



*January 2019*

# FLATHEAD SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION INFORMER

PO BOX 5041 KALISPELL, MT 59903

## From The President..

### **Weather vs. Climate**

As you are reading this, you probably don't mind the snow. In fact, as 2019 kicks off, you are probably wishing (and praying and hoping) for more snow. We are a little behind in our typical snow amounts and it has been warmer than normal here in Northwest Montana. If you are fairly new to the area, the only thing you can be sure of is that winter weather is unpredictable. Amounts of snow and periods of cold can change wildly from year to year. Long time residents will tell you that they remember green Christmases where the kids played outside with the toys in t-shirts! They also can tell of the Christmas that it was 20 below for two weeks! That's the nature of our winter weather. So hang in there and the snow will come.

I have also observed a surprising amount of consistency from year to year in certain areas. For example, for the last 21 years, we have had snow fall in the valley for 20 of those years in the first week of April. I would say that is a fairly steady climate. So regardless of the cause - climate change or weather variability - I think we can all agree - LET IT SNOW!

David Covill

FSA President

## **From the Treasurer's Desk - Who Pays For the Grooming?!?**

**Article by: Mark Smolen**

Each year, the FSA spends over \$66,000 on grooming. That includes maintenance, hauling the groomers, rent for storage facilities, contract grooming (Crane/Porcupine Mtn and Desert Mtn), plowing of lots, operator payroll, etc. When I tell folks how much it costs, there's usually a puzzled look on their faces as they do some quick math and realize membership dues certainly don't cover all that--then they ask: so where does the money come from?

The main bulk of the money comes from two grants. One is from the State of Montana (FWP) and the other is a Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) which is administered by the state. Both are funded by gas tax revenues (state and fed). And both require a substantial amount of paperwork, applications (every year) and tracking of dollars spent, volunteer hours, club money, etc., more on that later--keep reading!

The state grant is funded by the state's tax on gasoline/diesel fuel you buy at the pump. 17/32 of 1% of all gas tax money is routed to FWP for the funding of Recreational Trails. You may recall that the gas tax went up last year. As those revenues grow, so does the amount available for the trails... so there may be a silver lining to that tax going up (albeit somewhat small). FWP then gets the money, creates a budget and distributes the money to virtually all of the snowmobile clubs across the state that maintain trail systems. The larger a club is, and the more trails/equipment they maintain, the larger the sum of money is allotted. West Yellowstone is the largest followed by the FSA! Currently, we are receiving approximately \$21,000 from the state. FWP also uses that money to purchase groomers, repair existing groomers, and help clubs with unexpected grooming related expenses. Our Prinoth Bison was purchased (used) by FWP for us to use under this program--it was over \$200,000 and there's simply no way we could ever have afforded it without this program.

On the federal RTP side, we apply each and every year for the RTP grant. RTP is funded by a federal gas tax collected and distributed by the Federal Highway Administration. Every grant is reviewed by the State Trails Advisory Committee (STAC)--a board that consists of personnel from FWP, Federal Highway Administration, Montana DOT, and volunteers from around the state from a wide cross-section of user communities (motorized, non-motorized, etc). The volunteers apply for open positions and are appointed by the governor for three year terms--yours truly is a present member of the STAC and I meet with the board twice a year to review all grant applications (over 100 applications allocating \$1.4M/year) and review the entire grant process. Currently, the FSA has been receiving \$45,000 each year from the RTP grant and the money must be used within two years of the award. Therefore, we keep two grants open at all times where we are finishing up one grant early in the season and starting to pull from the more recent grant as we spend more money.

As you can imagine with State and Federal programs, there are tons of hoops and regulations to jump through and abide by. For instance, upon award, we have nine months to start using the

money (or you lose it) AND you HAVE TO make requests every six months! Further, we have to spend the money and have a cancelled check to show for it before you can be reimbursed--that means we have to have the money in the bank to spend before we can get the money out of the grant--they do NOT just write you a big check when you are awarded an RTP grant. So how to do we do that?

Well, FWP is partially our saviour on this count. They front us 75% of our \$21,000 each year at the start of the season. So that gives us some working capital we can use to pay bills and then file for reimbursements against our Federal Grant. We also have money in our grooming account from past reimbursements--so how can that be?

