

From
The
President

Greg Hiles



In last month's article I mentioned that groups like the Winter Wildlands Alliance (WWA) and land access issues that threaten snowmobiling are not going to end. I did some research on the WWA and found that it is a nonprofit organization promoting and preserving winter Wildlands and a quality human-powered snow sports experience on public lands. It was formed in 2000 and according to their website is the "first and only national organization working on behalf of snowshoers, skiers, snowboarders, wintry hikers and other outdoors adventurers to address national issues that impact "our" winter Wildlands". They "believe winter Wildlands adventurers and future generations should have sizable areas of public land on which to experience the natural sights, sounds and winter beauty of public lands free of motorized vehicles and that our backcountry wildlife habitat should be protected from the negative impact of motorized intrusion such as snowmobiles."

As activists they build relationships with grassroots snow sports and conservation groups, providing networking opportunities and useful resources. They publicize national issues and maintain a national presence by communicating regularly with the Forest Service, Park Service and congressional representatives commenting on draft plans and encouraging agencies to adopt **no motorized-friendly policies**. They utilize an online information clearinghouse and action alert network to provide their information to activists.

According to their website, they list 19 corporate sponsors at various levels of sponsorship, 26 conservation partners, 34 backcountry partners, 14 media partners, 15 supporting foundations. They have a 9 member board of directors coming from ID, CO, WY, MT, CA and WDC. Their staff (assuming paid and not volunteers) consists of an executive director, program administrator, a national SnowSchool Program director, an outreach and events coordinator and a policy director. Stipends are offered for employment of student interns. Their Facebook page indicates 2109 "likes".

For comparison purposes, let me provide you with information about ACSA, along with state snowmobile associations, including SDSA.

Not unlike WWA, ACSA is also a nonprofit national organization dedicated to providing leadership and advancing the efforts of all snowmobile-affiliated organizations to promote the expansion and education of responsible snowmobiling in the United States. ACSA acts as national coordinator and spokesperson for state volunteer snowmobile associations and snowmobile clubs. ACSA was formed in 1995.

ACSA works on behalf of snowmobilers to address national issues that impact "our" winter Wildlands. Snowmobilers believe that we should also have sizable areas of public land on which to experience the natural sights, sounds and winter beauty of "our" public lands and the wildlife within them. ACSA works with state associations and their local (grassroots) snowmobile clubs to provide networking opportunities and useful resources. They publicize national issues and maintain a national presence by communicating regularly with the Forest Service, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation and congressional representatives commenting on draft plans and encouraging agencies to adopt snowmobile friendly policies. Websites operated by ACSA and the various state's organization's are used as an action alert network to provide information to local members.

According to ACSA's website, ACSA lists 26 business partners, including major support from the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA). In addition, ACSA partners with the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO), the International Association of Snowmobile Administrators (IASA), the National Snowmobile Foundation (NSF), the Snowmobile Safety and Certification Committee (SSCC), the International Snowmobile Media Council (ISMC) the International Snowmobile Tourism Council (ISTC), and 11 national motorized recreation organizations, 3 national non-motorized trail associations, 5 national outdoor education & resource organizations and 2 national trail training organizations.

ACSA has a 7 member executive board of directors coming from SD, PA, IA, NY, MI and CO. There are 20 Snowbelt states with state organizations in good standing that are allowed one delegate per state on the Board of Directors. ACSA's staff (paid and not volunteers) consists of an executive director and a part-time secretary. ACSA's Facebook page indicates 480 "likes".

I hope that you can see the various similarities between ACSA and WWA. Their numbers and their financial backing are stronger, making the fights (yes, unfortunately plural) ahead of us an uphill battle.

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Snowmobilers Care
About Our Environment



International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association

From the President (continued from page 3)

What has really stuck with me as I learn more about WWA is who some of their support and/or business partners are. While some organizations are unfamiliar to me, it was North Face that really stood out. How many of you have North Face clothing in your closet? These types of businesses must also count on business from snowmobilers as well. Scheels All Sports is another such business. I asked them for an auction item for the convention a couple of years ago and was told that they do not support motorized sporting activities. At that point I brought to Scheels' attention the Columbia clothing, the thermal wear and some of the winter footwear purchased from their store was being used for motorized winter use not to mention the \$300 towable water sports tubes that many of us pull behind our boat. I'm not sure if my point was well received but it certainly changed our view on shopping Scheels. I have informed our 5 daughters regarding the fact that North Face is a WWA supporter and that is not in the snowmobiler's best interest to purchase their products. I think we all could and should spend a little time looking into cases like this.

