



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation



2023-2024 Snowmobile Season Report

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NYS SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The New York State Snowmobile Program exists by mandate from the New York State Legislature. The Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has been given the responsibility to plan for the development, maintenance, and oversight of a statewide snowmobile program. See Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation Law (PRHPL), Title D, Articles 21-27.

Rules and regulations applicable to administration of the snowmobile program by OPRHP are found at Title 9 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (9 NYCRR 453-460).

Mission Statement for OPRHP Snowmobile Unit & Trail Maintenance Entities (TMEs) as outlined by law:

§ 21.01. Legislative Findings and Purpose

The legislature hereby finds that it is in the public interest to:

- Register snowmobiles as recreational vehicles for the purpose of enforcement of reasonable provisions concerning their use and control;
- Encourage the sport of snowmobiling as a family activity;
- Promote the proper and safe use and operation of snowmobiles;
- Provide an adequate safety educational program for youthful operators;
- Limit the operation of snowmobiles upon public highways and private property without the consent of the owner;
- Protect and preserve the state's natural resources, including its wildlife, wild forests, waters, and scenic and wilderness character;
- Reduce the effect on the environment of excess noise;
- Ensure privacy of remote areas;
- Afford opportunity for compatible enjoyment of various recreational activities on the state's lands and open spaces.

It is the purpose of this title to promote the safe and proper use of snowmobiles for recreation and commerce in this state by encouraging their use and development and minimize detrimental effects of such use upon the environment.

§ 21.02. Snowmobile Trail Maintenance Entities

Snowmobile trail maintenance entities play an important role in the trail system. As general guidelines, to further promote the proper and safe operation of snowmobiles and the other purposes as set forth in section 21.01 of this article, snowmobile trail maintenance entities should strive to:

- clearly mark and delineate state designated snowmobile trails for which they are responsible;
- encourage riders to participate in available snowmobile educational programs to make riders aware of the inherent risks associated with the sport;
- equip trail maintenance vehicles so that they operate with such warning implements or devices as specified by law;
- hold training sessions each season, for operators of trail maintenance equipment concerning the proper operation of such vehicles;
- provide education for all other personnel charged with trail maintenance, inspection, or patrol duties as to methods to be used for summoning aid in emergencies; and
- maintain for public use trail area information showing the following: (a) the location of state designated trails; and (b) the status of each trail as open or closed. Nothing in this section shall create a legal duty or obligation beyond that which may already exist.

Program funding is authorized by section 21.07 of the OPRHP Law and is obtained through state snowmobile registration fees. The yearly registration fee is \$100, or \$45 with a valid snowmobile club membership voucher. Five dollars from each registration is allocated to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the agency responsible for registration administration. The balance of the registration fee is deposited into a State Special Revenue Snowmobile Account for program purposes, creating the Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund. **Registration fees are anticipated to increase in May 2024. Please refer to the DMV website for updated application and registration requirements: <https://dmv.ny.gov/registration/how-register-snowmobile>**

There are over 10,500 miles in the Statewide Snowmobile Trail System. These trails traverse 45 counties, are maintained by over 220 clubs, and are funded through 52 municipal sponsors. This vast trail network is comprised of lands under the jurisdiction of OPRHP, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), NYS Canal Corporation, the United States Forest Service, and local governments. Many private landowners open their property to snowmobiling with insurance coverage provided by the state snowmobile program.

OPRHP works closely with the [New York State Snowmobile Association \(NYSSA\)](#). NYSSA represents over 220 snowmobile clubs and acts as an advocacy and advisory organization for the snowmobile clubs it represents. OPRHP is also a member of the [International Association of Snowmobile Administrators \(IASA\)](#).

