



Montana Snowmobile Association is formally stating our opposition to the plowing of HWY212 also known as “the plug”, east of Cooke City. MSA represents 26 clubs and 520 registered members in Montana, the Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club in Cooke City is one of our 26 MSA clubs.

This topic has come up almost every year for the last 40 years with the same conclusions, not feasible, as there has been no changes to effect that assessment, with the exception this year of several very well funded businesses with the out of state deep pockets needed to buy this decision.

Snowmobiling in Montana is a 100 million dollar per year industry, and 26 billion annually in the United States. International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association “ISMA” tracks snowmobile sales across the world and has shown that sales have stayed the same or slightly increased in the west and mid-west for the last 10 years. Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks states that Cooke City sells more winter trail passes than most other communities in Montana, very much on par with West Yellowstone, arguably the snowmobile capital of the world. These numbers suggest that the claims of decreased snowmobile tourism in Cooke City are somewhat suspect or a result of other possibly temporary reasons such as the pandemic or historic floods.

It doesn't appear enough consideration is given to the uniqueness of Cooke City. A large part of this uniqueness is that it is “an end of the road” location with world class snow and challenging terrain. Cooke City has been rated among the top 10 best snowmobile destinations in most polls conducted in the snowmobile national community:

In 2004 Sno-West rated Cooke City, Montana the number one snowmobile destination in the United States.

Snowgoer magazine Feb 2022 voted Cooke City in the top 10 snowmobile destinations.

Snowest Destination: Cooke City is the End Of The World

That's Cooke City, MT July 2015. Well, in the wintertime, the answer would be every snowmobiler's paradise-Cooke City. After Dec 1st, there is only one way in or one way out of this quaint little town, unless traveling via snowmobile or other tracked vehicle. This really does give a visitor the feel of being at "the end of the earth" As the local saying says "Where the road ends, the fun begins"

I would also like to add that Cooke City is known for the "Steep and Deep" back country snowmobile riding. While this is very true, it was again brought to our attention that many trail riding enthusiasts like to use the several miles of groomed trails that are from Cooke City to the Top of the World in the Beartooth Range. If HWY212 is plowed, and no viable groomed trail is presented, the trail riding enthusiasts will also lose this connection with Cooke City and or the Top of the World.

Montana Snowmobile Association asks that you consider the same action that happened in 2012 at "The Summit" (These documents can be provided) which was "No Changes". We do not feel that there is sufficient local interest nor state interest to make such a controversial change to the current plowing status. We ask that you wait until the study's are completed and all options are investigated before and action is seriously considered.

If the talks progress to where a set down meeting will be happening, we ask that MSA and the Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Cub get an invite to the table.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

Fred Bailey
President,
Montana Snowmobile Association