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Sound off on snowmobiling

East Lansing, Mich., March 2021—While there may have been a time when a throaty engine rev was synonymous with snowmobiling, those days are long gone and a souped-up exhaust system can cause lost access as well as be illegal, reminds the American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA).

Snowmobiles have come a long way since the late 1960s when exhaust sounds would often reach above 100 decibels. Current snowmobiles have a regulated level of 73 decibels, which is slightly louder than a normal conversation, according to ACSA.

“When a snowmobile’s exhaust system is modified to increase the revving noise, it can be very annoying to homeowners and businesses located near snowmobile trails, other winter recreationists, as well as other snowmobilers,” said Scott Herzog, president of ACSA.

Beleaguered by loud snowmobile exhaust noise, many private property owners opt to close access to snowmobile trails rather than listen to excessive noise. So, keeping the original manufacturer’s exhaust system is the best way to keep trail access open and not irritate other riders, landowners, and other winter recreationists.

“When a trail is closed down due to some people who feel the need to modify their exhaust system to sound cool, that hurts everyone—from clubs and riders to local area businesses,” Herzog said.

Police and conservation officers can give civil infractions and fines in cases of excessive exhaust noise. If you are considering adding aftermarket equipment to your sled, remember that most states prohibit increasing the sound level above the sound level of the factory installed exhaust system.

Visit www.snowmobileinfo.org for more snowmobiling and sound management information.

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