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## ON THE COVER

*Dusk's brilliant colors chase away storm clouds after a fantastic day of riding on the trails of the Indian Head Snowmobile Club in Heath.* PHOTO BY DAN GOULD



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by Walsworth Print Group

**CONTRIBUTORS:** We welcome unsolicited materials and letters for possible publication. Stories, manuscripts, photos, artwork and other contributions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish it returned. ON THE TRAIL WITH SAM accepts no responsibility for returns, losses or damage of unsolicited materials. Letters to the Editor must be signed with address and telephone number of the sender. We reserve the right to edit the material to suit the presentation and available space.

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**PUBLISHED BY:** On the Trail With SAM is published five times a year, October, November, December, January-February and March by the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM), C/O Rena Sumner, P.O. Box 386, Conway, MA 01341. Phone: (413) 369-8092. Fax: (413) 369-0203. E-mail: rena.sumner@sledmass.com.

**President's Message****BY DAN GOULD**

# Preservation of Trails

**T**rails are a priority, it's what SAM is all about. One of our biggest challenges is land changing hands. Many landowners sell, donate or conserve land, believing that the snowmobile trail will stay in place. That's not always the case, even when a state agency is involved. By knowing ahead of time, SAM can be proactive and work to preserve the trail before the transaction. Before is the operative word.

If you hear that land containing a trail is being sold or transferred, contact the SAM office ASAP. Even if you hear a rumor. The same goes for land that abuts a trail. Don't wait a single minute, get in touch!

If you own land that has a snowmobile trail and would like to protect it, let us know. Matter of fact, if you own land and would like to preserve it in trust, we can help.

For the past few years SAM has been developing a trail preservation program and this year we finally were able to put it to use. None of this would have been possible without cooperation from generous landowners and a growing relationship with several land trusts.

The Franklin Land Trust conserved 46 acres in Leyden known as Zimmerman Farm in 2013. ITS-2 is a key trail managed by the BGL Club that crosses the property. The east-west run in the northern portion of the state connects Northfield to Colrain and trails to the New York and Vermont border.

A staff member from Franklin Land Trust attended a SAM meeting in the spring and explained the importance of the land and the value of conserving the property. SAM was able to partner in the project and the trail is now preserved within the protected property.

Cowls Sawmill & Land Company completed the largest conservation restriction on private land since the 1920's in a partnership between the Department of Fish and Game, Kestrel Land Trust and the Franklin Land Trust. The deal resulted in the protection of 3,486 acres of working forest land in the towns of Leverett and Shutesbury. The Cows have always been active in promoting and preserving recreational

opportunities and have pledged to keep the snowmobile trail intact.

In the town of Spencer, 350 acres of prime real estate had long been eyed for development. The Sibley and Warner Farms make up one of the most spectacular undeveloped properties in Central Massachusetts. A major snowmobile trail, ITS- 71, has been managed by the Snowbirds Snowmobile Club for decades, losing it would be crippling.

SAM and the Snowbirds worked with Common Ground Land Trust, Mass Audubon, The Town of Spencer and the Greater Worcester Land Trust. The project was daunting. Almost \$3 million dollars had to be raised and the town was obligated to spend \$700,000. But that had to pass a vote at town meeting.

The Snowbirds sent 1,000 letters to members and businesses in town asking that they not only vote yes but also to open their wallets and donate money. The vote passed, the fundraising was successful and the land and trail are now protected.

In Conway, Roger and Joanne Clapp signed a conservation restriction on approximately 36 acres of their property with the Franklin Land Trust. That property contained a major snowmobile trail.

While the conservation restriction is very clear about the prohibited use of motorized vehicles, the Clapps understood the importance of outdoor recreation and put specific language for the continued use of snowmobiles. For their thoughtfulness, the Clapp family were honored with the 2013 Friend of SAM award.

SAM has a new perspective, a new set of priorities. In the past we were strictly trail managers, now we are part of the preservation community. Our core beliefs are very much alike.

Snowmobilers need to be involved and keep SAM informed of any opportunities to preserve open space and our trails. We are actively pursuing fundraising opportunities and look forward to building relationships in future conservation projects. We need your help to make this goal a reality. 🐾

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# 2013 SAM Annual Awards

Photos by Scott Sumner



## DEALER OF THE YEAR:

As a dealer, **Ray's Cycle Center** in Greenfield is always promoting the importance of SAM and snowmobile legislation. Although they are small and family run, they make efforts to participate in local snowmobile activities such as club meetings, selling trail passes for several clubs, participating on club rides, and other events.

They loan equipment for Conway's Festival of the Hills parade to promote snowmobiling. Clubs that purchased grooming sleds always receive excellent support. Everyone at Ray's has an old-fashioned work ethic and are committed to the customer. You won't find many motorsport shops celebrating 50 years of business; this family's dedication is no doubt the reason we'll see many more.

Michael Pydych of Ray's Cycle Center accepted the award.



**FAMILY OF THE YEAR:** Bill and Joyce Taylor of the Knox Trail Sno-Riders were presented the 2013 Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts Family of the Year Award. Bill and Joyce have been active in SAM for decades. Combined they have held the offices of secretary, vice president and president in their club, sometimes for multiple years.

