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Know where you ride is right

East Lansing, Mich., February 2021—An expanse of pristine snow is a dream for many snowmobilers, but could be a nightmare if it is on private property or in a closed area on public lands, reminds the American Council of Snowmobile Associations, (ACSA).

“Riding on maintained and approved trails is safer for snowmobile riders and the community with trails being recognizable, vetted and groomed,” said Scott Hertzog, president of ACSA. Going off course not only endangers riders, but also the relationships that have been built up that allow snowmobilers to enjoy their wintery experience.

According to ACSA, there are 137,000 miles of maintained snowmobile trails across the U.S. which would not exist without the support of thousands of private landowners, numerous corporations, a multitude of towns, cities and county governments, along with state and federal agencies across the snowbelt.

Snowmobile clubs across the country work with landowners year-round to secure appropriate, safe and legal access to private lands that may also intersect with open public areas. These clubs also help provide education and awareness outreach about the sport of snowmobiling including appropriate places to operate a snowmobile.

Weather can also play a factor in safe riding. Many trails are closed due to low snow or the proliferation of “snirt,” a mixture of snow and dirt. Poor conditions like these have resulted in some areas closing their trails to keep conditions safe for riders and for the environment.

In addition to staying within boundaries of legally open riding areas and on open trails, riders can join a snowmobiling club and volunteer to help maintain and groom trails for landowners, who allow the sport to happen across their land.

“A little bit of common sense and respect can make the difference between a trail being open or closed off,” said Hertzog. “Staying on a designated trail shows not only safe and responsible riding, but also shows respect for the landowners allowing riders to enjoy their property.”

Visit www.saferiderssafetyawareness.org for more snowmobiling and safety information.

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