



Survey of Oregon Snowmobile Trail Public Recreation Providers

Final Report

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July 2014



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives

This survey is part of the 2015 Oregon Statewide Trails Planning effort. Project objectives were to describe funding priorities for the OPRD-administered Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and identify top snowmobile trail management issues as part of the planning effort.

Methods

Data were obtained from an internet survey of 100 Oregon snowmobile area managers and snowmobile club representatives between June 9 and July 7, 2014. The total number of completed questionnaires was n=52 with an estimated total response rate of 52%.

Results

- The majority of snowmobile provider respondents were from snowmobile clubs (86%), with some from the U.S. Forest Service (14%).
- Most survey respondents provide snowmobile riding opportunities in Region 10 (27%), Region 7 (22%), and Region 6 (20%).
- The most serious snowmobile management issues were closure of snowmobile trails/riding areas (48% rated the problem “slight” to “serious”), ATVs on snowmobile trails (14%), and cross-country skiers on snowmobile trails (14%).
- Other important management issues included closure of snowmobile trails and areas, need for more sno-parks, maintaining a steady budget for trail and facility maintenance, and need for more volunteers for trail grooming.
- The most important funding need was for more back-country off-trail riding areas (70% rated the importance “slight” to “very”), parking/ sno-parks (67%), expand existing trail systems (60%), develop long-distance trail more than 100 miles long (57%), more RV camping opportunities (53%), signs along trails (52%), restrooms in sno-parks (51%), and trail maps/ information (50%).
- Other important funding need included funding for trail maintenance, groomer sheds, more places to ride, and trail signage assistance.
- Survey respondents would prioritize medium trails of 50 to 100 miles (75% either “strongly” or “somewhat” prioritize) and short trails of fewer than 50 miles (70%) over long interconnected trails of 100 miles or more (59%).

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) was given responsibility for recreation trails planning in 1971 under the “State Trails Act” (ORS 390.950 to 390.990). The last Statewide Trails Plan for Oregon was completed in 2005. This survey is a part of an effort to update that plan. Project objectives were to describe funding priorities for the OPRD-administered Recreational Trails Grant Program (RTP) and identify top snowmobile trail management issues as part of the Statewide Trails Planning effort.

METHODS

Data were obtained from an internet survey (see survey instrument in Appendix B) of 100 Oregon snowmobile area managers and snowmobile club representatives between June 9 and July 7, 2014. A respondent was only allowed one opportunity to complete a questionnaire.

Sample Sizes and Response Rates

As shown in Table 1, the total number of completed questionnaires was $n = 52$ with an estimated total response rate of 52%.

Table 1. Sample sizes and response rates

	Initial contacts	Completed surveys (n)	Response rate (%)
Providers	100	52	52

RESULTS

Provider Description

Agency/Organization. The first question asked snowmobile trail managers to identify their type of agency/organization. Table 2 shows that most respondents were from snowmobile clubs (86%), with some from the U.S. Forest Service (14%).

Table 2. Respondent provider type

Provider Type	Participation (%) ^a
Snowmobile Club Representative	86
U.S. Forest Service	14

^a Cell entries are percentages (%) of respondents from each organization type.

Planning Region. Snowmobile trail managers were asked to report the primary trail’s planning region in which they provide snowmobile riding opportunities in Oregon. Figure 1 shows the boundaries for the 11 planning regions along with the locations of the 64 snowmobile parking areas in the state.

