



New York State Snowmobile Association

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SNOWMOBILERS PREPARING FOR THE SEASON

Early Snowfall Tempting; Most Trails Not Yet Open

Long Lake, NY – The 2008-2009 winter season is off to a great start, if you ask Jim Jennings, Executive Director of the New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA). With the recent lake-effect snowstorms and chilly temperatures, much of upstate New York is already under snow. Despite the early snow, Jennings cautioned snowmobilers to wait until the trails are ready and open before heading out to ride.

“It is looking like it will be a great season, but riders need to be aware of when and where the trails are open before they venture out,” said Jennings. “Here in New York, the earliest snowmobile trails can open is after the close of the big game hunting season.” In most parts of the state, trails will be open by December 20th, but according to Jennings, snowmobilers should check with the local club before riding.

Dave Perkins, NYSSA Trails Coordinator echoed Jennings’ comments. “In preparation for trail opening, your local snowmobile clubs have been working to remove fallen trees, clear brush, and install signs that direct snowmobilers safely along the route and away from hazards,” he said. Perkins noted that this year in particular, numerous wind storms and early heavy snow falls have triggered a lot more trail work and preparation.

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner, Carol Ash said, “For riders of all ages, it is important to underscore the need for responsible operation of your snowmobile while enjoying New York's magnificent outdoors and all the recreational opportunities available during the winter months. I strongly encourage all riders to think about safety first. A safe rider avoids excessive speed; never mixes alcohol with snowmobiling; takes care of the trails; plans for winter conditions, and avoids riding alone.”

In the southern tier of NY, snowmobile trails are not allowed to open until at least the evening of December 17th. Some trails in the northern zone will open sooner because big game

hunting ends earlier, but Jennings advises snowmobilers to always check with the local club to make sure trails are open before heading out to ride.

Perkins reminds snowmobilers that more than 80% of the 11,000-plus miles of snowmobile trails in New York are on private property, and that riding on private land before the official opening of the trail is considered trespassing.

“Respecting the wishes of landowners is critical, according to Perkins. “Landowners are the backbone of the NY snowmobile trail system,” he says, adding “without them we would have no trail system.”

Jennings stresses that common sense should overcome the urge to ride prior to the opening of trails and offers the following points to help ensure safe snowmobiling:

- ❖ Trails can't be opened until after the end of deer season. In the southern tier, that means after dusk on December 17th at the earliest.
- ❖ Contact the club where you plan to ride and make sure the trails are open, and to check on trail conditions.
- ❖ After a long summer's wait, snowmobilers are reminded to exercise caution while readjusting to riding this winter.
- ❖ Always respect landowners; stay on the trail. If the trail is closed, stay home.
- ❖ Make sure that youthful operators have completed the required safety classes. In fact, it is a good idea for adult riders to brush up on snowmobile safety as well. Classes are scheduled across the state for both youth and adult riders.

For more information visit the NYSSA Website at www.nyssnowassoc.org/.