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MANAGING EDITOR
Jeff Miller
Jeff.Miller@sledmass.com

ADMINISTRATIVE EDITOR
Jeff Miller
jeff.miller@sledmass.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Stewart Moon

ADVERTISING SALES
sales@sledmass.com

SAM OFFICERS
Susan Smiley, President
Matt Graves, Vice President
Mike Sarafin, Treasurer
Greg Conlan, Secretary

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. SledMass 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.

SUBMISSIONS:
P.O. Box 443
Greenfield,MA 01302
info@sledmass.com

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jeff.miller@sledmass.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome 2026-2027 Season

The 2026-27 season is fast approaching, and I am pleased that continued El Nino reports suggest another snowy winter for our region. The abundance of woolly bears and acorns also promises an exciting season ahead.

Our Sledmass family is actively engaged in trail work, kicking off their club activities and we are all getting our sleds ready for a full season of riding, plotting all those adventures and trips we anticipate with our friends and families. There is something about our winter passion that puts us in full gear come the end of August into September with the hint of cooler evenings and the leaves turning. Most people do not understand the winter fervor in our souls, so it is a happy time to share. To that end I want to ensure ALL are making that shout-out about our industry SLEDMASS EXPO coming up November 21 & 22, at the BIG E in West Springfield. We are anticipating a fantastic showing of vendors, clubs and industry partners to join us in providing the Snowmobilers of Massachusetts, and beyond, a great opportunity to learn what is happening with our sport and also take advantage of the incredible new products on the market, treasure the vintage machines that we hold precious as our valued legacy and garner all those great products the dealers bring for your snowmobiling enjoyment.



By Susan E. Smiley

As we move into this new season, our Trails and Membership Committees continue to make incredible progress in the enhancement of your Massachusetts Snowmobile experience. Fresh enhancements (safety and services) to our MapAPP features (still such a value at $4. 99), pursuits to enhance and unify our SSTS signage with a revised format for key trail junctions, same as our VT partners; and the continued collaboration and coordination with our State partners at those key critical trail locations are all contributing to the value you receive with a Trail Pass and Registration investment. The Membership team will be presenting an entirely new SAM booth at the EXPO with a legislative and hospitality center court, promotion of specific trail rides and back by popular demand is our Jr Ambassador safety demo. A focused pursuit of promotional materials for new and existing riders both in state and out of state will benefit the organization by bringing in more members, clubs, and volunteers. We continue our investment and remain optimistic about expanding our SAM family.

SAM will reinstate its Legislative Committee to expand opportunities across the Commonwealth and beyond, grow our trail system, and represent our interests in policy and funding decisions. Securing a seat on our regional Quabbin Watershed Board is a key achievement that ensures we have a voice in broader policy discussions. I'm excited to welcome new volunteers with a fresh generational perspective and see what they accomplish alongside our Government Affairs representative. Our interests have a promising future.

In closing, Mother Nature continues to bless us with snow, wintry weather and enthusiastic people that maintain and represent the incredible power of our Association. The contributions and hard work of each of you to our sport are indeed a testament to the remarkable snowmobile family we have here in Massachusetts!! Thank you to all who open their hearts, their thoughts, and their time to bring the Massachusetts Snowmobiling experience to us, every season!! ENJOY the WINTER!

Sincerely, Susan Smiley

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Meet the Officers

The officers (president, vice president, treasurer and secretary) are elected by the Board of Directors at an annual meeting held in April. In addition to our state association, several SAM members sit on the boards of regional, national and international snowmobile associations. These organizations hold yearly and quarterly meetings to develop plans to better the sport of snowmobiling all over the world.



SUSAN SMILEY

Susan Smiley, President of SAM, has served the Association for decades, including leading its legislative and government affairs efforts. Recognizing the need for a stronger focus at the state level, she decided to run for Association President. Snowmobiling has been her lifelong passion, on and off the snow and in every season. She has owned a sled since age twelve, when the Blizzard of '78 sparked her enthusiasm. Building trails, participating in club activities, and spending time with family in Pittsburg and Stewartstown, New Hampshire, deepened her connection to the sport and taught her the value of communities built around snowmobiling. Susan also briefly raced oval ice tracks for Team Arctic Cat while it was developing a women's Powder Puff series, but she most enjoys winding single-track trails through Massachusetts forests. "Recreation and access to the great outdoors will always be among my greatest joys. Whatever I can do to share that opportunity with others, I am all in—especially when it means experiencing the stillness of a snowy winter forest. "Nothing is better!"

Susan takes pride in representing the full range of interests within the Association. She welcomes input from the community and listens closely to understanding how SAM can better serve its members.

As a lifelong user of the Massachusetts state park system, Susan also serves as Vice Chair of the DCR Stewardship Council. In

this governor-appointed role, she has a unique opportunity to strengthen the connection between state parks and snowmobiling. She believes that expanding winter access enables year-round recreation and is essential to personal well-being and mental health.

Susan has held numerous leadership roles in municipal government and other organizations. In her professional career, she has supported the American warfighter through more than 35 years of work in the aerospace and defense industry.

Susan calls Lancaster home. Outside of work, she enjoys gardening, kayaking, exploring the woods, and, of course, snowmobiling.



