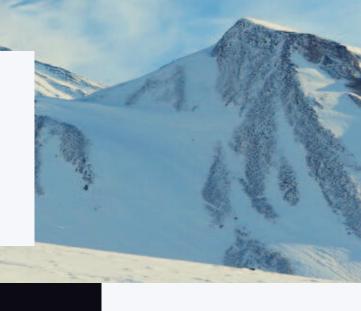
Vol. 2 Issue 1 • January 2022

# Over the Ridgeline

Official Newsletter of the Flathead Snowmobile Association



# **Snow Scoops from the President**

by David Covill

As I'm writing this, it is December 1st, 2021, the opening day of the snowmobile season here in Northwest Montana.

Unfortunately, the weather is not cooperating. It is 56 degrees F in Columbia Falls and the Flathead Valley is looking to post record high temps for the day! Oh well, next week looks cooler and wetter with snow in the forecast. We will see.

This season will have lots going on in the Flathead and across the state on Montana as far as snowmobiling is concerned. Club rides, Trans-Montana Charity Ride, and avalanche classes are just a few of the events coming up. Please keep an eye on our events page on the website.

We at the FSA look forward to seeing you at these events and on the trails and in the back-country terrain. Be safe out there, get avy training, and have a great snowmobile season!



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### by Mark Smolen

Last year, the Flathead Snowmobile Association via their 501(c)(3) charity Friends of the FSA, was awarded a Roundup for Safety grant from their local electricity provider Flathead Electric Coop. By having their charitable organization created, they are able to take advantage of new grant programs that support charities. The Roundup for Safety program collects money from members who choose to round up their utility bill to the nearest dollar. Those few cents add up to millions of dollars which are then awarded to worthy local causes like this!

Twelve people were able to take advantage of the program and receive Level 1 Avalanche Training or Avalanche Rescue Training with over \$3000 being paid out. This year, we've turned up the volume even higher. There are five motorized avalanche training courses being offered January thru March. Intro to Avi Safety, Partner Rescue, Two Level 1 (one of which is for women only), and a Level 2 training. These trainings will cost students \$13,920. Flathead Electric, Montana FWP and Friends of FSA will be covering 100% of these costs. All you have to do is sign up, take the class and send in your request for reimbursement. Send to grants@friends-of-fsa.org

The Level 1 Avalanche Training is a must for any rider. Even if you don't go off trail very much, think about how many trails in our great state traverse marginal or very dangerous areas where avalanches can occur? The overwhelming reaction from riders who take the course say they will think twice about riding with riders who have not taken the course--it's just that important!

The Flathead Snowmobile Association and Friends of the FSA (FFSA) work closely with the Flathead Avalanche Center who organizes the training programs. One example of this close working relationship is this year's schedule. In the past, the first motorized class was usually held in January and many of the slots were taken by local guides who were required to take the course for winter guiding jobs. FFSA recommended that a separate class be organized just for guides in late December so that the first class in January would be more open to the general public and that's exactly what they are doing. We also have encouraged them to hold a Level 2 Advanced Avalanche Training and that is also being offered this year!

The FSA lost a club member and we hope our training efforts help prevent any further tragic loss of life. To riders, don't be afraid of this class--it's not hard (it's actually quite fun) and everyone should have this knowledge--even if you don't ride off trail. Ask yourself how you would feel if you rode up on a new avalanche site and you didn't know what to do...taking one weekend to get this training could mean the difference between a fellow rider going home alive or not. A lot of work goes into getting these grants...making use of them is how we continue to get funding...please take or retake a course--we need to fill the seats. Finally a special thank you to FEC and FWP for supporting these efforts--THANK YOU!







