

# North Dakota Snowmobile Program

Strategic Plan 2008-2012



**North Dakota Snowmobile Program Strategic Plan  
2008-2012**

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# Introduction

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The plan which follows is designed to provide North Dakota's snowmobile program with clear direction regarding future strategies and organizational goals.

The strategic plan was based on a thorough assessment of market trends, as well as input from the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and Snowmobile North Dakota. Key leaders in the assessment process included state agency officials, association board members, staff, volunteers and significant representatives from affiliate snowmobile clubs.

Operational plans will need to be developed on an annual basis to establish objectives, action steps and time tables. The strategic plan will provide the North Dakota snowmobile program with general direction, whereas the annual operations plans will provide specific details for future actions.

## **Strategic Planning:**

Strategic plans provide organizations with a roadmap to the future. They chart a path designed to allow the organization to be responsive to market trends.

By providing focus, strategic plans also enable organizations to make the best use of their limited financial, technology and human resources.

Typically, strategic plans cover an extended period of time and extend anywhere from three to five years.

# Mission Statements

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The overarching missions of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and Snowmobile North Dakota reflect the goals and objectives of the state snowmobile program.

## North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

The mission of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department recreation division, which oversees the state snowmobile program, is “to provide statewide infrastructure for outdoor recreation development through program administration, coordination, planning and technical assistance.”

## Snowmobile North Dakota

The mission of Snowmobile North Dakota is “to generate excitement for the sport of snowmobiling.”

# Vision Statements

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The overarching visions of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and Snowmobile North Dakota reflect the goals and objectives of the state snowmobile program.

## North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

The vision of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is to

**Create** welcome, safe and accessible state parks and programs responsive to changing public trends to enhance North Dakota's quality of life;

**Provide** quality customer service within the limits of appropriation authority;

**Maintain** essential state park facilities and programs to ensure a quality recreation experience through a cost recovery fee system supporting resource operations and maintenance;

**Foster** an appreciation and understanding of North Dakota's natural heritage through responsible public stewardship programs on park-managed lands;

**Offer** educational programs that emphasize the cultural, historical and conservation content contained within the park and recreation sites under agency management;

**Advocate** a working environment that supports open communications for all staff;

**Support** partnerships willing to achieve goals consistent with the Department mission;

**Establish** processes that contribute to adequate and stable funding sources; emphasize the contribution to the tourism economy as supporting justification.

## Snowmobile North Dakota

The vision of Snowmobile North Dakota is "to build an organization and trail system that attracts residents and visitors alike to snowmobiling and serves as a model for others to emulate."

# Strategic Assessment

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## Snowmobile North Dakota Board and Staff

The following information was gleaned from the strategic assessment process described in the sidebar below.

### Greatest Strengths:

1. Passionate, dedicated volunteers
2. Relationship with the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department
3. Benchmark trail funding program

### Opportunities for Improvement:

1. Restructure the current Snowmobile North Dakota board structure to reflect current trail regions
2. Trail system structure
3. Regulation & enforcement
4. Membership
5. Marketing
6. Internal communication throughout program

### Top Issues:

1. Managing the current board and trail structure
2. Improving internal communication among leaders, trail associations and club members
3. Increasing the number of registered sleds
4. Declining membership and volunteer involvement

### **Strategic Assessment Process:**

In the summer and fall of 2007, Agency MABU conducted face-to-face or phone interviews with several key leaders affiliated with Snowmobile North Dakota (board members and staff) to assess strategic issues and activities for North Dakota's snowmobile program.

The representatives from Snowmobile North Dakota identified strengths, opportunities for improvement and recommendations for future actions relating to North Dakota's snowmobile program.

# Strategic Assessment

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## North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department

The following information was gleaned from the strategic assessment process described in the sidebar below.

### Greatest Strengths:

1. Passionate, dedicated volunteers
2. Relationship with Snowmobile North Dakota
3. Strong safety program

### Opportunities for Improvement:

1. Prioritize allocation of funds and spending within trail system
2. Prioritization and distribution of management responsibilities within program
3. Develop fiscally efficient signing practices
4. Strategically coordinate marketing efforts

### Top Issues:

1. Allocation of funds, spending among trail systems
2. Equipment management practices
3. Signage use and signing practices
4. Increase membership and volunteer involvement

### **Strategic Assessment Process:**

In the summer and fall of 2007, Agency MABU conducted face-to-face interviews with representatives from the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department to seek input regarding strategic issues affecting the North Dakota snowmobile program.

The representatives from North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department identified strengths, opportunities for improvement and recommendations for future actions relating to North Dakota's snowmobile program.

# Progress at a Glance

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## Program Management

- The Benchmark Funding Program was adopted to administer funds to trail systems throughout the state for reimbursement and recognition for completing intense work on the trails such as signing and grubbing.
- The relationship between North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and Snowmobile North Dakota has evolved over the past five years with increased communication and trust.

## Trail System Management

- A Trail Guideline booklet was completed in 2003.
- A Signing Guideline book was completed in 2004.
- A signing inventory plan was begun in 2006 (in progress of updating).
- Each association now has a sign budget.
- A trail maintenance inspector was hired to inspect all trails for signing.
- Snowmobile North Dakota's equipment committee was tasked with training equipment operators, spring inspections, and managing equipment breakdowns.
- Separate budget areas for equipment maintenance were added in each trail system's budget.

## Safety Education

- A full-time safety education specialist was hired to coordinate and teach snowmobile safety courses statewide.
- Classroom safety courses are held throughout the state.
- The home study course was discontinued and replaced with an online safety course.

## Public Information

- A brochure explaining the Recreational Immunity Act (NDCC 53-08) was created to help assist associations with landowner relations.
- In 2005 and 2007, booklets explaining snowmobile rules, regulations and operator safety were published.
- The SnoDak News has been updated from a newspaper format to a magazine format.
- Annual updates to Snowmobile North Dakota website.
- Information packets have been created to hand out or mail to snowmobilers to create awareness of snowmobiling in North Dakota.
- Statewide trail maps are printed biennially and distributed statewide.

# Progress at a Glance

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## Snowmobile North Dakota

- A Snowmobile North Dakota guideline booklet was completed.
- Snowmobile North Dakota has established eight committees which have completed many projects including:
  - Snowmobile North Dakota clothing – marketing
  - Membership Discount Card - membership benefit
  - Promotional folders
  - Updating the 10-Year Equipment Plan
  - Operator training classes provided
  - Provide more information to clubs and associations
  - Awards given to volunteers have evolved
- Clubs and associations receive information in the mail on a regular basis about the organization's activities.
- A chain of command is included within the guideline booklets that were created to help provide direction to the clubs and associations on communication efforts.
- The Annual Snowmobile Convention has been reformatted to increase attendance.

## Legislation & Enforcement

- Additional equipment was purchased to assist state and local enforcement efforts.
- In 2003, the snowmobile registration fee was increased from \$20 to \$40.
- Representatives from the state snowmobile program have developed good relationships with state senators and representatives.
- Representatives from the state snowmobile program have increased awareness to snowmobilers by distributing brochures and also by placing information about legislation on the Snowmobile North Dakota and North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department websites.
- A law establishing a \$15 non-resident permit was passed in 2003 and updated in 2007 to allow online and private business sales.

# Overview of Market Research

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## *Snowmobile North Dakota Volunteers*

The following information was compiled from the most current study conducted in 2007 with members of Snowmobile North Dakota.

### *Profile of a Typical Member*

The typical Snowmobile North Dakota member is in his/her mid-40s, has been a member for approximately 6 - 10 years, participates in public events, and spends an average of 12 days volunteering to help maintain trails during a typical season. Members are typically involved in the organization because they enjoy the sport of snowmobiling.