They enjoy volunteering and do whatever needs to be done, whether it's sharpening the chainsaws, building bridges, managing trail permits and memberships, assisting with safety courses, cooking at events, trail work, poker runs, club picnics or swap meets.

They have attended many ISC's in the U.S. and Canada and were volunteers when SAM hosted ISC. During the past ten-plus years, either Bill or Joyce have represented Knox as the SAM Delegate.

Thousands of snowmobilers meet Bill and Joyce every year as they greet visitors at the Expo. The couple are truly ambassadors of Massachusetts snowmobiling.

## TRAIL WORKER OF THE YEAR:

Snowmobile trail work is a year round project for **Paul Sokoloski** of the Conway Snowmobile Club. Smooth trails are on his mind all summer, long before any flakes fly. He is always thinking about the trails, regardless of the temperature outside. He's a gatherer, grabbing pipes, timber, and other usable materials that he stumbles upon, stock piling it, so it's on hand when the club needs it.

Paul has designed and built several groomers and drags, often using his vacation time to get the job done and to plan the next project. The use of his heavy equipment has made the trail system 100-times better than it was ten years ago. He opens up his garage so that club members can work on groomer equipment inside a heated shop.

His stance is this: Build it bigger, make the trail straighter, make it smoother and if there's a problem area,



find a way to go around. He applies countless hours of work towards making the trail system better.

Paul is a cook at club events, a SAM delegate, trail master for the club and so much more. You can't put into words or dollar amount, what his annual donations to the club and the sport are.

» **LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR:** The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts recognizes the legislative accomplishments of **Representative Stephen Kulik**, 1st Franklin District. His reputation, combined with his record of public service is defined in his honesty, integrity, and effectiveness for the people of Western Massachusetts.

In his 20 years of service on Beacon Hill his legislative focus has been on economic, environmental and land conservation issues. He has been a true champion for the interest of Massachusetts snowmobilers in the areas of trail access, trail safe-

ty and vintage snowmobile enthusiasts.

Prior to serving on Beacon Hill, Representative Kulik served on the Worthington Planning Board and was elected as Hampshire County Commissioner. He also served as a member of the Board of Selectmen in Worthington for 12 years. He was past President of the Massachusetts Selectmen's Association, past President of the Massachusetts Municipal Association and currently serves as Vice Chairman for the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Representative Kulik was presented the award by Randy Toth at the SAM Annual Meeting.



## » **GROOMER OPERATOR OF THE YEAR:** Dave

**MacLeod** has been a groomer operator for over 25 years as well as a trail worker. This volunteer knows what it takes to make trails smooth. As groomer chief for the Snowbirds Snowmobile Club he studies grooming and teaches grooming. He lives to groom.

He tinkers all summer long on the club groomers, getting them ready for service. This often involves major overhauls. His passion can be a little over the top at times. For instance, he once brought a drag with him on vacation to make the access trail to the hotel he was staying at smooth.

Dave has been a board of director in several clubs over the years as well as serving as president for more than one club. He constantly volunteers at club events and actively participates at the SAM Expo and other events. He is easily recognized by his big smile.



» **CLUB OF THE YEAR:** Having been involved in SAM since the 1970's, the **Snowbirds Snowmobile Club** understands what makes organized snowmobiling succeed.

They consistently have a crew of members volunteering at the Sled Expo and had several at the International Snowmobile Congress in June 2012, playing a key part in hosting guests and entertaining.

Their charity work is well known in Spencer where they donate thousands of dollars and volunteer work every year within the community. They host safety courses and work closely with the Massachusetts Environmental Police to promote safe, responsible snowmobiling. Their members responded to the South Shore last winter to assist the state's effort to restore electricity after the blizzard.

One of their biggest achievements was working with local land trusts to protect Sibley Farm and gain a permanent easement on their main trail.

John Berthiaume, Brad Rand, Rich Lapierre, Willie Davies, David MacLeod and Matt Graves accepted the award for the club.



» **FRIEND OF SAM:** The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts recognizes a family that has long supported recreation and snowmobiling, despite not being snowmobilers themselves. They've always understood the importance of snowmobiling to the area and the overall trail system.

Just over a year ago Roger and Joanne Clapp signed a conservation restriction with the Franklin Land Trust on approximately 36 acres in Conway, of which a major snowmobile trail travels through. While the conservation restriction is very clear about the prohibited use of motorized vehicles, the Clapps understood that snowmobiles are different and put specific wording in the Conservation Restriction to allow continued snowmobile use.

Of significant importance is what the Clapps did as "A Friend of SAM" without any discussion or persuasion from



the club. Roger and Joanne required that snowmobile use continue, all on their own. In fact, the club was made aware of the conservation restriction and specific wording after the document was complete. If there were ever a true friend to

SAM and the Conway Snowmobile Club, it is Roger and Joanne Clapp.

Ronald Sweet and Craig Warner of the Conway Snowmobile Club accepted the award and later presented it to the Clapp family.



» **SNOWMOBILER OF THE YEAR:** Dan Gould not only motivates others to step up to the plate but has led by example and personally made key contributions to snowmobiling on a local, state, national and international level.