Yes, we have an uphill battle, but it is a battle we have to fight. Besides, we are snowmobilers and we know how to get to the top. Give it the Gas!!!

And here is a unique idea – both sides of the fence work together for access to all public lands for multiple-use rather than both of us being shut out altogether. That will not happen anymore than Congress working together.

Criteria for the ACSA Legal Defense Fund are being developed. The original draft of the criteria was presented for discussion at a recent ACSA Board of Directors. Based upon that discussion, states were asked to submit their comments to ACSA which will then all be compiled for further discussion. All delegates who sent in comments will have a seat at the table as future discussions occur until finalization of the criteria. One of the concerns that I had with the proposed criteria was the matching requirement from a state legal defense fund. My comments included a suggestion that would address a recent substantial contribution to the ACSA Legal Defense Fund which would leave little or no reserve available in state funds. I will keep you posted as this goes forward.

SDSA had a booth in Club Row at Hay Days, alongside North Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. This was the first time for SDSA at Hay Days. While we have a list of "what we need to do next time", I do feel it was worthwhile to be there. Thanks to Lisa Watkins for taking a shift so that Diane and I could take in some of what Hay Days is all about. It is amazing the number of people that were in attendance but I do wonder how many of them are members of a local club. I also found it interesting that nothing on the topic of access to public lands or the pending lawsuits were found in the program booklet. This is something that needs to change in my opinion.

A grant application for the Safety Simulator has been submitted to ISMA under the Safe Rider Support efforts objective. This \$4,000 grant would supplement the RTP grant we have been awarded and would offset SDSA's contribution towards the purchase. Thank you Mary Anne for writing this grant for us with assistance from Brian and Dug. At this point, plans are falling into place for the Simulator to be available at the convention.

We are continuing the SDSA 50/50 raffle and tickets have been distributed. If you need more, contact Mary Anne at the office and she will get them sent out to you. These tickets sell for \$2 each with \$1 going to SDSA and the other \$1 going to the club that sells the ticket. Think about it for a minute – a club can earn \$1 for every ticket sold with no expense. SDSA counts on your efforts and we both gain in the end. While SDSA puts up \$1000 cash for one of the prizes we also count on the year after year contributions from Badger Oil and Trailer Sales for the 2-place trailer, from each manufacturer, Arctic Cat, Polaris, Ski-Doo and Yamaha for the jackets and from Roelofsen Implement for the two - \$50 gift certificates. Thank you!!!

This will be the third year of the Everybody Wins Fundraiser, the 2nd year for SDSA's fundraiser. 1000 tickets are being sold for \$20 a ticket. When the winning ticket is drawn at the SDSA Convention in November, ONE lucky winner will be \$10,000 richer. That's right, \$10,000 to one lucky winner! The other winners will be as follows - if all 1000 tickets are sold, \$5,000 stays with SDSA, the club who sells the winning ticket will be rewarded \$2,000, the person who sells the winning ticket will be rewarded \$1,000, \$1,000 goes to the Club hosting the convention and \$1,000 will go to the SDSA Scholarship program. If all of the tickets are not sold, the last 4 groups mentioned will be paid on a percentage of sales. This will NOT affect the \$10,000 winner. If you have this figured out, if your club buys some of the tickets and one of those is drawn and all 1000 tickets have been sold, the club would win \$10,000 plus \$2,000!!! This is exactly what happened last year when the Sioux Falls Sno-Trackers won the \$10,000 Grand Prize. Remember you can't win if you don't play. Knowing how snowmobilers like to play, I'm guessing all 1000 tickets will be sold.

For more information on either of these fundraisers please contact the SDSA office or myself (Cell # 605-203-0318). As I mentioned earlier, SDSA is counting on your support and THANK YOU for your help!

The East River's trail signing start date is November 1st unless the ditches are mowed and you have permission from the applicable DOT official in your area. Make it a fun time with family and friends. Let's hope for some rain to soften up the ground before the stakes go in. Then the rain can turn to snow and the real fun can begin!!

Until Convention.....

Greg Hiles

PS. And remember who North Face is sponsoring and who they are not and to let that fact weigh into the consideration before purchase of a North Face product.