### *Time Investment for Trail Maintenance*

On average, members surveyed believe that the amount of time required to maintain a snowmobile trail in North Dakota is 157 hours per trail, per season (actual average for the 2006-07 season is approximately 225 recorded hours per trail).

Perceived Hours . . . . . 157 per trail, per season  
Actual Hours . . . . . 225 per trail, per season

### *Financial Investment for Trail Maintenance*

On average, members surveyed believe that the cost to maintain a snowmobile trail in North Dakota is \$3,500 per trail, per season (actual average for 2006-07 is approximately \$30,837 per trail and \$8.84 per mile).

Perceived Costs . . . . . \$3,500 per trail, per season  
Actual Costs . . . . . \$30,837 per trail, per season

### *Number of Trail Miles*

From a trail management perspective, the majority (86%) of Snowmobile North Dakota members feel the current number of trail miles is sufficient.

### *Membership Value*

Overwhelmingly, 100% of Snowmobile North Dakota members are satisfied with the current benefits they receive for their membership dues.

### **Volunteer Assessment:**

In the summer of 2007, Agency MABU surveyed a random sample of Snowmobile North Dakota members.

The 2007 volunteer survey was developed as a means to further assess the organization's volunteer program and trail maintenance practices.

Results from this study are included in this section of the strategic plan to reveal trends relating to volunteer efforts and trail management practices within Snowmobile North Dakota membership throughout the state.

# Overview of Market Research Volunteers Continued

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## *Safety Education*

Based on a series of open-ended questions, Snowmobile North Dakota members generally provided positive comments regarding the current safety education program. The most common suggestions for improvement related to increasing the number of classes and implementing more advanced promotion of classes.

## *Main Concerns*

Of the concerns among Snowmobile North Dakota members, the most common related to increasing membership, recruiting more volunteers and engaging youth interest in the sport and the organization.

## *Additional Comments*

Survey respondents offered dozens of suggestions concerning ways to improve Snowmobile North Dakota. The most common ideas related to needing more volunteers, increasing advertising and promotion to recruit new members, and organizing more family-oriented events.

# Overview of Market Research

## *Snowmobile Enthusiasts*

### *Market Trends*

The following information was compiled from past market research studies and the most current study conducted in 2007 with registered snowmobile owners in North Dakota. Whenever possible, research results are compared from year to year to reveal trends in snowmobile usage.

### *Profile of a Typical Rider*

The typical snowmobile enthusiast in North Dakota is in his/her mid-40s, does not belong to a snowmobile club, owns 2-3 sleds, and spends over 30 days snowmobiling in-state each season.

### *Riding on Public Land*

The overwhelming majority (93%) of registered snowmobile owners in North Dakota would support increased riding opportunities on public land.

### *OHV Ownership*

Over half (56%) of registered snowmobile owners in North Dakota also own some type of off-highway vehicle.

### *Snowmobile Membership*

According to the most recent research, about one in six registered snowmobile owners (16%) is a member of Snowmobile North Dakota.

### *Registration Fees*

On average, North Dakota snowmobile owners believe \$31.00 to be a reasonable and appropriate annual registration fee for snowmobiles within the state.

### *Snowmobile Purchases*

During any given year, one fourth to one half of registered snowmobile owners in North Dakota purchase a snowmobile. Purchases tend to vary based on annual snowfall amounts.

1992 – 45.8%	1994 – 54.8%	1996 – 53.8%
2002 – 34.7%	2007 – 25.8%	

### **Snowmobile Enthusiast Assessment:**

In the summer and fall of 2007, Agency MABU surveyed a random sample of registered snowmobile owners in North Dakota.

The 2007 survey was patterned after previous research studies conducted by Snowmobile North Dakota in 1992, 1994, 1996 and 2002.

When applicable, results from these studies are included in this section of the strategic plan to reveal trends relating to snowmobile usage throughout the state.

# Overview of Market Research Enthusiasts Continued

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## *Travel Distance to Trails*

Almost half (48%) of registered snowmobile owners in North Dakota would be willing to travel up to 300 miles for good snowmobile trails. For regular snowmobiling, however, the majority (81%) of riders prefer to travel distances under 50 miles.

## *Premiere Trails*

If conditions were ideal, registered snowmobile owners in North Dakota would generally prefer riding in the northern part of the state. The top five areas identified as premiere destinations under ideal conditions were the Peace Garden Trail (52%), North East Trail (25%), Red River North Trail and Red River South Trail (10% equal share), Sheyenne Valley Trail (8%), and Lake Region Trail (5%).

## *Satisfaction with Grooming of Trails*

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the quality of grooming at their top destinations (identified above). The scale was set on a 1 to 5 rating, with 5 being the highest grade possible. The average rating for grooming was between 3.6 and 4.0.

## *Satisfaction with Trails*

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of North Dakota snowmobile trails, respondents rated "Trail Signs" and "Overall Recreational Quality" as the highest and "Trail Expansion" and "Trails Shared with OHVs" as the lowest. The scale was set on a 1 to 5 rating, with 5 being the highest grade possible.

## *Satisfaction with Facilities*

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various facilities along North Dakota snowmobile trails, the respondents rated "Overnight Lodging" and "Properly Placed Fuel Stops" as the highest, whereas "Loading Ramps" and "Trash Receptacles" were rated the lowest. The scale was set on a 1 to 5 rating, with 5 being the highest grade possible.

## *Safety Education*

About half (52%) of the respondents have one or more children who ride snowmobiles. Of those respondents, the majority (77%) have not participated in a children's safety education course. Of those respondents, the majority (56%) would not be interested in a children's safety education course.

A high number (85%) of respondents indicated they would not be interested in participating in adult safety education courses.

## *Additional Suggestions for Improvement*

Survey respondents offered dozens of suggestions concerning ways to improve snowmobiling opportunities, experiences and facilities throughout North Dakota. The most common ideas related to needing more snow, more frequent grooming, and increased law enforcement.

# North Dakota Snowmobile Program

## Strategic Plan 2008-2012



# Strategic Directives

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The following directives, goals and implementation strategies were based on a thorough assessment of the current state snowmobile program with input from the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and Snowmobile North Dakota. Key leaders who participated in the assessment process included state agency officials, association board members and staff, volunteers, significant representatives from affiliate snowmobile clubs, and a random sampling of registered snowmobile owners throughout North Dakota.

In order to keep North Dakota's snowmobile program moving in a positive direction, the following areas have been identified to be of strategic significance:

Directive Area #1: Program Management

Directive Area #2: Trail System Management

Directive Area #3: Safety Education

Directive Area #4: Public Information

Directive Area #5: Snowmobile North Dakota

Directive Area #6: Legislation Recommendations

# Directive #1

## Program Management

- Goal #1 Improve management tools within the program.  
**Implementation Strategies:**
- Identify spending priorities and allocations throughout the trail system.
  - Implement a checks-and-balances system to ensure ethical procedures.
- Goal #2 Implement, manage and evaluate the proposed Benchmark Trail Funding Program.  
**Implementation Strategies:**
- Promote and communicate incentives to volunteers.
  - Track volunteer hours and spending.
  - Perform annual evaluations on productivity and cost-effectiveness of program.
  - Consider conducting a volunteer feedback survey after the first year.
- Goal #3 Explore and implement opportunities for alternative funding.  
**Implementation Strategies:**
- Increase local fundraising at club events (raffles, silent auctions, chili feeds with donations, etc.).
  - Invest in dedicated grant writing.
  - Increase advertising sales and sponsorships.
  - Take advantage of federal funding opportunities through the motorized recreational trail program.
- Goal #4 Collaborate with the North Dakota Department of Transportation to promote snowmobile registration.  
**Implementation Strategies:**
- Develop and promote rider incentives such as winning a new sled, riding gear and/or weekend getaways to premiere snowmobiling destinations in North Dakota.
  - Work with the North Dakota Department of Transportation to ensure riders automatically become a member in Snowmobile North Dakota with their registration.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #4	Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

# Directive #1 Continued...

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## Program Management

Goal #5      Communicate the financial responsibilities of the program and the legal expectations of properly maintaining snowmobile trails to volunteers.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Address these issues and concerns at club meetings, in the Sno-Dak News magazine, on the Snowmobile North Dakota website, etc.
- Provide opportunities for feedback and questions from membership.
- Emphasize legal action that could be brought against the program should a rider become injured due to improper trail maintenance.

