

# NYSSA 2011-12 Snowmobile Owners Survey

## Profile of Snowmobiling Households

- Nearly 89% of the random sample of respondents to the snowmobile owners survey and 90% of the respondents of the NYSSA Members survey were male.
- The average age of the random sample snowmobiler responding to the survey was 48.42 years of age. The average age of the NYSSA member responding to the online request to complete the survey was slightly younger at 47.68 years of age.
- The random sample group of respondents had, on average, 4.47 members in their household while the NYSSA Members survey group reported an average of 3.75 household members.
- The percentage of respondents from both groups reporting a household member with limited mobility was approximately 6%.
- Approximately 82% of the respondents in each group were employed. More than 55% in each group (random sample – 55.7% and NYSSA Members group - 58.5%) reported combined household income greater than \$80,000.
- Approximately 84% in both groups reported that they were residents of New York State.
- Over 60% of respondents in both groups reported that they live in rural communities (random sample – 68.2%, NYSSA Members group – 63.9%) and approximately 95% own their own homes.
- Nine counties, Erie, Oneida, Monroe, Onondaga, Saratoga, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Warren and Wayne counties made the top ten counties of residence list for both respondents groups. For the random sample of snowmobilers, Jefferson County was among the top ten and, for the NYSSA Members survey group, Chautauqua County made the top ten list.
- Over 90% of the respondents in each group reported that they were members of a snowmobile club or NYSSA, paying an average of \$47.46 per household for dues and an average of \$84.79 on club fundraising activities. This membership entitled the snowmobile owner to a reduced registration fee for each snowmobile, saving \$55 per sled registered.
- The most frequently reported club activities were Work Detail/Trail Maintenance activities (one quarter of the respondents), followed by Fundraisers (approximately 20%), and Club Meetings (approximately 19%).
- Most of snowmobile registration fees are deposited into the State Trail Development and Maintenance Fund, used to support the public trail system in New York State. When asked if respondents were aware that the State has, in the past, taken money from the fund to balance the state budget, 71% of the NYSSA Members survey respondents and 61% of the random sample respondents reported that they were aware of that situation.
- When asked if the State Trail and Maintenance Fund should be privatized and controlled by snowmobilers themselves, approximately 80% of the NYSSA Members group and 89% of the random sample group reported yes.
- Less than 41% of the respondents were aware that they can apply to the State for a refund of highway fuel tax on fuel that goes into their snowmobile. Of those who were aware, approximately 25% have applied for this refund directly or through their club.
- Rather than applying for a highway fuel tax rebate, 85% of the NYSSA Members group and 77% of the random sample group reported that they would prefer to have this tax be dedicated to the Trail Development and Maintenance Fund.

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- At least one person in a majority of households in both groups (53%) has taken a snowmobile safety course. In addition, 70% of the respondents believe that a snowmobile course should be available online.
- Of twelve measures regarding safety and convenience on New York State trails, respondents reported highest percentages of satisfaction with Overall Safety on Trails (over 90%), Trail Placement (over 88%) and Identification of Hazards on Trails (over 86%). Lowest percentages of satisfaction were with Information about Trail Conditions (approximately 56%) and Trailhead Parking (approximately 68%).
- Satisfaction with Trail Grooming was 70% for the NYSSA Members group of respondents and 67% for the random sample group.
- Snowmobile owners were asked to rate four services available from trails. Respondents had the greatest satisfaction with Access to Restaurants (approximately 85%) and Fuel (approximately 73%). The lowest satisfaction was with Lodging (approximately 70%) and Repair Parts and Services (approximately 44%).
- Fewer than 20% of the respondents believe that the snowmobile registration process has gotten harder. Approximately 3% of all of the respondents reported that they had a problem obtaining snowmobile registration. (This survey was distributed prior to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles policy change allowing out of state residents to register online if they have snowmobiles registered in their home state.
- More than 76% of the respondents reported that they believe there is a need for designated open areas to ride.
- Approximately 40% of the respondents have had a problem with or witnessed an intoxicated snowmobile operator.
- Respondents were asked to rate how often they or others in their household had seen a law enforcement officer enforcing snowmobile laws on the trail or elsewhere. The most frequent response was Sometimes (approximately 40%), followed by Often (approximately 30%).
- Over 96% of the respondents have heard of the New York State Snowmobiler Association. Approximately 78% reported that their perception of the organization is "Very Beneficial" or "Beneficial".
- Top priorities for NYSSA were identified as 1) Protecting the Trail Fund, 2) Stopping anti-snowmobiling laws and policies, 3) Improving and enhancing safety and enjoyment of the trail system, and 4) Advocating for more areas open to snowmobiling.