When we file for our grant reimbursements, the grant terms allow us \$60/hour for trail grooming. That value is set and takes into account all costs including: operators, fuel, maintenance and anything else we spend money on. It costs less than \$60/hour to operate a groomer, but by the time we account for all the maintenance and "other stuff" we do every year, it adds up to \$60 (and sometimes more). But we file for \$60/hour and the money left over goes into our bank account "temporarily" and provides the working capital.

So what do we spend money on for all this "other stuff"? Remember a groomer doesn't operate on diesel fuel and an operator's paycheck alone...the hydraulics systems on these groomers are insanely complex and require constant maintenance, topping off, change of fluids every year (we're talking over 20 gallons per groomer!), parts/filters, repairs, etc. We also pay an operator (with CDL) to drive our large plow truck to clear lots, and we pay a contract groomer to groom Crane and Desert once a month. We also have two fuel trucks our operators use to get fuel to the groomers and we have to pay for the fuel, upkeep and insurance on all vehicles, permits for various areas we groom within as well as vehicle license plates/registration/permits, payroll expenses, etc...it all really adds up and is quite a balancing act to keep all the balls in the air!

Why did I mention volunteer hours and club money above? Well, as part of the grants, we need to chip in 20% of all monies applied for. So if we are applying for a \$45,000 grant, we have to show that we are coming up with at least \$9,000 of "matching" funds and that can come from two sources: 1) Actual club money, or 2) volunteer hours. The club money is pretty simple, when we raise money at our events, that money may be used to help pay our portion. But more importantly, volunteer hours are credited at \$20/hour towards our portion. So when you help us work on the groomers, we log those hours and it all adds up and saves us from having to pay real money out of our coffers! So thank you again to all the volunteers that have helped us and I hope I've given you a real reason to show up next time we ask for volunteers.

I know this was a long article, but part of what I want to do as Treasurer is give you some idea of just how hard your board is working for you as well as offer up some transparency into our club operations...and how important your help can be to us! Thank you!

## Corporate FSA Sponsorships are on the Rise!

If you look through this Newsletter, you'll see more and more ads for companies in the area who are paying to be sponsors of the FSA. Their support is really special and deserves our thanks. Please, if you need something like a trailer, RV, new sled, snowbike, apparel, parts or accessories, look at our Sponsor List and give these businesses YOUR BUSINESS.

Long-time sponsors like PENCO, FastToys and Lelands have led the pack with their support and truly deserve our thanks--so please tell them how much you appreciate their support when you visit with them!

Our newest sponsors like Montana Power Products (that have outlets in Ronan, Hamilton and Libby), Gardner's RV (outlets in Kalispell and Great Falls), and Moss Mountain Lodge are a sign that what we are doing IS getting noticed and we are driving business to them!

On the flip side of this trend is the absence of one of the largest snowmobiling related businesses in the valley. Multiple board members have spoken with this business, but we've been unsuccessful in securing their support for the FSA. So we feel it is worth mentioning to you and we encourage you to speak with them. They need to know that their support is important to your decision making.

We can tell you that all the dealers listed above and the other business sponsors at the end of the newsletter would love to see FSA members and they really appreciate hearing that their support of the FSA was important to you--so tell them every time you buy something!

For two years now, we are getting over 350,000 unique hits on our website! Our Facebook page is attracting folks from all over! We regularly gets requests from folks in Canada wanting info on the trails, where to stay, where to get gear, etc.

If you work for a local company that has ANY product or service (doesn't have to be related to snowmobiling!), please encourage them to be a sponsor. The cost is minimal and we work hard to promote those that support us! Sometimes, you just have to ask and you might be surprised how many companies are looking for alternative outlets to advertise!

For more info on how to be a sponsor, go to our [Sponsors Page](#) on our website! Near the bottom of that page is a description of the three levels and benefits of each.



Your board does a lot...but we could use a few more helping hands from time to time...

Here's what we need help on now:

- Canvassing the area for sponsorships
- Help with a float for the C-Falls Night of Lights parade
- Sending out Membership materials to new/renewing members (we cover all the costs)
- Working on the Groomers to get them ready for this-coming winter (re-tracking/hauling)
- Working on website/facebook page (we could use one more tech-savvy editor)

If you are looking for a great organization to volunteer with and you can help out, visit our website at <http://www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com> and click on the 'Join the FSA' tab and scroll to the bottom and tell us how you can help!!



# Do you usually advertise with FSA?

## You don't see your business's ad in our newsletter?

**Have a new  
summer/winter/outdoor recreation  
business and would like  
to advertise with us?**

Contact Mark Smolen to update your information!!