**Fact:**

Snowmobile North Dakota is a volunteer-based organization governed by a board of directors and is staffed by a full-time program manager.

Goal #6      Continue to build upon the positive working relationship between the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and Snowmobile North Dakota.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Communicate shared and delegated responsibilities in writing and verbally at regular board meetings.
- Continue to work as partnering organizations within the snowmobile program.
- Communicate positive relationship to general membership so they understand the importance of both organizations.

# Directive Area #2

## Trail System Management

Goal #1 Establish a system of premiere snowmobile trails. Collaborate with membership and utilize recent research among registered snowmobile enthusiasts to prioritize trails and develop a statewide plan to implement premiere trails.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider designating higher funding and dedicated management for premiere trails.
- Create and implement a formula for determining funding needs and distribution for non-premiere trails.
- Inform clubs and associations of prioritization criteria and implementation plan.
- Begin trail designation process according to recent research, which indicates the top five snowmobile trails among registered snowmobile riders are as follows:

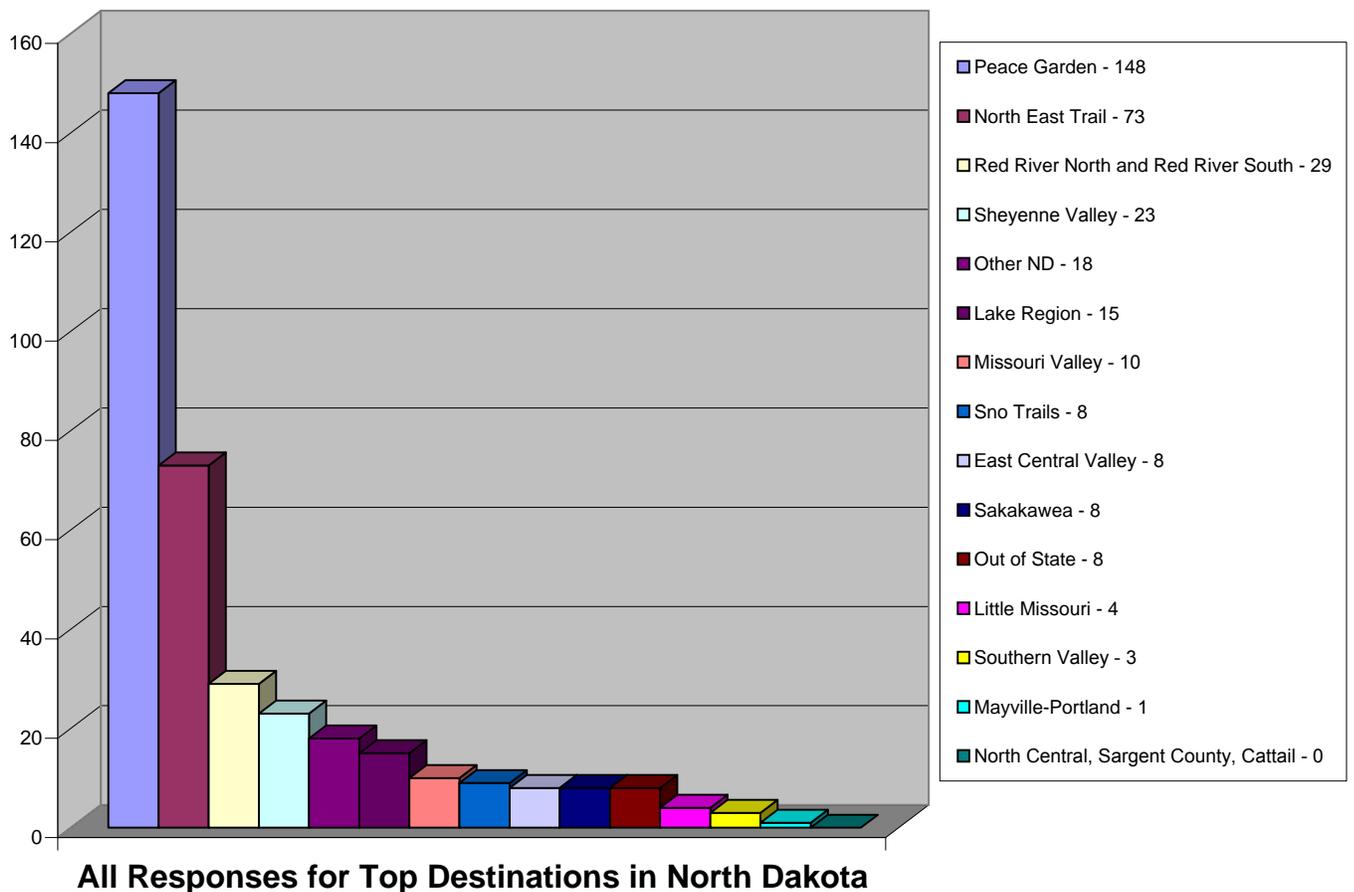
1. Peace Garden Trail (52%)
2. North East Trail (25%)
3. Red River North Trail & Red River South Trail (10% equal share)
4. Sheyenne Valley Trail (8%)
5. Lake Region Trail (5%)

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #1	Entire Board All Committees

**In Depth:**

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the quality of grooming at their top destinations (identified above). The scale was set on a 1 to 5 rating, with 5 being the highest grade possible. The average rating for grooming was between 3.6 and 4.0.

Overall, respondents were satisfied with the overall recreational quality at their top destinations (identified above). The scale was set on a 1 to 5 rating, with 5 being the highest grade possible. The average rating for recreational quality was between 3.8 and 4.0.