Over the past decade as president of Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts he has assembled a first class, business-oriented, executive committee to

operate SAM on a day-to-day basis and help lead SAM from a simple club-type organization into a first class statewide business organization with political recognition throughout the state.

Dan has transformed the state association's publication, website, mobile website and social media outlets into state of the art platforms that serve our membership.

Recently he worked with the Massa-

chusetts Audubon, the Greater Worcester Land Trust and Common Ground Land Trust, forming a partnership to permanently protect the snowmobile trails on a 352-acre farm being purchased by the land trusts. His goal has always been to promote the values of snowmobilers.

Randy Toth, SAM Legislative Chair, and Paul Trova, SAM Vice President, present Dan Gould with award. 🏆





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### ADAMS SNO DRIFTERS

by **Chrissy Satko**  
and **Joe Rogge**

Our club held a cookout in April to raise funds for the Relay for Life. We also participated in a fundraiser for cancer, distributed free popcorn at the Adams Street Fair, distributed free snowmobiling literature at the Adams Agricultural Fair, and will soon make a sizeable donation to the Fall Run Motorcycle Rally. Thank you, SAM, for use of the SAM Trailer and materials. Great PR!

Please do not take the trails for granted. Recently the Gould Farm at the base of Greylock was posted and closed to everyone. We do not know all the details except all the trails on the property and the main road on the property have been closed to foot and vehicle traffic. This property was the site of a SAM Vintage Ride a few years ago. The owner is a past "Friend of SAM" award winner. More details in future news. Respect the trails or you may find them closed.

We have started our regular monthly meetings at the Adams American Legion (2nd Thursday of the month at 7pm). We open this year trying to improve on last year. Check out our website: [adamssno-drifters.webstarts.com](http://adamssno-drifters.webstarts.com)



### BERKSHIRE SNOW SEEKERS

by **Randy Toth**

Come and experience the excitement of snowmobiling in the Berkshires. Our first class groomer fleet consists of 3 Tucker Sno-Cats, a Thiokol and 2 snowmobile-based groomers. Dues are only \$60 for each snowmobile (\$50 if you join before December 1) and they include a club membership, SAM membership and a trail permit. Join via snail-mail (PO Box 1102, Pittsfield, MA 01202), via our website ([berkshiresnowseekers.com](http://berkshiresnowseekers.com)), via a club meeting (7pm on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month from September thru mid-April at the Skyline Country Club on Route 7 in Lanesboro) or via one of our conveniently located trail permit outlets at a partici-

pating local business: Pittsfield Lawn & Tractor (Pittsfield), Ronnie's (Pittsfield), Friendly Fred's (Windsor), Sangar's General Store (Windsor), Hinsdale Trading Company (Hinsdale) and Lanesboro BP Gas Station (Lanesboro).

Please visit [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com) to see our club's scheduled events and our grooming reports covering the October Mountain State Forest Area, the Pittsfield State Forest Area and the Windsor Area. Grooming reports are promptly posted in the SAM Forums by our trail coordinators within hours of grooming. We hope to see you out on the trails this winter. Think lots of snow!



### BERNARDSTON-GILL-LEYDEN

by **Brad Stafford**

Believe it or not ... Yes, it is that time again to get ready for winter. It's time to get those honey-do list items done and get the sleds ready. But just remember that even if the sleds are in shape and ready to ride when the snow hits the trails... you have to have trails! So it should be on everyone's list to also go to at least one club meeting and a work bee to help us all get out there once the time has arrived.

If you need an extra hand getting the old iron up to speed or if it's ready for an upgrade, our club's 10th annual swap-meet will be held this year on Nov 10. Follow the BGL snowmobile club Facebook page and our website: [bglsnow.com](http://bglsnow.com) for more details.

For a quick club update: Our annual golf tournament was again a great success and the club has purchased another mini-truck that we will be trying to get on our trails this year if the time and money is available. So come support our club, and don't forget your own! Practice up on your "snow dance" moves and "Keep the Rubber Side Down."



### BUCKLAND RIDERS

by **Steve Howland**,  
secretary

The Buckland Riders are getting ready for another great year. Make sure you make it

to our fall fundraising event in Shelburne Falls where we sell hot baked potatoes topped with Cliff's BBQ pulled pork at the Shelburne Falls Moonlight Magic event. The main street is closed for the evening on the Friday evening after Thanksgiving (November 22) to kick off the holiday season. It's always a fun event. We started participating in this event two years ago and it's been almost as fun as our annual dinner.

Like any club we always welcome your participation in meetings, trail work, and fundraisers. Our meetings are at the Buckland Fire Station on the second Monday of the month, September to April. See you there.



### CHESTERFIELD FOUR SEASONS

by **Bill Golaski**, president

Our club is located on River Road in Chesterfield, across from the State Gorge. This is on Rt. 93 of the SAM map and a great place to start a ride, as our trail goes down the side of the Westfield River for several miles. Our clubhouse has heat, restrooms, and ample parking for trailers. When allowable, the club is open on most weekends for food and drink. The clubhouse is also available for rent.

