

## 2023 Ogemaw Hills 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary & 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Vintage Snowmobile Show & Ride

Sat Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 2023.

OHSC celebrated another fantastic milestone day in the beautiful Ogemaw Hills. Think of that for a moment, our club was founded in Dec 1967- over 55 years ago. The club has served the sport and the West Branch and surrounding communities without a break in service for a long time. All done with volunteers who share two passions- snowmobile and Michigan's winter wonderland and serving our local community. Many may not realize it, but snowmobiling is a \$2.5 Billion dollar annual industry.

The members of OHSC have surely stepped up to the challenges of hosting an event like this- with over 25 members helping out on our "prep day" – the day before. We had the club ready for the masses in a few short hours.

Event day, Saturday arrived and we had some fresh snow- that caused some traffic delays for many coming from all around Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and yes some really long distant guests from Florida and Georgia. Our grand opening and flag ceremony this year was extra special as we were treated to a live National Anthem sung by 10 members of the choir from Surline Middle School, led by Ms. Summer Paige- the kids did an amazing job. We also had a 20ft X 30ft US flag being held up for display by about 20 club members, while Walt our Sgt. At Arms raised our clubs flag. It was a very proud experience.

The crowds and old sleds continued to arrive and by noon we had over 340 sleds from the 50's, 60's, 70's and newer on the grounds, with a crowd of over 1500 enjoying the days old time Michigan winter events. The bon fire, hot drinks, world famous "rake dogs" and others snacks were enjoyed by all throughout the day. We had a local Lupton Kettle Corn team on hand making their excellent carmel and kettle corns! Our OHSC ladies made over 10 gallons of Hot cocoa for all to enjoy!

Our memorial service paid tribute to 5 of our recent members who had passed, including one of our co-founders- Mr. David Hufstедler. Family from each of those past members shared in some of their great memories and the legacy that this club has provided to their families. Snowmobiling is a multi-generation sport- evident today with many folks having 3 generations with them at the show- all wearing big smiles.

The club raffles off a small youth snowmobile every year- as a fund raiser for our annual college/trade school scholarships, shop with a cop, Eastern Michigan food bank West Branch, and many other local charities we help support every year. Speaking of multigenerational sport, the winner of this year's Raffle Ticket was Elyse B. the 4-year-old grand daughter of a club member from down state. Her brother and sister came up to claim the prize with smiles from ear to ear.

Another really fun family story from this years show was a family that came up from Georgia with their parents, and their grandparents from Florida made the trip too. This was the first time the two grandkids 8 & 6 had seen or enjoyed snow! They made a full trip of it- going skiing, tubing, skating etc earlier in the week- but the highlight according to their thank you letters was the time spent at OHSC and going snowmobiling. Carsen H (8) and Crew H. (6) from Peachtree GA got to ride and drive snowmobiles from the 60's and 70's and both went on the guided trail ride too. These two are now excited fans of this sport and can't wait to come back to Michigan. Both of them shared videos and photos with their teachers and classmates- and even commented that it was the "best part of the trip for sure" .

The trail ride was great, with 140 old sleds making the 20-mile trip into our beautiful Ogemaw hills, and most coming back under their own power. A few had to be towed back – but still with smiles abounding. One fella had his first sled break down a short distance from the club, so he got towed back and grabbed another from his herd and headed back off on trail 6- only to have that one break down further out- so towed back again! But came back both times with smiles and chuckles!

The trail ride was back to the club by late afternoon, and everyone was packing up and headed home. The stories and laughter could be heard everywhere- all sharing in their day's events and great times here at OHSC!

Our club gained many new members, and everyone pitched in to our donations buckets to help support our annual efforts. We are already working on next years event, which will be Sat Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 2024! We do have a gorgeous 2014 Polaris 120cc youth sled that is practically brand new- and we will be selling raffle tickets for that sometime soon.

Thanks to everyone that came and helped make it a great day.

Doug Lubahn, OHSC Trustee/ Show Host.