

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

By Christopher Geray

One of my favorite things to do in the winter is to ride snowmobile on a freshly groomed trail. When I first started riding I didn't realize how much work was involved in maintaining a snowmobile trail. After becoming involved in trail maintenance, I began to understand how much work there was to be done and found many things that my age group could do to help with trails, groomer repairs and to promote the sport of snowmobiling.



Trail maintenance is a simple and important job young people can help with. In our club we team up with family or an adult club member to help get the trails ready each fall. We can help with signing, brushing, clearing or marking hazards on the trail. While helping, we are learning the proper way to safely sign trails and that makes riding more enjoyable. In the spring we can help take down the temporary signs and put them in the storage shed for the summer. Since trail maintenance can be physically demanding work young people are a big help.

Landowners are an important part of our trail system too. When snowmobilers show respect to both public and private property while out on the trails, the landowners are more willing to allow existing, or possibly new trails on their property. I think it's important to set a good example by staying on designated trails and encouraging my friends to do the same. I think it is a good idea to let your friends know they are giving snowmobiling a bad name when they go off of the trails as landowners might stop allowing trails to go across their land.

I would guess most clubs have upkeep and work to do on their trail grooming equipment. Trail groomers are built compact so even crawling into a tight spot to hold a bolt can be very helpful. While I enjoy the mechanical work and helping with the groomer and skid, other young club members may enjoy helping with fundraising and promoting club and MnUSA memberships. It's important that our peers know how trails get established and what it takes to keep our sport going. The local clubs do the work of creating and maintaining the trails along with providing snowmobile safety training while MnUSA works for the snowmobilers and the clubs by lobbying for funding and supporting the sport of snowmobiling in the State of Minnesota.

As the current snowmobile club members get older the younger generation of snowmobilers will have to step up and takeover the responsibility of maintaining the trails and making repairs on the groomer. It is important that young people learn how to do these jobs the right way. A good way for them to learn the skills needed is by helping at a young age and seeing the proper way of doing things. When the snowmobile trails are well signed and clear of hazards there is nothing that compares to the amount of fun that you can have out on the trail.