Our meetings are on the 2nd and last Tuesdays of the month at 7pm. To view our winter event schedule check us out on the SAM website. We have some new officers of the club and are moving in some new directions, so please check out a meeting. Big thanks to all that have volunteered in the past year.

Club raffle for enclosed clam shell trailer or cash: only 400 tickets to be sold at \$20.00 each. See our club page on the SAM website for info.



### COLDBROOK

by **Michael Roy**  
On behalf of the Coldbrook Snowmobile Club we hope

all SAM club members enjoyed their off season from the pastime we love. Even though the sight of the first white flake is



in the future, it's time to start organizing and planning for the riding season ahead.

The Coldbrook Snowmobile Club had a very meaningful addition to the club officers, as Jean Black accepted the nomination as secretary and will be in charge of membership registration and more. Thank you, Jean, for your continued volunteerism.

There are many trail plans to be completed, once they are met with approval. The Coldbrook Snowmobile Club takes great pride in working in a cooperative effort with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Army Corps of Engineers, private property owners, conservation commissions of towns and all other authorities to ensure the trails are legal, safe, and appropriately maintained for our riding pleasure.

Please refer to [coldbrooksnowmobilers.com](http://coldbrooksnowmobilers.com) for the latest club activities and upcoming events. New memberships are welcome, as is continued volunteerism. Hopefully, if you believe in opposites, this dreadfully hot summer

will bring us a very cold and snowy winter.



## FLORIDA MOUNTAINEERS

by Tim Keating, secretary

Hello from the Mountain!

On July 14, we had Our Annual Pig & Putt Golf Championship. This year's winner of the 'Prestigious Green Jacket' was Jeff Rose. Congratulations, Jeff! The weather was perfect, and the pig came out awesome as usual thanks to club president Scott Fortini. Thanks to everyone, especially Lou Zelazo for the use of the golf course every year!

Trail trims start in September in order to get them ready for the upcoming season. Trail trims are every Sunday until we ride, at the Whitcomb Summit at 9am. Please show up and give us a hand.

Club meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at the Golden Eagle Restaurant, located on the Hair Pin Turn on Route 2 at 7pm. Call 413-663-9834 for questions, or directions.

I have noticed that the sun is coming up later, and the sun is going down sooner, so it won't be long before the white stuff is flying. We are also hoping to be awarded a grant this year, in order to replace one of our older groomers. The club's three groomers should be ready to roll, in order to lay down a flat/wide trail.



## GREATER WHATELY

by Bob Sabola

Welcome to the Greater

Whately Snowmobile Club (GWSC). Here's what the club is currently working on: We have a trail that passes through Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife (MFW) property that requires a bridge. This vital trail is located between Christian Lane and Swamp Road. As of this writing, GWSC is working to get a bridge approved and built for this trail. In order for this trail to exist, a license agreement is needed between the GWSC and MFW. We also need approval from the Whately Conservation Commission. This process started January 28 and is

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still ongoing. A civil engineer was hired to deal with the wetlands/endangered species issues and a structural engineer for the bridge design. This is been a very expensive undertaking for the club. If and when the bridge is approved by all the required parties the club will have spent \$3700 just for engineering services and state required fees!

GWSC club meetings are held on the second Monday of the month starting September 9. Time: 7pm, Location: Whately Town Hall, across the street from the Whately Inn.



## HARVARD

**by Joe Gibbons,  
board of directors**

Today is August 1, as I send in the club news it's 90 degrees and like many of us, the thought of snow seems to wander into my mind frequently. Jet skis on the water just don't do it for me! As the season approaches, The Harvard SC's board of directors will be meeting to set the agenda. Our trails were in great condition after last year's season of maintenance, trail clearing and bridge repair. One of our top goals this season will be to complete a pontoon bridge system that joins Ayer Road with Old Mill Road. This will be a challenge, we need your help! Trailrides, cookouts, pizza parties and our big trip to New York Tug Hill are all in the makings. The groomer is now resting but you can bet she's waiting for that first snowfall. New members are always welcome! Come join us for great friendship and let's get excited and motivated to talk and ride our sleds on the beautiful trails we have here in Harvard. Come ride with us!



## KNOX TRAIL SNO-RIDERS

**by James Richard,  
media director**

The members of the Board of Directors have been hard at work getting ready for the 2013-2014 season. They hope you had a great summer and look forward to seeing you on the trails real soon!

The Fourth Annual Raffle is underway and it's more exciting than ever. Only 100 tickets will be sold and a brand new 2013

Ski-Doo MXZ550F will definitely be given away. Your ticket includes a dinner voucher for two at the December 27 drawing event in East Otis. The grand prize winner need not be present, attendees will win additional prizes, and the dinner voucher is transferable. Tickets are \$125 each. Find out more at [knoxtrail.com](http://knoxtrail.com).

Progress is being made on the trail front, too. A number of bridges have been repaired. Negotiations with the DCR on the Twining Pond area are shaping up and work is being done to re-open some closed trails.

The club's constant quest for new volunteers is never-ending. The newsletter publisher position is still unfilled. While you are busy getting your sled ready, how about donating some of your time to help the club? Every volunteer helps make KTSR the club of choice for many snowmobile enthusiasts!



