

Bradford Barker
Leeds Stump Thumpers S.C.

2/12/2021

IF&W Legislative Committee,

The Leeds Stump Thumpers Snowmobile Club supports LD 280 - An Act To Increase Funding for Snowmobile Trails and Capital Equipment Grants.

I am the president of the Leeds Stump Thumpers Snowmobile Club, Inc. for 31 years running. We have increased membership from all time low of 3, to currently over 50. Our trail volunteers is less than 10. I am also the MSA secretary and on the Maine-Snowmobile Advisory Council. In Leeds, we have thirty miles of local trails and 9 miles of ITS 87, we see heavy traffic from the Lewiston/Auburn area headed to points north. I have seen a lot of change in the grooming equipment, from a 36" wide snowmobile with a pipe drag to a full sized snow cat and drag 8' wide. Our biggest obstacle of grooming the trails is the cost of new grooming equipment, it's staggering, \$280,000 for a new snow cat and drag. So, our club simply can't afford this, instead we have an old worn out 1989 Tucker 2000 Snowcat and drag for our heavily used trails with a high maintenance and repair costs. For our local trails, snowmobiles and side by side UTV with drags. I have over 400 hours in the driver's seat of a Jeep and Blazer (SUV) with four snowmobile tracks pulling a large 8' drag going 26 miles from the Lewiston/Greene line to Livermore Falls/Jay line. These had their place in time, but with faults. Yes, low investment, plenty of horsepower, nice comfortable cab, but the track system is the weak link. I have spend many hours on the trail, repairing and getting unstuck. This inexpensive alternative just doesn't hold up, and I can assure you being stranded at night is serious.

The fore mentioned 36" wide snowmobile back in the early 1970's cost new \$800- \$1,000 with the snowmobile registration cost of \$8.00. In comparison, a new snowmobile cost \$12,000 to \$20,000 with the current residential registration is \$45.00. So, the proposed increase is still way below the same percent back in the 70's to the costs of a new snowmobile.

Please support this bill, help us afford newer grooming equipment.

Brad Barker, President
Leeds Stump Thumpers Snowmobile Club, Inc.