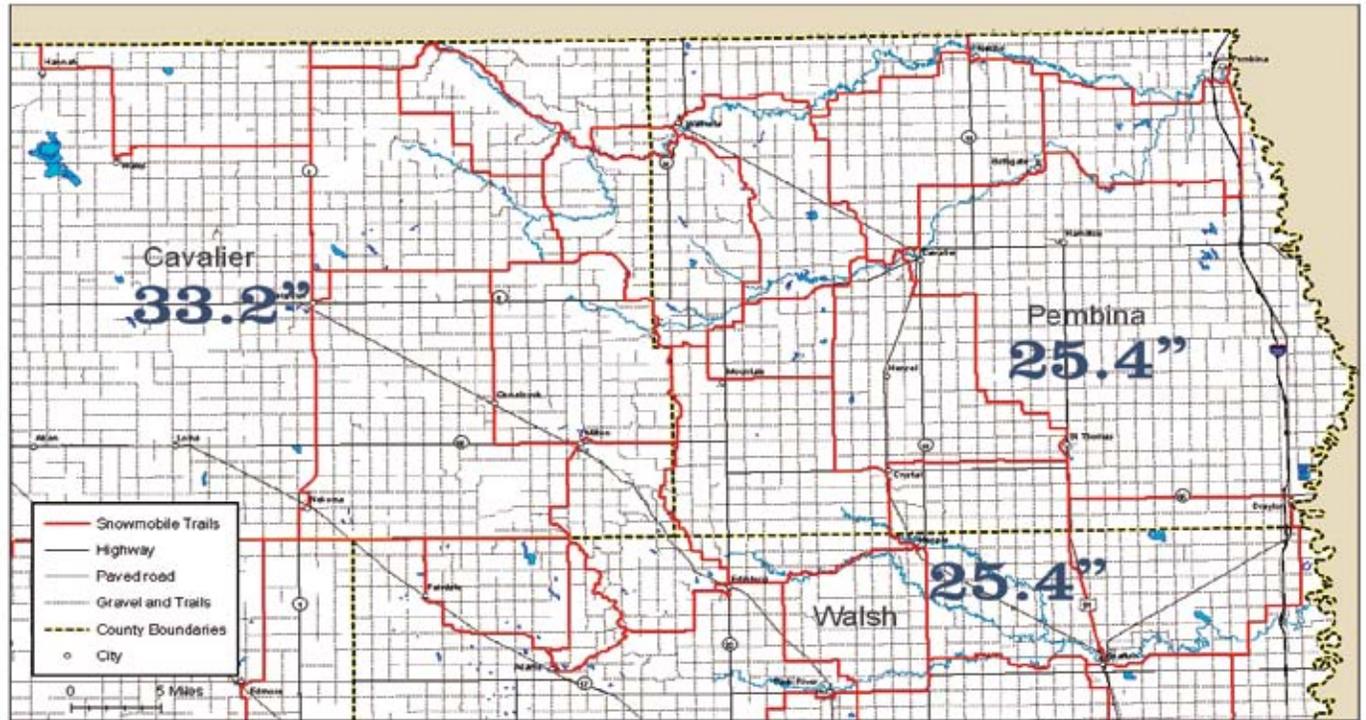
# Top Ranked North Dakota Snowmobile Trails

North Dakota State Snowmobile Trail* (Listed in order of recreational quality)	Average Satisfaction with Grooming Quality (based on scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is "very satisfied")	Average Number of Days Spent Snowmobiling	Trail Location (North Dakota County)	Average Annual Snowfall by County**
1. Peace Garden Trail	3.9	7.1 days	Bottineau County Rolette County	39.2 33
2. North East Trail	3.7	5.1 days	Cavalier County Pembina County Walsh County	33.2 25.4 25.4
3. Red River North Trail Red River South Trail	3.6	5.8 days	Grand Forks County Pembina County Walsh County	38.6 25.4 25.4
4. Sheyenne Valley Trail	4.1	3.3 days	Barnes County Dickey County LaMoure County Ransom County Stutsman County	35.2 16.6 22.5 33.7 30.1
5. Lake Region Valley Trail	3.9	4.5 days	Benson County Nelson County Ramsey County	31 30.8 34.8
6. Missouri Valley Trail	--	--	Burleigh County Emmons County	21.6 32.8
7. Sno Trails Trail	--	--	McHenry County Ward County Renville County	36.8 33.4 30.3
8. East Central Valley Trail	--	--	Cass County	33.6
9. Sakakawea Trail	--	--	Williams County	32.8
10. Little Missouri Trail	--	--	Dunn County Stark County	40.1 38.6
11. Southern Valley Trail Riders Trail	--	--	Richland County	31.3
12. Mayville-Portland Trail	--	--	Traill County	15.1
13. North Central Trail	--	--	Benson County Pierce County Towner County	31 54.6 34.2
14. Sargent County Trail	--	--	Sargent County	30.3
15. Cattail Trail	--	--	Steele County Cass County Barnes County	31.6 33.6 35.2

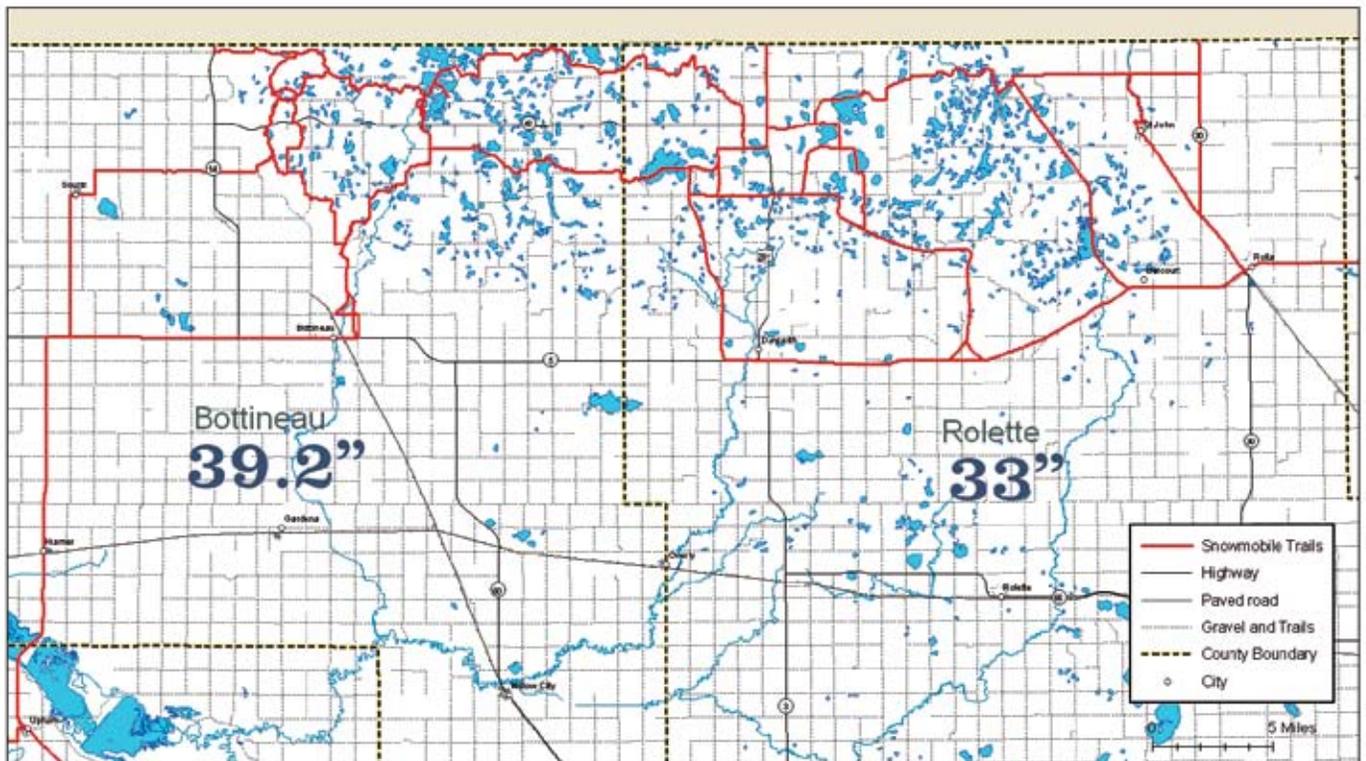
-- Trails not ranked by survey respondents.

\* Survey respondents were asked to rank their top five snowmobile destinations in North Dakota in terms of overall recreational quality, if conditions were ideal.