## SAVOY KANARY KATS

**by Doug DeCoigne**

Hello and Happy Fall to all you fellow snowmobile fanatics! It's hard to believe it's time for the first SAM magazine to be going out. For some of us the snowmobile season does not end as far as club activities are concerned. SKK members have had a busy summer, clearing land, preparing a site for the 32' x 60' foundation for a groomer garage, pouring the foundation, working on grants for club equipment, planning for groomer repairs/upgrades and trail maintenance. We have been busy since the snow melted. We are also looking into private land easements in several key locations that could connect several state forest trail systems together so we could have permanent connections between those forest trails.

SKK is raffling off a 2014 Ski Doo 600 liquid-cooled Rev XP again this year. Tickets are \$20.00 each and no more than 700 tickets will be sold. Join us and get your raffle ticket at the Sled Expo, October 19 and 20.

We hold trail trims every Sunday starting at 9am meeting at the Savoy Store on Rt. 116. Call Dave Purple at 860-202-0466 or Jim LaFrance at 413-743-2556.



## SNOWBIRDS

**by Brad Rand, president**

Welcome to another season of excitement! The Snowbirds are now preparing the trails for the expectation of a very snowy season. The crews are out clearing, repairing bridges and making "the loop" safe for travel. We can always use more assistance with this large chore. If interested in helping, please contact Brad at 508.892.1563.

Also, now is the time to join a club! Membership is an important part of the snowmobiling community. It gives the clubs revenue to repair and maintain the trails but also keeps the snowmobiler informed of events, changes in laws, safety tips, and open conversations with fellow riders to share stories.

The Snowbirds' trail system is located in Central MA, with other clubs trails connecting into it. Travel to New Hampshire is very possible from just outside of Worcester. Parking is available at the 4-H Camp to the north and Howe Park to the south.

Meetings are held at the Spencer Fish and Game Club, 155 Mechanic Street, Spencer from September to March at 7:30pm. Please stop by and introduce yourself, I would like to welcome you to a great sport!



## WORTHINGTON

**by Jeff Smith**

2013 was an up and down year for the club and all its members. I rode in town before the New Year and after St. Patrick Day but could have used some more snow at times during the winter. Overall we had great club support and we hope all will continue their memberships. One thing is for sure, if the snow is on the ground, we will be grooming it.

Meetings are first and third Tuesday of the month at the firehouse. New voices are always welcome. The drawing for our summer raffle was held and winners notified. Trail trims will start up in the fall, typically, Sunday morning from 8 until noon. If we get hit with some typical fall storms, help will be needed. Email [pacodella@aol.com](mailto:pacodella@aol.com). Thanks again for your support. 🐾





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## The Tech Corner

BY JIM TUCKER

# The Great American Ski Test: Part III

Story and photos by Jim Tucker

*They look so much like a downhill ski you'll be tempted to run the Curve XS on the slopes.*



**H**as a new king been crowned or is the Simmons ski still at the top of the heap? Read on loyal followers and you will soon find out what is the hot set-up this year.

To recap, we have tested the SLP Straight Line Tracking, Simmons original Flexi-Ski and the C&A RZ Razors. We know that the Simmons reign supreme in this writer's eyes for its cornering precision, minimal darting and precise tracking. A tough act to follow, indeed.

Now for the new kid on the block, the Curve XS Ski System made by Curve Industries, with a base price of \$368. I had seen these skis on the trails and heard good feedback from riders, I just knew I had to get my hands on a pair. A quick call to the head honchos in upper New York and shortly thereafter a package arrived with Curve skis inside.

Right out of the box I noticed the curvature to the length of the skis, much like shape skis which revolutionized downhill skiing. Would the precise turning of downhill skis transfer to the snowmobile world? We shall see.

Beefy and robust, with "Tivar" embossed in raised letters, you know right away these curved skis mean business. They weigh in at a svelt 8.1 pounds and have space for one carbide runner. The Curve is a system of pieces that make up a unique ski. There is an optional Thruster for soft or deep snow that bolts to the outside of each ski, protruding beyond the edge like a little wing. I'm a groomed trail rider so the Thrusters weren't tested, but the Leading Edge plate was installed right





*The Curve XS is a high quality ski.*

away. The Leading Edge is a small angular block that bolts to the underside of the ski in front of the carbide. The design prevents the ski from diving into ruts made by other skis and eliminates something called deceleration tracking.

Installing the skis on my Cat was a snap and by far the easiest to date. Perhaps it's because I've done it so many times. The life of a tester is not easy you know! Straightaway I noticed how easy it was to get on and off the trailer. Not quite sure why, but the single runner and keel design may have something to do with this very pleasant trait.

After unloading, I hit the trail. Right off the bat I noticed how easy it was to turn at walking speeds. These skis were also easy to maneuver while backing up, and short-slow speed adjustments for trail

**My heart was pounding as I hit the throttle in anxious anticipation of what I thought these skis would be capable of.**



hazards produced no measurable seat-of-the-pants bad manners. Nice!

My heart was pounding as I hit the throttle in anxious anticipation of what I thought these skis would be capable of. I had no way of knowing which way this test would go, thumbs up or thumbs down, but there I was, in the cold north, eagerly awaiting the hands-on results of the Great American Ski Test!