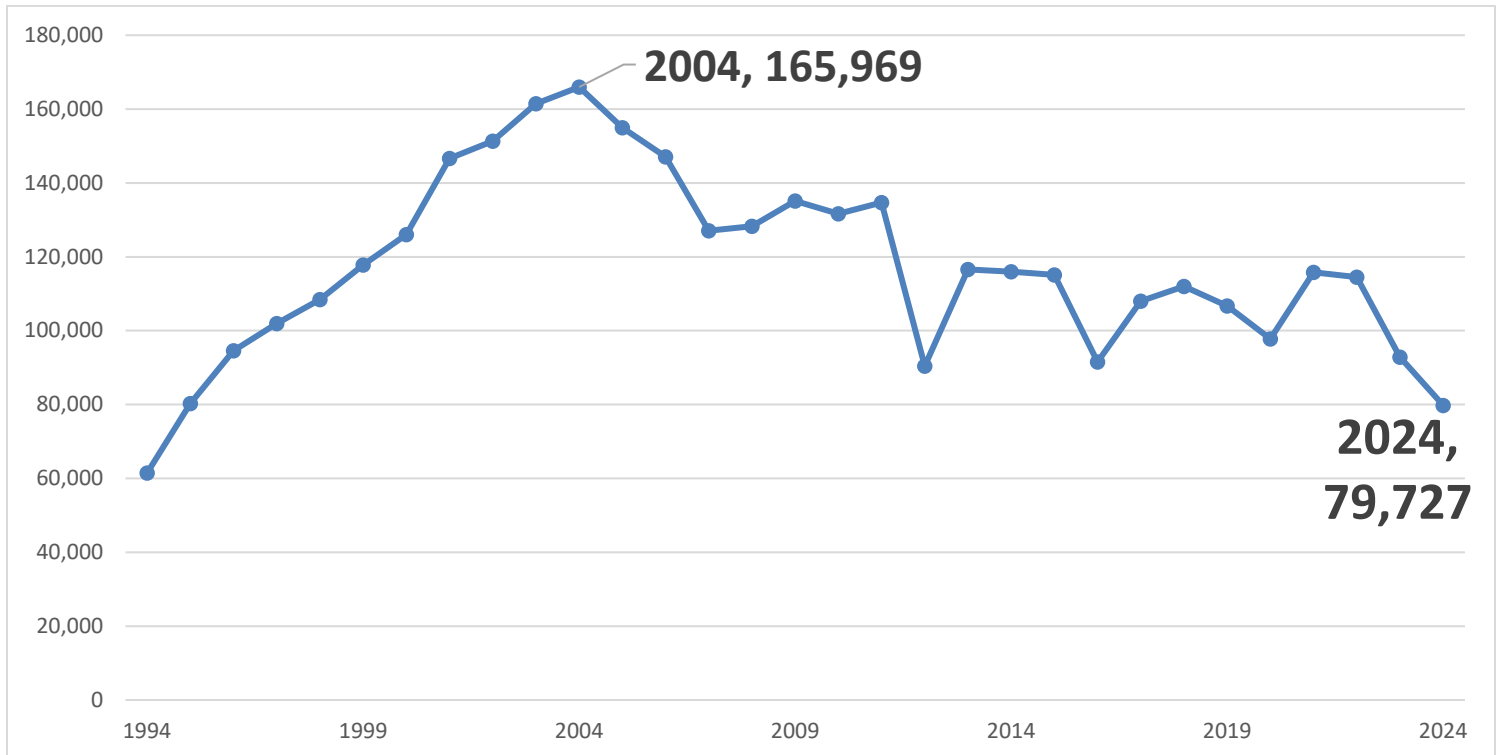
OPRHP has established programs for snowmobile trail grants, snowmobile law enforcement grants, a snowmobile law enforcement development school (NYS SLEDS), snowmobile safety education programs and snowmobile special event permitting. OPRHP also makes premium payments for the statewide trail insurance policy protecting, collects and reports on snowmobile accident reports, and publishes informative resources on snowmobile operation, law, equipment, trail signage, and groomer operation.

Snowmobile Registrations

Based on information received from the Department of Motor Vehicles, 79,727 snowmobiles were registered in New York State during the 2023-24 season. This reflects a 14% decrease in snowmobile registrations from the 2022-2023 season total of 92,841. \$3,976,630 was collected in registration fees, compared to \$4,646,635 in the 2022-2023 season.

The chart on the following page displays total annual registrations since 1994:

Total NYS Snowmobile Registrations (1994-2024)



The following table further breaks down the registration data for in-state registrations, out-of-state registrations, club registrations, non-club registrations, renewals, and originals.

| 2023-2024 Registration Breakdown | Totals |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| In State: | 66,328 |
| Out of State: | 12,889 |
| Originals: | 13,388 |
| Renewals: | 66,339 |
| Club Member: | 64,527 |
| Non Club Member: | 14,690 |
| Total Annual Registrations: | 79,727 |

In-State Registrations vs Out of State Registrations

In State Registrations: Any snowmobile registered by a New York state resident.