Michael Sarafin

MIKE SARAFIN

Hey everyone! My name is Michael Sarafin and I serve as Treasurer for the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts. I have served as a SAM officer since 2017 holding both Treasurer and Vice Presidents positions through the years. I also serve as the Vice President of the Worthington Snowmobile Club and have done so since 2008. I've been involved in the club and SAM since I was a kid, attending meetings with both of my parents being club officers.

Outside of the snowmobile world I work as an aerospace machinist, making engine components for everything from fighter jets to commercial aircraft and personal jets. When I'm not doing that you can find me



on my family's farm being part of the 4th generation along with my brother to have the privilege of being in agriculture.

I got my very first sled under the Christmas tree in 1994, a brand new Kitty Cat. I have been a die hard Arctic Cat man ever since, you won't find me on anything else!

Being involved with the state association has given me many opportunities to get to know officers and directors from all over the northeast United States as well as Canada. It's amazing how the challenges as well as the love and passion for the sport are very similar no matter where in the snowmobile world you are.

I have enjoyed my time serving the association and look forward to continuing to do so.

Think Snow!



Greg Conlan

GREG CONLAN

My love for snowmobiling began in the early 1970s when my parents purchased a Ski-Doo and introduced me to the sport by taking me riding in New Hampshire's White Mountains and the iconic Ponkapoag area of the Blue Hills Reservation in Massachusetts.

Growing up in Dorchester, one of my most vivid memories is the Blizzard of 1978. During that historic storm, our snowmobile became more than a recreational vehicle. It was the only reliable way for my family to obtain groceries and essential supplies, and it also allowed us to help neighboring families who were stranded by the record snowfall.

After two consecutive winters with little snow, my parents sold the snowmobile. Although I no longer had the opportunity to ride regularly, my passion for the sport never disappeared.

As I approached retirement in 2016, I fulfilled a lifelong goal by purchasing a home in Central Massachusetts on a lake with direct access to the local snowmobile trail system. Through my neighbors, I was introduced to the Leicester Snowmobile Club and soon afterward joined the Easy Riders Snowmobile Club as well. Today, weather permitting, I ride more than 1,000 miles each season directly from my back door and participate in numerous Easy Riders snowmobiling trips throughout northern New England and beyond.

Snowmobiling has has provided adventure, friendship, and a deep appreciation for the volunteers who make our sport possible.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining and preserving our trail systems, I began volunteering for trail work shortly after moving to Central Massachusetts. What started as a desire to give back to the sport has grown into a significant commitment to local snowmobile clubs and the riding community.

Today, I proudly serve as a Board Director and Assistant Trail Boss for the Leicester Snowmobile Club and as Vice President of the Easy Riders Snowmobile Club. Through these roles, I work to support trail maintenance, club operations, rider safety, and the continued growth of snowmobiling for future generations.

Snowmobiling has been a part of my life for more than five decades. It has provided adventure, friendship, and a deep appreciation for the volunteers who make our sport possible. I am proud to continue giving back to the snowmobiling community that has given so much to me.



MARY WILSON

Mary Wilson is an avid snowmobiler who chairs the Membership Committee of the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts. She is the active Secretary of the Lunenburg Snow Riders Association where she has served for 8+ years. Mary contributes to the sport and local community through trail stewardship, mapping, and grant writing for trail improvements and snowmobile access. An outdoor enthusiast who enjoys both winter and summer sports, hiking, biking, camping, fishing, and snowmobiling. She is a U.S. Coast Guard veteran. She brings her professional experience in engineering leadership and regulatory compliance to her volunteer work supporting trails, conservation, outdoor recreation, and the great sport of snowmobiling.

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Corridor 2 in Bernardston looking south down Pioneer Valley.

Excursions Close to Home

By Brad Stafford

Despite wherever they call home across New England, when snowmobilers are asked "When you trailer your sled to enjoy the sport you love, where do you go and why? The usual answers include Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and upstate New York. The reasons why are obvious, they have more snow and also things like trail size, special destinations and of course easy access to trailside amenities like parking, food, gas and lodging. I have ridden in some of these areas and I agree with it all. But along with the good there is the downside, and the biggest of these places are the travel time it takes to get there. From most of Massachusetts the more popular places are 4-8 hours away. But with all things considered and when Mother Nature does cover us here in Massachusetts with the white stuff, there are plenty of reasons to stay and ride right here in our own backyard of Massachusetts.

Let's start out with some facts, as I bet most of you didn't know that across the state of Massachusetts there over 2100 miles of trails that are maintained by 30 plus clubs that make up the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, aka SAM. These SAM trails are maintained and groomed with a full spectrum of machines from utility sized sleds to the full size units like the Tuckers, tracked mini trucks and 4 wheel drive tractors driven by countless volunteers. There are trails located in the center of the state that connect the Spencer area to Royalston. There is a club located even east of them in the Harvard area. From there looking westward there are riding opportunities from Belchertown through Shutesbury and beyond that up and down the I-91 corridor you can ride west and north all the way to the Vermont and New York state lines. There is also access in a couple spots to ride into Vermont and New Hampshire.