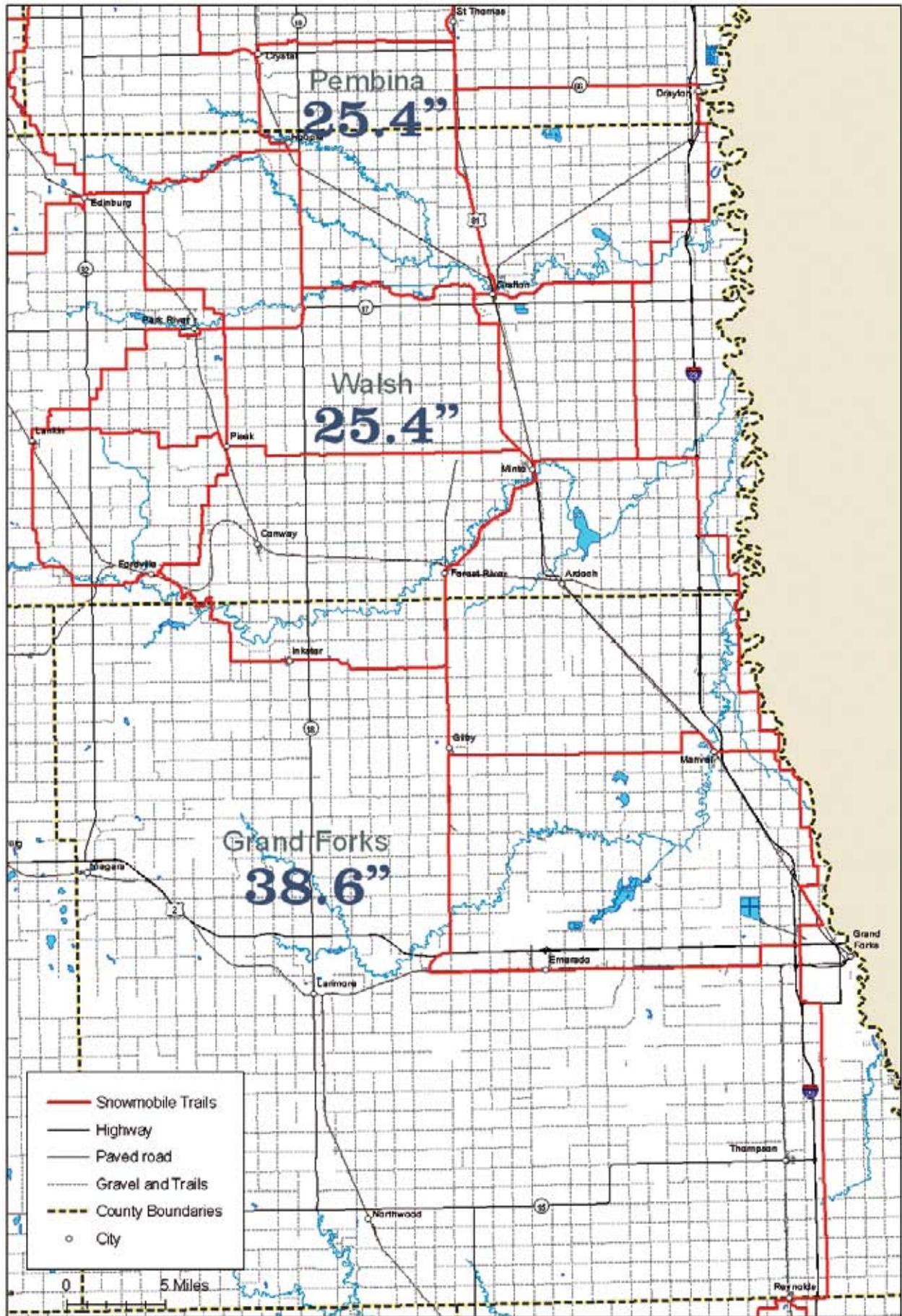
\*\* All measurements are in inches, based on statistics from approximately 1950 – 2005 (source: National Climactic Data Center)