Out of State Registrations: Any snowmobile registered by a resident of a U.S. state other than New York or outside of U.S.

Renewals vs Originals

Renewals: Any snowmobile previously registered within New York state.

Originals: Any snowmobile in registrant's name for the first time.

Club Registrations vs Non-Club Registrations

Club registration fee: \$5 to DMV; \$40 deposited into the Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund.

Non-club registration fee: \$5 to DMV; \$95 deposited into the Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund.

Registrations exempt from trail fund: Do not provide revenue.

Snowmobile Trail Grant-In-Aid Program

The Snowmobile Trail Grant-In-Aid Program establishes a mechanism for allocating funds to local governmental sponsors who engage in the development and maintenance of snowmobile trails designated as part of the State Snowmobile Trail System. The OPRHP Snowmobile Unit administers this program. The authorization for the program is based in Article 27 of the NY Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law.

The trail maintenance and development reimbursement grant-in-aid program provides funding to 52 local municipalities and over 220 TMEs. The maximum award value each municipality is eligible to receive is calculated on a rate-per-mile formula, based on the trail classifications provided.

The following table displays the 2023-2024 maximum trail grant award values based on the rate-per-mile formula. High snow funding is applied on top of current mileage based on a thirty year average of NOAA snowfall data.

| Classification | Miles | \$/ Mile | Total |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Corridor A | 6,420 | \$384 | \$2,465,280 |
| Corridor B | 512 | \$315 | \$161,280 |
| Secondary A | 3,137 | \$384 | \$1,204,608 |
| Secondary B | 452 | \$315 | \$142,380 |
| High Snow | 2,543 | \$342 | \$869,706 |
| Total Miles: | 10,522 | Total: | \$4,843,254 |

Corridor Trail: A corridor trail is a “through trail” connecting to other trails in a manner similar to the interstate highway system. This main trail connects villages, towns, cities, counties, and/or state parks, and should pass near service stations, repairs shops, restaurants, and motels. A corridor trail is expected to be maintained in such a manner that will allow it to handle a larger volume of traffic than a secondary trail.

Corridor trails will be wider and feature special route marker signs. Overhead clearance should be maintained at a minimum of 12 feet and sustained grades and slopes at a maximum of 20%.

Secondary Trail: A secondary trail is usually designated to lead to a corridor trail at some point. This type may be one or more trails branching off from the main trail, originating from a local trailhead and providing access to necessary facilities not accessible directly from the corridor trail. Overhead clearance and maximum grade should be the same as the corridor trail.

Class A: Trail treads at least 12 feet wide, wider in curves and must be capable of handling groomer power units and drags that are at least 8 feet wide. They are cleared to an effective height of at least 12 feet. All culverts and bridges must be sufficiently wide enough to accommodate grooming equipment 8 feet wide. Bridges costing \$5,000 or more must be built according to approved engineering designs. The travelled portion of Class A trails can be much wider than 12 feet and must be capable of handling two-lane traffic. Where possible, add an additional 2 feet of width to improve safety in high use areas.

Class B: Trail treads at least 8 feet wide, wider in curves and must be capable of handling groomer power units and drags that are at least 4 feet wide. They are cleared to an effective height of at least 12 feet. Bridges costing \$5,000 or more must be built according to approved engineering designs. Class B trails can be wider than 8 feet. Where possible, add an additional 2 feet of width to improve safety in high use areas.

Important Dates For the Snowmobile Trail Grant-In-Aid Program

June 1st : Submission Deadline for Snowmobile Trail Applications (Phase I)
September 1st: Submission Deadline for Applications for Funding (Phase II)
May 31st: Deadline for Expenditure submissions (Phase III)