[Treasurer@flatheadsnowmobiler.com](mailto:Treasurer@flatheadsnowmobiler.com)

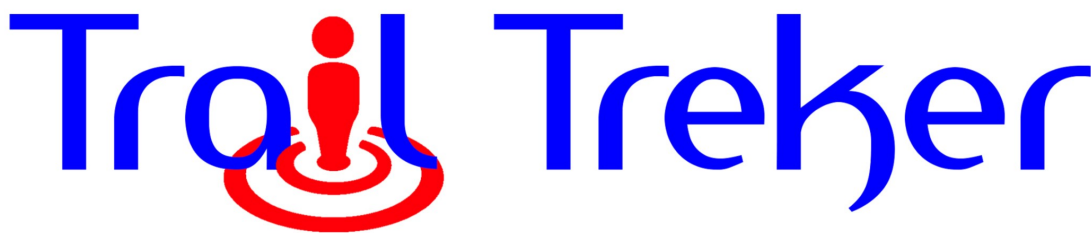
## Snowbikers, Fat-Tire Bikers, Cross-Country Skiers, Dog Sledders, Hikers -- Everyone is Welcome!

Back in 1971, our club was founded and named with the word Snowmobile in our name. And it's a great name, but winter sports recreation has grown to encompass so many more sports! We'd simply like everyone to know (and here's where we need your help) that we are open to anyone and everyone that wishes to use our 200 miles of trails every winter! So if you see a biker, hiker, or skier on the trails, stop, say hi and invite them to be a member of the FSA! We'd especially like to see more of the snowbikers join up! We know that riding trails isn't exactly they buy a snowbike, but let's face it, the trails sure make it easier to get to those great spots you do like to ride! All the dealers are saying snowbikes are jumping off the floor, so we're left wondering where are all these potential members...you probably know a few, so please invite them to join.

Finally, please encourage everyone that uses the trails especially mechanized users like snowbikes, fat-tire bikes, tracked ATVs, etc to purchase a 3 year trail pass--yes, they are good for **3 YEARS!** They are only \$18 at any dealership (that's only \$6/year!). Every penny of that money goes into grooming--FWP keeps no money and even produces the stickers out of another fund...**EVERY PENNY** goes to clubs for grooming. But anyone can buy a pass...put it on your skis, dog sled, or baby backpack :-). And if you (our members) see a biker, hiker, etc with a pass, thank them for supporting the trails system--I have done this a few times and I can tell you it gets a big smile and folks really like being recognized like that.

Thank you!

**Get the trail maps on your phone!**



All three trail systems the FSA maintains (Canyon Creek, Crane Mountain, and Desert Mountain) will be available for free download to club members. The Trail Treker app is \$2 (one time). The app is available on the Apple and Google stores. The app will show you exactly where you are at all times (with no mobile phone coverage needed!). You will need this code: **FSA18** to download the maps. Just another great benefit coming from your FSA dues!

Trail Treker is a locally owned company doing business with clubs across the country. We have partnered with them to make sure you have the safest and most enjoyable ride possible. Using Trail Treker, the FSA also makes money by showing local businesses on the map as well as from visitors to the area downloading the map! So make sure you tell everyone and especially visitors, to download the app and maps!



**PENCO**  
**LARGEST SELECTION**  
**IN THE NW**  
AVY GEAR • OUTERWEAR • SNOW ACCESSORIES

**Klim**

**YAMAHA**

**NO MATTER WHAT YOU RIDE, PENCO HAS THE  
PARTS, ACCESSORIES, & SERVICE YOU NEED!**

**TOBE OUTERWEAR** **FXR** **509** **MOTORFIST**



**DTS 129**



[www.yamahanow.com](http://www.yamahanow.com)

**406-755-6229**



**PENCO**

2310 HWY 93 S, KALISPELL, MT 59901



## Smile even more with Amazon!

I try to buy local when I can, but If you're like me, you shop a lot on Amazon.com. I use Amazon for many things that I just can't get here in Montana.

But what you might not have known is that Amazon gives a portion of sales to charities. Last month, we told you about creating **Friends of the Flathead Snowmobile Association** (FFSA)...this is our 501(c)(3) charitable organization that allows us to support the FSA with charitable donations.