Throughout all of these SAM trails there are many easy access areas for parking to start your journey, some within an hour from the Mass/Connecticut border, just minutes off I-91. A short drive out the Mass Pike can take you up into the Berkshires to name a few. Once on the trail there are plenty of opportunities for surprise scenic views. Enjoy a planned destination ride and find fuel and food for both you and your sleds.

Hopefully by now I have you thinking more about snowmobiling in Massachusetts and wondering about the logistics of it. I will try to be brief here and then get back to the fun stuff.

Located on the SAM webpage (www.sledmass.com) is all the info you will need and a contact list to ask any questions. Because SAM is not financially connected or governed by the state of Massachusetts, You will need to register your sled with the State



Break time on the trail at the lookout in Rowe, MA.

of Massachusetts and then you will be able to ride on any state governed snowmobile trails in a handful of state parks. To enjoy the SAM club trails across the state you then have to join a club of your choice and get a SAM trail pass which opens up all the above mentioned trails across the state.

Also on the SAM webpage are links to all the clubs across the state and their info about parking, trail conditions and places to ride to in their areas through their webpages, Facebook links and contacts lists.

All of you that have years of riding have your favorite places to go, including myself. I'm lucky enough to access the SAM trail system from my front yard in my hometown of Bernardston. I enjoy taking new riders and those who have always wanted to try it but never had the chance, out whenever possible. From the house, one of my favorite rides for beginners is north on SAM Corridor trail 2. This takes us up through the towns of Leyden and Colrain. Along the way there are a few scenic lookouts including the fire tower in Shelburne, on the way to the great food at Pine Hill Orchards. It is a nice 3-5 hour/40-ish mile trip depending on the length of our "pit stops", riders experience and how many side trails we take. If the group of the day is up for it, a ride to the lookout farther west up in Rowe that looks over the old site of the Nuclear Power Plant that includes a section through the Cook State Forest and some powerline trails for those that like to ride with that above mentioned "spirit". One of the longest in state day trips that I have been on from my place is up to the Ashfield lake house for lunch/gas/ and stories that logged about 150 miles on my sled. As for out of state rides I have made a day trip from my front door up into the Woodford area in Vermont and friends of mine have traveled from neighboring Northfield, Mass all the way to Pittsburg, New Hampshire.



Shelburne fire tower on Massaemett Mountain.

Moving away from my area to others across the state, every year SAM and the Massachusetts Vintage Snowmobile Club get together and plan a vintage ride in 3 different clubs across the state. As the season goes on and conditions allow, there are plenty of club rides that are open to all and are family friendly. There will also be some local favorites and specialty rides and events that include The Savoy Kanary Kats Annual Winter Carnival, Chesterfields 4 Seasons Clubs game dinner and The Florida Mountineers annual "Fat Bastard" poker run to name a few.

The event that is shaping up into one of the state's biggest is the Stan Kopala "The Godfather of Greylock" Memorial ride. Starting in the town of Chester and with the combined effort of at least four clubs and many volunteers, there will be a couple different loops to ride including one to the top of Mount Greylock. With plenty of food, raffles, stories and access to the Jim Hoellerich's vintage motorcycle museum there will be plenty for everyone of all ages and experience to enjoy. Again details on these and others will be on the SAM and club websites.

So if you have had the thoughts of …I wish I could ride this weekend but don't want to travel 6 hours in the truck, or I wish there were places that my kids or other less experienced riders could go and enjoy some of the best scenery in New England, don't look past what is probably just within an hour or so from your front yard.



Adams Sno-Drifters

Welcome to SAM and Snowmobiling 2026-2027

All clubs received an invitation from Jeff Miller for an article that is: "…telling what is special about your club and your trail system."This is the perfect opportunity to "toot your own horn" so be loud and proud. Any special events or rides that you have done."

Our initial thought was to talk about "Charity Community and Camaraderie." As a Club we like to think about those things that are more important than simply riding. Our Club is a Family. We are part of the Community. The Community extends beyond the borders of Adams, or Cheshire, or Savoy. At our last meeting a new club member pointed out the wonderful feeling (Camaraderie) he got by participating in trail trims. He stated that as a veteran being part of an organization was special. This led us to talk about an Event that has occurred each June since 2024 with a 2027 event planned.

The Event is the Veterans' Ride In . This is special because it involves the three "Cs". The CHARITY is "Enlisted for Life" –a Veteran's support organization. The COMMUNITY includes SAM, Adams Sno-Drifters, Berkshire Snow Seekers, Florida Mountaineers, and Savoy Kanary Kats. The CAMARADERIE is an example of four clubs, SAM, and a community of riders, non-riders, and all ages involved. A large sum is collected each year. However, more important than dollars is the cause and heightened awareness by the general public. We have supported many charities and will continue to do so. The Three Cs are an integral part of all snowmobile clubs.













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OUR CLUB

The Berkshire Snow Seekers is one of the largest snowmobile clubs in Massachusetts uniting snowmobile enthusiasts to further the sport of snowmobiling in a safe, sensible, and responsible snowmobiling environment for everyone to enjoy. Club members span all age groups and include singles, couples, and families with children. We currently enjoy memberships from throughout Berkshire County, Connecticut, New York, and Vermont. Though our backgrounds may vary considerably, we all share a common love of snowmobiling, the winter months, and the great outdoors.

