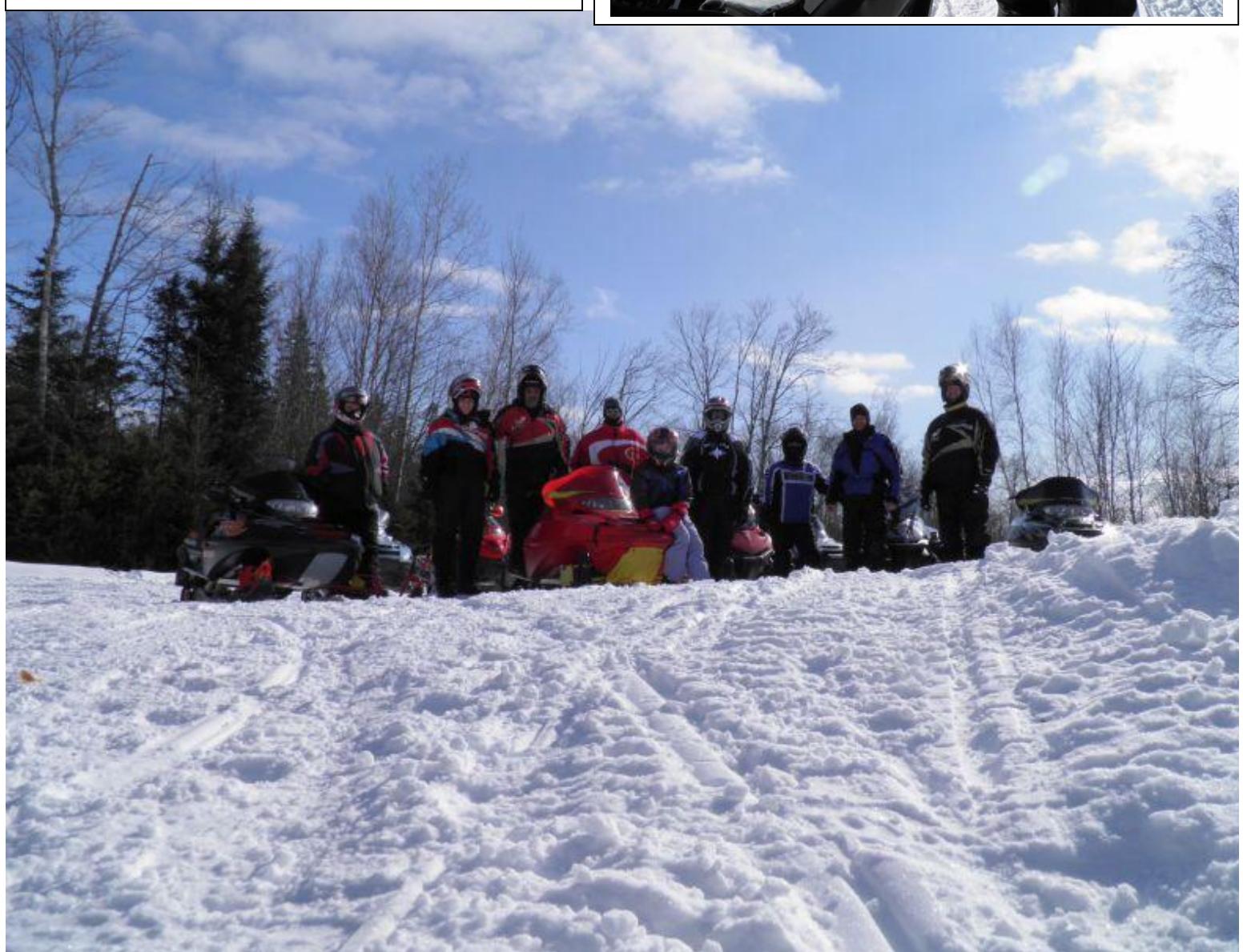


### Day one

Pretty much a set up day. Drive up, get the groceries, get settled in, etc. The first immediate concern was that when they say "sleeps 6" they mean 3 couples. But with the couch and air mattresses, we worked it out.

In all it was a fantastic time. Island Falls is a great hub. Shin Pond area was EXCELLENT. Me, Pete (Popeye), Vermont John, and Casco contingent (Matt, Brian, and Cary (Chef King)) arrived Saturday late afternoon to setup house. Kim (Matt's wife), Madison (Matt and Kim's daughter of pre-teen age), and Donna (wears lipstick, but rides as well as any of us) left Casco 4AMish to make the day's ride.



