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DRIFTRUNNERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB

49th ANNUAL OVEST

January 23 – 26, 2020 CRESCO, IOWA

Schedule of Events

THURSDAY

- VOKATY EARLY BIRD RIDE 10 AM
- FUN RIDE FOR SPINA BIFIDA BEGINS
- CLUB TRAIL RIDE 7PM

FRIDAY

- LADIES TRAIL RIDE 10 AM
- CLUB TRAIL RIDE 7 PM

FOR EVENT UPDATES AND DETAILED SCHEDULE SCAN OR CODE





SATURDAY

- BOY SCOUT BREAKFAST 6-11AM
- VINTAGE SLED RIDE @ NOON
- HOCA CANCER FAMILY TRAIL RIDE @ NOON
- BINGO @ NOON
- FOOD AT EXPO CENTER ALL DAY
- TORCHLIGHT PARADE @ 6PM WITH BONFIRE
- SNOWBALL DANCE @ 8PM WITH DJ MIKE DONAHUE

SUNDAY

- FUN RIDE DRAWING & BRUNCH - 11 AM
- CLUB TRAIL RIDE 1 PM

FIND US ON FACEBOOK AT "DRIFTRUNNERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB" FOR EVENT LOCATIONS, TIMES, & UPDATES

For more info contact Brandon or Lee at:

563-605-0141 or 641-229-1588



ABOUTUS

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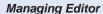
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Groomer Update

RSC officials hope to clear logjam of federal grants available for new equipment



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Favorable Outlook

Lobbyists expect new Senate committee chair to move on single-sticker proposal





Snowmobile Safety

lowa clubs urged to participate in programs the week of Jan. 18-26





Club Profile

Team Iowa Snowmobilers featured in center spread





Keynote Speaker

Spina Bifida's Biller recounts Grand Canyon hike at November convention









Team lowa Trail Map Inside

Magazine Deadines
FebruaryJan. 10
March.....Feb. 7

COVER: Robyn Hefler of Boone, a member of the High Bridge Trailblazers, launches from the starting line at the Team Iowa Ice Drags near Jewell last winter. The traction action returns to Little Wall Lake Feb. 1 for the Region 7 club. Photo courtesy Joni Wheeler.

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BRIAN CARMICHAEL

ISSA PRESIDENT

reetings, lowa snowmobilers. I hope by the time you read this, we all have some good snow on the ground and have had some chances to get out and ride

Again this year, I am looking forward to seeing many of you on the trail, meeting new people and having the chance to talk to them.

I will be trying to do the Snowmobile lowa schedule if there is snow on the ground. So come on out if it's in your area or travel as needed; let's make it a good ride and explore new places together. There are also some really good events coming up across the state like Snow Fest in Cresco and the renamed Midwest Sled Fest in Clear Lake. There's plenty of fun to keep us busy in OUR season of fun. Think snow.

Notify ISSA of Changes

If your club has elected new officers or if you have an address change, please email bepaulus@outlook.com and editor@iowasnowmobiler.



RSC Looks to Clear Logjam of Federal Groomer Grants

by Cameron Hanson

dministrators with the Review Selec-Ation Committee (RSC) of the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program are expected to meet with Recreational Trails Program (RTP) officials in Ames later this month to attempt to clear the logiam of federal grant funding available for snowmobile trail grooming equipment in Iowa.

As explained at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in Burlington Nov. 23, the RSC currently has three outstanding grant awards totaling close to \$800,000. That federal funding cannot be applied toward new or updated groomers until the equipment satisfies the Buy American Act, which was enacted in 1933 to require the federal government to prefer U.S.-made products in its purchases.

The mandate can be lifted, and the last time a waiver was allowed was for the 2016 grant cycle. That move cleared the way last year for the ISSA-managed program to purchase two Prinoth groomers coming off lease for Kossuth and Johnson counties. No groomer purchases have been allowed since.

"Part of what took so long to get approval for those two groomers was determining if we are already in the funnel with the waiver and if they were going to allow the waiver or not," explained Past ISSA President Chris Willey, co-administrator of the RSC. "We've since been told there's no chance of the waiver coming back."

According to the RSC, Prinoth groomers and tracked tractors do not qualify without a waiver. Presently, Tucker groomers are recognized as Buy American by grant officials in other Snow Belt states but not



in Iowa. The difference here is the RTP is managed by the Iowa Department Transportation (IDOT). In other

relevant states, the program is administered by their departments of natural resources.

RSC officials said the IDOT is tiptoeing through the trail grant award process and does not want to jeopardize federal funding for important road projects from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The FHWA also controls the RTP, which was created in 1991 to reserve a small portion of the federal fuel taxes paid by off-road user groups for trail development.

"The IDOT feels like they have a lot to lose if they make a mistake," said Past ISSA President Terry Durby, co-administrator of the state snowmobile program. "They get all of their federal funding from Federal Highways, and that's a lot more than just trail money. It's just not worth the risk right now."

"They are being extra careful, and it is frustrating to us," Willey added.



Members of the Review and Selection Committee of the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program provide an update at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in Burlington Nov. 23. Pictured are, from left, Chris Willey, Brian Carmichael (seated), Terry Durby and Scott Nauman.

Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program Review and Selection Committee

Permanent Administrative Positions

- Chris Willey, Past ISSA President
- Terry Durby, Past ISSA President

Members By Position

- Brian Carmichael, ISSA President
- Scott Nauman, ISSA Vice President

Members By Election

- Randy Magg (Western representative)
- John Kahler (Central representative)
- Todd Sieverding (Eastern representative)

Iowa DNR Representative

Rhonda Fowler

Iowa Recreational Trails Advisory Committee Representative

John Kahler (by appointment)

Please communicate with the committee via email at ISSA.RSC@gmail.com.

Region 7 Director John Kahler was re-elected to a three-year term on the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program Review and Selection Committee at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in Burlington Nov. 23. Nominations were due Oct. 15. He ran unopposed. Candidates are not required to be a member of the ISSA. The eastern Iowa representative is up for re-election in 2020. Western representative Randy Magg was re-elected at the 2018 convention in Okoboji.

Beneficial funding source

The state snowmobile program has relied on RTP funding for groomer purchases for 20 years now. The amount appropriated to Iowa each year is in the neighborhood of \$1.2-\$1.4 million. By rule, those funds are divided among three trail user groups: motorized (30 percent), non-motorized (30 percent) and diversified (40 percent).

Through a cost-share grant application process, the snowmobile program in Iowa has typically received between \$200,000 and \$240,000 annually to purchase snowmobile trail grooming equipment. Using snowmobile registration receipts, the program pays for the equipment up front and then receives 80 percent of the funding back through RTP reimbursement.

"We have to spend the money to get the money back," Willey explained.

RTP grant applications are graded by the Iowa Recreational Trails Advisory Board each October. RSC member and ISSA Region 7 Director John Kahler represents snowmobiling interests on that volunteer board. Earlier this fall, the committee scored 20 applications and awarded \$1.3 million of the \$7.2 million requested. Recipients have up to four years to obligate awarded funds.

"It is important to note the state snowmobile program did not put in for a grant this year because we have three pending, and we are trying to get them settled,' Kahler pointed out at convention.

"We didn't apply for funding this year because we have so many grants in the queue already that we're waiting to get clarification on," Durby added. "We didn't figure it was worth our time, knowing next year we could apply for a bigger project. That's what (the Off-Highway Vehicle Association in Iowa) did a few years ago, and it worked out for them."

Dollars At Work

lowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program

Yvonne Diller had served as the program manager for federal and state recreational trails for the IDOT but retired last year. RSC officials are hoping to meet with her replacement this month to either get grooming equipment approved for purchase or to revise the existing grant awards so the money can be obligated elsewhere in the state snowmobile program.

"Right now, we are looking at other ways to spend the money that would be acceptable," Durby said.

While at IDOT offices, the RSC also wants to complete the process to recognize the ISSA as a "sponsoring agency" for the



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ISSA Region 7 Director John Kahler, a member of the ISSA RSC, leads groomer operator training near Alleman Dec. 14. The class was hosted by the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club. Kahler also certified operators at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in Burlington in November. Two more training sessions are planned this month. See calendar p. 16.

RTP grant application process. Before the ISSA took control of the state snowmobile program in 2017, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) filled that role. Two years ago, Franklin County applied for RTP funding on behalf of the ISSA, and in 2018, the ISSA applied on its own.

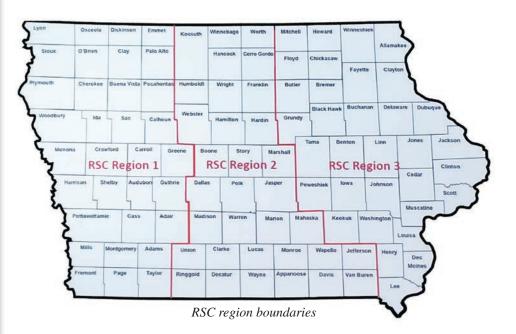
"We have to finalize that the IDOT recognizes us as a sponsoring agent like the IDNR was doing for us before," Kahler said.

Third winter in control

This winter, the ISSA is entering its third season of managing receipts from snowmobile registrations and user permits. The ISSA receives 70 percent of the revenue for trail development, and the IDNR retains 30 percent for law enforcement and education. The IDNR still collects the fees and distributes the ISSA's share quarterly. The RSC oversees expenditures, and its recordkeeping is audited during the off-season.

Snowmobile clubs in Iowa are eligible to apply for trail grant funding from the RSC. The application deadline is May 1. For the 2018-19 season, the program spent \$282,239, including \$54,951 for trail insurance and \$141,432 for groomer operation. This season, the program is working with a FY2020 budget of \$354,967, with \$202,402 set aside for grooming expenses.