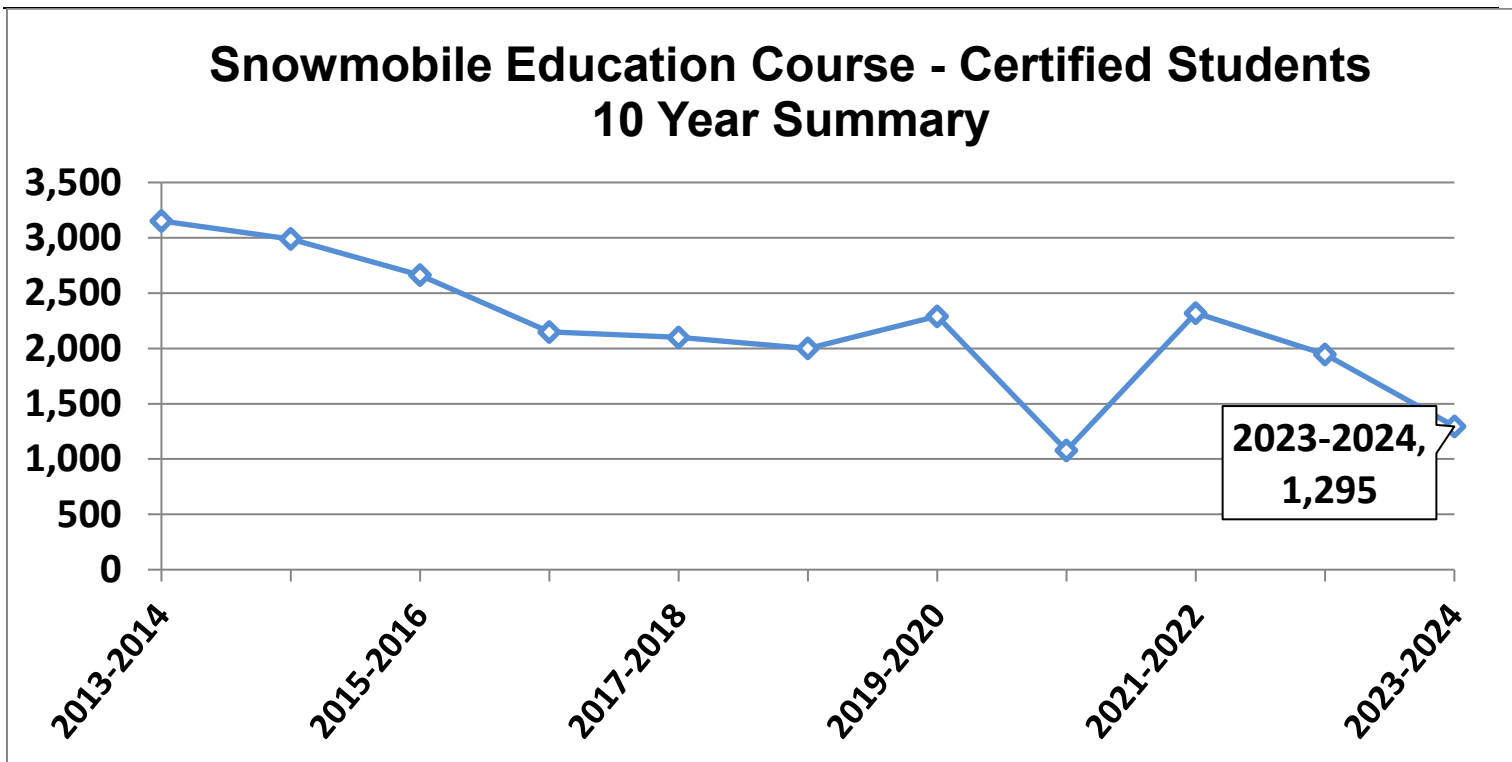
Snowmobile Safety Education

OPRHP has been given the responsibility for the establishment of a comprehensive snowmobile information and safety education and training program, including provision for issuance of snowmobile safety certificates for operation of snowmobiles by youthful operators.

- No person under the age of 14 years shall operate a snowmobile except upon land owned or leased by the parent or guardian. Leased lands as used in this section shall not include lands leased by an organization of which said operator or parent, or guardian is a member.
- Safety course certificates are required for youths, ages 10 through 17, who wish to legally operate a snowmobile on public trails within New York state, with the following stipulations:
 - Youth ages 10-13 must have a certificate and operate within 500 feet of an adult ☐ A person 10 years of age or older, but less than fourteen years of age who holds a valid snowmobile safety certificate may operate a snowmobile if accompanied by a person over eighteen years of age. "Accompanied" shall mean within five hundred feet of the person over eighteen years of age.
 - Youth ages 14-17 without a certificate may operate within 500 feet of an adult, but with a certificate, may operate without supervision ☐ A person fourteen years of age or older but less than eighteen years of age, who either holds a valid snowmobile safety certificate or is accompanied by a person over eighteen years of age, may operate a snowmobile in the same manner as a person over eighteen years of age. "Accompanied" shall mean within five hundred feet of the person over eighteen years of age.