Figure 1. Oregon snowmobile planning regions

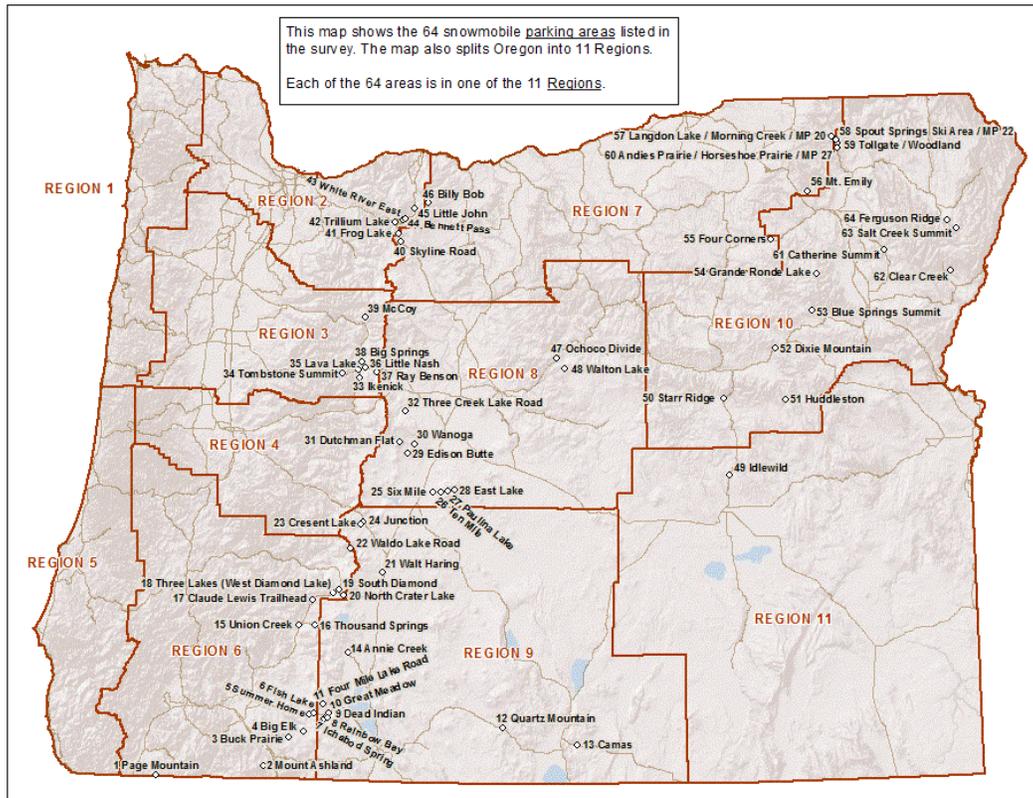


Table 3 shows that most survey respondents provide snowmobile riding opportunities in Region 10 (27%), Region 7 (22%), and Region 6 (20%). No respondents provide riding opportunities in Region 2, Region 5, and Region 11.

Table 3. Respondent planning region ^a

Region 1	2
Region 2	0
Region 3	6
Region 4	4
Region 5	0
Region 6	20
Region 7	22
Region 8	14
Region 9	6
Region 10	27
Region 11	0

^a Cell entries are percentages (%) of where respondents provide snowmobile riding opportunities in Oregon.

Snowmobile Management Issues. Several items in the questionnaire examined provider attitudes about snowmobile management issues in their trail's planning region. Providers were asked, for example, the extent of a problem listed issues posed to managers. Table 4 shows that the most serious issues were closure of snowmobile trails/ riding areas (48% rated the problem "slight" to "serious"), ATVs on snowmobile trails (14%), and cross-country skiers on snowmobile trails (14%). The least serious issue was vehicle noise (0%).

Table 4. Ratings of snowmobile management issues ^a

	Snowmobile Providers (%) ^a
Closure of snowmobile trails/ riding areas	48
ATVs on snowmobile trails	14
Cross-country skiers on snowmobile trails	14
Too much law enforcement	12
Irresponsible/ dangerous/ reckless riding	12
Vandalism	10
Riding in closed areas	10
Too little law enforcement	10
Excessive speed on trails	10
Alcohol or drug use	6
Dogs on snowmobile trails	4
High avalanche risk	2
Dangerous "high marking"	2
Too many people and machines	2
Lack of parent supervision of youth riders	2
Vehicle noise	0

^a Cell entries are percentages (%) of respondents who rated the problem "slight" to "serious."