See table for the budget breakdown. Trail insurance and sign orders remain



FY 2020 BUDGET

	2 YR COMPARISON	FY 2019	FY 2020
	INSURANCE	\$54,951	\$53,725
	SIGNS DELIVERED BY NOV 5TH	\$14,596	\$13,488
	OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE	\$141,432	\$202,402
	TRAIL DEVELOPMENT	\$6275	\$12,952
	PRESEASON REPAIRS	\$14,985	\$22,400
•	EMERGENCY REPAIRS	\$50,000	\$50,000

RSC budget

fairly stable while the RSC is committing an additional \$8,000 this winter for preseason groomer repairs due to the uptick in grooming during the second half of last season. According to the RSC, every groomer in the state fleet was in operation last winter as volunteers logged more than 21,000 miles on Iowa snowmobile trails.

"All that together put some challenges on our budget," Willey noted. "It was the first time in probably eight or nine years that every groomer in the state was running. And a lot of these groomers were out running for the first time in four or five years and were running a lot of hours too. We were starting to see some repairs come up as well as general operational issues by the end of last season."

As of convention weekend, 14 clubs in Iowa have requested updated grooming and trail maintenance equipment. The RSC is reassigning some machines to fill a few holes, but until the floodgates open on the Buy American stipulation at the IDOT, the

RSC remains in a holding pattern for new or late-model groomer purchases.

"Nothing has been purchased," Willey said during the RSC update at convention. "We don't even know what we can spec out at this point."

"If the groomers have to be Buy American, it will have to be from Tucker." Durby predicted.

As unveiled at the 2018 ISSA Annual Convention in Okoboji, snowmobile clubs requesting new groomers are now expected to cost-share the expense. Depending on year and age, a groomer and drag combination can cost close to \$200,000, and the club match can range from 10 percent of the cost to 25 percent of the cost, according to RSC guidelines.

"We're putting clubs in the driver's seat of what they want," Willey said. "Once we identify the club and you let us know where you want to be in that match, then we can start the process for updating equipment. We have a list with club needs and will work that into our shuffle as we move machines around."

CLUB MATCH

New Equipment-	25% match
Used 1-5 years old-	20% match
Used 6-10 years old-	15% match
Used 11-15 years old-	10% match

RSC groomer match schedule



Rusty Peters, right, of the North Iowa Snow Seekers of Region 3, visits with RSC co-administrator and Past ISSA President Terry Durby following the RSC meeting at the state convention in November. Peters' club currently ranks 10th on the RSC's list of grooming equipment needs in Iowa.

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ISSA Legislation Committee Chair Jim Willey, left, and ISSA Lobbyist Mike Heller look at club maps and advertisers at the Snowmobile Iowa display at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in Burlington Nov. 23. Snowmobiling's economic impact in Iowa is expected to be a major selling point as the ISSA pursues the merger of the registration and trail pass fees in Iowa for the fourth straight year.

Favorable Outlook for Fee Merger Legislation

by Cameron Hanson

nyone who has registered a snowmobile in Iowa this winter knows the trail user permit system remains in effect this season. Otherwise known as a trail pass, the permit allows riders to operate their machines on snowmobile trails, in ditches and on public ice in Iowa.

The permit fee is \$15 plus writing costs. The registration fee is \$15 plus writing costs. A snowmobiler caught without either sticker faces a fine of \$127.50 plus court costs for each infraction. The trail pass is required for out-of-state riders and is technically optional for Iowa residents, provided they don't ride in those three stated areas.

The user permit was created seven years ago as a compromise to a registration fee increase. Annual compliance since its inception has hovered around 65 percent, resulting in lost revenue to the state snowmobile program of approximately \$74,000 annually. For the fourth year in a row, the ISSA Legislation Committee is looking to close that gap.

As ratified at the 2018 convention in Okoboji, ISSA members overwhelmingly support legislation to merge the registration fee and the trail pass into one \$30 (plus writing fees) snowmobile registration de-

cal. The single-sticker proposal has unanimously passed the Iowa House twice but has repeatedly stalled in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

New leadership in that Senate committee has given new life to the effort, and ISSA



Lobbyists Mike Heller and Paula Feltner remain optimistic the legislation will pass this session in Des Moines.

When the 88th Iowa General Assembly convenes Jan. 13, the bill will be carried over from last season, and the only change to its language will be the effective date from 2019 to 2020.

Sen. Waylon Brown (R-St. Ansgar) is the new chair of the Ways and Means Committee and has supported the legislation in the past. He succeeds Sen. Randy Feenstra (R-Hull), who declined to bring the bill up for a vote the previous three sessions. Feenstra is now eyeing the Congressional seat for Iowa's Fourth District.

"Sen. Brown has heard from snowmobilers so I feel pretty good about our chances," Heller said at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in Burlington in November. "I've talked to most of the members on that

committee. I feel we have a lot of support for the merger, and we just need to get it out for a vote. We have a decent opportunity this year."

Heller encouraged snowmobile clubs to invite legislators to meetings to enlighten them on the sport in Iowa and the increased funding needed to make it work, including equipment purchases, insurance and operating expenses like fuel and parts. Central Iowa in particular remains a focus for lobbying efforts as Senate leadership is concentrated in that area.

"We need to do a better job educating legislators," Heller noted. "If you get a chance to invite a legislator to a club meeting, please do so. Let them know what we do. Most legislators don't have a clue what a groomer is. When I say groomer, most of them give me a glazed look. They are also shocked that we have 8,800 miles of snowmobile trail in Iowa."

