e.g. Ohio)? Why do non-Michigan residents pay the same trail fees as in state? Trail safety is our biggest concern-many trails

visibility on corners is extremely limited-narrow and winding trails limit safe operation with approaching traffic- recommend utilizing more seasonal roads as trails during winter, wider and better visibility at min expense to maintain.

- Snowmobile trails in the Houghton Lake Area are not maintained/groomed very well.
- Most everyone we encountered on our trip was operating safely & was staying on trails. This is a very expensive sport to begin with so increasing fees, fines and/or # of rules & regulations would be counterproductive in my opinion.
- The price of trail permit is getting too expensive!
- Generally the trails we ride are pretty good, we go to Newberry, & Grayling mostly, club groomers do as good as they can with the amount of traffic on the trails. When the state takes over it's a different story. IE Grayling this year, first they were so bad it hurt to ride then they overdid it, last trip up I seen the Gaylord groomer, grooming at 48* in full sunshine. He was pulling up the base (do they get paid by the mile, regardless of the conditions?) As with the state getting involved with leases? No, absolutely not, anything the state is involved with ends up more bureaucracy, more fees and less consumer minded. I see the Michigan Snowmobile Assn. is for an increase in fees. They may be right but I'm retired and any fee increase takes away from my riding money so the state may get more money, but the small business that I use on our trips get less, who needs it more? Good luck.
- Great place to spend time with young son.
- Awesome snow, great trails – great job marked
- It is an expensive sport and I have no desire to pay more to participate. I use older sleds because of cost. The newer sleds are much easier to ride and control. I say this because newer riders can benefit by riding superior machines. Easier to control; fewer accidents. The trails during the middle of the week are usually in great condition provided there is enough snow. On the weekend it is a different story. By the time Sunday comes the trails are usually shot. A big concern for me is in the woods. When the trails deteriorate cornering becomes more difficult. With 2 way traffic it can be somewhat dicey when it is busy around towns. Speaking of town. When you guys change the trail and it affects home owners that can create problems for snowmobilers. Local law enforcement is directed to tickets as many as possible. This helps with the coffers and to keep snowmobilers out of town. This bothers me because I enjoy riding from town to town. I will never spend another dime in Marquette, MI. If you try and step up enforcement I fear the result will be fewer sledders. More sanctioned races or an outlet for those that have a need for speed would help. Recommend speed posting may help but to limit the speed @ 55 mph on rail road grade is disappointing. Riding to Copper Harbor was a wonderful experience I will cherish for the rest of my life. My son enjoys sledding with me and I hope to continue riding the trails with him as long as the lords willing.
- Trail permit fees pay for groomers but is any money used to widen & smooth existing trails. Trails signs need to be checked in off months, Bar & restaurant owners need to help out with alcohol use. State needs to issue DUI's to some riders. The word might get out about drinking and driving. Some of the questions about monies spent on this sport I cannot answer accurately. I love to ride and don't keep account of amounts. When weather permit we ride each & every weekend. I have seen many accidents in the thousands of mile I have driven, most were alcohol related. Thanks for taking interest in this great sport. I think most riders would welcome information about changes or improvements.
- Even though we only have 2 in our house hold my children regularly come to our house to snowmobile. Trail is 1/8 mile from our house. Having two sleds allows friends & family to

accompany me on trails. The snowmobiling in the Eastern UP is fantastic. After the 1st time 3 yrs ago I'm hooked. I have two sleds to take my daughter one time and a friend another. I find most snowmobilers polite on the trails my biggest fear is traveling on sharp curves and having an oncoming sled slide over on my side.