## Sunday, The Real Day One. Shin Pond Area

Madison had recently read the story about the hikers that got lost on Kathadin so the riding plan was easy. Head for the lookout. We headed for the big lookout near Bowlin Camps.

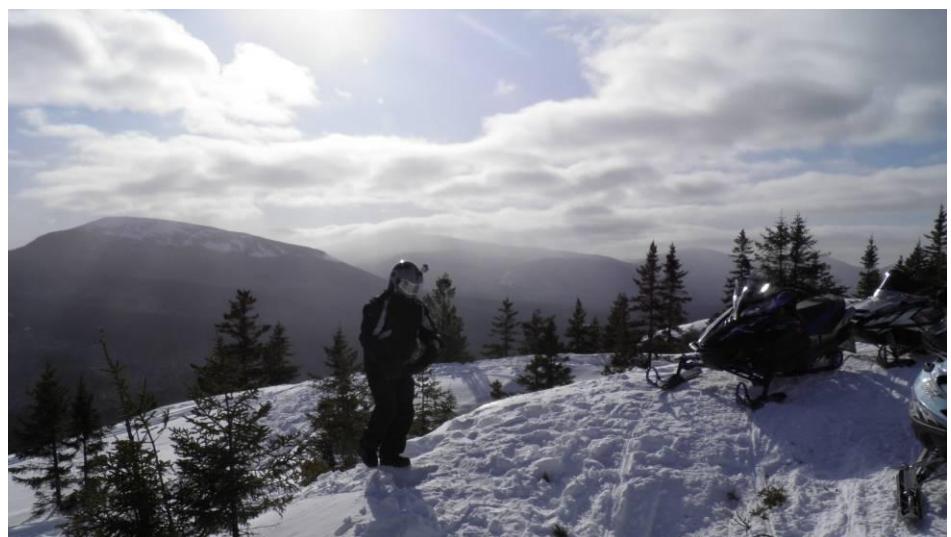
Unfortunately, Madison had had enough by the time we got to Shin Pond and Matt, Kim, and Madison turned back for Island Falls. Too bad, because we found out that the other two closer lookouts are just as good, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

So, we carried on to the lookout. A group of people saw I had a map and came over and asked what was what. They had strange stickers on their sleds that we didn't look at too close. Figured they were Canadian's. Coming down, we encountered them again. One of them had flipped her sled. Brand new Ski Doo. Big lesson, be very careful when you get a new sled. Get used to it first. I know that well going from an Edge to an IQ.

She was aware, but blurry vision. There was an EMT in the group behind us so my aging first aid services were quickly retired.

Finished the day with a comfortable 153 miles of fantastic trails. 9-10 on a scale of 10 all day.

Fast long smooth sweeping corners. A few places where airbornness is an option!