At convention, Heller spent some time in the Snowmobile Iowa display, collecting trail maps and gathering information to share with legislators from those respective areas. He said he was impressed with the advertising on the trail maps and plans to use this visual to tout the economic benefits of snowmobiling in Iowa.

"Stressing that economic impact to legislators really helps," Heller said. "These maps are great. I'm going to collect as many as I can and show legislators they have businesses in their district which are getting impacted by our sport. I've talked to legislators who simply did not know they had that many snowmobilers in their districts. It does make a difference when they know who you are."

Past ISSA President Jim Willey has chaired the ISSA's Legislation Committee during much of this campaign and admits he has been frustrated over the lack of progress on the fee-merger bill. With another legislative session comes a renewed commitment to see this legislation through. He hopes fellow ISSA members will jump on board as well.

"We need to have our region directors and our clubs get to know their legislators and to contact them," Willey said. "We need to make sure that the legislators know who the snowmobilers are. Let them hear from you. Tell them how important this is. You should be on a first-name basis with your legislator. It's that important."

"We have support from both sides of the aisle," Heller said. "The bill was totally bipartisan in the House, and it should be in the Senate too. We just need to get there. I'm optimistic. People shouldn't be discouraged that we've hit the same hurdle the last three years."

"Snowmobilers have always been known for making things happen," Willey said. "But the last couple years, we didn't get the grassroots support like we needed to. People have been discouraged when there hasn't been any snow. But we have to keep it up. That's our strength. We're known in Des Moines that we are a group who is passionate about what we do. We pay our own way, and we do good things."





International Snowmobile Safety Week Jan. 18-26

The ISSA is joining the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) in observance of Jan. 18-26 as International Snowmobile Safety Awareness Week for 2020. A safety proclamation has been requested from Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, and club-related activities and safety classes are being encouraged at the local level.

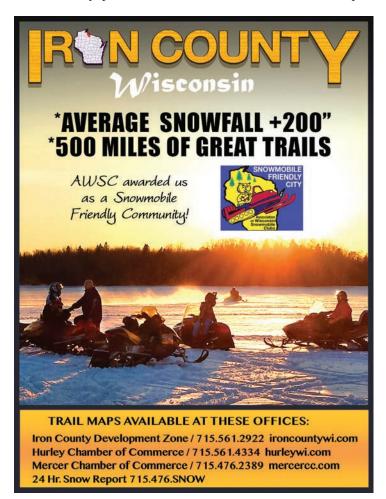
"The purpose of International Snowmobile Safety Week is to expose people to safe snowmobiling practices and to demonstrate how operating safely can prevent mishaps," explained ISMA President Ed Klim. "Snowmobiling is a fun and exciting family activity enjoyed by over four million people across the United States and Canada. The sport is a safe and enjoyable form of recreation if done properly and with respect."

In Iowa, snowmobiles are operated by men, women and children of all ages. Depending on weather conditions, approximately 8,800 miles of snow-covered trails are maintained and groomed by snowmobile club volunteers across the state and enjoyed by a variety of winter recreationists.

Activities and events held during Snowmobile Safety Awareness Week will promote responsible attitudes and actions that will foster the safe, family image of snowmobiling.

"Safe Snowmobiling means riding within your own capabilities, operating at safe and appropriate speeds for the terrain and never drinking alcoholic beverages before or while driving," explained ISSA President Brian Carmichael. "Always wear a helmet and adequate clothing, stay within designated riding areas and always snowmobile with another person, never alone."

Occasionally, problems occur, and snowmobilers should be pre-





You Make Snowmobiling Safe snowmobile.org

pared for all possible scenarios.

"Take along a spare belt, spark plugs and tools to do basic repairs. You also should carry emergency supplies, such as a basic first aid kit, and overnight survival provisions, such as food, matches, flashlight and extra batteries, and shelter building materials," Carmichael recommended. "Most importantly, always use common sense and keep a clear head. Learn all you can about responsible snowmobiling and keep safety as your top priority."

Carmichael said the ISSA is encouraging its member-clubs to sponsor youth snowmobile safety courses and to host other safety-related activities. Ideas and suggestions are available online through ISMA's Campaign Action Manual at www.snowmobile. org. Also posted there is information on ISMA's Safe Riders! program.

Materials that are available from both programs include the following: posters, fact books, a safety video, public service announcements, a website and decals that highlight safety messages and enhance safety education efforts.

"We hope that you will find this web-based information useful in your organization's snowmobile safety campaign," Klim said. "The suggested activities contained there can be modified to meet your club's needs. Any suggestions or ways to improve this manual are welcome. Have a great snowmobile season!"

Safe Snowmobiling Tips

- 1. Never consume alcohol or drugs.
- 2. Become familiar with the snowmobile you ride.
- 3. Operate at safe and reasonable speeds.
- 4. Stay on trails and areas where snowmobiling is permitted.
- 5. Avoid travel on unfamiliar frozen bodies of water.
- 6. Use extra caution at night.
- 7. Keep your snowmobile properly maintained.
- 8. Become familiar with the terrain you will travel on.
- 9. Listen to the weather forecast before you leave.
- 10. Always wear a helmet and proper clothing.
- 11. Never ride alone and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- 12. Carry emergency supplies and learn survival skills.





