

# If You (Re)Build It, They Will Come (Back)

## The Restoration Of Zoar Moto Park

### Part Two: "Should I, Do It?" "Well, Of Course You Should."

By Ed Abdo

On January 19th, 2023, I was headed to a swap meet in York PA with my wife Bonnie. As we were about to leave, I decided to finally start the social media page about

and said, "OK, Let's go." Bonnie asked what I expected from the page. I told her that I was hoping to bring back memories from folks that raced at Zoar and Bluemont. "How many people would be interested in that?" she asked. I told her "Maybe 50, I hope." 5 hours later we arrived in York. I looked at the page. There were already over one hundred members!

pressed with the pictures and comments about Zoar. I asked if there was a way that I could meet with him and his family to talk about Zoar, knowing that it was impossible, but it would be worth a shot to see if there was a way to do something up there once again.

A week or so later I met Josh Bylbie, his brother Bryan and his mom Brenda at her home which is the large Brick house out in front of the track that was occupied by the owner of the property when Zoar was active, Bill Bylbie. They were all very interested in learning some history of the track, so we talked about how it all came about. They were unaware of all the positive feelings that so many had from the track. After talking for a while, Josh and Bryan took me up to the track and we walked around. You could not recognize much of anything as the amount of growth made it all but impossible to walk around, but we managed to wiggle our way through brush to the point that I knew exactly where we were. I stopped and looked at a tree that had tires

The page grew rapidly with people from all over the country joining in and sharing memories and pictures faster than I could have ever imagined, within a month, over one thousand members had joined the page.

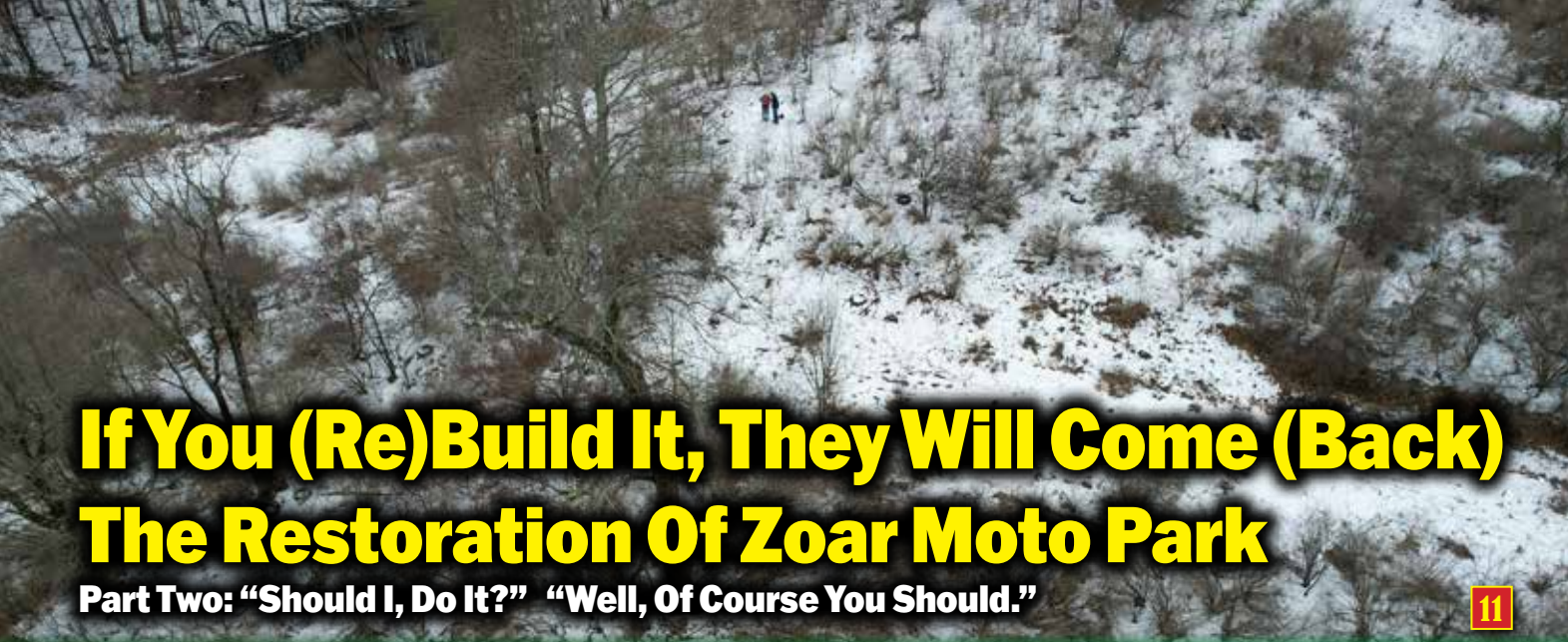
I received a private message in mid-February from a guy that said his aunt owns the property the track was on. He somehow came across the social media page and was im-

