

# Keeping Snowmobile Access in Today's World

Presented by

Kim Raap

Trails Work Consulting



137,000 miles of snowmobile trail  
across the United States –  
plus millions of acres off trail riding



This access is built upon  
**RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS**  
established more than 40 years ago

- Private Landowners
- Legislators
- Local Government
- State Agencies
- Federal Agencies



# **Today's Access:** exists because snowmobilers brought resources to the table

- **Money:**  
registration fees, gas tax and user fees
- **Volunteers:**  
leadership, advocacy and labor for trail work



# **Future:** cannot lose sight of what got us here or take our 'access roots' for granted

- Make no mistake about it: we would NOT have the same level of snowmobile access we enjoy today if we had to start over in today's world – so we'd better work hard to keep it



# Today's 'Top 5' Access Threats

- ❖ Maintaining Relationships
- ❖ Maintaining Funding
- ❖ Maintaining Volunteers
- ❖ Defending attacks from environmental groups
- ❖ Winter travel planning



# Defending Attacks from Anti's

- Yellowstone roots
- Common theme: **Objection to the “sight, sound and smell of snowmobiles”**
- Impacts snowmobile access everywhere



# 3 Most Common Objections to Snowmobiles

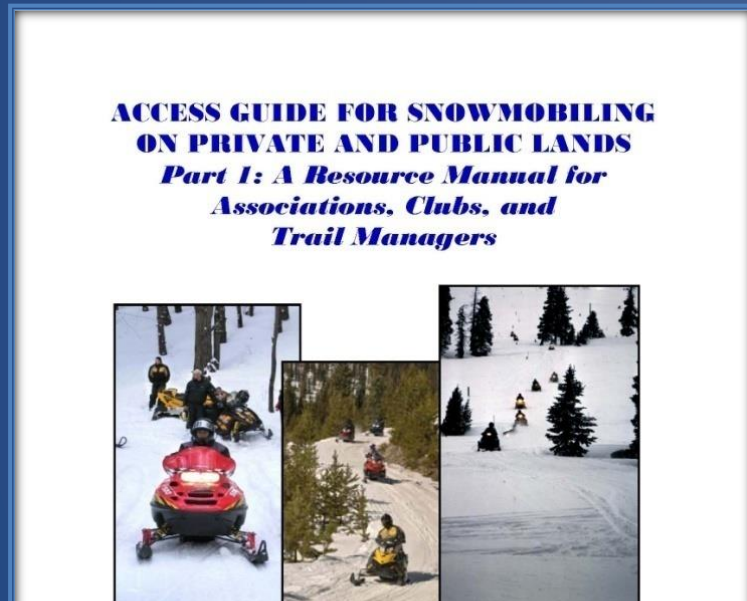
- **SIGHT:** some bothered by mere sight of sleds; will never win this, but glad to see 'snow camo'
- **SOUND:** snowmobile sound levels have decreased 94% compared to early models = must strictly enforce sound laws
- **SMELL:** EPA rules reduced snowmobile fleet emissions by over 50% since 2002; new technology has dramatically changed snowmobiles = must promote this





# Access Resources from ACSA available on-line at: [www.snowmobileinfo.org](http://www.snowmobileinfo.org)

## 2008 Access Guide



Library of Research Studies  
Related to Snowmobiling Impacts

## 2009 'Facts Book'



Multiple Use Trails  
For Winter Recreation  
Facts and Myths about Snowmobiling

# Defending Attacks from Anti's: The Main Thugs Today

- Winter Wildlands Alliance
- Wilderness Society
- Sierra Club
- Numerous other national
- A multitude of regional and local groups



# Winter Wildlands Alliance

## National, Human Powered, Quiet Use

- Budget \$476,400 (2010)
- Formed in 2000
- Founding member of the Outdoor Alliance
- Prime Corporate Partners  
Cliff Bar, REI, Patagonia, Keen & Atlas Snowshoe
- 5 full-time staff
- Based in Boise, Idaho
- Lists support from 26 'Conservation Partners' and 15 foundations (including Sierra Club)
- [www.winterwildlands.org](http://www.winterwildlands.org)

# The Wilderness Society

## Protect Wilderness & Inspire Care of Wild Places

- Assets: about \$55 million
- Formed in 1935
- Over 500,000 members
- A top-ranked national charity
- 100+ full-time staff
- Based in Washington, D.C. with 9 regional offices across the U.S.
- [www.wilderness.org](http://www.wilderness.org)

# Sierra Club

## Oldest, Biggest & Most Influential Enviro. Group

- Founded by John Muir in 1892
- Has huge budget & huge membership reach
- **Sierra Club Foundation** founded in 1960 = \$100 million in assets, with 8 staff members
- 125+ full-time staff
- Based in San Francisco with legislative office in D.C & 64 chapters/offices across the U.S.
- [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

# Maintaining Relationships

- Cannot take for granted
- Single most strategic action to protect access
- Must work from 3 levels: national, state and local



# Maintaining Relationships

## ACSA: Our Strong National Voice

- D.C. Fly-In
- Forest Service ‘Enlightenment Rides’
- Federal Highway projects
- ISC speakers
- Partnership with national groups



# Maintaining Relationships

## State Associations

- State government – favorable policies & legislation
- Sponsor rides & events to showcase snowmobiling
- Connections to state/federal land managers





# Maintaining Relationships

## Local Clubs

- At the ‘kitchen table’ with private landowners
- Working one-on-one with public land managers (state, city, county, federal)
- Connections to state & local politicians



# Maintaining Funding

- **Support increased fees:**  
when needed to keep state trail & access funds healthy
- **Treat snowmobiling as a 'charity'** = support Legal Action & Right to Ride funds versus giving all charity money to groups that do not actively support snowmobile access



# Maintaining Volunteers

## One of Our Greatest Threats

- Declining numbers overall
- Leadership burnout
- Private landowner work
- Fortitude to stick with lengthy federal land use planning
- Groomer operators & other trail work



# USFS Winter Travel Planning

- Regardless of the outcome of the WWA/USFS court case in Idaho – we're going to see more Forest Service travel planning
- Have seen bits & pieces of in the past = we always lose some acres, so had better get better prepared for the future



# Questions & Discussion