Club vice president Coyce Carlson

Scenes from the 2019 race. Photos courtesy Jonie Wheeler.



Starter Jason Vansickle



Club president David Eide

Team lowa Ice Drags Feb. 1 at Jewell

by Cameron Hanson

eam Iowa Snowmobilers of Region 7 will be hosting their third annual ice drags on Little Wall Lake at Jewell Feb. 1. The event began in 2018 as an effort for the club to recruit new members and generate interest in snowmobiling in and around Hamilton County.

Their hard work has appeared to pay off. Since the inception of

the ice drags, membership in the club has risen from 43 members to 70 members in 2019. Club president David Eide is hoping to keep the momentum going this winter on the first Saturday in February.

"This is our largest event of the year, and so far, so good," said Eide, who also serves

as a Region 7 assistant on the ISSA Board of Directors. "Participants have been coming from all over and have really made these races into what they are today. We want to keep this going in the right direction."

Featuring two-lane competition, the ice drags typically draw 50 competitors. Classes range from trail sleds to vintage rides to modified machines. Trophies are awarded to the top two finishers in each





class as well as prize money to the 'King of the Lake', the fastest run of the day.

The club works with Hamilton County Conservation Board for use of their facilities at the lake and also secures a Special Events Permit from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Additional insurance is also purchased to cover the head-to-head competition.

While most of the proceeds from the event covered race-day expenses and prizes, the club is able to pocket a little seed money for trail development as well as make small donations to the conservation board and first responders for their assistance with the event.

As detailed on the trail map in this month's center spread, Team Iowa marks and maintains 170 miles of trail in Hamilton, Story and Webster counties. They have approximately 60 miles of secondary trail and connect to neighboring clubs at five locations. The club also shares a trail with the Webster County Ice Breakers of Region 7.

Founded in 1990 and formerly known as the Webster County Snowmobile Club, Team Iowa changed its name and direction seven years ago. Eide said the club's recent success is due to "our loyal members and loyal sponsors." Their growth and positive efforts have definitely caught the attention of Region 7 Director John

"I believe Team Iowa's success is due to a change in leadership and a forward-thinking idea strategy that appeals to today's rider," Kahler said.

For more information on the club or the ice drags, contact Eide at (515) 835-8000. You can also join the club's Facebook group.

Join the ISSA Today!

f you enjoy the sport of snowmobiling in Iowa, you are not alone. In 2019, more than 21,000 sleds registered with the Iowa State Snowmobile Trail Grant Program, and 60 clubs around the state maintained a 8,800-mile trail system.

The glue that bonds us together is the Iowa State Snowmobile Association and its network of 2,224 dedicated family members and associates. Since 1973, our organization has helped to maintain an expansive fleet of groomers and lobbied on behalf of snowmobile-friendly legislation.

Without the ISSA over the past 30 years, snowmobiles—for example—would have been held to a 15 mph speed limit, and

there would not have been any night riding, ditch riding nor access to state parks.

We continue to work to increase funding for trail maintenance and development, and in 2017, our organization assumed control of the state snowmobile trail grant program and of the entire groomer fleet. Our efforts continue, and your support would be greatly appreciated.

Fill out the form below and join the ISSA today.

With your paid annual membership, you will receive a free subscription to the Iowa Snowmobiler magazine, our official publication.

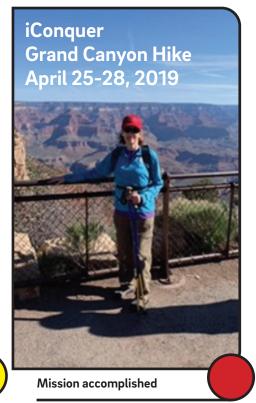
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Biller's 'Adventure of a Lifetime'

Iowa spina bifida ambassador reflects on hike through Grand Canyon in April

by Cameron Hanson

 $\mathbf{F}^{ ext{ragile}}$ and timid are not words most would use to describe Mary Helen Biller of Des Moines. Cautious and attentive, maybe, but resilient and determined seem to be a better fit for this 51-year-old who has lived her entire life with a birth defect known as spina bifida.

Biller was born in 1968 at a time when the local medical community knew very little about this disability. Her prognosis wasn't good. She was the youngest of seven children, and her parents were informed their daughter would not live past the age of two. She had other plans though.

"I was also told I wouldn't be able to walk, run, swim, ride a bike, drive a car or get a mainstream education," said Biller, the keynote speaker at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in Burlington in November. "I was able to check all of those off the list and then some."

Safe to say she defied the odds. Graduating from high school in 1987, she later gained employment in early childhood education; and seven years ago, she joined the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa (SBAIA),



iConquer participants from the national Spina Bifida Association

the ISSA's official charity since 1982.

"This organization has helped me through so many things," said Biller, an unofficial ambassador for the SBAIA. "I hope I am an inspiration to younger people with spina bifida. But I will say they have a lot more opportunities now than I had when I was their age."

