

Wyoming Comprehensive

Snowmobile Recreation Report

Summary of Key Findings

2011-2012

Report by University of Wyoming,
Department of Agricultural and
Applied Economics



The University of Wyoming – Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics conducted a study of snowmobiling for the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources at the conclusion of the 2011-2012 snowmobiling season.

Resident and nonresident snowmobilers, along with clients of snowmobile outfitters, were surveyed to determine use and spending patterns along with demographics and priorities for future management of the State Snowmobile Program.

The complete study report can be viewed at <http://wyotrails.state.wy.us/Research/Index.aspx> .

A summary of key findings include:

- Total direct snowmobile-related expenditures in Wyoming totals \$146.8 million per year
- Residents: \$31.1 million in trip expenditures and \$53.1 million in annual equipment expenditures in Wyoming; annual expenditures total \$84.2 million
- Nonresidents: \$30.4 million in trip expenditures and \$10.9 million in annual equipment expenditures in Wyoming; annual expenditures total \$41.3 million
- Outfitter Clients: \$21.3 million in trip expenditures while in Wyoming
- Residents: spent an average of \$98.29 per day on most recent trip; about 46% was for gasoline followed by 15% for food and 14% for lodging; also spent an average of \$3,367.28 per person per year for equipment
- Nonresidents: spent an average of \$159.80 per day on most recent trip; about 33% was for gasoline followed by 29% for lodging and 17% for food; also spent an average of \$624.86 per person per year for equipment
- Outfitter Clients: spent an average of \$825.89 per trip in Wyoming; about 31% was for lodging, followed by 17% for food and 15% for gasoline.



The regional modeling system IMPLAN estimates that the \$146.8 million in direct snowmobiler spending results in another \$29.0 million in secondary activity in the Wyoming economy.

IMPLAN estimates this economic activity supports the equivalent of 1,300 annual jobs with labor income of \$35.3 million.

The IMPLAN model also estimates the economic activity associated with snowmobiling generates \$7.4 million in state and local government revenue in Wyoming.

Snowmobiling generates a total of \$175.5 million per year of economic activity for the Wyoming economy.

General Characteristics of Wyoming Resident and Nonresident Snowmobilers



88% of residents and 95.5% of nonresidents stated they were ‘satisfied’ or ‘extremely satisfied’ with their Wyoming snowmobiling experience

- Households own an average of 2.77 snowmobiles and have an average of 2.5 riders per household
- 18% of residents and 25% of nonresidents tried a new snowmobiling area in Wyoming this past winter
- 97% of snowmobile trips taken by Wyoming residents were in Wyoming while 67% of nonresident snowmobilers’ trips were taken in Wyoming
- 93% of resident snowmobilers’ days were spent riding in Wyoming while 72% of nonresident snowmobilers’ total snowmobiling days were spent in Wyoming
- The top three reasons Wyoming is an attractive snowmobiling area include snow conditions (#1 – 36.1%) and off-trail powder (#2 – 35.1%) followed distantly by trail availability/quality (#3 – 6.0%)
- Snowmobilers spent about 6.5 hours on their snowmobile while traveling an average of 54 miles per day
- The top three priorities stated for use of snowmobile registration/ user fees were: (1) trail grooming and maintenance (47.1%), (2) parking area construction and snow removal (18.1%) and (3) trail signage (11.0%).

Characteristics of Wyoming Resident Snowmobilers

- Average 21 years snowmobiling in Wyoming; 86% also snowmobiled in Wyoming the previous year
- Average 20 days snowmobiling per year in Wyoming; average group size is 4.6 people with 4.6 snowmobiles
- Average travel time to site of most recent snowmobile trip was 2.2 hours and about 90 miles from home
- Residents spent an average of 1 night away from home on their most recent snowmobiling trip; 62% didn't have an overnight stay and returned home the same day as their trip
- The largest amount of resident snowmobile use typically comes from people who live in Fremont, Sublette, Natrona, Lincoln, Sheridan, Sweetwater, Albany, Campbell, Teton and Laramie Counties

Characteristics of Nonresident Snowmobilers

- Average 11 years snowmobiling in Wyoming; 80% also snowmobiled in Wyoming the previous year
- Average 11 days snowmobiling per year in Wyoming; average group size is 7 people with 7 snowmobiles
- Average travel time to site of most recent snowmobile trip was 11 hours and about 675 miles from home
- Nonresidents spent an average of 5 nights away from home on their most recent snowmobiling trip; 9% didn't have an overnight stay and returned home the same day as their trip
- The largest amount of nonresident snowmobile use typically comes from people who live in Minnesota, Colorado, Iowa, South Dakota, Montana, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Nebraska, Utah and Idaho



Characteristics of Snowmobile Outfitter Clients



- Average 9 years snowmobiling in Wyoming and 19 years of total snowmobiling experience
- Currently own an average of 2 snowmobiles with 2.3 snowmobilers per household
- 89.8% were 'satisfied' or 'extremely satisfied' with their Wyoming snowmobiling experience
- Average 10.1 days snowmobiling per year in Wyoming; average group size is 5.9 people using 5.1 snowmobiles
- Spent about 6.4 hours on a snowmobile while traveling an average of 69 miles per day
- Average travel time to site of most recent snowmobile trip was 12.8 hours and about 1,014 miles from home
- Snowmobiling was the primary purpose of 65.7% of outfitter client trips; 30% indicated they also participated in downhill skiing or snowboarding while on their trip
- Responses were received from outfitter clients who live in 24 different states with the largest numbers of responses received from people who live in Minnesota (26.7%), Wyoming (21.0%), Ohio (5.7%), Alabama (4.8%), Georgia (3.8%) and Wisconsin (3.8%)

Outfitter clients spent an average of 8.3 nights away from home on their most recent snowmobiling trip, with an average 8.7 total days in Wyoming and 4.9 days of this spent snowmobiling

Snowmobiling Use Patterns

While the State Trails Program manages 12 snowmobile trail systems, the majority of use by resident and nonresident snowmobilers occurs at 4 areas:

- 86% of all snowmobiling use occurs at 4 areas: Continental Divide – 26.0%, Snowy Range – 25.8%, Bighorn Mountains – 20.7% and Wyoming Range – 13.5%
- 82.7% of all resident snowmobiling use occurs at these same 4 areas: Continental Divide – 25.4%, Bighorn Mountains – 20.2%, Wyoming Range – 19.7% and Snowy Range – 17.6%
- 88.7% of all nonresident snowmobiling use occurs in these same 4 areas: Snowy Range – 33.1%, Continental Divide – 26.4%, Bighorn Mountains – 21.3% and Wyoming Range – 7.9%

The majority of snowmobile outfitter use was reported at 4 state-managed trail systems plus Yellowstone:

- 70.2% of outfitter client use was reported at 4 areas: Continental Divide – 31.4%, North Bighorn Mountains – 20.0%, Gros Ventre – 9.8% and Granite Hot Springs – 9.0%; all other areas reported 4% or less of total outfitter client use
- 8.0% of total Wyoming snowmobile outfitter client use was reported to occur in Yellowstone National Park



Changes in Yellowstone National Park snowmobile use patterns

- 48% of residents, 33% of nonresidents, and 46% of outfitter clients indicated they had previously visited Yellowstone on a snowmobile
- Only 3% of residents, 9% of nonresidents, and 18% of outfitter clients have taken a snowmobile trip to Yellowstone since 2004 (when rules requiring snowmobile access to be 100% commercially guided on Best Available Technology snowmobiles)



Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails

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Wyoming Department of State Parks & Cultural Resources

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