Respondents were then asked to identify any other snowmobile management issues that were important to them and their organization. Most frequently mentioned issues included closure of snowmobile trails and areas, need for more snow parks, maintaining a steady budget for trail and facility maintenance, and need for more volunteers for trail grooming.

Snowmobile Funding Need. Snowmobile trail managers were asked to rate the importance of funding need for a number of types of snowmobile facilities in their planning region. Table 5 shows that the most important funding need was for more back-country off-trail riding areas (70% rated the importance “slight” to “very”), parking/ sno-parks (67%), expand existing trail systems (60%), develop long-distance trail more than 100 miles long (57%), more RV camping opportunities (53%), signs along trails (52%), restrooms in sno-parks (51%), and trail maps/ information (50%).

Table 5. Ratings of snowmobile funding importance ^a

	Snowmobile Providers (%) ^a
More back-country off-trail riding	70
More parking/ snow-parks	67
Expand existing trail system	60
Develop long-distance trails (more than 100 miles long)	57
More RV camping opportunities	53
More signs along trails	52
More restrooms in sno-parks	51
More trail maps/ information	50
More trail grooming	49
Better snow removal at sno-parks	47
More warming shelters	42
More educational programs promoting safe/ responsible riding	39
More avalanche education	36
Increase trail safety/ reduce hazards	28
More enforcement of existing rules/ regulations in trail areas	11

^a Cell entries are percentages (%) of respondents who rated the importance “slight” to “very.”

Respondents were also asked to identify any other snowmobile resource needs that were important to their organization. Most frequently mentioned needs included funding for trail maintenance, groomer sheds, more places to ride, and trail signage assistance.

Finally, snowmobile managers were asked to rate the importance of trails of a variety of mileage lengths. Table 6 shows that the majority of respondents would prioritize medium trails of 50 to

100 miles (75% either “strongly” or “somewhat” prioritize) and short trails of fewer than 50 miles (70%) over long interconnected trails of 100 miles or more (59%).

Table 6. Ratings of snowmobile trail length ^a

	Snowmobile Providers (%) ^a
Medium trails (50 to 100 miles)	75
Short trails (fewer than 50 miles)	70
Long interconnected trails (100 miles or more)	59

^a Cell entries are percentages (%) of respondents who rated the importance “slight” to “very.”

Results Summary. Taken together, survey results showed that:

- The majority of snowmobile provider respondents were from snowmobile clubs (86%), with some from the U.S. Forest Service (14%).
- Most survey respondents provide snowmobile riding opportunities in Region 10 (27%), Region 7 (22%), and Region 6 (20%).
- The most serious snowmobile management issues were closure of snowmobile trails/riding areas (48% rated the problem “slight” to “serious”), ATVs on snowmobile trails (14%), and cross-country skiers on snowmobile trails (14%).
- Other important management issues included closure of snowmobile trails and areas, need for more sno-parks, maintaining a steady budget for trail and facility maintenance, and need for more volunteers for trail grooming.
- The most important funding need was for more back-country off-trail riding areas (70% rated the importance “slight” to “very”), parking/ sno-parks (67%), expand existing trail systems (60%), develop long-distance trail more than 100 miles long (57%), more RV camping opportunities (53%), signs along trails (52%), restrooms in sno-parks (51%), and trail maps/ information (50%).
- Other important funding need included funding for trail maintenance, groomer sheds, more places to ride, and trail signage assistance.
- Survey respondents would prioritize medium trails of 50 to 100 miles (75% either “strongly” or “somewhat” prioritize) and short trails of fewer than 50 miles (70%) over long interconnected trails of 100 miles or more (59%).

APPENDIX A: OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

What other issues are important to you and your organization?

- Closing of more snowmobile trails
- USFS closing areas of snowmobile use in the pending management plan
- Access, access, access!!!
- In the past several years there have been a variety of timber sales that required to be logged in the winter to reduce impact. The environmental impact might be reduced but it has affected roads and corridors that the snowmobiles typically use.
- Closing of areas.
- Keeping our existing trails open for generations to come
- The Crater Lake wilderness proposal by Oregon Wild.
- Keeping all trails open.
- keeping riding areas open, no more wilderness or non-motorized areas
- Personal relations are a biggie for our club. The Rogue is the largest in the state and it is very easy for the anti-snowmobile people to start pointing fingers and say look at those horrible people and what they are doing!!!
- Maintaining an adequate budget for grooming, route markers and signs. We appreciate the good working relationship we have with our local clubs.
- Keeping access to the riding areas we have now and maintaining them for the future generations.