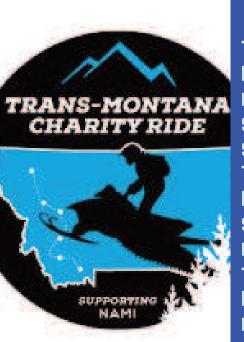
# Montana Snowmobile Association News

**About MSA** 

has taken over as President from Jason Howell (thank you Jason for all the years of service!). And John Zell from Seeley Lake is now VP. Our very own Mark Smolen has taken over as webmaster creating an entirely new website complete with membership management system (just like the FSA's system!). If you are a member, you should be getting an email from them with instructions on how to login. You can send an email to members@snowmobilemt.org if you have questions/comments. If you're not a member, we encourage you to join the MSA. The MSA works to ensure our access to public areas is maintained. They work with clubs like ours who are being unfairly encroached upon where access to trails and riding areas are being threatened. You can join the MSA when you sign up for the FSA or just join on the MSA website www.snowmobilemt.org

The MSA will hold its annual riding convention on Feb 5th in Lolo (in conjunction with the first day of the Trans Montana. That evening there will be a banquet at the Victor Steakhouse with a silent auction, great food, and fun for everyone. Everyone is invited and you can stay at the Lolo Hot Springs Resort the evening before with the group (make your reservations early!). The evening of the 5th, the group will be staying at Bitterroot River Inn in Hamilton. Rooms have been blocked at both locations under Trans Montana.





THE TRANS MONTANA CHARITY RIDE (TMR FOR SHORT) IS SCHEDULED FOR FEB 5-11 WITH A SPECIAL ROUTE THAT WILL END IN COOKE CITY! WE'D LIKE TO ENCOURAGE ALL OUR MEMBERS TO CONSIDER RIDING OR SUPPORTING A RIDER VIA A DONATION. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT THE STATE HAS SEEN AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF SUICIDES THIS YEAR. THE TMR SUPPORTS NAMI MONTANA AND THEIR EFFORTS TO ROLL OUT A TEEN MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM TO MORE SCHOOLS AS WELL AS MORE PTSD SUPPORT FOR OUR VETERANS. PLEASE CONSIDER SPONSORING A RIDER OR RIDING ON THE RIDE...THERE ARE ALREADY AT LEAST SIX RIDERS FROM THE FSA LOOKING TO GO! IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CALL OR EMAIL MARK SMOLEN (YEP, HE'S CO-CHAIR OF THIS EVENT TOO!). EMAIL: LEADER@TRANS-MONTANA.ORG



CALL: 406-837-5566



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On Saturday, Nov 20th, the FSA held its annual Pray for Snow Party, Dinner, and Fundraiser. Over 50 people attended (thank you to everyone who did attend). We were hoping for a few more than that, but overall, the event was a success raising over \$4,000!

Below are some pictures of the event, our donated auction items, prizes, and fun!

We want to say a very special thank you to Tammy and Rick David for organizing and cooking the entire dinner. Tammy worked for days doing all the shopping, prep work and cooking...and yes, Rick helped too :-) Thank you Tammy, dinner was outstanding!

We also want to thank Dave and Jenny Covill, Trish Hiday, Amanda & Aaron Burlinger, Jeff Sweet, and Mark & Karla Smolen for all the help and hard work getting the facility and getting everything organized / ready to go, and working the check-in table. Thank you all!