OUR TRAIL SYSTEM

The Berkshire Snow Seekers have worked closely with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, other nearby snow-mobile clubs and private landowners to develop and maintain an extensive snowmobile trail system. Our portion of this trail system includes well over 140 miles of corridor trails plus many more miles of secondary trails in and around Mount Greylock State Reservation, Pittsfield State Forest, October Mountain State Forest and Windsor State Forest.

OUR CLUB MEETINGS

The 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month @ 7:00 PM, September through April at the Polish Falcon Club, 32 Bel Air Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201. Visit us online:
www.berkshiresnowseekers.com
www.facebook.com/berkshiresnowseekers

OUR ACTIVITIES

Join our club to make new friends, to participate in snowmobiling related social events, to access local/state/national snowmobile news, to get the latest trail information, to help preserve your right to ride, and to receive a monthly club newsletter to help keep you well informed .







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Bernardston Gill Leyden

By Brad Stafford

Hello fellow snow lovers! I'm hoping as so many of us that last years snow fall here in our neck of the woods was just the first of many of the old fashioned snow filled winters of the past. Our club, as all the rest is currently busy getting ready for just that. Besides the ongoing trail clearing, bridge maintenance and groomer prep our biggest project is a grant funded bridge rebuild. On our trail system a great addition has been the reopening of the Windmill Motel. It is under new management/ownership and they are hoping to have their restaurant open soon. It is right on our trail system near the state road intersection of route 10 and 142. As all clubs we are always looking for new members for our core membership that keeps our 60 plus miles open and ready to go when the snow hits the ground. We meet the last Monday of the month at the Bernardston Vets club in Bernardston on Hartwell street at 7pm. You can follow us on facebook at Bernardston Gill Leyden snowmobile club or our website where you can get your SAM trailpass is BGLSNOW.com. Hope to see you all at the Snow show at the Big E!

Enjoy the day and "Keep the Rubberside Down"



Getting ready for a days ride



It doesn't get any better than this

Buckland Riders

This summer we completed our fifth major bridge project with a Mass Trails Grant. This project involved removing an old telephone pole bridge and replacing it with a steel beam bridge with 4x6 decking and 54" high railings (recommended height for horses and riders that will also use the bridge). As usual our thanks goes out to all the volunteers that make big projects like this happen and to the land owners that let us have such amazing trail access.

With a lot of excitement over last year's excellent snowfall and high hopes for a new season we will be out clearing and improving trails throughout the fall. To find out more about how you can volunteer with us or for meeting announcements please email club@bucklandriders.com to get on our contact list.

Trail passes are also available. Trails pass locations for Buckland Riders are LaBelle's Service and Repair 296 Ashfield St, Buckland, at meetings, or online anytime at bit.ly/sledpass



Decking going on



Getting the beams laid down



Our crew, all done ready for snow

Easy Riders

Club lore has it that the club's 1st meeting was held in Marlborough in January 1971, thus making this our 56th season, and although we have moved our meeting location several times, we still hold our meetings in Marlborough. Our meetings are currently held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, October thru March, at the Moose Lodge on Fitchburg St. Since we are so close to Boston, years ago, we morphed into a traveling club. We go where there's snow. Whether it is MA, VT, NH, ME , and even NB or Que, we could be there. Club members are instrumental at making our club what it is by planning and coordinating trips and inviting other members to travel with them. Some trips are short notice day trips, while others require extensive planning and could be a week long tour. Additional information on the club, member-planned trips, meeting dates or copies of our 20 page newsletters are all available on the club's webpage and/or our Facebook page. Trip planning for 2027 has already begun. A trip to Ft. Kent over MLK weekend in January and a 5-7 day January/February tour to New Brunswick and Quebec are in the planning stages. Do you have an interest in finding new places to ride, seeing new places and making new friends; if so, take the step to becoming a member of one of the oldest active clubs in Massachusetts, "The Easy Riders Snowmobile Club, Inc."

Our meetings are held at the Marlborough Moose Lodge, 67 Fitchburg St., Marlborough. MA. on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, October thru March.
http://ersc.net
https://www.facebook.com/groups/178832419989005



St. John's Valley Overlook, Frenchville, ME



Mt. Greylock in Massachusetts



Pierce Rock, Pierce Quebec



Our club president, Mike, atop Colburn Mt. in Maine.

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SAM ANNUAL AWARDS

REMINDER: NOMINATIONS FOR THE SAM ANNUAL AWARDS ARE DUE MARCH 1

SAM volunteers are the heart and soul of snowmobiling. Without them there wouldn't be anywhere to ride. No trails, no clubs, no events, no leadership, no future. Snowmobiling would simply cease to exist.

Take a minute and nominate a volunteer right now at sledmass.com/awardsscholarships/. Nominate as many people as you want. You can even nominate a person in multiple categories.



Goshen Highlanders

Goshen Highlanders Snowmobile Club (GHSC) was established in 2003 with just 38 members that year. We are located in the scenic mountains of Goshen, MA. We offer 30 miles of trails, 16 of which run through the DAR State Forest. Our trail system will bring you around town or lead you to Chesterfield, Williamsburg or Ashfield, connecting you to many points beyond.