What other resource need are important to you and your organization?

- Not losing any riding areas, but increasing them.
- law enforcement
- Snow parks with restrooms are important
- Parking for large trailers only
- creating more places to ride, dispersing the crowd over more area
- It is very important to have a winter rec officer that is interested in what the clubs have to say and help out anyway that they can.
- I would like to see more destination warming huts for lunch like at Dog Prairie. We also need a cat shed to store and maintain our snow cat. We would like to build a multi-use shed!
- None
- Funding of facilities and rangers.
- More funding
- More summertime trail maintenance equipment to help our volunteers preform trail maintenance and continue to keep our trails in good riding shape.
- Funding for trail work for multi-use.
- Training for groomer drivers to groom more effectively.
- It is important that we can use snowmobile registration information to contact people and encourage them to become members of the clubs. It also helps plan rides to include them in our activities.
- -Increased signage and law enforcement near designated wilderness areas

- We need assistance with signage management, the weather conditions deteriorate so quickly that our staff spends more and more time trying to keep up with signs, posts that in addition to grooming it would be great to have more assistance in trail marking.
- Grooming shed for the groomer
- We need to construct a building to house and be able to work on our groomer out of the weather
- Be respected as an equally viable winter sport.
- Only a small number of trail users are members of a snowmobile club. ALL users should be charged and a stamp affixed to their machine allowing access to each area, not just statewide licensing. Too many freeloaders!
- More trails, camping and recreational use of our public forests.
- More help from the forest service in removing brush and hazard trees from the trails.
- We have noticed that almost every sno-park in Oregon is in serious need of repaving/resealing which has been a major battle when it comes to volunteers doing snow removal, additional mobile warming huts are also a hit topic that has been well received.
- Tollgate snowmobile area is in both Umatilla and Union counties and on your little map it was hard to distinguish the exact area. We have two warming shelters and four sno-parks some in Umatilla and some in Union.

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Land Manager/ Snowmobile Volunteer,

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) requests your assistance in completing the following survey for your land management agency. Survey results will identify Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) facility and services need and management issues in Oregon as part of the Statewide Motorized Trails Planning effort.

This survey is intended for land management agencies and snowmobile clubs providing snowmobile riding opportunities on public lands in the state of Oregon. Survey results, along with information gathered in general user surveys and regional public meetings, will be used to develop evaluation criteria for distribution of Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funding administered by OPRD.

Because the 2013-2014 season had unusually low snow, please answer survey questions with respect to snowmobile riding during an average season over the past five years/ seasons.

The survey is very brief, and should take no more than 5 minutes of your time. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Terry Bergerson, OPRD planner:

Email: terry.bergerson@oregon.gov

Phone: 503-986-0747

Thank you for participating in this important survey.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department



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1. Name of your organization:

