

Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club 52nd Anniversary & 8th Annual Vintage Show & Ride

Feb 22, 2020

The hustle and bustle of 20 plus club members that came together on Friday the 21st at the OHSC club house, made quick work of all the prep for the show. Everything was in tip top shape and we were done in about 4 hours and ready for the early morning of "vintage show day" 2020!

Mother nature was really on our side this year, as we arrived on Sat Feb 22nd 2020 at the Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile club grounds at around 7am, greeted by pretty much perfect Michigan winter weather - a nice white snow base thanks to several storms over the last week and half, and clear sky above that slowly yielded to some of the most gorgeous Michigan Blue Bird sky you could ask for.

Seemed so very serene and peaceful, albeit very brief. But let the fun begin- by just 7:10am the trucks and trailers of sledder's from near and far started arriving for our 10am show--- yep almost 3 hours early—I guess they were as excited as we were.

The campfire was soon started, and the ladies inside were already brewing coffee and hot chocolate for the cold thirsty hundreds of visitors filling our parking lots.

The first display sleds were on the ground by about 7:30am and that eventually grew to an all time high for us of 249 registered show sleds from 99 individuals from all around the Great Lakes. This did not include the approx. 40 or more old show sleds that folks didn't register, and the 100 to 150 new sleds that visited us throughout the day.

The crowds this year were larger than ever, with an estimate of 1000 people attending and enjoying the day's events. We served 600 plus world famous "rake dogs" with all the trimmings, chips and hot drinks, all for donations to the club.

At 12:30pm the crowds gathered as we had a short ceremony in honor of 4 previous members who had passed away recently. We gave a brief story of each of their lives, family and their commitment to the club and the sport of snowmobiling. There were many immediate family members in attendance, and many brought picture boards of their lost love one enjoying his favorite hobby - snowmobiling at Ogemaw Hills. All the family members were pleased and appreciated this memorial. We also printed and gave away 250 stickers with their names and "in honor of" to family and guests.

Next in order was the drawing of the winning 50/50 ticket with a total of just \$1000. A young guest drew the winning ticket and the winner graciously donated back half of his winnings, so club netted over \$750 from this (thank you Russ K.)

Then another youngster from the crowd came up and drew the winner of the annual vintage sled raffle, this year the winner had a choice of a nice 2 owner 1983 Yamaha SS440 snowmobile or \$500 cash prize. The winner was not present, but he is a friend of one of our groomers from down near Novi MI and he knew his buddy wanted the cash. So, the raffle sled will now be sold to help defray the costs.

So then, next on the list was the highly anticipated vintage ride - what with perfect snow and weather conditions it was time to rally up and head out. Everyone was ready and chomping at the bit to go - we were honored to have Don Carroll (one of our long-time board members - decades long) lead us on the parade laps around the parking lot with his son's 1977 Ski Doo RV. It was an emotional ride to say the least.

This sled was bought new by his son in '76, and his son sadly passed away in 2019 after having sold the sled to our own Bryan Lehr. Bryan spent a full year restoring this thing to beyond showroom condition and surprised Don and his wife Chris with it as a memorial to their son. The extended Carroll family was there - at least 4 generations of sledders paying respect to their lost loved one. This is what snowmobiling is all about—great family time and memories.

Our parade laps were packed to the max, having us start out running 2 rows side by side, with both ends of the line up almost connecting before we split off on Trail 6 out into the great trails of Ogemaw Hills.

Shortly after 130pm we had 114 vintage sleds cross over Rose City Road, as we headed out for our guided ride. Everyone really enjoyed our beautiful Ogemaw Hills trails and sights. We stopped for a bit at the "ghost town" Tucker cemetery, and then continued north up trail 6- eventually stopping and enjoying some stories and laughs together, as well as for a few staged photos.

We had riders ranging in age from their mid-80's down to a young girl of only 8 years old. She helped restore and display (and yes rides) her own 1972 Arctic Cat 305 Panther- painted all pink and aptly named "Pink Panther"—complete with lots of great additions to her display like a stuffed Pink Panther toy and more. She made the trip in grand style- while her dad may have had a couple of trail side repairs on his Massey Ferguson sled—just saying. The "IndyDoo" family shows up in style with everyone on an old sled and always willing to help out.

Yep, there were a few break downs and trail side repairs (that's always a part of the adventure) but only 3 of the oldies had to come back on a rope. Three out of 114 is amazing odds and accomplishment. Once back to the club by about 3-3:30pm everyone began slowly loading their sleds and breaking down displays. No one was in a real rush as the weather continued to shine on all of us- with the sun starting its downward trip in the west sky- it was still a blue bird Michigan Winter day!

We had some folks that didn't leave the parking lot for their trip home until almost 6pm.... Didn't want the fun to end.... And already planning their trip here for Ogemaw Hills 2021 (Feb 27th, 2021 mark your calendar)

Our ladies at the club clothing display inside sold nearly \$1200 worth of club gear to excited visitors wanting to proudly show their OHSC colors. The display folks were treated to one of our "Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club Old Sled Heaven since 1967" vintage t-shirts or beanie hats as a thank you for helping make the show a great success.

Of course, we want to send huge thanks to all from OHSC who helped in any manner—it's a big team effort, especially as it continues to grow!! Keep up the great work- I am proud of all of you and this club. (Doug)

We do want to thank our sponsors for this years event, Griffin Beverage of West Branch for the great banners/posters, Viking Marine of Hubbard Lake for the “world famous rake dogs” , West Branch Golf and Country Club for donation to pay for raffle tickets, and Quality Inn of West Branch for the discounts and help with community involvement from Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau. West Branch has really stepped up to help us make this a destination event – and a great destination for all your snowmobiling needs- less than 2 hours from Metro SE Michigan.

Mark your calendars for Ogemaw Hills 2021-- Saturday Feb 27th, 2021!! See you all then.

Doug Lubahn, Event Host/Trustee OHSC