

# ***OCONTO COUNTY SNOWMOBILE ALLIANCE***

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***This Press release is being sent on behalf of the Oconto County Snowmobile Alliance. Please contact John Brantmeier for any questions or additional information.***

## ***For Immediate Release***

### ***Oconto County Snowmobile Alliance Ready for Another Great Season***

With Thanksgiving and deer hunting behind us, winter can't be far behind. Here in Oconto County that means another year for some great snowmobiling fun. Did you ever wonder how those trails magically appear each year just in time for riding fun for our visitors and residents?

Our 475-mile Oconto County trail system interconnects with over 22,000 miles of trails across Wisconsin. With good snow conditions it is possible to ride virtually anywhere in the rural areas of the state. The trails are maintained by 576 clubs across Wisconsin. Local club efforts are coordinated by the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs. More information about AWSC can be found on their website at [www.awsc.org](http://www.awsc.org).

The Oconto County Snowmobile Alliance consists of 10 clubs including the Oconto Falls Snow Jokers, [Bagley & Brazeau Joyriders](#) of the Lee Lake area, [Chase Sno-Chasers](#), Gillett Sno Riders, Lena Snow Drifters, Chute Pond Snowmobile Club, Paul Bunyan Riders of Lakewood and Red Arrow Snowmobile ATV Club of Townsend. The Iron Snowshoe and Kumalong Riders of Marinette County also belong to the Alliance as they have trails coming into the eastern side of Oconto County. These clubs spend an estimated 10,000 volunteer hours each year preparing, brushing and grooming the trails. For example, the Bagley & Brazeau Joyriders maintain just under 100 miles of snowmobile trails. Last year their club members put in approximately 600 hours just getting their trails ready for the season. They also have to get permission from 59 landowners and 6 Townships every year to maintain them. Overall coordination of the county wide trail system is the responsibility of the Oconto County Parks and Recreation Department. A major Alliance project is a new map every two years of our trail system. The newest 2010-2011 map will be available in late December at locations across the county.

Safety is always on the minds of responsible snowmobilers. The Alliance encourages riders to watch their speed and drink alcoholic beverages responsibly if at all while riding. The nighttime 55 MPH speed limit for snowmobiles is in effect again this year. Riders are also reminded that machines must slow to 10MPH when in the vicinity of pedestrians, dwellings or fishermen. Trails are monitored by the Oconto County Recreational Officer and DNR wardens. Anyone born after January 1, 1985, must obtain a Snowmobile Safety certificate to ride legally. The course is available on line at <http://www.snowmobile-ed.com/wi/> or from classes that individual clubs hold yearly. Anyone under the age of 16 must take the class in person. A list of upcoming classes across the state can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/enforcement/safety/coursereq.htm>

You may not know that the Snowmobile (and ATV) sports are entirely self-funded. All monies spent on trail placement, upgrading and maintenance comes from machine registrations and a small rebate from the state gas tax calculated based on how much fuel each machine burns in off highway use. Most clubs have fundraisers and club dues to supplement the cost of maintaining the trails. Equipment, insurance and fuel are major expenses for clubs and can total hundreds of thousands of dollars when you include the cost of replacing groomers and drags. More information about the individual clubs and links to their websites can be found at [www.ocontocounty.org](http://www.ocontocounty.org).

Our Alliance realizes that everyone lives a busy life these days. We encourage you to join a club and get involved in keeping the trails in the shape we all expect. Tourism is a major part of our Oconto County economy and great trails keep the visitors coming back. We are only a “round trip tank of gas” away from Green Bay and the Fox Valley, making Oconto County an ideal snowmobile destination. Even if you don’t ride a sled but own a business or just want to get involved we welcome your assistance. Check the website just above for the club nearest you and volunteer to join or help...either financially or with your time.

One final thought...if the snowmobile sport is to grow more people need to experience the thrill of riding our great trails. February 12-22, 2010, has been designated “Take a Friend Snowmobiling” week nationwide. Make it a point anytime this winter to take someone riding who has never been on a sled or who hasn’t gone for years. Thanks for your support and see you on the trail!