2. Contact person (or person completing this survey):

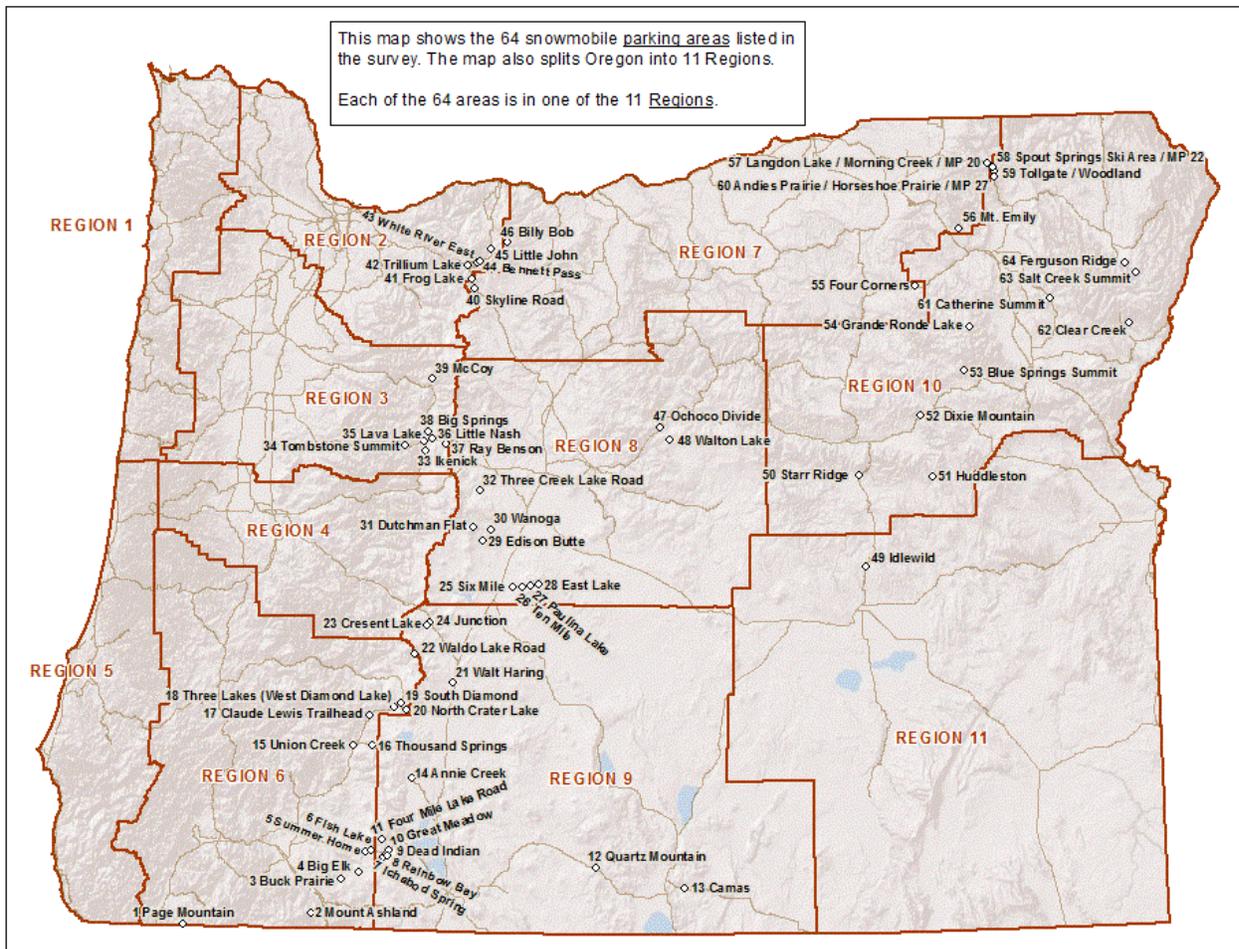
3. Organization (Please check one only)

- US Forest Service
- Snowmobile Club

Please answer the following question to identify your primary snowmobile service coverage area.

4. Using the map below, please identify the trails planning region in the area that you service (write in)

Region # _____



Q5. Based on your experience with snowmobile trail management in Oregon in the past 12 months, how much of a problem do you think each of the following is on snowmobile trails in your trails planning region? Check one number for each issue.

Issue	Not a problem	1	2	3	4	A serious problem 5
Alcohol or drug use	1	2	3	4	5	
Vandalism	1	2	3	4	5	
High avalanche risk	1	2	3	4	5	
Dangerous “high marking”	1	2	3	4	5	
Riding in closed areas	1	2	3	4	5	
Too little law enforcement	1	2	3	4	5	
Too much law enforcement	1	2	3	4	5	
Closure of snowmobile trails/ riding areas	1	2	3	4	5	
Irresponsible/ dangerous/ reckless riding	1	2	3	4	5	
Too many people and machines	1	2	3	4	5	
Lack of parent supervision of youth riders	1	2	3	4	5	
Excessive speed on trails	1	2	3	4	5	
Vehicle noise	1	2	3	4	5	
Dogs on trails	1	2	3	4	5	
ATVs on snowmobile trails	1	2	3	4	5	
Cross-country skiers on trails	1	2	3	4	5	

Q6. What other issues are important to you and your organization?