- Trails have significantly improved in last year due to added grooming hours. Concerned with taking my children & wife on groomed trails due to other operators with limited skill passing us in trails, and on corners. Suggest to add speed limit signs to tight corners, particularly blind corners.
- Lay off the lake racers
- Hope to do a lot more in future. Need to be able to use road shoulders to get to trail.
- Would like to see more trails leading into and out of town for gas and food.
- We did not snowmobile this winter much just due to the cost associated with snowmobiling. It just does not make sense to me to buy 4 trail stickers to go out of town riding one time a winter, we stayed home and rode on an inland lake to and from fishing spots this winter only. It would be nice to be able to buy a weekly trail sticker for about \$5.00 per week.
- Snowmobile riding is already expensive even if you ride locally. This whole questionnaire is geared toward more laws and restrictions, more law enforcement and increased fees. Most people ride responsible and within their capabilities. The sport is very good for our local economy. The majority of non-local riders seem to be groups of young men. The industry builds fast sleds. This is a large part of what makes the sport so popular. Keep trail fees as low as possible. Some law enforcement is ok but don't overdo it. Work with private land owners toward easements. DON'T over regulate the sport.
- Have enjoyed very much.
- We need more miles of trails.
- 1. Speed & acceleration is a huge draw to snowmobiling and to legislate out either would kill the sport. 2. Safety is best taken care of by each individual. Don't turn in front of traffic. Don't go to fast into a turn. Don't drink and drive. 3. With tough times here in Michigan, raising fees will be a shaky proposition. The most recent increase in trail permits and registration prices has made more than just a few pretty mad.
- Would like to see information on DNR site for features of trails like large hills to climb or what we used to call sugar bowls where you could spend time playing around. Signs on trail to tell distance to gas, food, etc. When you ask how much you would be willing to pay for certain things on trail keep in mind a lot of people own more than one sled it adds up fast.
- UP was great. Few spots were rough spots. In Leroy its really rough not to well groomed and DNR seem to harass you a lot during dirt rides. Thinking of just quitting and had one ticket. My son two every season. This goes on also during bow season in Luther. They mess with bow hunters not rifle season?
- We have been coming to Mich for the last 10 years. We drive 400 miles twice a year. You have got to be doing a lot of right. I think you groom other trails very well, this last year @ Watersmeet we did hit one trail full of water. Think you need to look into that.
- Thank you for surveying the snowmobiling public.
- I have been snowmobiling the UP since 1995 and I feel its one of the best places to ride. Some years I would say the trails where overcrowded, however the last 2-3 seasons didn't seem bad at all. These last 2-3 seasons where some of the best and most consistent trail conditions I have experience in the UP, I believe that more people are only traveling as far as necessary for good snow conditions because of cost. Its getting more & more difficult for the average person to

afford snowmobiling because of all the increased cost (snowmobile prices, gas, tow vehicle, trail permits, etc.)

- Snowmobiling has changed from an opportunity to see the beauty of Michigan winter to a thrill sport. The latter always takes away from any ride by a close call or being tailgated and passed at a high rate of speed by others. I fear for my family's safety and always ride first to limit their exposure to a head on accident, depriving them of seeing wildlife. The snowmobile manufactures are promoting fast machines and ruining snowmobiling this state needs to slow down the sport and enjoy it more.
- Presque Isle, Cheboygan & Montmorency counties need more trails. These areas have beautiful scenery & should take advantage of ORV trails in the Onaway/Atlanta/Gaylord area. Plowed shoulders damage snowmobiles. Road crews do not need to plow so low to gravel on roads that have designated trails. I talk to more & more snowmobilers who stay away from towns that do not have easy access to restaurants. Michigan has great trails. Higher trail permits costs need to be put to better use. 1. Better trail system in towns (Alanson, Brimley, Rogers City) 2. Lease land getting to towns of interest for food/gas/lodge. 3. Utilize volunteer patrols & phone #'s for reckless/intoxicated riders. Everyone has a cell phone now. The trail markers that can be GPS coordinates in the Gaylord/Grayling/Frederick area is a good idea.
- Michigan cost for recreation are too high. State park camping fees Michigan \$17.00, Texas \$8.00. We & entire family are leaving/left Michigan.
- Could use gas stations & more porta johns!!
- Need to have no law enforcement on trails not just Friday Saturday to enforce speed and under control on local system. Although our household doesn't get on trail (Mainly to respond to accident) we are in business everyday during season. Bout 7 day were are told by one or more snowmobiler hey have be seen of trails. Our lively hood comes from SM 4 or more months of year this under lying problem that keep many people from coming back.
- It just amazes me that the bureaucrats are trying to get their money-grubbin' fingers on the one money making recreation past-time that communities like Luther, Wellston & Cadillac depend on in the economically lean times that the Michigan winter delivers. The proposed increases in trail permits plus the added expenses of sled registration is only going to deter prospective participation and are existing sledders. I believe that the current system is a viable/self-sustaining system and attracts out-of-state money to areas that need the economic boost. To me, it is a shame that the ignorant legislators only see this viable economic juggernaut as a way to balance the books against the short comings of other fiscal fiascos.
- Power, aggressive lug tracks do lots of damage to trails. If people who tore up the trail had to pay as much as I did 10 years ago because the trails are always in bad shape. 45 mph speed limit on trails only 3/4" lugs on your track on groomed trails.
- Trailering safety should be considered. Consider reflective reg. tags.
- While my snowmobile usage is mainly non-recreational, I hear from my friends that Michigan's trail system is excellent at least here in the UP.
- I am a safe and courteous operator. If I was to get a speeding ticket for a safe blast of speed on a trail or lake, I would be all done. Sell the sled.
- I have been riding for a lot of years, the freedom we have in Michigan has always been special. While I understand costs have gone up for all and paying for well groomed trails is just one aspect of riding. The 2 biggest things I have observed is lack of driver education and the thoughts that you can drink alcohol and ride safely with today's highly advanced snowmobile. I do not want to lose the freedom to ride responsibly and do not want more rules and regulations etc.