As speed picked up I discovered that the skis really tracked well around corners. I found myself going a little too fast but couldn't help it as they inspired confidence. Funny how these things work. When it feels right you know it straightaway. I said to myself, "Slow down, get control of yourself, there will be a time and place to turn the heat up." Safety instructors from various disciplines had drilled into my head that overconfidence and unfamiliarity with new equipment is a recipe for disaster. 'Nuff said there.

The skis darted some and I wondered if a slight ski alignment tweak could fix it. A quick toe out adjustment of 1/4 inch, and the problem got measurably better. After lunch I went out again to explore more of the confidence-inspiring cornering, with no wobbles, miscues or off trail excursions. These are not full-blown race skis but are darn close in cornering precision. The C&A's take that title, but if you purchase the Curves you would not be embarrassed around any corner that is white!

Riding down the trail I realized I had to spin around after missing a trailhead. As with most trails, safe places to turn around are few and far between. I wanted to test the skis off-trail and here was an opportunity. Going off the groomed surface I braced myself for some bogging due to the deep snow, thinking I may even get stuck. For those of you that don't know, I ride a Arctic Cat four-stroke, and that is one sled you do not want to get stuck. Out in the deep, I was pleasantly surprised; there were no ill effects whatsoever, it just glided along like nothing ever happened. I suspect the curved ski shape helped here as the leading and trailing edges are wider than the waist of the ski. Bonus!

If you do have to move the skis by hand, the loops are not so ergonomic. They may hurt your hands, but the loops are made to last and might have some effect on how

the front of the ski absorbs trail junk and shock. Perhaps a little redesign may be in order here, but not a big deal.

So, are the Simmons dethroned? Let's do a rundown. The original Simmons Flexi-Ski has very precise cornering, planes up on the snow above 25 mph, offers easy steering, cool looks and a tremendous amount of shock absorption. On the downside, they sink a little bit off trail, seem to follow other dual carbide ski tracks and are a bit harder to turn at walking speeds and turnarounds. They may be expensive but with zero push and an attitude that holds a line with an iron fist, they are worth it.

For absolute zero darting and good grip in the corners, it's the SLP Straight Line Tracking, hands down. Thumbs up here for a lightweight and thoughtful design. A slight push in the corners, but again, most riders would never notice. Limited somewhat in runner choices but the ski just works.

## The Curve XS gets my vote as the best all-around trail ski.



The C&A RZ Razors track well, are a hardy ski and corner better than the SLP's, but despite adjustments, dart the most of all. Cool factor is that they're following in the footsteps of racy big brother, the C&A Pros. Definitely a good choice for the hard core, aggressive, rider, although the handlebar push/pull technique is needed to really get the most out of these boards.

With its somewhat radical look, easy steering at any speed, ultra-precise cornering, no push, very minimal darting and excellent off trail manners, the Curve XS gets my vote as the best all-around trail ski. Clicking off the miles is just a pure delight with these boards. The leading edge and keel shape really do tone down the

darting and virtually eliminate deceleration darting. Rutted trails are no problem as this ski seems to make its own path. I think the flared tail is responsible for some of the precise cornering. The Curves are not wiry and do not wear you out after a two-hundred-mile day, like some others I've tried. When you let off the throttle the ski seems to glide somewhat easier than the others, much like adding ski wax to downhill skis. Not quite sure how they pulled that one off, but I like it anyways.

A new king is crowned! How long will it take for the others to catch and surpass? Stay tuned! Seriously, any of the above skis would be an excellent choice for all the reasons stated above and keep in mind that ski behavior varies from snowmobile to snowmobile. The best thing about aftermarket skis is that you can take them off when you trade in your ride and then slap 'em on the new buggy! Win, win! Next up: Duraflex ice scratchers. Do they work? 🐾

# Save Big at the Sled Expo

**Saturday, October 19, 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM**

**Sunday, October 20, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

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Used sled corral: Sell your sled for only \$10! Serious sellers and buyers are at the Sled Expo. Don't waste time with advertising and phone tag when you can display your snowmobile, ATV, motorcycle or other power-sport toy in front of eight-thousand enthusiasts. Only \$10 for an entire weekend of sales exposure!

Massachusetts Vintage Snowmobile Club: See some of the best the vintage snowmobiles in the area. Better yet, display your sled. Go to [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com) to register.

Support the Sled Expo, support your trails! All proceeds go to the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts and support our trail system. 🐾



PHOTO BY SCOTT TOMPKINS

*Plenty to see and buy at the Sled Expo.*





## The Vintage Side

BY ANDY HOLLAND

# Vintage Season Kick-Off

**H**owdy again. It's been a while since the last Vintage Side of the Trail appeared. Even though I wasn't making an appearance in the magazine, I was still out there working the trails, tinkering with my vintage Cats and supporting the sport. I would like to thank Bob Dodge for stepping up while I was taking some time off. He continued to keep the ship moving forward.

Well, here we are moving into the nice fall days and cool nights, marking the arrival of the sport we all love. So be a part of the helping force this year and get involved with preparing the trail systems for the upcoming snow. Who knows, it might be your club that is hosting a sanctioned vintage ride on your trails this year.

