

MidMichigan Health Partners with Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club for First Sasquatch Gravel Chase Bike Race

WEST BRANCH, Mich. – MidMichigan Health Foundation and the Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club (OHSC) will host the USA Cycling-sanctioned gravel race to benefit patients served at MidMichigan Medical Center – West Branch. The inaugural Sasquatch Gravel Chase will take place on Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021.

Nicole Potter, director of fund development and cyclist, is excited about this event and the chance to partner with OHSC. “We had planned for a race last year but were unable to hold it due to restrictions as a result of COVID-19,” said Potter. “As with many events in 2020 it was hard to let it go, but we knew it was in the best interest and safety of all. Now, we are coming back strong and are looking forward to a unique event in the beautiful Ogemaw Hills.”

Cyclist may choose a 40-mile or 18-mile race on gravel. Hills and elevation will prove to be challenging to participants riding gravel, mountain, cyclocross or fat tire bikes. Winners in each category will be awarded.

Doug Lubahn, trustee, OHSC, stated “We are very excited to host this event at our club grounds. We all love the outdoors and are community-minded. This will be an awesome event that will highlight our beautiful Ogemaw Hills and the West Branch community while raising money to support our Medical Center.” Lubahn has served as a pit crew member at several Michigan Ice Man competitions and sees great potential in the Gravel Chase as another event that will have huge appeal and success.

Race co-director Jakub Malarz, a family practice physician at MidMichigan Health Park – Bay and cyclist, looks forward to attracting participants from all over the state. “This is going to be a tough but beautiful course,” stated Malarz. “The hills and rigor of these events should bring some seasoned riders to West Branch.”

John Dantzer, city manager of West Branch, appreciates the collaboration at work to bring this event to the area. “As the West Branch community, we take pride in our great outdoors and are excited to share it with all of our visitors,” he said. “This race event is important to our community members, and I am grateful for the MidMichigan Health Foundation and all those taking part to make it happen.”

The Sasquatch Gravel Chase has a limit of 300 riders, and registration will be accepted online only at www.midmichigan.org/bikereg. A reduced rate can be secured May 1 through June 30, a USAC rider license is not required for this race. All registrations must be completed by Aug. 1, and contactless packet pick-up will begin at 7:30 a.m. on race day at Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club, 2846 North Fairview Road, West Branch.

Those interested in learning more about the race location and reviewing a race map may visit www.midmichigan.org/gravelrace.

Those interested in more details about the race or to participate as a sponsor or volunteer may contact Nicole Potter at (989) 343-3694 or nicole.potter@midmichigan.org.

CAPTION: Nicole Potter, director of fund development, and Jakub Malarz, M.D., co-race director (center), are pictured with the Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club members. Members are excited to host the inaugural Sasquatch Gravel Chase in West Branch on Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021 at their club.

MidMichigan Health, a non-profit health system headquartered in Midland, Michigan, is a leader in providing award-winning, high-quality care to the 23-county region it serves. With Medical Centers in Alpena, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Midland, Mt. Pleasant and West Branch, MidMichigan Health provides a full continuum of care across a wide array of settings, including urgent care centers, home health, virtual care, as well as medical offices in more than 30 specialties and subspecialties including cardiology, hematology/oncology, orthopedics, vascular surgery, family medicine and more. MidMichigan Health demonstrates its commitment to the future of medicine by partnering with leading institutions to offer medical education programs that train medical students, physicians, nurse practitioner and physician assistant students, nursing students and other clinical experts for our region. Its more than 8,800 employees, volunteers and health care providers work together to create healthy communities through solutions designed to meet the ever-changing needs of the 938,000 residents in the health system's service area. In fiscal year 2020, MidMichigan Health provided more than \$91 million in community benefits, as well as supported its patients and families with new equipment, services and programs with funds raised by the MidMichigan Health Foundation.

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