There is a solution to keeping the few off our trails without negatively affecting the thousands of riders that ride safe, smart and secure.

- This survey needs to be separated between UP & LP the riding is totally different IE snow, trails. #25 you will never be able to make snowmobiling “safe” some people are just too stupid. Bottom line don’t waste money, thin the herd. Combine some trails into one way.
- I’m against any increase in the cost of snowmobiling – snowmobiling is very important to the cost and maintenance of machines & gas. I feel we should be careful not to discourage future snowmobiles. There are many activities less expensive than snowmobiling – including skiing & golf, ice fishing and the list goes on and on. None of those activities have the impact on the economy like snowmobiling.
- It is my experience that trails maintained by clubs are always in overall better condition than those of the DNR
- *Engine size restrictions to minors/inexperienced riders (Building experience/engine size)
- My wife and I love to snowmobile in the MI UP for many reasons: beautifully groomed trails, very few sleds thru the weekdays, wide trails, very good trail signage, locals are glad for our business
- The more regulations & laws you put on snowmobiling the more people are going to stop riding. Most people just like to ride have a few drinks some food. Just look at how much snowmobiling has already dropped off. We did not see ¼ of snowmobiles out 2008/09 year as in past years.
- No matter how slow I’m going blind curves are too narrow when someone else is coming the other way there is only inches between skis.
- Snowmobiling is becoming an expensive sport or activity. We thank the private clubs for grooming the trails so well, the DNR or totally government would not be as great. DNR takes care of some of the ski trails we visit. Clubs are better. Snowmobiling was more fun when you could share the road with automobiles, going from point A to B or just to gas up was easier. Towns want your business but they make it hard to trail around town for food and gas.
- All funds paid out to the state by snowmobilers should be spent for the purpose intended. We should not subsidize law enforcement that is not dedicated to snowmobiling only. We should not subsidize other activities of the DNR other than those directly applicable to the sport of snowmobiling. Our lawmakers should realize the financial impact snowmobiling has on northern Michigan business and the tourist trade. The snowmobiling industry is an asset that generates income many times greater than its cost to the state. No other winter sport compares to the positive value of snowmobiling. Snowmobilers are among the healthiest of all sportsmen.
- I love MI. Its just 5 hour drive so hard to find time to make it up there.
- Groomers Keeping skilled groomers is a must! They need to be paid at least monthly & repair bills for grooming machines need to be reimbursed immediately. Our club took out a loan because suppliers cant carry the debt. MI has our money up front and should be distributing it through the season not at the end! Law Enforcement It is wasted man hours for officers to be waiting for someone to blow thru stop signs. Add some flags at critical crossings. Add signs where property owners have complaints. Send the officers to the bars. Speed Limits There should be speed limits in towns and along highly used roads (used by cars, etc.) where snowmobiles must travel at the edge of these roads. In the areas the limits should be 5 mph lower than posted for cars. Otherwise no limits.
- I strongly feel the DNR are way too stern with some of their punishments. Open riding on ice away from fisherman in my eyes should not have a speed limit. Anyone who riders a snowmobile

knows they are fast and the risk is there, but I don't run a 700 cc machine to go slow. Also I know for me and my friends night riding is really all we do so a curfew sounds crazy!