Amazon has a special landing page: <http://smile.amazon.com> that allows you to donate to any charitable foundation like ours (and yes, you can choose the FFSA!). When you shop via smile.amazon.com, a small percentage of the sale gets funneled to your selected charity. If you're a Prime member, you still get the free shipping and other benefits of your prime membership. All you have to do is go to smile.amazon.com (instead of www.amazon.com) and select our charity! The first time you login to smile, you just select a charity. There are many charities automatically listed, but you can search for any charity; I searched for "Friends of the Flathead Snowmobile Association" and it allowed me to select our charity! Now everytime I buy via smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates a small percentage to us.

If you happen to login and a charity is already selected, you can change your charity under "Your Account" or by clicking this link (you have to be logged into Amazon). <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/charity/change.html>

Every little bit adds up and our little organization can use every penny! It costs nothing and you get all the same great prices and deals.

Check out [this link](#) for more screenshots on how to change your charity and search for FFSA.

The image below shows where the link is located under Your Account settings when you log into smile.amazon.com



amazon smile prime

Deliver to Mark Bigfork 59911

Supporting: Friends of the Flathead Snowmobile Association

EN Hello, MARK Account & Lists Orders Prime Cart

MARK's Amazon

AMAZON SMILE DONATIONS \$0.74 generated Learn more

YOUR ORDERS 2 recent orders View orders

GIFT CARD BALANCE \$99.01 Manage balance

AMAZON PRIME REWARD \$ VISA CARD Start Earning 5% Back Learn more

AUDIBLE AUDIOBOOKS Try Audible Get 2 free audiobooks

Your Orders Track, return, or buy things again

Login & security Edit login, name, and mobile number

Prime View benefits and payment settings

Your Addresses Edit addresses for orders and gifts

Payment options Edit or add payment methods

Gift cards View balance or redeem a card

Digital content and devices

- Amazon Drive
- Apps and more
- Audible settings
- Content and Devices
- Digital gifts you've received
- Games and software
- Music settings
- Video settings
- Your uploaded product videos
- Digital and device forum

Email alerts, messages, and ads

- Advertising preferences
- Communication preferences
- Email
- Message center
- Shipment updates via text
- Alexa shopping notifications

More ways to pay

- 1-Click settings
- Allowances
- Amazon credit cards
- Amazon Coins
- Amazon Pay
- Coupons
- No-Rush reward balance
- Shop with Points

Ordering and shopping preferences

- AmazonFresh settings
- Amazon tax exemption program
- Archived orders
- Download order reports
- Language settings
- Lists
- Profile
- Pet Profile

Other accounts

- Amazon Business registration
- Amazon Web Services
- Login with Amazon
- Seller
- Your Trade-In Account
- Twitach account settings

Shopping programs and rentals

- Amazon Household
- Teens Program
- Dash buttons
- Change your charity
- Giveaways
- Prime Pantry
- Rentals by Amazon
- Your Printing Projects

Choose one of our spotlight charities

ASPCA ASPCA Founded in 1866, the ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States.

Select ASPCA

Or pick your own charitable organization:

Friends of the Flathead snowmobile association

Search

your Account + Change Your Charity + Search Results

Choose from almost a million charities, schools, and other nonprofits. We will reach out to the organization you select to ensure it is ready to accept donations from Amazon.

Friends of the flathead snowmobile association

Search

Showing 1-1 of 1 Results Sorted by: Relevance

Friends of the Flathead Snowmobile Association Kalspell MT

About Fund Raising and/or Fund Distribution

Previous 1 Next

Click Select when it shows  
FFSA! (above right)

Type in "Friends of the Flathead Snowmobile Association" into the search box.

MONTANA POWER PRODUCTS

EST 1991

RONAN • HAMILTON • LIBBY

POLARIS

TIMBERSLED

Ronan

406.676.5000

35863 Round Butte Road

Ronan, MT 59864

Hamilton

406.375.9903

1151 N. 1st Street Suite A

Hamilton, MT 59840

Libby

406.293.7500

31740 US Highway 2 S

Libby, MT 59923

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1991

CHECK OUT OUR INVENTORY AT

MTPOWERPRODUCTS.COM

# Calendar of Events

## January

- 10 - 7:00 pm: Avalanche Awareness Talk @ Stonefly Lounge (Coram)
- 15 - 6:00 pm: FSA Board Meeting @ Scotty's (Kalispell)\*\*
  - 7:00 pm: FSA Member Meeting @ Scotty's (Kalispell)
- 17 & 19 - Ladies Intro. To Avalanche Training. Time and Location TBA
- 19 - 9:00 am - 4:00 pm: FSA Club Ride (Crane Mountain Trail System)
- 26 - Feb. 2: Trans Montana Charity Ride