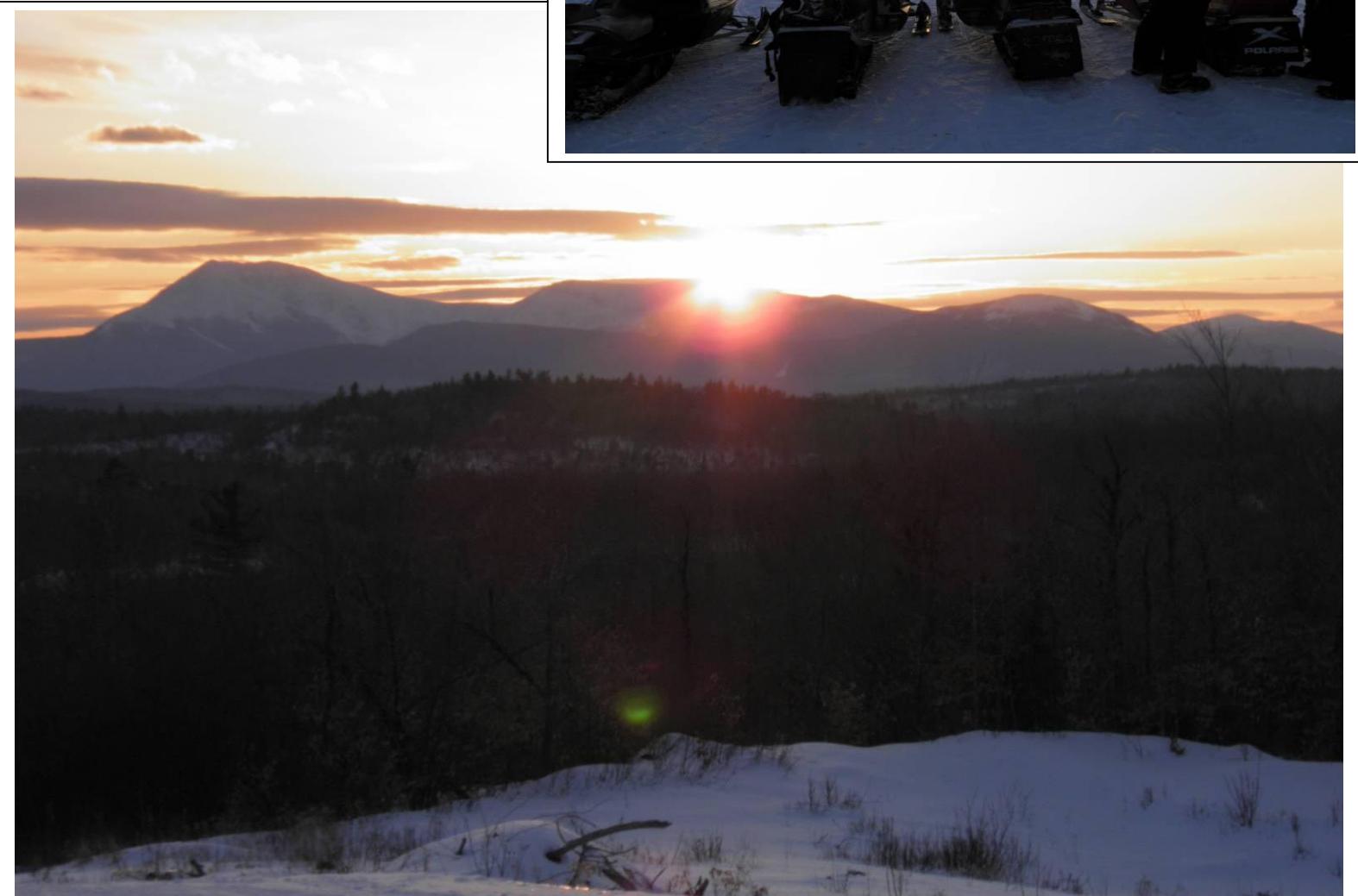




Monday - On the trails before the crack of noon again! We took the long way to Houlton on ITS 83 - short way back. Both ways go past Phil's place. 150 miles.