- Region 3 needs more trail access – it becomes more and more difficult to snowmobile from your home. Not everyone wants to trailer sleds to a trail head. Communities need to clearly mark snowmobile travel routes through their town. Snowmobiling brings lots of business to an area if they are welcome. Small business always want your money however few do anything to exchange hunters & snowmobilers. Everyone is required to purchase a trail permit even if you have little or no access to the trails – Riding on state property or the sides of a public road should not require a permit.
- Keep up the good work!
- I was hit by 2 other riders this year, it was totally their fault. I am now going to avoid “trail riding” in the future & do more “back country” and “off trail” riding.
- If people cared about their life, we would be safe and if the drinking stopped life would be better. Please consider riders that would police trails with a GPS and be able to call a law enforcement hotline. The purpose is to slow down the drunks.
- Love the rails to trails – Gaylord to Indian River. Would like a well marked way to get from Manistee area to Gaylord. Had a great time snowmobiling this year!!!
- Overall I feel Michigan snowmobile trails are great. It is a great sport for family and friends.
- As important as the snowmobiling dollars are to the economy of the state of Michigan and local communities in the snow belts – you would think that the DNR would be more cooperative with snowmobile people.
- You're doing a great job keep it up.
- UP trails are very nice and well maintained.
- Too much of our trail permit money is spent on law enforcement and not enough on trail grooming. Sitting at trail stops watching to see if we come to a complete stop each time and writing \$120 tickets if you don't. That don't save lives, it does bring in extra money.
- Normally I put about 1500 miles per year. But this year (09) we were in Arizona for the month of March & I missed out on several trips.
- There can be several variables to these questions. Yes, speed can kill if you're stupid. There are times to go fast & times to go slow. Education should be required for all first time riders to help teach common sense. People drinking can be dangerous if they have had too much. One with lunch is a stretch, if they drink to get drunk that's a problem. I am all for paying a little more to enjoy our trails, but keep in mind this isn't the cheapest sport with the cost of machines, permits, hotels & let's not forget the gas. Everything in moderation.
- I love the UP
- South West needs more drop points along trails
- DO not make us buy a separate trail permit! Combine all fees into the state registration and mandate all snowmobile registration fees remain, and only be used for and by, snowmobilers!!
Thanks
- I love this sport, I'm very happy with the trail system I'm afraid with this economy snowmobiling numbers will decline having adverse affect on trail and business.
- How about a \$5.00 five day trail permit. I was able to get away for our annual Drummond Island run but my tow van broke down, so I didn't get to use my trail permit last year (enclosed) Are refunds available if you don't use them because of snow conditions or other reasons.

- Our local grooming is poor. We are in the heart of big snow country. Myself and family travel outside of our area and find fine grooming with less snow with approx. same traffic. Thank you.
- Snowmobiling is the one thing I have to look forward to during the Jan-March period. I cannot afford to go to warmer areas. I take these “mini” vacations and enjoy my beautiful state of Michigan.
- Please continue having the snow trails in Mich @ other state, it opens @ whole new outlook of the beautiful (nature) scenes available in our great state. Makes you appreciate it more and puts pride in living in such a beautiful state.
- Love it. Don't go anywhere else.
- I only ride from home.
- In an attempt to make snowmobiling more safe in Michigan more education is in my opinion, needed. I believe renters should have to go through a class before riding on the trail system. Also, I had gone to a snow show event once, that had a snowmobile on display that was involved in a accident causing death. That smashed machine had everyone's attention and it made people think a little bit (anyways). I have been riding Michigan trails for 15 years and every close call I've had was people riding too close to center of trail & people parks in trail at bad locations (corners and other side of hills). Maybe trail parking areas with signs would help a little.
- The more we ride, the more we slow down. If the kids want to race get them on a track. Economics – we can't afford to go enjoy this sport anymore. It's too because it's a lot of fun! The 1st 10 years we went 5-6 times per year, 2,000 + miles every year! Times change. Thanks!
- Hauling snowmobile. 3 snowmobiles on a two place trailer proper trailer weight enforced. Proper tie downs. Thin ICE, soft ICE warning or lake travel dates Jan Feb only or maybe the same as ice shanties dates. Every year someone always drown on First ice Nov or Dec.
- State should stop raising trail pass prices, you are forcing people to sled on private land only.
- It is a great sport, helps pass the winter time blues. It's good for the up north economy in the winter months.
- I love the condition of the trails in the UP. It is worth the drive to me I feel it is much safer because the number of people & trail conditions is always much better up there. Keep up the good work in the UP. The lower needs help.
- Only concern is the 90 degree corners in the woods and trail is narrow can't always see if there is someone coming more so during the day because if there is someone flying around the corner it always on the inside and there's that change of hitting them. Otherwise love the scenery and trails and design.
- Need more trails in NELP. Groomer did a great job on all trails rode this year!
- Life time member of MSA. I know everyone wants to get their hands in the till – if the monies that everyone paid in would stay there wouldn't be any money problems. Fuel tax money doesn't stay here. I understand we all have operating expenses. We keep paying more and it's never enough. I know trails & grooming have gotten better, since trail permits were started – but where does all the fuel tax money – from snowmobilers – tow vehicles and so on go.
- I am a snowmobile racer, not trail rider per say
- I feel that the state receives enough money from the snowmobile registrations/trail permits to maintain a very good snowmobile facilities throughout the state if used properly & for snowmobiling only/not hidden agendas.
- It's great and relaxing during the week but dangerous on the weekends or holiday time.