Up to the challenge

Spina bifida is a birth defect where the spinal cord does not close properly. The condition leads to lower sensitivity issues, including incontinence, as well as limited mobility. Biller is partially paralyzed on her left side and wears a leg brace as a result. Each step takes some effort.

"I have a tendency to fall—about once to twice a week—even across my living room floor because my left foot barely clears the floor," she admitted before her presentation at the Saturday night banquet. "If I'm not mindful of where I'm walking, I will scrape my foot and go down."

Yet, despite this physical limitation, Biller decided to challenge herself last April and participate in the iConquer Grand Canyon Hike and Adventure. The event was organized by the national Spina Bifida Association (SBA), and Biller was among six SBA

members from across the country to join in the hike.

"I thought, 'Why not? This is doable," said Biller, who was accompanied at the snowmobile convention by SBAIA Executive Director Carlyn Crowe. "I needed a lot of help to get things rolling, and I needed a lot of help with the fundraising."

Biller described the hike as an "adventure of a lifetime." She said



the goal was to build awareness about spina bifida and the need for access to quality health care. Crowe said Biller was an ideal candidate for the challenge, and she and others raised \$8,500 for the SBAIA as part of the April 25-28 event.

"Mary Helen was my first choice for

somebody who I thought would be great to do this trip," Crowe said. "She goes after life with vigor, and she has the best outlook on life that anyone could ever have."

Help along the way

Family members helped raise funds and gain pledges from area businesses. Her niece, Janet Regier, also from Des Moines, accompanied her on the trip and helped her navigate through the flight and other logistics. Biller admitted she has a "bit of a learning disability" and appreciated the extra assistance.

"Had Janet not been there, I would have probably really struggled," she said.

Regier also joined her aunt on the April 27 hike. They chose the Bright Angel Trail, and her guide, Gene, offered her adjustable

January

CALENDAR

- ISSA RSC groomer operator certification class Jan. 5 in the basement meeting room at Farmers & Merchant Bank, 200 N. Devoe St., Lone Tree. For additional information, please contact ISSA's Chris Willey at kioti79@gmail.com or (563) 920-9010.
- ISSA RSC groomer operator certification class Monday, Jan. 6, at 6:30 p.m. at the Pizza Ranch, 104 N Runger, Sheldon.
- ISSA Board of Directors meeting Jan. 12 at 9 a.m. at the Americlnn, 702 Central Ave W, Hampton.
- · Team Iowa Snowmobilers Ryan Carlson Family benefit and fun run Saturday, Jan. 18, at Haman Auction building in Stratford. Live and silent auction items, food and entertainment.
- · Snowmobile Iowa ride Jan. 18 from Rock Falls to Clarksville. Cohosted by North Iowa Snow Seekers/Floyd County Groomers/ Butler County Snow Snoops. For more information, contact Seth at (641) 512-1932.
- International Snowmobile Safety Week Jan. 18-26.
- Driftrunners' Snowfest Jan. 23-26.
- University of Okoboji Winter Games 23-26.
- Theisen's Snocross National Jan. 31-Feb. 1 at Dubuque.

February

- Team Iowa Ice Drags Feb. 1 at Little Wall Lake, Jewell.
- Snowmobile Iowa club ride Feb. 1 at the trailhead in Slater. Hosted by the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club. For more information, contact Barry at (515) 240-5444.
- · ISSA Winter Kids Day with the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa Feb. 2 at 11 a.m. at Huxley. For more information, contact Bruno at (515) 240-3858.
- Driftrunners' Charlie's Chili Feed Feb. 8 on the Florenceville/ Granger trail.
- Midwest Sled Fest vintage LeMans racing Feb. 8 at Clear Lake State Park. Visit midwestsledfest.com for additional information.
- Snowmobile Iowa club ride Feb. 15 at Mount Pleasant. Hosted by the Southeast Iowa Ridge-Blasters. For more information, contact Aaron at (319) 217-6361.



Biller enjoying our favorite sport.

walking sticks to traverse the uneven terrain. Estimating 11,000 steps on their pedometers, the pair walked five miles roundtrip on the same trail, and Biller is proud to say she did not fall one time. There were some close calls though.

'You really had to watch where you were walking," she said. "I took my time and just kind of strolled. They told us to make sure you look down and watch for rocks. There were a few times that I didn't pick my foot up in time and would catch a rock. If I didn't have the walking sticks, I would have gone down on my knees for

Biller said the training she did back home prior to the hike paid off for her on the day of the walk. She said she was grateful for the attention from her guide as well. "He was phenomenal," she said. "He let me set the pace. He let me stop when I wanted to stop and for as long and as often as I wanted to stop. This definitely was not



a sprint."

Never too late to start

Biller said most of her life was spent avoiding physical activity. In school, she was often excused from gym class, and she really didn't exercise on her own until she joined the SBAIA. To improve her stamina, she began working out with Courage League Sports in 2014 and really stepped up her routine when she signed on for the iConquer challenge.

"I began to develop muscle tone that I didn't think I had," Biller said. "I have strength now that I never thought I would have. I'm doing push-ups and sit-ups. I had never done that on my own... ever. I'll try anything once and tell you if I can do again it or not."