- While ages 18+ do not require a snowmobile safety certificate to legally operate a snowmobile on public trails in New York State, it is highly recommended.

During the 2023-2024 season, 97 courses were held and 1,295 students received certification. The following chart shows the historic trend of students certified by the course:



Snowmobile Law Enforcement Development School (SLEDS)

Law enforcement officers of the state, including Park Police, Sheriffs, local and State Police, Environmental Conservation Officers, and Forest Rangers are authorized to enforce snowmobile laws and regulations.

The Snowmobile Law Enforcement Development School program is designed to present officers with the fundamentals of snowmobile operation and law enforcement, as well as provide an understanding of the knowledge and skills needed by the snowmobile law enforcement officer to function in an effective and professional manner. It is the intent of this program to achieve effective and uniform snowmobile law enforcement practices and policies across the state, while building upon the basic law enforcement and investigative skills of police agency personnel, involved in snowmobile patrol activities which require knowledge of snowmobile-related laws, rules, regulations, and Accident investigation techniques. This is accomplished through a combination of classroom lectures and outdoor field exercises.

The program is held annually and is open to officers from all law enforcement agencies throughout New York State involved in snowmobile patrol and enforcement. In 2024, 42 students representing 22 law enforcement agencies attended the school.

Agencies in attendance included the Erie, Franklin, Fulton, Lewis, Livingston, Monroe, Montgomery, Oneida, Ontario, Oswego, Otsego, Saratoga, Steuben, St. Lawrence, Tompkins and Washington County Sheriff's; NYS DEC Forest Rangers, NYS Park Police, New York State Police, and the Southern Vermont Snowmobile Task Force.

Snowmobile Law Enforcement Grant-In-Aid Program

Every county, city, town, or village, engaged in snowmobile enforcement activities shall be entitled to receive state aid for costs incurred by municipal police agencies in the enforcement of snowmobile rules, regulations, and safety training. Authorized expenditures shall not exceed \$50,000. The maximum reimbursement value is 75% of approved expenditures with a county maximum award of \$37,500. The total amount of funding allocated cannot exceed the sum of \$200,000. If the combined statewide post audit submission total exceeds the \$200,000 limit, individual awards shall be prorated equally.

Below is a summary of 2023-2024 Snowmobile Law Enforcement State Aid Grant Awards by submitting agency:

| 2023-2024 Snowmobile Law Enforcement State Aid Grant | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Participating Organizations | Statewide Amount Requested | Statewide Amount Approved | Statewide 75% Payment Value | Prorated Payment Value |
| 23 | \$476,073.30 | \$342,344.89 | \$256,758.67 | \$200,000 |