Throughout the DAR State Forest you can visit the fire tower, Camp Howe, and if safe, both Upper and Lower Highland Lakes. In town you can reach Spruce Corner Restaurant along Corridor 9 where you will find good eats, homemade desserts, beverages and friendly and trail knowledgeable staff. The Goshen General Store is accessible off secondary 112. Along with club memberships, trail maps and trail passes they carry a variety of snowmobile parts and accessories both in stock and available to order, deli style and convenience store snacks and local goodies.

The trails are maintained solely by volunteers and new faces are always welcome! During the fall most weekends you can find a group of enthusiastic members' brush hogging, trimming, rebuilding bridges, removing obstacles and performing general trail upkeep. We advertise these work bees through a text system and on our Facebook page which we update regularly. Our club provides lunch to its members at Spruce Corner Restaurant following a morning of productive group trail work. During the winter we have a dedicated grooming crew who operate a variety of equipment including a tracked John Deere tractor, Skandic, RTV and a Polaris Ranger which was purchased through an RTP grant. These are all volunteers and work very hard to provide the best experience possible on our trails. When you see them out there, stop and say hi, and thank them for the great job they do and their dedication to the sport!

Please join us at our bimonthly meetings at the Spruce Corner Restaurant, 188 Berkshire Trail West (RT 9) on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings at 7pm. Always remember to respect land owners, our trails depend on them and ride safely! See you out there in just a few weeks. #thinksnow





Knox Trail Sno-Riders

Give your space in your man cave to a bear!

The **Knox Trail Sno-Riders** is once again raffling off a brand-new snowmobile. The **17th Annual Raffle** features a **2027 Ski-Doo MXZ 600 Sport**. Tickets are **$100 each**, and **only 150 tickets will be sold**. The drawing will take place on **January 17th**, 2027.

The club also recently held its **12th Annual "Be Bold, Ride Old" Vintage Sled and Tractor Show** at the Blandford Fairgrounds. After two previous rainouts, the third time was *almost* a charm—the weather held off until noon, allowing for an abbreviated show. Trophies were presented across multiple classes for sleds 25 years and older. Unfortunately, the tractor portion of the event had to be canceled due to—you guessed it—more rain!

In exciting news, progress is finally being made on the **Farmington River Bridge**. Because the bridge is heavily used year-round by hikers, anglers, and Knox Trail history buffs—while the club only utilizes it for a few weeks a year—it was decided that the **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)** should take over the project.

A new, **80-foot by 8-foot steel bridge** will be installed to replace the old suspension bridge, with installation slated for this coming summer. Unfortunately, the old bridge remains closed to sleds for one more winter, but a permanent fix is finally on the horizon!



Over 42 sleds and tractors were entered.



The rain forced the show to close before the tractors had their review.



What's rain without a rainbow?



A big batch of donated gifts made for a great raffle. Thanks go out to Lowes, New Boston Crane, and Westfield Auto Parts.



Thirty handmade, laser cut and welded steel trophies were the talk of the show. More for next year! Thanks Paul!

PHOTOS BY J.RUFFO AND ADDIE D.

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CENTERSTAGE Highlights Mr. Tim Keating, Florida Mountaineers

Our SAM Publication introduces a feature that highlights and shares noteworthy individuals, activities, or efforts within the SAM snowmobiling community.

By Susan Smiley, President



Highlighting the lifetime investments Tim has brought forward not only to SAM but to his family, his snowmobile club and his town community of Florida, Massachusetts. Tim Keating deserves SAM's CENTERSTAGE highlight as our annual prestigious winner.

There are Volunteers within our ranks and as we look to seek those true contributors, our leadership team often identifies those that truly "GET IT." Rather than arriving with crossed arms or a furrowed brow, you notice those who tilt their heads, genuinely listening and thoughtfully considering the conversation. They offer positive solutions to study. There is never the limited thought of East vs West, or big club vs little club but rather when individuals can demonstrate the willingness to reflect and share ideas, solutions and options that put the good of the sport in Massachusetts at the forefront of consideration, you come to see how a person with these qualities are genuinely a thoughtful contributor that consistently participates, helps, and assists wherever/whenever and for whoever is in need. Tim Keating is THAT person and he honestly wants what is best for everyone.

As President of our Association, I have come to learn, witness, and share the deeper value and commitment this Individual has provided to the SAM family. When I say Family, Tim understands nothing greater than family. Be it through his own family, sharing the love of snowmobiling, his dad passed on to him through the start-up of his club or now passing that tradition to his own son, who is already proudly following in his enthusiastic footsteps. Or his unwavering sense of family, demonstrated through the work he does for/with his club. He is non-stop at wrenching, grooming and always ensuring all the equipment is safe and ready to go. HE is "THE MAIN MAN," that is what more than one person shared with me.

These are actions, not words or promises, this is what Tim Keating represents - HE IS THERE - in all ways!

THANK YOU, Tim Keating, for all you do and for being that backbone to our Snowmobiling Family. SAM members, clubs and our state association notice, appreciate beyond words can say and all that you provide to our SAM Family.



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An Advocate in the Legislature

I'm Chip Jones (Charles Warren III on the birth certificate. But when there's two others, I guess you had to have a different name or too many people came running when grandma called!). I'm your Government Affairs Director and I'm truly appreciative of being afforded that honor and opportunity.