Speaking of which, if your club is interested in hosting a vintage ride make sure you submit the application to the Mass Vintage Committee on or before October 31. Your club delegate has the application (or can download it from [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com)). Contact your SAM delegate ASAP. The rides are a great way to see the old sleds of the past out there using the trails again.

On the show front, we are now one month into vintage shows, like the Old Iron Dogs Vintage Show, which was hosted by the Snowbirds of Spencer in early September. This show, like others, has grown the last few years. The Sled Expo will again feature a display of old iron vintage sleds. Get in touch with me if you would like to bring one out to the show for display. There will also be a giant swap meet to sell used parts, so clean out the garage. There is a minimal fee to sell at the swap meet, go to [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com) for Sled Expo details.

The VSCA show was hosted out at Boonville, NY. Hats off to Ed Stabb, Bob Dodge and their crew for another great show. As for other happenings, keep an



PHOTOS BY SCOTT TOMPKINS

*You never know what you'll find at the Sled Expo!*



*Display your vintage machine at the Sled Expo.*

eye on the vintage forums and calendar of events at [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com). Submit events as you find them.

As everyone is aware, we have an antique snowmobile registration bill filed in the State House again. Last year it made

it through the system and missed passing by three votes! The SAM Legislative Committee has resubmitted the bill, so if you are interested in seeing it pass contact your state representative and state senator and ask for their support. The more calls and emails they get, the better chance it will pass.

As always, we keep working to preserve our past history on snowmobiling. If any clubs are interested in hosting a vintage event (swap meet, vintage ride or show) contact Bob Dodge (Western MA) [robert.dodge@sledmass.com](mailto:robert.dodge@sledmass.com) or Andy Holland (Central & Eastern MA) [vintagesleds@sledmass.com](mailto:vintagesleds@sledmass.com) or call me at 508-485-6553. You can always reach us via the vintage page at [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com). The committee is available to lend advice or assist with functions. If you have an idea for a vintage story or a vintage photo for the magazine drop us an email. 📧



*Brad Rand and Dale Hovagimian transported NSTAR staff along utility lines as a chopper flies overhead.*

# SAM Assists With Blizzard Recovery

**By Dan Gould**

**Photos by Brad Rand and Scott Sumner**

**M**emories of the Blizzard of 2013 have melted away by the heat and humidity of the summer but it was only a half year ago that we experienced one of the greatest storms in decades. On February 8 and 9, Massachusetts was buried by a category 3 Nor'easter nicknamed Nemo that dumped 20 to 30 inches across the region. Schools were closed, state of emergencies declared and many roads were shut down for days. Electricity was lacking, to say the least, and getting it restored looked to be a major undertaking, especially in the eastern part of the state.

The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts was contacted by NSTAR, as part of the Governor's Command Center, to assist in the restoration of electric power. NSTAR reached out to SAM once it realized that specialized snowmobile equipment and operators would be needed to access remote transmission lines on the South Shore. SAM members responded with utility snowmobiles and small groomers to transport NSTAR engineers to assess damage in Plymouth, Yarmouth and several other locations.

On the heels of the blizzard, seven SAM members dropped everything and

headed to the storm damaged region immediately: Brad Rand, Rich Lapierre, John Berthiaume, Matt Graves, and Dale Hovagimian of the Snowbirds Snowmobile Club, along with Scott Sumner of the Conway Club, and SAM treasurer, Jeff Miller of BGL. SAM Executive Director Rena Sumner and President Dan Gould coordinated between NSTAR officials and SAM members as preparations were made.

A day after the storm cleared NSTAR had about 175,000 customers without power on the South Shore and Cape Cod, utility representatives predicting it would take a few more days to get power back online. Some felt that was a bit optimistic.

NSTAR used helicopters to identify potential problems and then SAM members ferried engineers out to trouble spots to review the situation and verify what was needed to restore power.

Brad Rand reported that he and Dale Hovagimian transported NSTAR staff for miles along utility lines, stopping at every tower for inspection. They ultimately discovered a transmission line crossing another line. Power had to be cut to 40,000 homes in order for the repair to be made.

Scott Sumner and Jeff Miller worked in Carver, Duxbury and Marshfield. Using the Bernardston-Gill-Leyden club's groomer, they ferried engineers to areas along the high-tension lines that were not easily accessible.

They reported seeing a lot of large trees on damaged houses and lines down everywhere. "It was pretty well a war zone," said Scott. "We snowmobile because we love it but it was nice to help other people," Jeff said. "It's not something we do very often but we are always available to help in an emergency."

A few days after power was restored SAM received an email from Joan Soper who said, "I personally want to thank the Snowmobile Association for its kindness during our recent storm. I have family in Plymouth, a nephew, his wife and two sons. He had his sister and her two children with him when the power went out. I know that your contribution of assistance was a great help and probably lessened the time that the residents were helpless."

"You could have been home with your families or out having fun in the snow.





You are now part of my unsung heroes, I will be letting my family and friends know of your kindness. Thank you, again."