| # | Agency | Statewide Amount Requested | Statewide Amount Approved | Statewide 75% Payment | Prorated Payment Value |
|----|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Chautauqua County | \$3,834.54 | \$3,834.54 | \$2,875.91 | \$2,240.16 |
| 2 | Cortland County | \$938.02 | \$938.02 | \$703.52 | \$548.00 |
| 3 | Erie County | \$18,050.07 | \$18,050.07 | \$13,537.55 | \$10,544.96 |
| 4 | Franklin County | \$1,507.85 | \$1,507.85 | \$1,130.89 | \$880.90 |
| 5 | Fulton County | \$3,381.37 | \$3,381.37 | \$2,536.03 | \$1,975.42 |
| 6 | Hamilton County | \$10,349.05 | \$10,349.05 | \$7,761.79 | \$6,045.98 |
| 7 | Hamilton County (Town of Inlet) | \$12,711.54 | \$12,711.54 | \$9,533.66 | \$7,426.16 |
| 8 | Hamilton County (Town of Webb) | \$102,499.02 | \$50,000.00 | \$37,500.00 | \$29,210.31 |
| 9 | Lewis County | \$56,164.87 | \$50,000.00 | \$37,500.00 | \$29,210.31 |
| 10 | Livingston County | \$4,804.70 | \$4,804.70 | \$3,603.53 | \$2,806.94 |
| 11 | Monroe County | \$13,950.56 | \$13,950.56 | \$10,462.92 | \$8,150.00 |
| 12 | Montgomery County | \$3,188.85 | \$3,188.85 | \$2,391.64 | \$1,862.95 |
| 13 | Niagara County | \$7,132.43 | \$7,132.43 | \$5,349.32 | \$4,166.81 |
| 14 | Oneida County | \$30,066.98 | \$30,066.98 | \$22,550.24 | \$17,565.32 |
| 15 | Ontario County | \$7,271.52 | \$7,271.52 | \$5,453.64 | \$4,248.07 |
| 16 | Oswego County | \$16,434.73 | \$16,434.73 | \$12,326.05 | \$9,601.27 |
| 17 | Saranac Lake (Village) | \$21,991.02 | \$21,991.02 | \$16,493.27 | \$12,847.29 |
| 18 | Schoharie County | \$8,500.37 | \$8,500.37 | \$6,375.28 | \$4,965.97 |
| 19 | St. Lawrence County | \$11,443.74 | \$11,443.74 | \$8,582.81 | \$6,685.50 |
| 20 | Tompkins County | \$7,630.18 | \$7,630.18 | \$5,722.64 | \$4,457.60 |
| 21 | Warren County | \$47,260.50 | \$16,229.00 | \$12,171.75 | \$9,481.08 |
| 22 | Washington County | \$2,199.60 | \$2,199.60 | \$1,649.70 | \$1,285.02 |
| 23 | Wayne County | \$84,761.79 | \$40,728.77 | \$30,546.58 | \$23,794.00 |