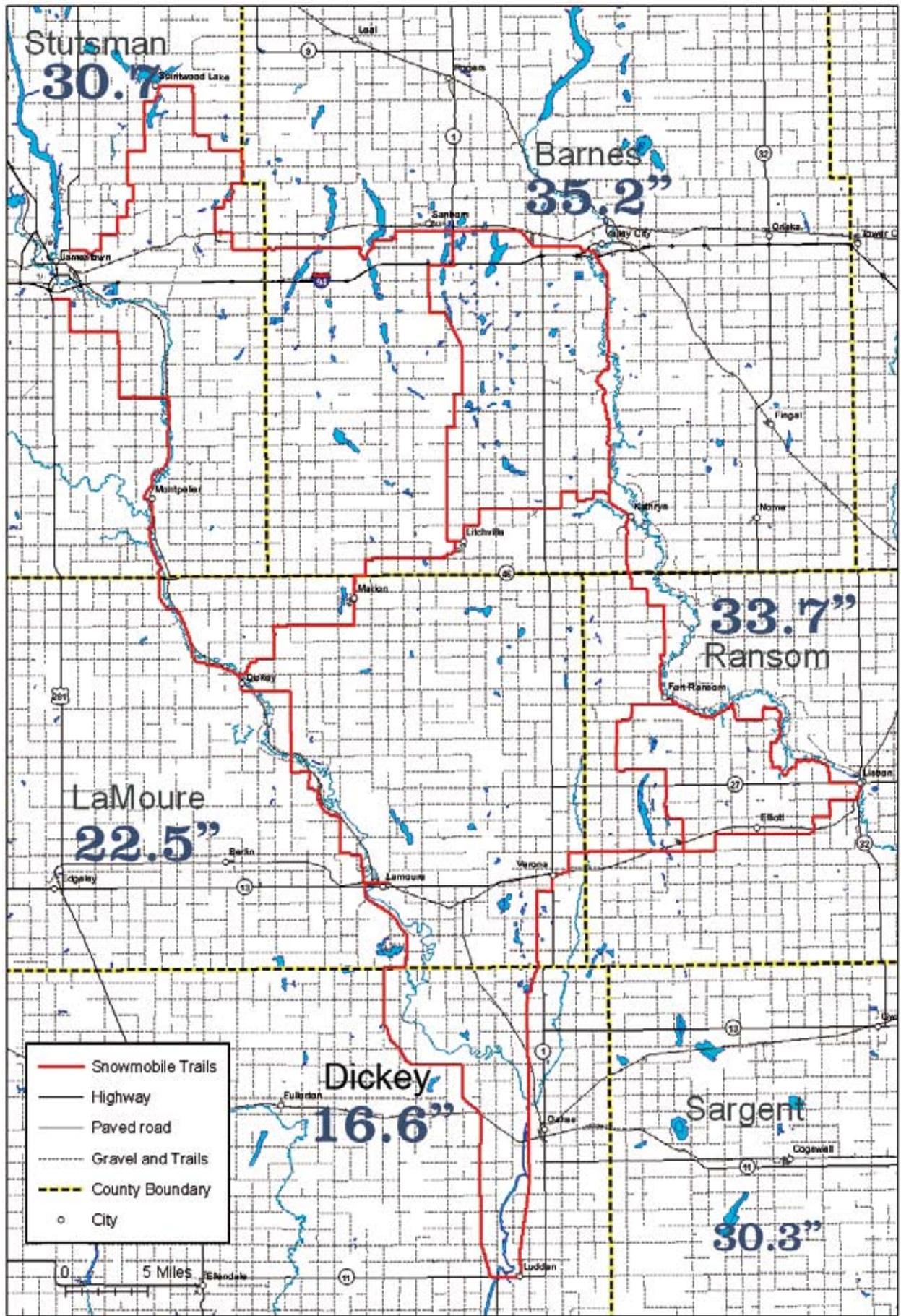
Northeast Snowmobile Trails



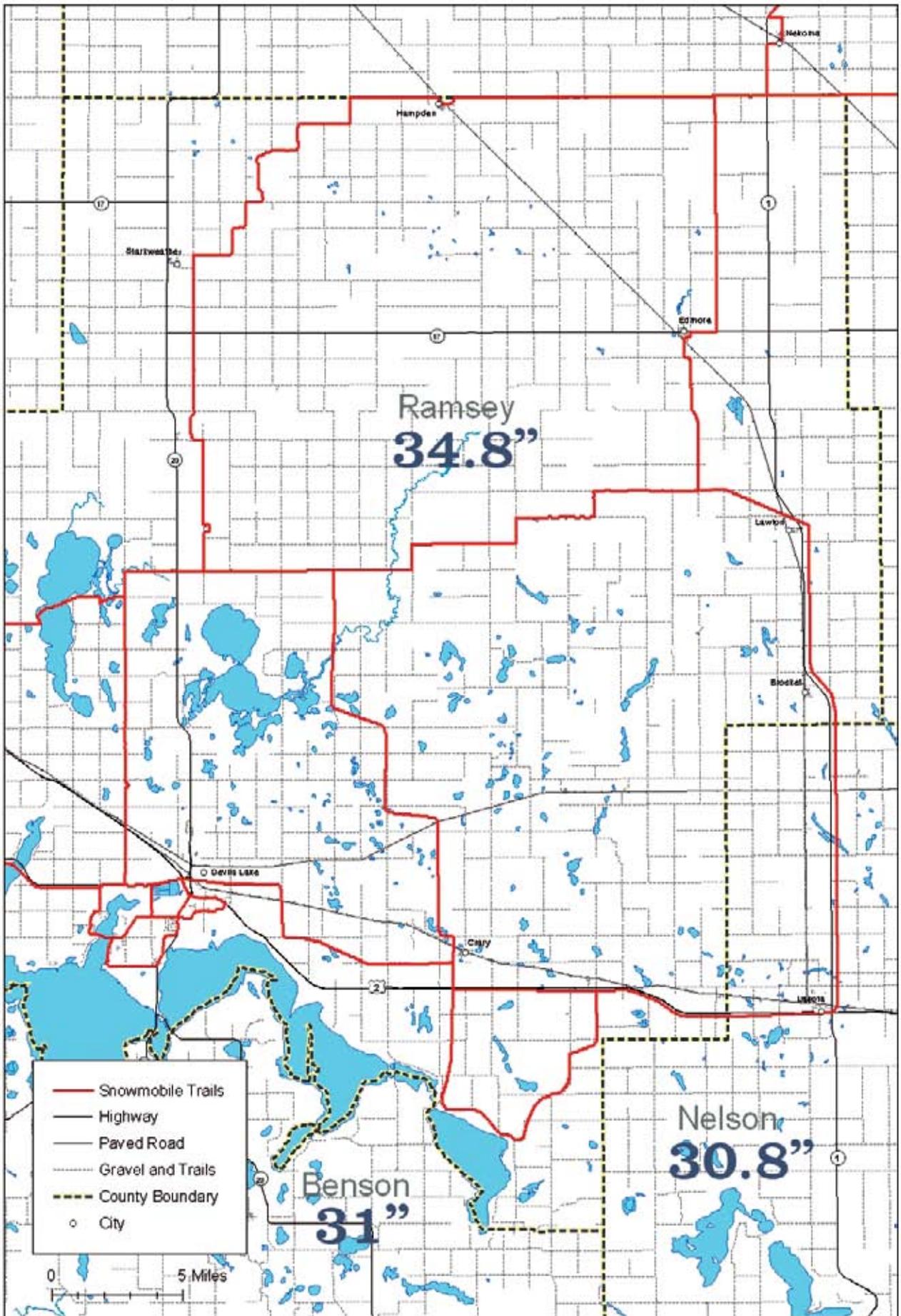
Peace Garden Snowmobile Trails



Red River North & South Snowmobile Trails



## Sheyenne Valley Snowmobile Trails



Lake Region Snowmobile Trails

# Directive Area #2 Continued...

## Trail System Management

Goal #2 Improve upon the management and resourcefulness of current signing practices.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop and implement a system to manage sign usage, needs and spending among associations (e.g., identify associations with excess signage and distribute surplus to associations with limited resources).
- Educate clubs on signing requirements and liability concerns that could come against the program should a rider suffer an injury as a result of improper signing.

Goal #3 Build positive relationships and collaborate with local law officials to encourage enforcement.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Educate local law enforcement on current legislation.
- Collaborate to establish system of registration checkpoints.
- Network with local law enforcement officials at community events to promote positive relationships.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #3	Legislation Bylaws/Constitution Committee Promotions, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #4 Effectively maintain trail system.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Implement and monitor Benchmark Trail Funding program to ensure proper and timely trail maintenance.
- Increase level of historical interpretation (see In Depth sidebar on the following page).
- Improve loading ramps and the availability of primitive toilets and trash receptacles.
- Do not increase trail miles (see In Depth sidebar on the following page).

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #4	Entire Board All Committees

# Directive Area #2 Continued...

## Trail System Management

Goal #5 Effectively manage equipment maintenance, usage and storage.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Train equipment operators regularly.
- Invest in dedicated mechanics for routine upkeep and regular maintenance.
- Establish system to manage equipment in terms of maintenance, usage and storage.
- Assess current fleet size against current need.
- Distribute aging equipment to areas with little snowfall.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #5	RTP Equipment Committee Budget Committee

Goal #6 Improve upon annual state rides.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Establish one or two state rides as signature events for riders to look forward to on an annual basis.
- Seek to promote state rides to a broad riding population throughout the state (Snowmobile North Dakota members and non-members alike).
- Consider enhancing competitive aspects of state rides to increase awareness and draw new riders to North Dakota trails.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #6	Entire Board Promotions, Membership & Safety Committee

# Directive Area #2 Continued...

## Trail System Management

Goal #7 Improve upon local trail-based events.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Seek to promote local events to a broad riding population throughout the area (Snowmobile North Dakota members and non-members alike).
- Invite input from membership to share ideas on fundraising, competitive events and promotion.
- Consider focusing events from a more family-oriented perspective.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #7	Entire Board Promotions, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #8 Expand access to public land and reduce ditch riding.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Increase public awareness and emphasize positive riding experience.
- Work with current trail system to loop trails.
- Negotiate with landowners to increase riding opportunities.

**In Depth:**

The majority (86%) of Snowmobile North Dakota members surveyed feel the current number of trail miles is sufficient. Overall, respondents indicated they were satisfied with the length and number of trails. The scale was set on a 1 to 5 rating, with 5 being the highest grade possible. The average rating for both areas was between 3.4 and 4.0.

On average, members surveyed believe that the amount of time required to maintain a snowmobile trail in North Dakota is 157 hours (actual average for 2006-07 is approximately 225 recorded hours per trail).

Overall, respondents indicated they were unsatisfied with the level of historical interpretation. The scale was set on a 1 to 5 rating, with 5 being the highest grade possible. The average rating for this area was 2.8.

On average, members surveyed believe that the cost to maintain a snowmobile trail in North Dakota is \$3,500 (actual average for 2006-07 is approximately \$30,837 per trail and \$8.84 per mile).

# Directive Area #3

## Safety Education

Goal #1 Consider increasing fees for current courses.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consult recent data on what the general public believes is a reasonable cost for various course formats (see In Depth sidebar below).
- Use input from members of the Promotion, Membership and Safety Committee, as well as the entire board, to determine reasonable costs.

Goal #2 Explore ways to incorporate hands-on training in current curriculum, even in years with little snowfall.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider bringing students in contact with a sled to learn about parts of the vehicle, proper riding positions, simple maintenance, etc.
- Consider costs and practicality of transporting a sled(s) to various locations throughout the state.
- Consider utilizing members' sleds at each location.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #2	Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

### In Depth:

The overwhelming majority (89%) of registered snowmobile owners surveyed indicated they would not be interested in volunteering to teach a safety education course.