## February

- 10 - Flathead Industries Charity Rides (Time and Location TBA)
- 16 - FSA Club and Sweetheart Ride with NV Search and Rescue
- 19 - 6 pm FSA Board Meeting @ Scotty's (Kalispell)\*\*
  - 7 pm FSA Member Meeting @ Scotty's (Kalispell)\*\*
- 23 - AMA Snowbike Races (Time and Location TBA)
- 29-Mar. 2 - Introduction to Avalanche; Non Motorized (Time and Location TBA)

## March

- 17 - 9:00 am - 4:00 pm: FSA Family Day Ride (Dessert Mountain Trail System)
- 19 - 6:00 pm: FSA Board Meeting @ Scotty's (Kalispell)
  - 7:00 pm: FSA Member Meeting @ Scotty's (Kalispell)
- 21-24 - Recreational Level 2 Patrol Fund (Whitefish)
- 31 - Last Day of Grooming on Open Trails

## April

- 14 - Last Day to Ride Open Trails
- 16 - 6:00 pm: FSA Board Meeting @ Scotty's (Kalispell)
- 27 - End of Year Party (Time and Location TBA)

***\*\*Any and all board meetings are open to the general public. Members are welcome to attend and discuss matters brought before the board but may not vote on board matters.\*\****

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE EVENTS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

**<http://www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com>**

ESTABLISHED 1996  
Owner - Bill Mann



## EVERYTHING FOR YOUR EVENT AND MORE!

Event Planning • Tents • Liners • Leg Drapes • Dishware  
Tables • Chairs • Linens • Lighting • Bars • Heaters  
PA Systems • Dance Floor • Staging

**BarnDoorEventRentals.com**

2124 Hwy 2 East Kalispell 406.752.1266

## 2018-2019 Board Members

President - David Covill

Vice President - Bryan Landis

Grooming Co-Chairmen - Rick David and David Covill

Secretary - Tammy David

Treasurer - Mark Smolen

Safety Officer - Brock Bolin

Board Member - Steve Konopatzke

Board Member - Alan DeLeon

Board Member - Meghan/Brian Weber

Board Member - Erik Loroña

Want up-to-date  
grooming information??



Like us on Facebook!!

Search for

Flathead Snowmobile  
Association

or follow this link:

[https://www.facebook.com/  
FlatheadSnowmobileAssociation/](https://www.facebook.com/FlatheadSnowmobileAssociation/)



## Snow Jobs & Dirt Stuff



Rick Anderson

(406) 755-9450 • (406) 309-2384



737 W. Center St.  
Kalispell, MT 59901



**Advertise  
Here!!**



CONTACT

MARK SMOLEN

Treasurer@flatheadsnowmobiler.com

406-407-0301



**Been out riding?? Send me your pictures!**

**Have info that you think would be interesting to others?**

**Send it my way!!**

**Jessica**

**jessicardyer@gmail.com**

**Want up-to-date grooming  
information??**

**Visit our website!**

**[www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com](http://www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com)**

**You can view SPOT tracking for the groomer so you can see exactly where they are!  
Please check this site for grooming info!!**





## 2018-2019 Flathead Snowmobile Association Membership Application

F.S.A. Begins a new membership year every JUNE!

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) New ( ) Renewal Member

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of snowmobilers in your family or business? \_\_\_\_\_

### **FSA Only**

- ( ) Single \$15.00
- ( ) Family \$20.00
- ( ) Business \$30.00

### **FSA & MSA**

- ( ) Single \$37.00
- ( ) Family \$42.00
- ( ) Business \$65.00

F.S.A. will forward your application  
and dues to M.S.A.

### **Make checks payable & Send to:**

**Flathead Snowmobile Association**  
**P.O. Box 5041**  
**Kalispell, MT 59903-5041**

Add \$10 donation for the Grooming Fund and receive  
an "I Support the FSA Sticker" with 100% of the  
proceeds going directly to our grooming fund!



**Please check any and all that you would like to volunteer for.**

- ( ) Family Day Ride -- January
- ( ) Family Day Ride -- February
- ( ) Family Day Ride -- March
- ( ) Trans-Montana Ride
- ( ) Summer Camp Out -- July

For information or to pay your dues with a credit card, please visit us @ [www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com](http://www.flatheadsnowmobiler.com)

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE FSA**

Comments or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Remember- T.E.A.M.- Together Everyone Achieves More!**