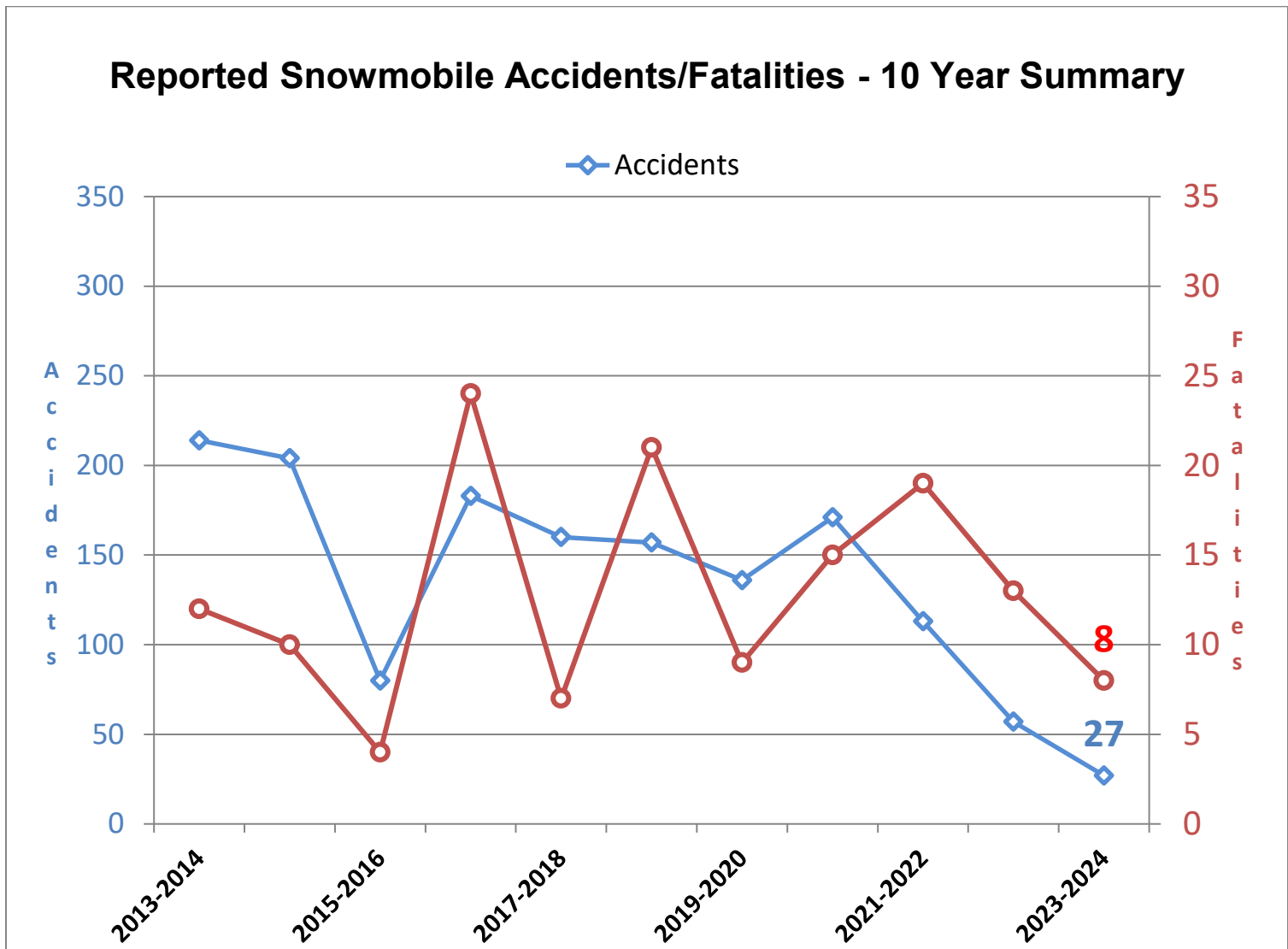
Snowmobile Accident Reports

The operator of any snowmobile involved in any accident resulting in personal injuries or death of any person, or in which property damage in the estimated amount of one thousand (\$1,000) dollars or more is sustained, must report such accident to both an appropriate law enforcement agency and OPRHP. The law enforcement agency will submit an original snowmobile Accident report to OPRHP, who compiles received accident reports into a statistical summary.

Unsafe speed has been the primary cause of snowmobile Accidents. Most accidents continue to involve single-vehicle collisions with fixed objects, such as trees. While OPRHP believes that all fatal Accidents and most personal injury Accidents are reported, it is possible that some, especially those involving property damage only, go unreported. At the time of this publication, there were 35 total accidents reported, consisting of 27 non-fatal accidents and 8 fatalities reported in the 2023-2024 season. For comparison, there were 57 reported accidents and 13 fatalities during the 2022-23 season; in 2021-2022, there were 113 accidents and 19 fatalities.

OPRHP is dedicated to working with partners in the snowmobile community and state legislature to take any necessary actions to address these issues.

The following chart displays the annual accidents and fatalities for the last ten years:



The following table summarizes the date, location, and context of the 2023-24 season’s snowmobile-related fatalities:

| 2023-2024 Summary of Snowmobile Related Fatalities | | | | |
|--|---------|----------|-----------------------------|--|
| Date | Time | County | Type | Leading Factor |
| 01/19/2024 | 10:57pm | Oswego | Collision with fixed object | Alcohol Involvement/Failed to negotiate turn |
| 01/31/2024 | 12:40am | Herkimer | Collision with fixed object | Unsafe speed |
| 02/03/2024 | 2:47am | Lewis | Collision with fixed object | Alcohol Involvement / Unsafe Speed |
| 02/17/2024 | 9:30pm | Oneida | Collision with fixed object | Unsafe speed |
| 02/20/2024 | 7:36pm | Madison | Collision with fixed object | Unsafe speed |
| 02/21/2024 | 11:33pm | Lewis | Collision with fixed object | Unsafe speed |
| 02/29/2024 | 1:42pm | Cayuga | Fell from moving vehicle | Operator inexperience |
| 03/23/2024 | 7:47pm | Herkimer | Collision with fixed object | Alcohol Involvement / Unsafe Speed |