About half (52%) of the respondents have one or more children who ride snowmobiles. Of those respondents, the majority (77%) have not participated in a children's safety education course. Of those respondents, the majority (56%) would not be interested in a children's safety education course.

A high number (85%) of respondents indicated they would not be interested in participating in adult safety education courses.

Regardless of course format, respondents indicated that an average of \$20-25 is a fair amount to pay for a safety education course.

# Directive Area #3 Continued...

## Safety Education

Goal #3 Collaborate with current Snowmobile North Dakota membership to recruit volunteer instructors.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Avoid targeting non-members to teach safety education courses (the majority (89%) of non-members surveyed indicated they have no interest in participating in this effort).
- Consider offering perks, gifts or incentives to members who volunteer to teach a course(s).

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #3	Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #4 Explore ways to promote continuing education for both children and adults in terms of educating riders on new legislation and riding practices.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Communicate the importance of continuing education to riders in terms of changing regulations and understanding legislation
- Employ promotion tactics which communicate to children that “it’s cool to learn” and that learning is a beneficial, life-long process.
- Seek to promote on the local and state level through websites, direct mailings, public service announcements, etc.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #4	Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

# Directive Area #3 Continued...

## Safety Education

Goal #5 Offer courses in an increased number of areas throughout the state. Target course promotions to current membership.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Identify areas of the state in which increased courses would be the most effective.

Goal #6 Explore ways to engage snowmobile enthusiasts (those not current members of Snowmobile North Dakota) in safety education courses for both children and adults.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Communicate the importance of continuing education to riders in terms of changing regulations and understanding legislation.
- Employ promotion tactics which communicate to children that “it’s cool to learn” and that learning is a beneficial, life-long process.
- Consider discounted or free first-year memberships to new members who enroll in safety education courses.
- Seek to promote courses on the local and state level through websites, direct mailings, public service announcements, etc.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #6	Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

**Fact:**

North Dakota’s Sno-Dak News magazine helps generate interest in the sport and provides important information on snowmobiling throughout the state.

# Directive Area #4

## Public Information

Goal #1 Develop a collaborative annual marketing plan to coordinate and co-brand the efforts of Snowmobile North Dakota and the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider contracting with an outside agency to conduct a communications audit and create a collaborative annual marketing plan.
- Identify and research state snowmobile trail programs in surrounding states for ideas on co-branding and focused marketing strategies.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #1	Entire Board Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #2 Participate in outreach marketing activities throughout the region to promote North Dakota snowmobile trails. Continue to participate in national and international organizations for increased networking and promotion.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Participate in regional winter sports shows, conventions and expos.
- Consider participating in off-season events where snowmobile enthusiasts might be in attendance such as boat shows, hunting and fishing expos, home shows, etc.
- Increase activity and participation on the individual level within local, national and international membership organizations.

Goal #3 Develop and implement strategies to engage younger-than-average riders. Seek to develop a life-long interest in the sport.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider employing more family-oriented activities such as a “Let’s Go Snowmobiling” campaign to encourage awareness and participation.
- Identify family-friendly environments in which to hold social events such as town halls, restaurants, parks, etc.
- Implement and promote family-friendly and kid-friendly games, prizes and activities at local and state events.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #3	Entire Board Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #4 Continue moving in a positive direction with the Sno-Dak News magazine. Consider expanding to include more variety in content.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Maintain the glossy, full-color magazine style as opposed to previous newsletter format.

# Directive Area #4 Continued...

## Public Information

- Spotlight volunteers and specific trails.
- Include more general articles on the sport (feature new sleds, new riding gear, etc.).
- Shift from newsletter content to general industry features to attract a broader audience.
- Create and distribute newsletter content for members only.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #4	Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #5 Establish and implement a set of website guidelines for Snowmobile North Dakota and the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. Determine and designate specific information best suited to come from each organization.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider focusing the Snowmobile North Dakota site on membership and volunteer activity (message boards, links to clubs, local events, etc.).
- Consider focusing the North Dakota Parks and Recreation District site on public information (trail information, current regulations, out-of-state passes, who to contact for questions, etc.).
- Emphasize the overarching relationship between both organizations by incorporating links to one another's sites.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #4	Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #6 Cultivate media relations on the local and state level for increased earned media and event coverage for news and events.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop personal relationships with media representatives (specifically outdoors reporters) through social and professional networking.
- Consider holding a media tour of local trails and invite them to participate in special events as opposed to simply attending.

Goal #7 Consider establishing a statewide magazine to target convention and visitors bureaus, tourism, out-of-state riders, businesses and dealerships.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Establish as a separate publication from Sno-Dak News and target audiences who are not members of Snowmobile North Dakota.
- Identify and research out-of-state and national snowmobile magazines for ideas on content, layout and advertising.

# Directive Area #5

## Snowmobile North Dakota

Goal #1 Establish the current Snowmobile North Dakota board structure to accurately reflect the current trail regions.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Accurately reflect the current trail regions.
- Consider a structure with no more than ten members.
- Consider an annual assessment of board structure to determine appropriate size with regard to trail system.

Goal #2 Improve and expand upon the communication efforts, methods and mediums between the Snowmobile North Dakota board, trail associations and club members.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider identifying club members to serve as rotating representatives at board or association meetings.
- Consider establishing a Communications Committee charged with ensuring the timely and accurate distribution of information to the entire membership.

Goal #3 Increase frequency of board meetings. Explore alternatives to face-to-face meetings to decrease spending and travel costs.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Consider web, phone and video conferencing.
- Identify, research and compare associated costs.
- Consider rotating meetings throughout the state so travel time and costs are more evenly distributed.

Goal #4 Develop and implement strategies to engage non-active members, especially in years with little snowfall.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Increase the number of picnics, events, game nights, and other family-oriented activities throughout the year.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #4	Entire Board Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

# Directive Area #5 Continued...

## Snowmobile North Dakota

- Implement kid-oriented activities and contests such as coloring contests and essay contests. Publish winners in the Sno-Dak News magazine.
- Consider a family-oriented “Day on the Trail” campaign to promote and educate membership on what it takes to maintain trails.

Goal #5 Increase membership in Snowmobile North Dakota among registered snowmobile users in North Dakota from an average of 15% by 2013.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Focus efforts on increasing public awareness and promoting year-round membership benefits.
- Consider incentives, contests and prizes to reward current members for recruiting friends and family to join Snowmobile North Dakota.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #3	Entire Board Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #6 Explore the possibilities of engaging OHV enthusiasts in terms of increasing Snowmobile North Dakota membership (see p. 12 for more information on OHV ownership).

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Seek to identify shared interests among user groups.
- Collaborate with OHV enthusiasts on social and networking functions within Snowmobile North Dakota.
- Promote collaboration with the understanding that trails shared with OHVs can be a sensitive issue among many snowmobilers.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #3	Entire Board Promotion, Membership & Safety Committee

Goal #7 Educate the current Snowmobile North Dakota membership on the evolution of the organization from a social club to a business.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Promote understanding of responsibilities among members with regard to trail maintenance, cost-effective operations, legislation and volunteer participation.
- Emphasize the connection between participation and the continuation of high-quality snowmobile trails in North Dakota.

# Directive Area #6

## Legislation Recommendations

Goal #1 Support stricter enforcement and increased fines relating to unregistered snowmobiles and riding violations in North Dakota.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Work with local law enforcement to gain support outside the state snowmobile program.
- Identify appropriate fine increase to deter deviant riding and registration practices.
- Research surrounding states to begin identifying appropriate dollar amount for various fines.