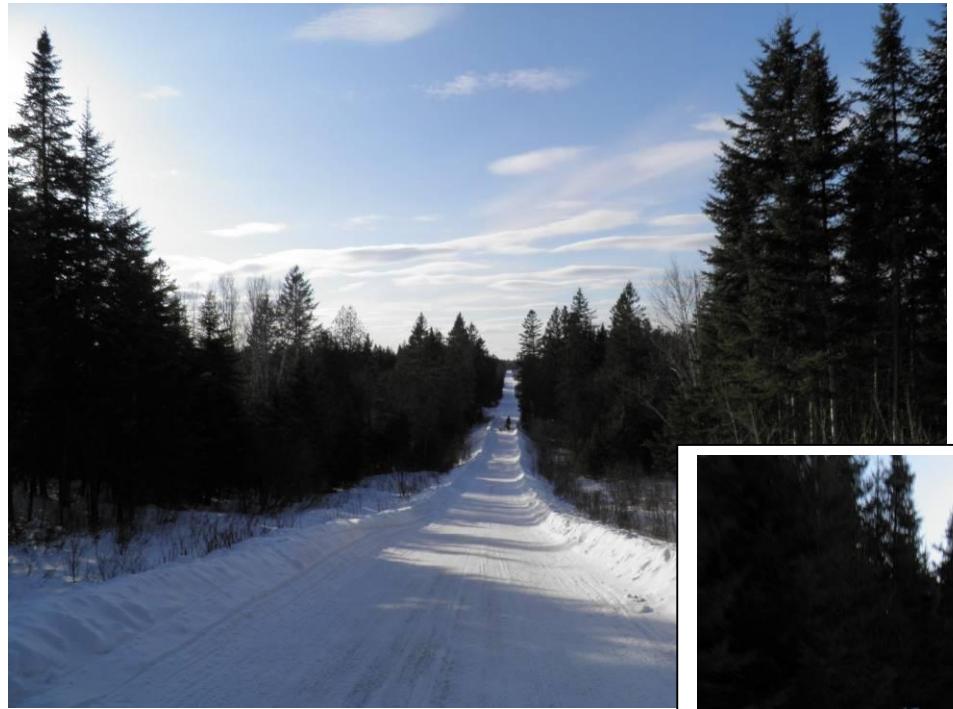
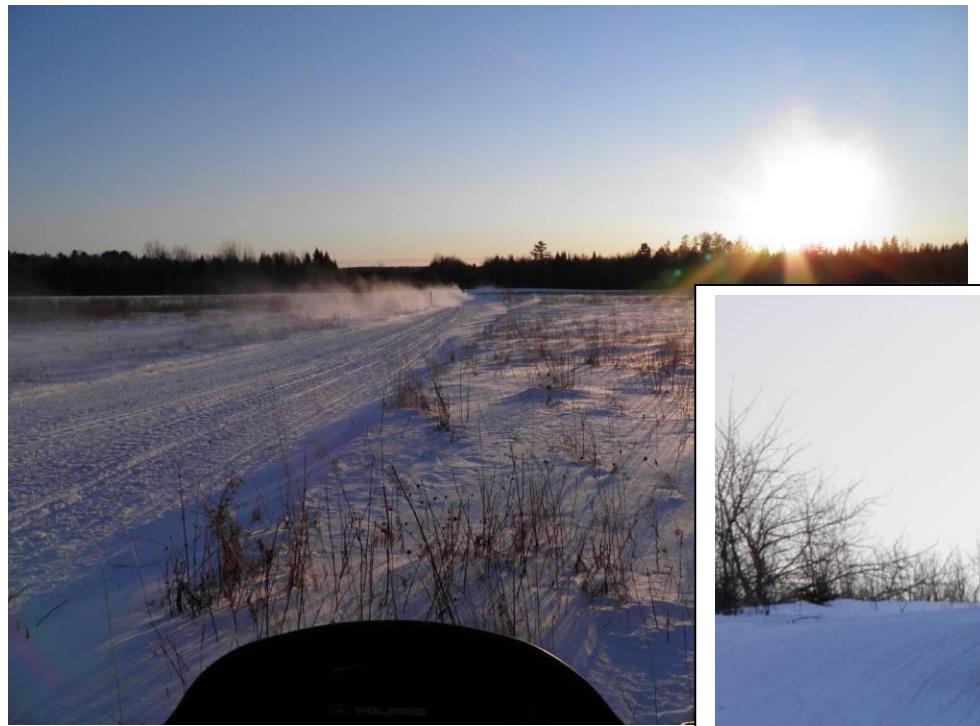
Tuesday - Pete and VT John did the big loop. Short way to Houlton, up 83 to 86 West, way over to Oxbow and back down to IF. 220 miles. The rest of us decided to take the less aggressive more sociable route and checked out the other two Kathadin lookouts. #1 was a fine appetizer, #2 was the (insert fancy French descriptive). Due to our impeccable punctuality we happened to be there for an unforgettable sunset.



Wednesday - Short way to Houlton. That's one of the great things we found out about the area. There's short ways and long ways for most every way. Unfortunately, Matt broke down. Now, hang on Mr. Renegade. This is a 2001 Edge. 11 year old sled. That I have to add has lived outside with no cover it's entire life. Anyway, Brian headed back for the Truck, Matt and Cary headed for the water trowl, and VT John, Pete and myself continued on. Same route - up 83 across 86. I caught a wabbit, but the Elmer Fudd nickname appears to not be sticking. Plan was to take club trail 62A strait south into 114. Beginning of 62A was clearly marked, and ungroomed. I said the Beginning.

We did 5-6 miles of heaven, but the cold reality that we hadn't seen ANY trail markings since that one slowly set in. The trails had been so well marked, I stopped bringing my GPS. Big oops there. We could have continued on further into heaven, but we all agreed to take the guaranteed success route back to Houlton. Still made it back in time for some hot tub time! 174 miles.







Thurs - See the original plan was to do an overnight trip up to Ft. Kent and back. I was much more into hanging back and doing less miles as opposed to ball busting all day riding to get to the destination. Then VT John bails too, and poor Pete was the only one left. But, as a constellation we trailered up to Ashland. Got the scoop from Pat. Dropped at the motel. Hit the usual awesome trails (I think 95% of the trails were awesome the entire week). Up to Portage. 10:30AM. Brunch at Dean's.

Oh yeah. See karma was at work. We get there. Outside an old timer asks me..

"How's the trails?"

"Awesome!!" I say. I figure him for a local groomer.

"Where ya from?"



"Merrimack, NH"

"No kidding. I used to live in Hudson, NH"

"No kidding!", I say " I worked in Hudson for a number of years. You know where Flagstone Drive is?"

"Yeah" he says "I opened up a bunch of buildings for DEC on Flagstone"!!

I think he said he was Ed Landry. Name sounds real familiar. He was up pretty high in the food chain. Small world.



But I digress! We continued on to Ft. Kent and back to Ashland. Nice little 166 mile up and back. And so we live to sled another day.

