



*In your opinion, what do snowmobile clubs and associations need to do in order to engage millennials and encourage them to become active participants in their activities?*

By Brady Swanson

Snowmobiling is a passion that develops bonds and friendships that can last a lifetime. Growing up riding snowmobile has had a big effect on the person I am today. It all started for me with taking a few trips with family and close friends up to northern Minnesota around the Rainy Lake area. The first trip we took I had to ride on the back of my dad's snowmobile which wasn't the most fun, but it was enough to encourage me to work hard the next few summers and save for my own snowmobile. By the fall of 2012, I had saved three thousand dollars which was enough to get me a nice sled. It was quite an upgrade from the 120 I was used to! Now with this newfound passion and a little extra power, almost every weekend I spent was out riding. Our father noticed this and encouraged me to join our local community club, The Hardwood TrailBlazers. Keeping me active and aware of the broader aspect of what goes into making everyone happy and safe on the trails each day.

Each year the local clubs in our area put on rides and activities such as vintage runs, fun runs, and the local snoдео races. I find these events are always a lot of fun to attend but I have also noticed the lack of kids my age and that most of the people are adults attending these activities. It made me start to think about what will happen in the future if area clubs don't have the involvement and participation of my generation. I started to brainstorm ideas on how to get the younger age groups involved again.

I grew up with parents involved in clubs already so it's easy for me to enjoy it and be involved. But if I did not have this opportunity, as some kids don't, how could I ever become interested without knowing what snowmobiling is all about? People need to find enjoyment before they invest and really get active in a hobby and so my first idea would be to have a day designated throughout the State of Minnesota to take a youth snowmobiling. I think it would be an excellent way of getting kids involved if the local clubs designated a day just to the youth and the younger generations. On a day like this, the opportunity to experience snowmobiling on a beautiful day in Minnesota may be enough for them to want to be involved with the area clubs and associations as they get older. For example, my family owns four snowmobiles that we could use to take kids out for a day and stop at local establishments. We could have drawings for snowmobile related items such as hats, gloves, helmets and other gear. Something as simple as this may be enough to create interest in the sport of snowmobiling and spark interest in someone who may not have had it before. Or it could be even simpler, and that would be through advertising. As a millennial myself I spend a decent amount of time on social media, watching television, or just surfing the internet in general. Which I can quite honestly say I have never stumbled upon a snowmobiling advertisement other than maybe a random brand-name company selling things. The easiest way to target millennials is through social media sites and tv commercials. It would not have to be anything over the top, but just a general recognition of the many fun/positive things snowmobiling can provide.

With a few small things such as the ones I have suggested, I believe my generation would more involved in snowmobiling and create a passion that would last a lifetime.