Priority for 2008-09	Related Committees
Goal #1	Legislation, Bylaws/Constitution Committee

Goal #2 Explore legislation to require snowmobile dealerships to complete registration at the time of purchase.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Research process of North Dakota law which required similar action with highway vehicles to help determine direction and processes.
- Conduct informal research with dealership representatives to determine interest level and needs.
- Research surrounding states' practices (if applicable) to help determine direction and processes.
- Coordinate with related state departments and community organizations.

Goal #3 Pursue legislation to change current night travel regulations wherein ditch-riding laws conflict with state snowmobile trail laws in terms of direction of travel.

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Develop and implement formal legislative action plan.
- Identify key safety issues that affect the entire riding population.

**Facts:**

North Dakota's snowmobile trail system covers nearly 3,500 miles of groomed trails across the state.

State snowmobile trails additionally receive a small portion of revenue from conducting safety courses throughout the state.

The state snowmobile program operates on a biennial budget, typically around \$600,000.

# Facts & Figures

The following facts and figures from the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) and the International Association of Snowmobile Administrators (IASA) were compiled and placed in the strategic plan in order to place the North Dakota Snowmobile Program in context with national and international statistics within the snowmobiling industry.

State/Province	# registered	State/Province	# registered
AK	53,400	SD	11,691
CA	22,330	UT	27,894
CO	36,500	VT	36,000
ID	51,000	WA	31,532
IL	41,900	WI	232,320
IN	13,499	WY	19,060
IA	40,650	AB	26,513
ME	53,275	BC	75,000
MA	13,000	MB	22,522
MI	302,000	NB	10,367
MN	277,290	NF	77,545
MT	23,440	NS	7,000
NE	2,100	NT	na
NH	50,000	NU	na
NY	146,662	ON	305,000
<b>*ND</b>	<b>16,249</b>	PE	1,642
OH	17,300	QC	154,862
OR	16,809	SA	16,819
PA	45,270	YT	899

\*2005-07



# Facts & Figures

Worldwide snowmobile sales for the last 15 years:

1993 - 158,000	1998 - 257,936	2003 - 186,627
1994 - 181,000	1999 - 230,887	2004 - 181,336
1995 - 227,400	2000 - 208,297	2005 - 173,733
1996 - 252,324	2001 - 208,592	2006 - 164,860
1997 - 255,773	2002 - 203,153	2007 - 160,318

The average age of a snowmobiler is 42 years old.

65% of the snowmobilers usually trailer their snowmobiles to go riding. 35% either snowmobile from their primary residence or have a vacation home where they keep and use their snowmobiles.

Approximately 80% of snowmobilers use their snowmobile for trail riding and touring on marked and groomed trails. 20% of snowmobilers use their snowmobile for work, ice fishing or transportation.

Snowmobilers spend, on the average, 7.2 nights per snowmobile season in a motel/resort room while snowmobiling.

There are over 225,000 miles of groomed and marked snowmobile trails in North America that have been developed by volunteer clubs, working with local government and private land owners.

There are an estimated 135,014 miles (129,270 kilometers) of signed and maintained snowmobile trails in North America that have been developed by snowmobile clubs and associations, usually in cooperation with provincial, state and local governments.

State	Miles	State	Miles
AK	350 MI	NE	404 MI
AZ	500 MI	NH	7,000 MI
CA/NV	2,500 MI	NY	11,000 MI
CO	2,600 MI	<b>ND</b>	<b>3,489 MI</b>
ID	7,200 MI	OH	127 MI
IL	2,500 MI	OR	6,410 MI
IN	300 MI	PA	3,000 MI
IA	5,000 MI	SD	1,613 MI
ME	13,200 MI	UT	1,200 MI
MA	1,100 MI	VT	4,675 MI
MI	6,500 MI	WA	3,000 MI
MN	20,385 MI	WI	25,000 MI
MT	3,500 MI	WY	2,300 MI



# IASA Finance Survey Chart

2006/2007 Snowmobile Program Finance Study									
Revenue by Category: United States									
State	Trail Miles	RTP Funds	Registration Revenue	Gas Tax Revenue	Other Tax Revenue	User Permit Revenue	Other Revenue	Total Revenue	Revenue per Mile
Alaska	1,000	\$430,526	\$269,755					\$700,281	\$700
Arizona									
California									
Colorado	2,800	\$269,000	\$678,000					\$947,000	\$338
Connecticut									
Idaho	5,500	\$236,000	\$803,270	\$800,000				\$1,839,270	\$334
Illinois	2,000		\$160,000					\$160,000	\$80
Indiana	200	\$130,000			\$24,000			\$154,000	\$770
Iowa	5,000	\$675,000	\$475,500					\$1,150,000	\$230
Maine	13,200	\$300,960	\$1,700,000	\$1,527,492	\$10,930		\$500,000	\$4,039,382	\$306
Massachusetts									
Michigan	6,352	\$3,774,000	\$500,000	\$2,515,200	\$4,305,210	\$83,600		\$11,178,010	\$1,760
Minnesota	20,385	\$800,159	\$3,798,083	\$5,299,597		\$3,148,672		\$13,046,511	\$640
Montana	4,155	\$146,625	\$419,625	\$700,454		\$148,022		\$1,414,594	\$340
Nebraska									
New Hampshire	6,700	\$378,000	\$3,200,000	\$405,000				\$3,983,000	\$594
New York	11,202	\$1,046,423	\$3,600,000					\$4,646,423	\$415
New Mexico									
North Dakota	3,650	\$175,041	\$570,905	\$103,797	\$4,025			\$853,768	\$234
Ohio	44		\$22,500					\$22,500	\$511
Oregon	6,410			\$720,000				\$720,000	\$112
Pennsylvania	2,749	\$306,000	\$476,974	\$1,000,000				\$1,782,974	\$649
South Dakota	1,613	\$104,000	\$94,000	\$372,000	\$206,000		\$58,000	\$834,000	\$517
Utah	1,200	\$180,000	\$452,000	\$157,500				\$789,500	\$658
Vermont	4,650	\$200,000	\$555,888	\$148,000		\$1,905,200		\$2,809,088	\$604
Virginia									
Washington	3,500	\$42,500	\$1,074,685	\$921,469				\$2,038,654	\$582
Wisconsin	18,444	\$1,470,688	\$6,000,000					\$7,470,688	\$405
Wyoming	2,200	\$402,991	\$937,650	\$617,045				\$1,957,686	\$890
TOTAL: (US\$)	122,954	\$11,067,914	\$25,788,203	\$15,287,554	\$4,550,165	\$5,285,494	\$558,000	\$62,537,329	\$509 (average)



# About the North Dakota Snowmobile Program

The North Dakota snowmobile program exists to provide an administrative framework for snowmobile trail development, education, enforcement and awareness in North Dakota.

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is the state agency legislatively mandated to administer this program and the dedicated State Snowmobile Fund which supports the program as part of the agency's overarching mission to "provide and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities through diverse parks and programs that conserve the state's natural diversity."

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department contracts with Snowmobile North Dakota to cooperatively manage and maintain aspects of the State Snowmobile Program including a trail system consisting of 3,489.5 miles of trails.

Snowmobile North Dakota is the umbrella organization representing 45 clubs, nearly 1,100 individual/family members, and about 100 business members located throughout the state. Together, these clubs and members make up 14 trail associations in North Dakota. Through these associations and the membership which supports them, trails are established, groomed, signed and maintained.

The State Snowmobile Fund receives revenue through a combination of sources including registration fees, safety certification course fees and a percentage of gas taxes. These funds are leveraged with federal grants and local funding sources. The state snowmobile program additionally relies heavily on support from volunteers.