I've been a snowmobiler for a very long time. I jokingly tell people that I drove past the Last Supper on a greasy triple! I had ridden on Massachusetts trails when the Colebrook Club was becoming operational but migrated north to northern New Hampshire to ride because of the state regulations and fees that were being applied to snowmobiling in Massachusetts and because my friends were going there and it was really a social thing.

In my early years of riding, I was a firefighter, among other things, and ultimately became Fire Chief in my community. As part of that job, I became involved with the Fire Chief's Association of Massachusetts and ended up on the legislative committee and as one of the two legislative advocates (the name you call people who behave like lobbyists but don't have to register and pay the absorbent fees!). Those times were some of the most enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding times of my life. The things that we got done, not for our own direct benefit, but for the benefit and the safety of people in the Commonwealth is an area of pride for me.

I continued to ride in my retirement and would go north for the whole winter

and putting 3000 miles or more under my keister on a sled! But recreation alone does not make a great life. This organization has given me back PURPOSE,and purpose is probably the most underrated thing you can have in life! I've been given the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills that I developed in the past to enhance the sport I love in the present!

My next goal with the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts is to create what I do now for the future. When you're long in the tooth like I am, it's your obligation to create your legacy through others and to create a system for the future that protects and enhances the sport that was so important to you, to your family, and honestly to the physical and emotional development of your children.

In the next years, I will be working with the newly re-formed legislative committee and trying to develop new young enthusiastic legislative advocates who have a deep appreciation and sophistication in the workings of a political system that is far from what we want it to be. And the torch will be passed on and the long-term protection of the sport will be enhanced!

I've been given the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills that I developed in the past to enhance the sport I love in the present!





Who Are We and Where Did We Come From?

By Jeff Miller, Chairman
United Snowmobile Alliance

Many people wonder, what is "USA" and where did they come from? So today, I'll give you the history behind the United Snowmobile Alliance.

Many of us know the history of the snowmobile industry; it grew so fast in the 60's and early 70's and as these new-fangled machines started showing up everywhere in the snowbelt the natural progression was to form clubs and later form state associations. With everything that grows that fast, state and federal regulations start changing to keep things in check. So, in 1995 the American Council of Snowmobile Association (ACSA) was born to help state snowmobile associations with federal regulations and laws. Other international organization also came into being, the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO) and the Swedish Snowmobile Federation (SNOFED). As it grew internationally, the International Snowmobile Congress (ISC) came to life along with the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) representing the major snowmobile manufacturers. ISMA worked with ISC to have these organizations meeting yearly and working together to promote snowmobiling around the world was a giant step forward for snowmobiling.

As time went on in the U.S. many felt the representation of the state associations on a national level was not distributed fairly and openly. Growing unrest with many associations in the U.S. brought about talks of "there has to be a better way". With associations that had over 250,000 registered sleds in them not feeling represented properly, something had to give.

HERE'S AN IDEA.

So, in the fall of 2018 members from 7 associations got together to hammer out an idea of what a national organization should look like and in November 2018 it was announced, the creation of the United Snowmobile Alliance. This would be a completely different organization built from the ground up by people who were "the boots on the ground".

OUR MISSION:

The United Snowmobile Alliance, Inc, is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of environmentally responsible, organized snowmobiling and the creation of safe and sustainable snowmobiling in the United States.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- An active national advocate for snowmobiling.
- To promote the orderly development of all snowmobiling in the United States through the cooperative efforts of the member states.
- To encourage the safe, courteous, lawful, and responsible use of snowmobiles.
- To act as a medium for the exchange of information and ideas between the participating State Associations, International Organizations, Government Officials / Agencies and other organizations.
- To promote the exchange of information and ideas among the members of the Alliance and between this Alliance and other snowmobile organizations of the International Snowmobile Council, the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association, and any other organization, governmental or private, involved with snowmobiling in any way.
- To join with and support other organizations concerned with motorized and non-motorized outdoor recreation in the United States and elsewhere.
- To promote responsible access to public land and forge trust and respect for private landowners who allow access to their land for snowmobiling.

We are a rapid response organization, one that immediately addresses problems our member associations are having, to get them resolved in a timely manner. To be transparent in all dealings so that our members feel that they are part of the solution and always engaged in the process. We want to know about all the issues that our members are having no matter how large or small, so our members know "we have their back".

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Here it is 2026 and where is the United Snowmobile Alliance at? We currently have 11 state associations in the U.S. as members: California, Colorado, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Utah, Vermont.

Due to continued interest in our mission to support associations everywhere, we now offer affiliate memberships to associations outside of the U.S. and we are proud to announce that we have 4 new affiliate members this year: British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan.

The United Snowmobile Alliance is well, healthy and ready to help our members in any way possible. I hope this gives a better understanding of our great organization.

For more information, visit: www.unitedsnowmobilealliance.com or email: jeff.miller@sledmass.com





Take a Walk in the Woods... with a Chain Saw

A little trail clearing is good for the soul

By Steven Howland

As a snowmobiler I spend all summer waiting for… fall. Wait, why fall? Because its trail clearing season! I spend way more time on trail clearing every year then I do snowmobiling and love every minute of it. If you haven't tried it here are eight reasons I love it.

