

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

Snowmobiling is a pastime that many Minnesotans both young and old enjoy. I am fortunate enough to have been raised in a household that is very passionate about the sport of snowmobiling. This has helped immerse me into the many aspects of the snowmobiling lifestyle. My family’s love for snowmobiling has led us to become very involved with our local snowmobile club, the Holdingford Sno-Flyers. I believe that youth involvement with their local snowmobile club is vital to ensure a secure future for those of us whom enjoy this sport so much.

When asked the question of “What can my age group do to improve the quality of our snowmobile trail system?” I believe that the answer is mainly two-fold. The first thing that young adults such as myself can do to improve the quality of our trail system is to become involved with their local club. Once they become a member, if they are not already, they can further become involved by helping out with trail maintenance and construction. This is possible by helping with the installation and removal of traffic signs along the snowmobile trails in your club’s area. Another way to be involved with trail maintenance and construction would be to help construct a small bridge if need be so the trail would be able to cross over a small creek. If their club allowed, it would also be very helpful for a young adult to operate the trail groomer to make sure that the club’s trails are kept smooth and safe to ride on for snowmobiling enthusiasts.

The second part that youth can get involved with to help improve the quality of our local trails is to make sure that they are respectful when riding. It is important that they obey the signs and stay on the trails. A lot of Minnesota trails are made by routing across farmer’s fields and through other private property. If riders are disrespectful by exploring across a hayfield full of powder that is on property not being leased as land for trails, it could result in that specific land owner requesting that the club find land elsewhere to ride on. Thus, to ensure the safety of your club’s current route young riders should make it a priority to pay attention to where they are riding and be sure to obey the laws of the trail. A way to ensure that riders are up to date with rules and regulations is to have refresher courses at your local clubhouse along with safety literature and current trail maps readily available.

It is important that young people become members of their local snowmobile clubs. It is even more important that they become involved with projects dealing with the maintenance and construction of trails. Their involvement will help sustain and improve the trail’s quality so that many people can enjoy the benefits that our beloved sport has to offer. Putting up signs, building bridges, along with riding respectfully and responsibly are just some small ways that teens and young adults can help make a positive impact on their local club and also on the sport of snowmobiling itself, so it may be enjoyed for generations to come.