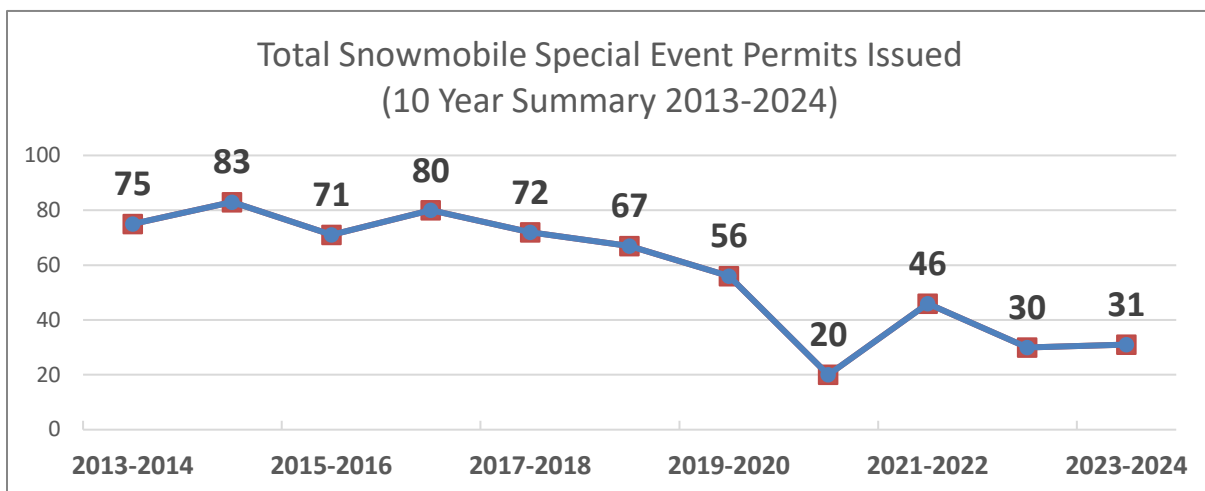
Snowmobile Special Events

A snowmobile "special event" is defined as an organized snowmobile event of limited duration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule and in which public interest is generated. An OPRHP-issued permit allows participants to operate snowmobiles at special events (including on-site practice) with exemption from registration.

The sponsor of a snowmobile special event must secure a permit from the Snowmobile Unit. Before applying for a permit, written permission from the landowner must be secured and any other potentially impacted parties must be notified. It is the responsibility of the person in charge and the event sponsor to plan and undertake the event with the utmost regard for the safety of the participants and spectators.

The Special Event permit application and instructions are available under “Applications & Forms” on our webpage: <https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/snowmobiles/documents.aspx>

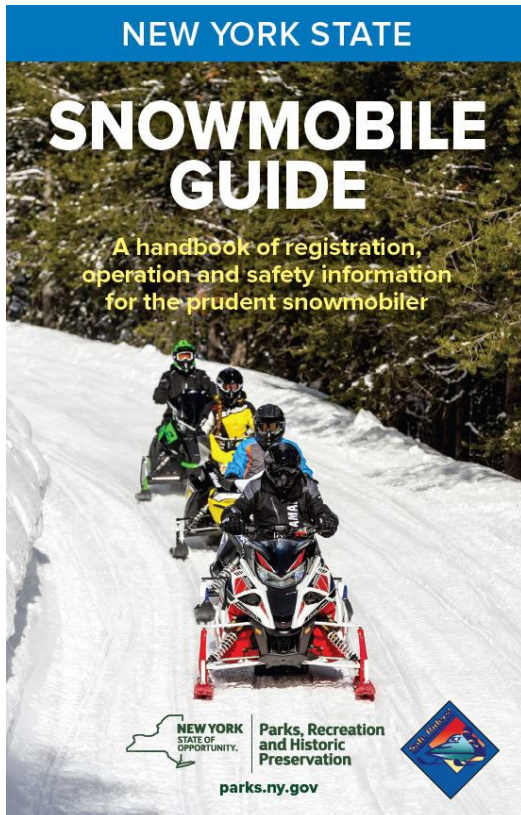
The following chart illustrates the annual number of special event permits issued for the past ten years:



Snowmobile Publications

Publications can be found on our website at <https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/snowmobiles/documents.aspx>. Publication materials can also be requested by sending an email to our unit mailbox at Snowmobile.Unit@parks.ny.gov.

New York State Snowmobile Trail Signing Handbook: outlines a comprehensive and uniform system of trail signing across the state. The objective of trail signing is to enhance the safety of persons, vehicles, and property; improve travel within and between trail systems by maintaining consistent standards; increase comfort and confidence in navigating the statewide trail system; and promote recreational snowmobiling trails.



New York State Snowmobile Guide: Serves as a snowmobile resource guide, with over 50 pages of useful information on snowmobile equipment, rules, regulations and registration. Check out the interactive guide under “Training Manuals & Informational Guides” on our webpage.

Guidelines For Snowmobile Trail Groomer Operator Training

A Resource Guide for Trail Grooming
Managers and Equipment Operators

Snowmobile Trail Groomer Operator Training: Serves as a resource guide for trail grooming managers and equipment operators.



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