

**MCSA News Release**  
**November 1, 2006**  
**For immediate distribution.**

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**Madison County Snowmobilers Plan Season**

The Madison County Snowmobile Association (MCSA) recently completed plans for the upcoming snowmobile season. At the recent October MCSA meeting, President Tom Baker of the Tri-Valley Riders reviewed the calendar of events for the 2006-2007 winter. With Halloween over and snow just around the corner, clubs are busy with trail inspection and maintenance, as well as other preparations. MCSA is a federation of snowmobile clubs that maintain snowmobile trails in the county, and participate in the NYS trail development program. MCSA is also a member association of the New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA)

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**Snowmobile Fee Savings**

Madison County NYSSA Director Elwin Goff reported that during a recent NYSSA Director’s session, the NYS DMV reported on snowmobile registrations. According to the DMV estimate, about 25% of the registration renewals do not include club membership vouchers. Goff, who also serves as the President of the Cazenovia-based Snow Valley Riders, explained that the new regulations adopted by the state legislature increased the snowmobile registration fee from \$45 in past years, to \$100 this year, for non NYSSA club members.

“With most clubs charging around \$25 for membership, it only takes simple math to figure out the savings,” Goff stated, adding “We hope that snowmobilers figure out that by joining a local club, they can receive a discount of \$55 on each snowmobile registration and at the same time help to support the local clubs.”

Under the new two-tier system, as the legislation was dubbed, the savings would help local clubs with the costs of trail development by driving local club membership. Even if individuals do pay the increased fee, that extra revenue is earmarked for the state-administered trail grant program. The drawback is that those dollars are spread across the entire state system.

“Local membership keeps the money where it belongs- in the local community,” explained Goff, “and with rising costs of fuel to operate trail grooming equipment, we need all the help we can get.”

**Snowmobile Season Start**

The official start to the 2006-2007 snowmobile season begins at sunset on the final day of big game hunting season. Although the dates vary based upon the region of the state, the season generally begins in late December. In Madison County this year, the start is scheduled for sunset on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

Tom Baker, MCSA President, reminds snowmobilers to respect landowners as well as hunters.

“Even if we get an early snowstorm, the trails are closed until after deer season. It is important that we respect the rights of landowners and stay off the trails,” Baker stated.

In New York State, about 80% of the more than 11,000 miles of funded snowmobile trails are on private lands. Many landowners who allow the temporary use of their property for snowmobile trails also allow hunting. Interfering with the landowners wishes by pre-season riding puts the trails at jeopardy, and also raises safety concerns.

“Riding on closed trails before the season begins can cause damage to crops and landscaping,” Baker explained.

“Trail signs have not been inspected and replaced, bridge repairs have not been completed, and brush and fallen trees have not been cleared from the trails. Snowmobile trails are not safe until the clubs complete their off-season maintenance. Riding snowmobiles in hunting season adds the potential for firearm accidents as well,” Baker added, saying “the simple solution is to stay home until the season begins.”

Riders looking for the first available riding should also remember that heading out on trails the first few days of the season will likely mean that gates and fences may still be closed, since club volunteers won’t be able to complete pre-season maintenance and last-minute preparations until after the hunting season. Extra caution should be taken until the clubs have had the opportunity to wrap up those details.

### **Rider Training**

The MCSA supports the rights of the generous landowners who are the backbone of the NYSSA trail system. MCSA also believes in the important role of proper education, reminding snowmobilers that while even adults can benefit from refreshing their safety training, it is mandatory for youthful operators. MCSA clubs help that effort by sponsoring local training sessions.

For more information on rider training, local club membership, or related snowmobile information, contact MCSA by email at [MCSANYSSA@aol.com](mailto:MCSANYSSA@aol.com), or by telephone at 420-8208.