IT'S BEAUTIFUL IN THE WOODS IN THE FALL IN NEW ENGLAND.

If I didn't have trail work to do I'd be out walking anyway. The temperature is perfect for being outside, there are no mosquitoes, the air is crisp and clean, the leaves are turning golden colors. Its why tourist spend big bucks on driving to New England. We can just walk out our back doors and our trails are not busy with tourist. Our trails in the fall are one of the best kept secrets of New England fall hikes.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A WELL-KEPT AND FRESHLY CLEANED TRAIL.

Start the day with a tangle of downed trees, hanging limbs, brush growing in on the sides of the trails and after a bit, turn around and look back at a clear and inviting path through the woods.

MY DOCTOR TOLD ME TO EXERCISE.

There are lots of studies showing that walking is one of the best ways to exercise, but I prefer exercise with a purpose or getting something done at the same time. When the fall comes my long weekend walk turns into something more than just a walk for the sake of walking. I'm getting exercise and doing something useful that I, and hundreds of other snowmobilers, will benefit from later.



I GET TO WORK WITH MY COMMUNITY.

I've been a club member for about 15 years (so I'll always be a "new comer"), and it's been a pleasure and an honor to get to know many of the folks that are the backbone of the local community. The people you work with on the trails are the same folks that are making the maple syrup you eat on your pancakes, give you a jump start when you have a dead battery on your car, keep your chain saws, lawn tractor and snow blowers running, answer a call at midnight to come help you get the groomer unstuck, give you deer sausage from their fall hunt and haddock from their summer fishing trips and on and on. In short, being an active part of any community pays back big dividends.

I GET TO USE FUN TOOLS.

My favorite is a gas-powered pole saw. I remember the days of a manual pole saw where I stood below the limb sawing back and forth and got worn out after about 6 tree limbs. Now I've got about 12' of length with a spinning chain on the end and can clear hanging limbs on a mile of trails in about an hour. It's still an arm stretcher so best to have a buddy to take turns with. You need a second person to pull the cut brush aside anyway. When you come through the woods at 50 mph in February you really appreciate that there are no snow covered hemlock bows hanging in the trail to whack you in the head.

IT'S A MINDFUL WAY TO SPEND A SUMMER MORNING.

Mindfulness is the current big word in personal health, but you don't need to do Yoga or Meditation or Tai Chi to experience the health benefits of Mindfulness. Instead think of it as just clearing your head from your daily grind in any of a variety of ways. My Mindfulness activities include the above, but also motorcycling, snowmobiling, weekend carpentry, and of course, trail clearing. Anything you do that lets you focus on a pleasurable task at hand while relaxing your body and your brain is a Mindful activity.

IT'S A DAY'S WORK THAT YOU GET TO ENJOY FOR MONTHS TO COME.

When the snow flies we get to enjoy the fruits of our labor and ride trails with pride. We also get to ride trails that other clubs maintain and be impressed by their wide tracks and amazing bridges.

LAND OWNER'S LOVE HAVING SOMEONE ELSE CLEAR THEIR TRAILS.

Don't forget that what we do is a benefit to land owners. They get to enjoy the fruits of our labors with a clean trail available for their use. Maybe they aren't snowmobilers, but many of them walk their dogs, ride their mountain bikes, cross country ski, get access to back sections of their property, run their syrup lines, or pull firewood out along the trails we help to maintain. We do our best to thank land-owners every year for letting us use trails across their property, but we also get thanked by landowners for keeping up trails and bridges on their property for their own use.

I'll bet you can think of even more good reasons for getting out on the trails each fall, and I hope you get as pumped as I get when the air turns crisp each September and the time for trail clearing work has come. Let's meet any fall Sunday at a trailhead for a day of fun, purposeful, work. I'll even provide snacks.





How Our Map App Came To Be

By Jeff Miller

The Association has always had a paper map. Fold that sucker up and pop it in your bag and you're good to go. Maintaining a paper map though is no easy task. We had done full size maps that took a painstaking amount of time and edits to get them right and even then, things fell through the cracks. Our last version was a booklet with maps of the clubs. It was high-quality paper, but it was a big clunky map that wasn't easy to use on the trails. But this map was different, we started to get our trails electronically stored through GPS tracking. Now this was something totally new to us, but the map was more accurate than ever before, but it still could be better.