- Regarding increased fees, I have the following investments in order to snowmobile. A \$10,000 sled, a \$7,000 enclosed 4 place trails, and drive a \$45,000 Yukon XL highly influenced by snowmobiling. We also do considerable riding in Ontario where an annual pass is approx. \$150 but is worth it because of the highly groomed non busy trails. With this much invested, I am more than willing to pay more fees as long as they are used wisely. We also pay a lot of gas tax but doubt we see that money used for snowmobiling.
- I usually travel 400 miles to the Western & Central UP because of snow conditions and condition of their great trail grooming. Their scenery is second to none.
- Over priced for 1-2 day rides w/ poor trail conditions w/ lots of snow, why?
- Charge Illinois residents double the amount as Wisconsin residents – we deal with them enough in Wisconsin let alone Michigan.
- Get trail system through Powderhorn. Hundreds of places to stay but no trails to them. Officer _____ is a great guy.
- 1. Increased grooming in high traffic areas 2. Speed limits through towns 3. Loud pipes are not necessary they have to lead to complaints 4. Raise the sticker price to keep groomers going, and trail rights open 5. Keep the drunks off the trail 6. I believe speed limits on trails would detour a lot of snowmobilers.
- No high powered sleds (over 380 cc) to any one with less than 3000 miles experience illegal to sell to anyone without (should be 250cc) but I don't think they make em anymore 380 cc sleds go 70 mph still too d--- fast make everyone hit a tree at 25 mph you'll heal and be a lot more careful.
- You should have a price for a one time trip on the permits.
- If you, (whoever is doing this study) is a seasoned snowmobiler you should not be considering make any new laws or added any restriction. You should talk to the snowmobile clubs and let them tell you what is needed and not needed.
- I think the Mich registration and trail permit is a lot of \$ for such a short season both should be combined. I have one sled that never goes on groomed trails but you still have to have if you use off private property. People view snowmobile DNR as just police hasseling riders. That should not be I think that is wrong image. Also speed is a major problem on groomed trails. I fear for my life on weekends on groomed trails. Seems that should be addressed maybe? We never go to the UP because of that also. We are not aggressive drivers. Lots of people drink and drive that is not good. I'm not a tea totaler but I know how to important it is to be sober on snowmobiles and ATV etc. Thanks for listening.
- I am from Pennsylvania and there are 3 other guys that come to Michigan with me. We have always had a good time and no trouble with anything we wanted to do.
- Young people! Need to take up the sport of snowmobiling. Week day trails are good.
- Would like to see more restrictions on noise. I believe it provides anything positive to the sport. I also believe that noise is the largest factors in public/private land use.
- I think it is a fantastic network, very proud of the vast system we have. Great for tourism and small northern Michigan towns. Overall, the riding is great w/ unbelievable scenery. I think you need to be careful in raising fees, it is an already expensive hobby for most people. I think un-experienced riders are a problem, sleds are way too fast for a beginner to hop on and feel comfortable then not a windy trail. Educating people is the first step. Keeping the drinks off will help as well. Glad to see this survey is out. Snowmobiling is important to Michigan.
- I think it costs too much already to snowmobile in Michigan now and you want to raise the price. If the price goes up I will stop snowmobiling. Send me a free hat.

- Only a few close calls with my kids learning to drive (crossing rds.) and other vehicle drivers not giving a ---- about snowmobile drivers!! Out in the country on gravel rds. Or seasonals
- Did not snowmobile in 2008/09 due to surgery.
- Stupid people cause problems on the highways, lakes, and snowmobile trails and you can't fix stupid. It is up to the rest of us to practice safe skills and watch for others. Additional training and other safety education would help. I ride a motorcycle and the skills training learned in riding courses have help build better snowmobiling skills also. Snowmobiling is very very good for the poor economy in Michigan.