SAM volunteers have assisted state agencies, municipalities and rescue personal on many occasions in the past and will continue to respond when needed. Getting a note of appreciation was uplifting and reminds us how important volunteering in our community is. 🐾

*SAM treasurer, Jeff Miller, stands with the BGL's grooming truck at NSTAR's staging area in Plymouth.*

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## Legislative Corner

BY LARRY TUCKER



PHOTO BY DAN GOULD

# The Trails Community Comes Together

**W**hile this past summer did have its hot spells, overall it was real nice with beautiful weather. I hope everyone was able to enjoy some cookouts, camping, the beach and some parties. While we put our sleds away for the summer and were busy with summer activities, a new and growing event was taking place: The 2nd Annual Massachusetts Trails Conference.

This daylong event on May 2 was unique in bringing together approximately 195 attendees and participants that embodied a broad array of trail-based organizations. Just a few of the groups partaking in this event were the Appalachian Mountain Club, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Trustees of Reservations, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM), and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT). Other attendees

**This daylong event was unique in bringing together attendees and participants that embodied a broad array of trail-based organizations.**



included various “friends groups,” trail users, conservation commissions, bike trail committees, land trusts and volunteers. Snowmobile attendees included Dave Purple; Dean Zuppio, MARTAB snowmobile representative; Lawrence Tucker; and SAM President, Dan Gould, who was also one of the presenters.

The event was sponsored by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board (MARTAB) and was

hosted at the Devens Commons Center in Devens. Special thanks go to Amanda Lewis, Recreational Trails Program contact for the DCR, and Dick O’Brien, the Chairman of MARTAB, for their tireless efforts to bring this event to fruition.

This unique conference brought together a wide cross section of trails enthusiasts, all of whom have the very similar goal of creating and maintaining a trail system. The opportunity for networking served to both create and strengthen partnerships and coalitions, which hopefully are laying the foundation for a more unified approach to building our collective trail systems for the future.

16 very fascinating and productive workshop sessions were offered. Topics such as Private and Public Funding for Trails, Preserving Trail Corridors, Working with Conservation Commissions, State Trail Mapping Efforts and many other very informative topics were presented. I attended the “Creating and Preserving Trail Corridors” session, which was co-led by SAM President, Dan Gould. This presen-



## Marketplace

tation emphasized the sometimes-amazing results that can be achieved when groups work together. This workshop, presented by the people who were actually involved in the project, described how a very important parcel of land was saved and how the snowmobile trail on it was preserved. It was a very enlightening workshop. I also attended State Trail Mapping Efforts, which was led by Chris Curtis, Chief Planner for the PVPC. It offered an insight into the mapping tools available to all.

Of particular interest to snowmobilers and the motorized recreational community in general was the presentation on Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grants. This was presented by Amanda Lewis, the DCR's RTP contact, and was very relevant to helping motorized groups apply for these federal funds for trail-related projects. A workshop for any snowmobile club having a trail that crosses a body of water titled "Working with Conservation Commissions" was also offered. Thanks to the efforts of Amanda Lewis at DCR, most of the presentations are available online and are posted at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/conference.htm>

This conference was first and foremost a very educational opportunity for everyone and was certainly a great opportunity to network. But it also left me with the feeling that the seeds of unity within the trail community were beginning to grow. There was a sense that all are slowly realizing that by sharing and helping each other, all of our goals can come to fruition with more benefits to all.

Another underlying common thread for this conference was the growing recognition of the importance for the connectivity within our trails systems. This connectivity for bike trails, hiking trails, snowmobile trails and rail trails is the common denominator all enthusiasts share. I believe there will be increased attention of this topic at future Trails Conferences.

Thanks again to Amanda Lewis and Dick O'Brien for putting this event together. I hope to see everyone again next year. And, remember, snowmobilers are environmentalists. 🐾

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- Poll: How many snowmobiles are in your household?
- Canadian military tests stealth snowmobile for covert operations
- BGL member names newsletter for Tucker Sno-Cat dealer
- DCR releases volunteer policy draft
- Sled Expo: Register for Swap Meet or Used Sled Corral



# Winter Clothing Drive for Charity at Sled Expo

By Marcia Miller, Charity Chair

**T**he SAM Charity Committee is once again holding its Winter Wear Recycling Program at the 2013 Sled Expo. We ask our fellow snowmobilers to check out the great deals at the Expo, but before that, we ask that you look through your closet and donate items that you haven't worn in years but are still in good shape.

The donated items will be cleaned and turned over to the local Big Brother/Big Sister program. Last year we received 31 very nice coats. The majority were teen or adult sizes, which was perfect for BBBS. There are many programs that help provide winter clothing for children but the teens and older kids are sometimes left out. We are looking for any winter-type clothing such as coats, snow-pants, boots, mittens, gloves, hats, etc. Please check them over carefully to make sure they are in good condition.

The kids receiving them are so appreciative for warm clothing when it's cold and windy outside. Maybe their big brother or sister will be taking them snowmobiling?

Every time I ask for help in one of our charity programs I am amazed at what wonderful people snowmobilers can be. Thank you for making this program special for those in need. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [marcia.miller65@gmail.com](mailto:marcia.miller65@gmail.com).



**The kids receiving them are so appreciative for warm clothing when it's cold and windy outside. Maybe their big brother or sister will be taking them snowmobiling?**



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