NEXT PHASE

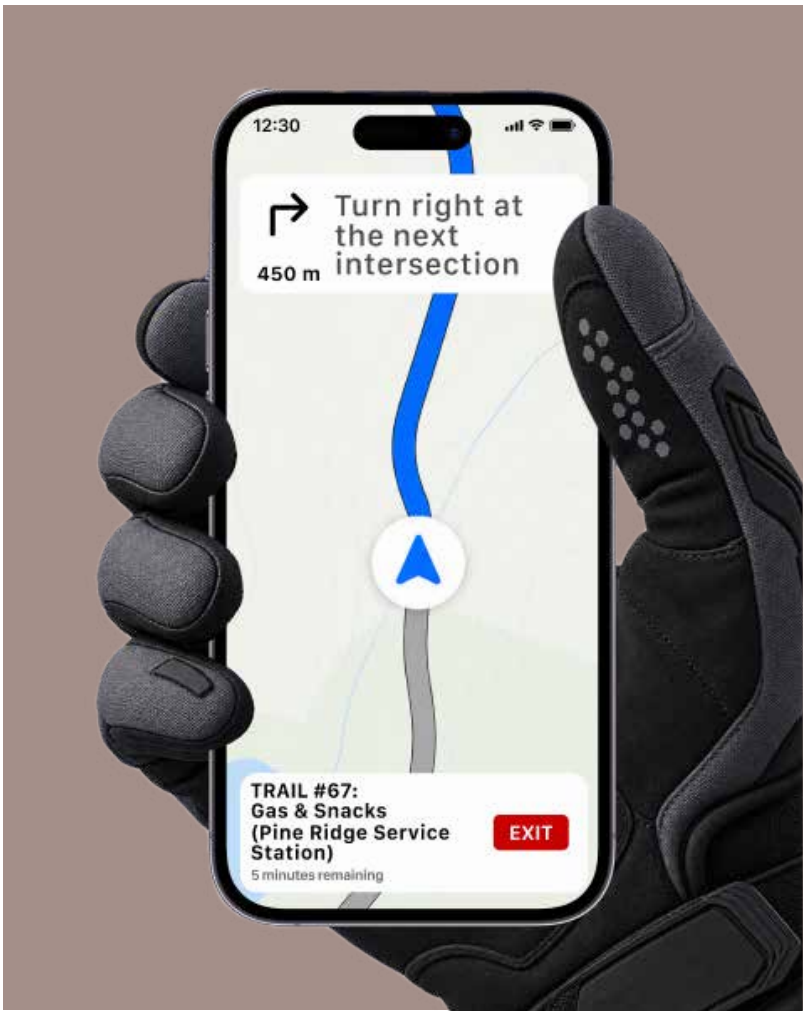
In 2014 our president (Dan Gould) had heard of a company named Mohawk Valley GIS that does the wildest thing, they build an app for your phones that would have all your trails on it instead of carrying a paper map! WOW, if that doesn't make your head explode, I don't know what will. So, in January of 2015 we launched our very first map app. By today's standards it was clunky and primitive, but back then this was cutting edge and very few Associations had gone down this path. While this was state of the art at the time, smart phones had not exploded into the market like they have today, so sales were slow, but they increased over time. Another issue was that updates to the app were done by the developer and could be costly, so they were done in bunches and not at the drop of a hat.

BAD NEWS

In late 2017 we heard Mohawk Valley GIS would be shut down due to health reasons and they would not be supplying support for their app any longer. We were now stuck with a great product that could not be developed anymore and no way to update our trail system. We needed a solution to this unexpected problem, and fast.

THE HUNT IS ON!

Our app was working fine, but we were unable update to with new trails and re-routes so the app quickly became outdated. So, in the spring of 2018 we went to the International Snowmobile Congress in Halifax Nova Scotia to network with all the other North American Associations. While walking through the Vendor booths I ran across a gentleman with a perpetual smile, Pat Fitzgerald from Mapgears. Pat explained how they were getting into the snowmobile mapping world, so we sat and chatted for quite some time.



COULD THIS BE TRUE?

In talking to him, they were offering something that we had been looking for all along, an app for the riders, an online web map and best of all this would be able to be managed and edited by the Association. Their goal was to make Associations as self-sufficient as possible! Could this even be possible, a mapping program that we



Pat Fitzgerald

We not only manage our own trail system, but we now also track all our groomers through Mapgears and it automatically updates trail statuses, so riders know when trail were last groomed.

can change and edit on the fly throughout the season? After congress, the flight and riding home, my mind was racing like a bullet train thinking of the possibilities. We got home, but I couldn't stop thinking about it and in the summer of 2018, I reached out to Pat for more info. "Let me see if I understand you correctly" Pat said and that's where it all began. Within a few days with our data, they were able to mockup an app for me to test and see how it would look. This was the beginning of great things to come. In the fall we decided to move forward with the web map and map app. After many emails and phone calls we learned how edit and repair the mapping and we haven't looked back since.

2026 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Fast forward to 2026 and where are we now? What began in its infancy as just a trail app has grown much more than that. We not only manage our own trail system, but we now also track all our groomers through Mapgears and it automatically updates trail statuses, so riders know when trails were last groomed. They get the latest updated trails daily along with up-to-date trail closures. The rider has never had so much info at their fingertips before. Paper maps that were obsolete right after printing are no longer needed. It truly has transformed the rider's experience. And for the clubs? No longer do they have to submit grooming logs; it's all done automatically, freeing up valuable volunteer time. We now have the option to maintain all our landowner's information and well as catalog all of our trail infrastructure to help the clubs maintain their crucial trail system.

WHAT A RIDE

What started as an idea to modernize mapping has turned into this. It's amazing how it has revolutionized mapping for snowmobiling and I can't wait to see what next year brings.

Interested in the map app? Go to your app store and search "Ride Sledmass Trails"

Want to know about Sledmass? Go to sledmass.com and you'll see our interactive web map.

Hope to see you on the trails.



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