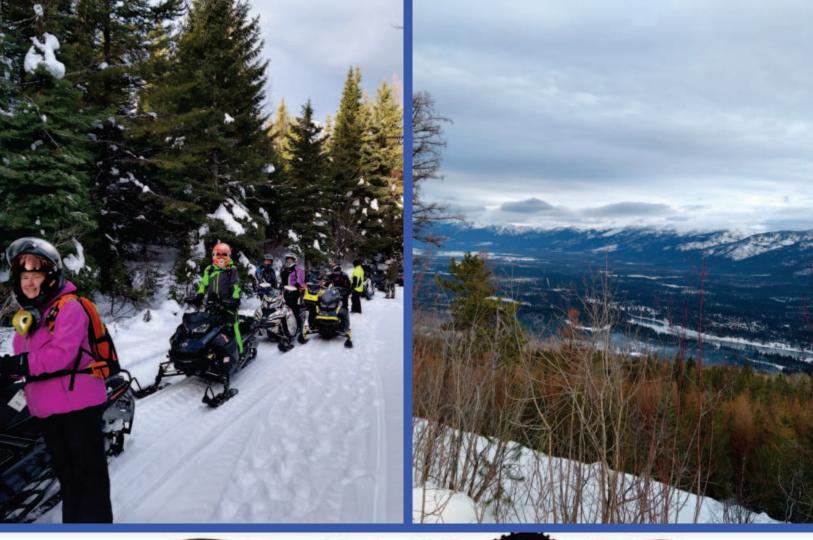


















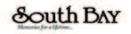














CALL: 406-257-8697



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# Be Searchable

This year, the Friends of the FSA (our 501c3 charitable org) has partnered with Recco to help keep you safer in the backcountry! Recco makes passive radio signal reflectors that amplify and reflect the signal from a search device.

We are incredibly lucky in that Two Bear Air has one of the few Recco search devices in the entire Pacific Northwest! They can fly at 100KMH with the search device lowered and see your reflector (IF YOU HAVE ONE). These do NOT take the place of avalanche beacons (you still need those!), but this is one more tool to help you BE SEARCHABLE if you need help! Through our partnership, we are able to offer you two types of reflectors; we have stick-on helmet reflectors or "bag tag" reflectors that you can place on your backpack/avi-bag and transfer it around from bag to bag thru the seasons. So you can use them for hunting, snowmobilng, hiking, etc. We have red and black reflectors of each kind available.

Normally, these tags sell on Amazon for \$36 or \$38. We are offering them at a discount to you for \$25 or \$28. Not only are you helping yourself BE SEARCHABLE, but you are also helping the Friends of the FSA as we make a little money on each sale. We will be using this money to help pay for our Avalanche Safety Training Scholarships.

These make great Christmas gifts for your friends and family! So stock up while we have them available! At these prices, we cannot afford to ship them, and we're not looking to create a cottage industry...so please come to our monthly meetings or other events and we'll have them there. We can also meet up with you to drop them off locally.

by Mark Smolen





## HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

Have you seen vehicles with this plate and wondered what that plate is for? It's the MSA license plate. The monies collected from this plate go to the MSA Legal Defense fund and are used to fight for your right to access public lands.





## BRAAAAPENINGS

20

- Club Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Locations rotate, watch facebook and your email for locations.
- Sat. Jan 15, 2022 Club Ride, location TBD
- Sat. Jan 15, 2022 Motorized Partner Rescue Class, <u>Register Here</u>
- Feb. 2-6 Motorized Level 2 Avalanche Safety Training
- Feb 5-11, 2022 TransMontana Ride, <u>Register</u> <u>Here</u>
- Sun. Feb 20, 2022 Club Ride, Location TBD
- Feb. 25-26 Ladies Intro Avalanche Class
- March 4-6 Ladies Level I Avalanche Training
- Sat. March 12 Club Ride, location TBD
- March 17-19 Motorized Intro to Avalanche Training
- April 14, 2022 Trails close north of Columbia Falls & Whitefish

# FRIENDS OF THE FLATHEAD SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION



You can donate money to our club just by shopping! Follow these <u>directions</u> to start donating today!

# FSA Website Info

Many people follow us on Facebook and we thank you. We have over 1000 followers on FaceBook and that's incredible. But it kinda begs a question, why do we only have 200 memberships?

We have an incredible website www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com that has tons of info, avi safety info, trail info, trail pass info and a new membership management system called MembershipWorks.com.

MembershipWorks (MW for short), allows you to sign up, enter your payment info, and even have the system bill you once per year automatically. You would not believe how much your use of this online system helps us. It will email you a membership email with a link to our membership "kit" with all the great stuff like groomer tracking link, coupons from supporting businesses, etc. It will also send you reminder emails when your dues are up for renewal or about to be auto-renewed (no surprises!).

We hope you'll take advantage of the website and sign up as members. It's not about the dues we collect, but the numbers of people we have behind us as we defend our rights to use the areas we have and want to use.











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