In addition to the Grand Canyon hike, Biller has also downhill skied with Adaptive Sports of Iowa and ridden on a snowmobile, courtesy of the ISSA. Biller said she is proud of all of her accomplishments and would not hesitate to do any again. She said she appreciates the support from her family, her community, the SBAIA and the ISSA.

"When I was born, my family was told I wouldn't be able to do these type of activities," Biller said, pausing to hold back her emotions. "It takes the support of family and community and the compassion of these wonderful organizations that I would have never had the experiences I had over the last seven years. I'm truly thank-

Improving quality of life

The SBAIA was created in 1972 and, 10 years later, became the official charity of the ISSA. Since then, snowmobilers in Iowa have raised more than \$300,000 for the organization, including \$10,000 in donations from clubs at last November's state convention.

"We couldn't thank the ISSA enough for all that you do," Biller said. "If it wasn't for all of you, there are a lot of things that we wouldn't have."

"None of the programs we do would be possible without the support your organization has given us over many, many years," Crowe added. "We are very appreciative of your support."

Crowe said spina bifida is a "fairly common" birth defect. Eight babies are born with spina bifida each day in America, and the condition is still the number one birth defect which leaves the person permanently disabled for life. The cause is "relatively unknown," although some factors like diet and genetics can play a role, she said.

Among other "hidden conditions," Crowe said most people living with spina bifida require mobility assistance—namely wheelchairs or crutches—and several of them need to see specialists on a regular basis. Those doctors' visits cost money, and that is where



Biller helped staff the SBAIA booth at the 2019 ISSA Annual Convention in November in Burlington.

the financial support from the ISSA comes into play.

"Spina bifida is not something you catch after you're born or that you develop early in life," Crowe explained. "This is something that babies are born with. At this point, we know there is no cure for spina bifida, but there is treatment for the conditions which come with it. We are always looking at ways to invest our money and to find the best ways to help our people who are living with spina bifida to improve their quality of life."

DONATIONS

ISSA Lobbyist Club Challenge				
Tri-County Snowmobile Association\$401				
Central Iowa Snowmobilers\$350				
Sac County Snow Lovers\$303				
Floyd County Groomers Association\$300				
Bremer County Sno-Knights\$250				
Cedar Falls Snow Hawks\$250				
Chickasaw Sno-Riders\$250				
Eastern Iowa Sledheads\$250				
Snow Pioneers\$200				
Team Iowa Snowmobilers\$200				
Butler County Snow Snoops\$150				
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club\$150				
Dickinson County Snowhawks\$100				
Iowa River Riders\$100				
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Spina Bifida Association of Iowa Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club\$1,550				
Southeast Iowa Ridge-Blasters (Strothman Memorial) \$650				
Cedar Falls Snow Hawks\$500				
Central Iowa Snowmobilers				
Eastern Iowa Sledheads				
Tri-County Snowmobile Association				
Floyd County Groomers Association				
Bremer County Sno-Knights\$250				
Chickasaw Sno-Riders \$200				
Team Iowa Snowmobilers\$200				
Trail Blaz-zers, Inc.,\$200				
Butler County Snow Snoops\$200				
Iowa River Riders\$200				
ACSA Legal Defense Fund				
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club\$250				
Team Iowa Snowmobilers\$200				
Floyd County Groomers Association\$200				
Central Iowa Snowmobilers\$200				
Iowa River Riders\$100				
Sac County Snow Lovers\$100				
ISSA Scholarship Foundation				
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club\$250				
Snow Pioneers\$250				
Butler County Snow Snoops \$200 Floyd County Groomers \$200				
Team Iowa Snowmobilers\$200				
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Dickinson County Snowhawks \$100 Cedar Falls Sno Hawks \$100				
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Cedar Falls Sno Hawks\$200				
ISU Clean Snowmobile Challenge				
Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club\$250				
ISSA Communications				
Dickinson County Snowhawks\$100				
Fundraising year begins at the ISSA Annual Convention in November				

Fundraising year begins at the ISSA Annual Convention in November.

CLUB NEWS

Region 4

Floyd County Groomers

by Amy Hunt, Reporter

Our November meeting was held at Phil and Carol Schrage's shop in Marble Rock after putting up trail signs. A potluck soup supper preceded the meeting. Seventeen people attended. Jan. 18 will be the Snowmobile Iowa ride from Rock Falls to Clarksville. We received the Club of the Year Award this year at convention. Our new maps are here. We have updated the maps at the T's with this year's maps and advertising. Membership dues are due for 2020.



Butler County Snow Snoops

by Seth Bram, President

Hello, fellow sledders! Club members have been busy marking and clearing trail these past few weeks. Some important dates to remember: Jan. 18 is our Ride Iowa event held with the Floyd County Groomers and North Iowa Snow Seekers. Our 3rd annual Snow Snoops Vintage Ride will be held Saturday, February 15th. We had over 40 vintage and 20+ late model sleds that came to enjoy the ride. Hope to see you at these events! Do your nightly snow dance!

dinator Bill Boeckmann.