Next, please rate the importance of funding need for each type of snowmobile facility/ service in your trails planning region. To identify need, please consider the types of high-priority projects that your organization has identified for development in the coming five-year period.

Q7. Trail managers have limited resources to provide for all types of snowmobile trail experiences. How important is each of the following in your trails planning region? Check one number for each action

Action	Not important					Very important				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More signs along trails	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More trail maps/ information	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More enforcement of existing rules/ regulations in trail areas	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More trail grooming	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More educational programs promoting safe/responsible riding	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More parking/ sno-parks	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More restrooms in sno-parks	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More RV camping opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Better snow removal in snow-parks	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Increase trail safety/ reduce hazards	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More avalanche education	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More warming shelters	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Expand existing trail system	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Develop long-distance trails (more than 100 miles long)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
More back-country off-trail riding	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Q8. What other resource needs are important to you and your organization?

**Q9. Finally, how important is each of the following snowmobile trail riding opportunities in Oregon?
Check one number for each opportunity.**

Trail riding opportunities	Not important Very important				
Long interconnected trails (100 miles or more)	1	2	3	4	5
Medium trails (50 to 100 miles)	1	2	3	4	5
Short trails (fewer than 50 miles)	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C: UNCOLLAPSED PERCENTAGES

1. Name of your organization:

See report

2. Contact person (or person completing this survey):

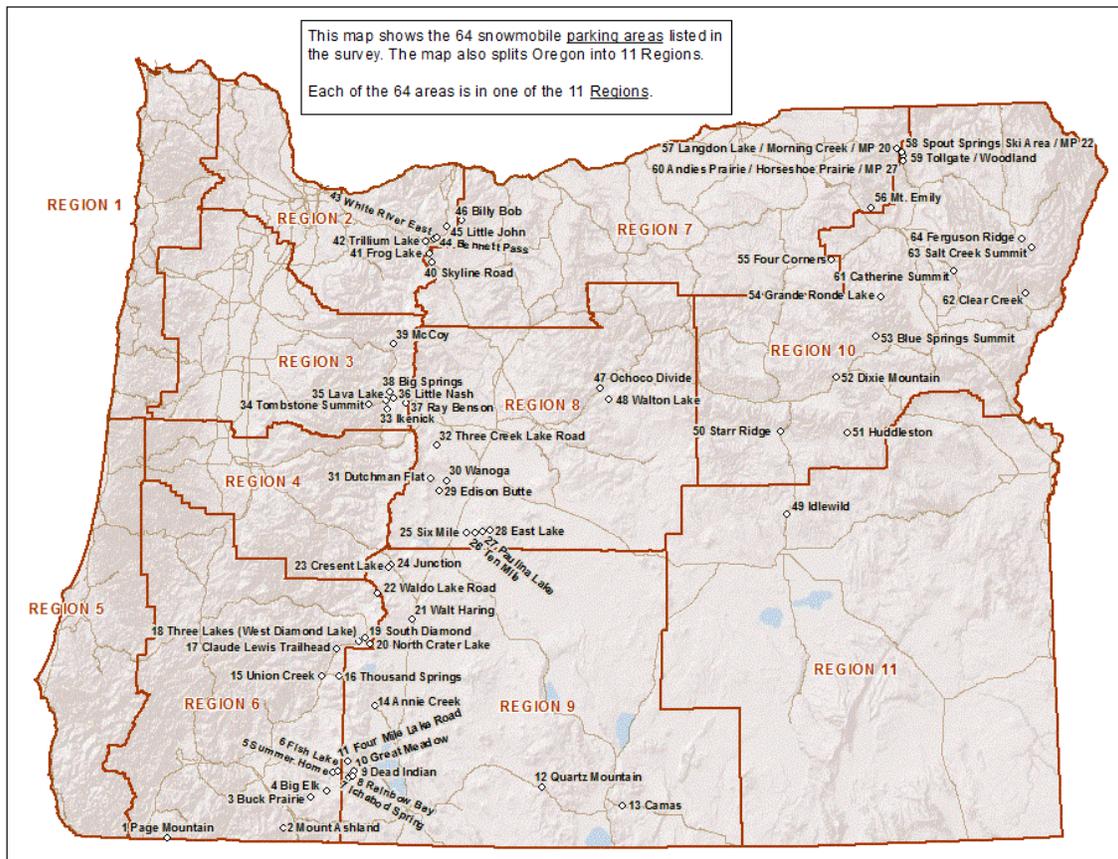
N/A

3. Organization (Please check one only)

- 14% US Forest Service
- 86% Snowmobile Club

4. Using the map below, please identify the trails planning region in the area that you service (write in)

Region # See Report