Region 5

Driftrunners Inc.

by Bob Martinek, Treasurer

It's here! Well, almost anyways. Our 49th Annual Snow Fest starts Thursday, Jan. 23, and goes through Sunday, Jan. 26.

At its core, Snow Fest is about our trails and our trail system. Almost all will agree that when Mother Nature cooperates, we have one of the best around. Our trails are open for all sledders to enjoy. Besides club rides on Thursday morning, Thursday evening, and Friday evening, we have many other events planned. Check our poster advertisement in this issue or our Facebook page: Driftrunners Snowmobile Club.

Most Snow Fest events start from or are headquartered at the Expo building on the Howard County Fairgrounds (west side of Cresco, three blocks north of A&W off Highway 9). Also keep in mind that Snow Fest is our fundraiser for our spina bifida donation. Mostly, tho Snow Fest is just lots of FUN! Thank you, and I hope to see everyone here Jan. 23-26.

P.S. Charlie's Chili Feed follows two weeks later on Feb. 8.



ISSA President Brian Carmichael and ISSA Vice President Scott Nauman joined the Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club at the Spina Bifida Association of Iowa's Walk-N-Roll in October.

Region 7

Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club

by Barry Starmer, President

Another busy month. Maintenance was done on the Pisten Bully. We're ready for snow. Our trails are marked. December's club meeting was another good turnout. The ISU Clean Snowmobile Challenge team gave a great presentation. A big thanks goes out to Aaron Dorothy and the Southeast Iowa Ridge-Blasters for all their work putting on the convention in Burlington. It was such a fun time. Always good to see friends I only see once a year. Some of our members are headed north to ride the week before Christmas.

Hopefully by my next writing, we can ride here in Iowa. Get involved and ride safe.



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Clay County Sno Broncs

President: Doug Alger 912 E 14th St., Spencer, IA 51301 (712) 260-6855

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Lyon County Sno-Lyons

P.O. Box 576, Rock Rapids, IA 51246 President: Walt Dibbern 902 1st Ave, Rock Rapids, IA 51246 (712) 472-3804 walt.dibbern@yahoo.com

O'Brien County Snowtrackers

President: Kelly Jongerius Visit club's Facebook page at www. facebook.com/pages/OBrien-County-Snowtrackers/149959738392476.

Osceola County High Point Riders www.highpointriders.com President: Jeremy Wollmuth 5992 200th Street, Melvin, IA 51350 (712) 461-1510 jeremywoll10@gmail.com

Powder Players Inc

P.O. Box 154, Remsen, IA 51050 www.powder-players.com President: Dee Jay Kellen dkellen91@yahoo.com 712-540-5723

Sioux County Snowmobile Club

Find us on Facebook President: Jesse Wynia 133 W 1st St, Sioux Center, IA 51250 712-441-0934 jesse_wynia@hotmail.com

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snoskimmers@gmail.com Kossuth County Drift Skippers

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Sno-Pak

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President: Lenny Watts

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P.O. Box 27, Northwood, IA 50459 President: Mike Peterson P.O. Box 97, Kensett, IA 50448 (641) 390-1499 petersonex@wctatel.net

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President: Gary Matthias 2161 Rainbow Dr., Waterloo, IA 50701 (319) 235-7667

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President: Nick Winter 2997 Vanderbilt Ave. Waucoma, IA 52171 (641) 330-1134

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schrage@windstream.net www.floydcountygroomers.webs.com **Howard County Stump Jumpers**

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buckarro0149@hotmail.com Mitchell County E-Z Riders, Inc.,

President: Karl Hermann 128 State St., Osage, IA 50461

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Trail Blaz-zers Inc. President: Randy Henniges

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randyhenniges@gmail.com Trails Unlimited

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www.wsaiowa.com President: Morgan J. Kuper 1916 Central Ave., Jesup, IA 50648. (319) 239-0590, mkuper3@itt.net Winneshiek Trail Twisters Inc.

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REGION SEVEN

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Raccoon Valley Snow Chasers

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Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club Saylorville Dam Snowmobile Club P.O. Box 3133, Des Moines, IA 50316 www.saylorvilledamsnowmobileclub.org President: Barry Starmer 602 NE Trilein, Ankeny, IA 50021 (515) 240-5444

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Team Iowa Snowmobilers www.teamiowasnowmobilers.com

President: David Eide 3339 Stagecoach Rd. Stratford, IA 50249 teamiowasnowmobilers@gmail.com (515) 835-8000

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Snowmobile Association County P.O. Box 231, Traer, IA 50675 President: John McKenna 5164 23rd Ave., Mt. Auburn, IA 52313 319-721-5895, jnmckenna1@gmail.com REGION NINE

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ccwwarriors@vahoo.com President: Jerry Meier 1241 Jackson Ave., Tipton, IA 52772 (319) 325-6021

jerrymeier2040@gmail.com

Cascade Snowmobile Club President: Steve Peiffer 916 6th Ave. SE, Cascade, IA 52033

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President: Burgundie McClure 1155 160th St., Stanwood, IA 52337 (563) 945-6217 bassman7333@yahoo.com

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REĞION TEN

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President: Brad Landhuis 3046 210th St., Clarinda IA 51632

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