Q5. Based on your experience with snowmobile trail management in Oregon in the past 12 months, how much of a problem do you think each of the following is on snowmobile trails in your trails planning region? Check one number for each issue.

Issue	Not a problem			A serious problem	
	1	2	3	4	5
Alcohol or drug use	60%	26%	8%	6%	0%
Vandalism	44	34	12	10	0
High avalanche risk	36	40	22	2	0
Dangerous "high marking"	55	29	14	2	0
Riding in closed areas	54	22	14	8	2
Too little law enforcement	56	16	18	8	2
Too much law enforcement	57	4	27	10	2
Closure of snowmobile trails/ riding areas	28	12	12	18	30
Irresponsible/ dangerous/ reckless riding	46	32	10	12	0
Too many people and machines	68	16	14	2	0
Lack of parent supervision of youth riders	70	18	10	2	0
Excessive speed on trails	52	20	18	8	2
Vehicle noise	64	20	16	0	0
Dogs on trails	70	10	16	2	2
ATVs on snowmobile trails	40	22	24	12	2
Cross-country skiers on trails	41	27	18	12	2

Q6. What other issues are important to you and your organization?

See report

Next, please rate the importance of funding need for each type of snowmobile facility/ service in your trails planning region. To identify need, please consider the types of high-priority projects that your organization has identified for development in the coming five-year period.

Q7. Trail managers have limited resources to provide for all types of snowmobile trail experiences. How important is each of the following in your trails planning region? Check one number for each action

Action	Not important			Very important	
	1	2	3	4	5
More signs along trails	9%	7%	33%	28%	24%
More trail maps/ information	11	9	30	35	15
More enforcement of existing rules/ regulations in trail areas	38	33	18	9	2
More trail grooming	11	15	26	28	21
More educational programs promoting safe/responsible riding	15	17	28	30	9
More parking/ sno-parks	7	7	20	22	46
More restrooms in sno-parks	15	15	19	23	28
More RV camping opportunities	15	11	21	28	26
Better snow removal in snow-parks	11	13	30	26	21
Increase trail safety/ reduce hazards	15	15	43	17	11
More avalanche education	19	15	30	30	6
More warming shelters	24	7	27	18	24
Expand existing trail system	19	9	13	17	43
Develop long-distance trails (more than 100 miles long)	22	2	20	28	28
More back-country off-trail riding	11	9	11	23	47
Other (please specify)	0	0	11	0	89

Q8. What other resource needs are important to you and your organization?

See report

**Q9. Finally, how important is each of the following snowmobile trail riding opportunities in Oregon?
Check one number for each opportunity.**

Trail riding opportunities	Not important		Very important		
Long interconnected trails (100 miles or more)	0%	11%	30%	26%	33%
Medium trails (50 to 100 miles)	0	2	23	32	43
Short trails (fewer than 50 miles)	0	9	21	19	51