Zoar and Bluemont that I had talked about for so long. I placed the Zoar history story and a few pictures onto a Facebook page

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#### IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

1. Beyond the brush, the tree at the location of the first turn still had tires wrapped around it from 50 years ago.
2. This is where the front straight was once located.
3. The remains of a concession stand, put into place in the early eighty's replaced the original 50 ft. tower that was removed for safety reasons.
4. The chimney is located about one hundred feet from the top of the "A" hill and was not known by all, but those that did know about had a lot of fun at it in the mid 1970's!
5. This tire was placed in this spot in 1973!
6. Look carefully. There is a fire truck behind that brush!
7. The fire truck from the pond side of the track
8. Overhead view of what was once one of the most popular motocross tracks on the east coast.
9. Overhead view of the west side of the track covered in brush.
10. The well-known to all that raced at Zoar "A" Hill.
11. Look top center and you can see Jerome and I having the conversation that I will never forget.



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still wrapped around it and told them "This is where the first turn was!" From there I could tell where everything around the track was just from memory of riding the track for so many years. We walked around for quite some time, I thought to myself that there was no way that this could be brought back to life as there were trees and brush everywhere and only one or two open spots where the track once was that allowed you to see more than 20 feet in front of you. We came across a collapsed concession stand that was put in place around 1980 right where the original tower stood. Thorn apple pricklers were stuck throughout my body as we returned to the house in the dark.

land and hold a reunion at the track?"

I was expecting a quick laugh and "No" answer and to be frank, after going up there with the boys, was sort of hoping for that answer as I had absolutely no idea how that place could be brought back to life. She sat there for a moment, looked at Josh and said, "What do you think?" He said, "Hell yeah!"

She asked who would do all the work to clear the land out? Still thinking it was for sure a "No" I told her I would take care of everything including all costs from start to finish and if any money was made over the cost of doing the work, I would donate it all to local volunteer organizations. She sat there for a moment, and I was waiting to hear a "Thanks but no thanks." But instead... She said, "Sure, why not?"

To say I was stunned is an understatement. I honestly had no idea how I could get this sort of thing done.

As I was about to leave, I told her that I would bring a friend up to the track with me to see just what it would take to do the job and then go from there.

I left in my truck wondering to myself "What the hell just happened??"



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The next day, I contacted a good friend of mine that also shared the dream of bringing back Zoar due to the wonderful memories that it brought, Jerome Krzemien. *Continued on next page...*



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Jerome owns a landscaping business and has dealt with land clearing so I wanted him to look with me and tell me just how crazy anyone would be trying to take this on and then convince me to stop this ridiculous thinking and move on with my life.

We went up to the track with a drone for some overhead pictures. We were unable to enter the property through the nor-



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mal driveway as it was eroded away to the point that a tractor would have a tough time getting through, so we went the back way on a Gas line road. We drove for a while trying to recognize something related to the track and then I saw it. The Chimney. I knew where we were. The chimney was the remains of a cabin that Earl Bylbie built in

the 1940s that burnt to the ground due to of all things, a Chimney fire. The chimney was a spot where many riders went up to hang out at in the early days of Zoar and was just on the other side of the largest hill on the track known as the "A" hill.

We parked and started to walk around just to find brush, pricklers and so many trees that nothing was recognizable. We worked our way around the best we could and then I came across the remnants of a banked turn in between two hills. I stopped and yelled out to Jerome, "I know where we are!" Jerome worked his way towards me, and I was able to show him a buried tire at the top of a hill on the west side of the track. With eroded wash outs over twenty feet deep, large trees and brush everywhere, we worked our way over the hill and down into the valley and walked until I saw

the next remarkable point of interest. The Fire Truck! I could not believe it but the fire truck that was used to water the track, well hidden behind the brush, in its original location about 50 years after it was placed there.

We walked the property and took pictures with my drone for most of the day. I was not sure if I'd make it as I was short

of breath and was hobbling around on a bad knee, but it was amazing that we could recognize portions of the original track. We found many tires that were still in place from the last event that was held there in 1983 and came to an opening where we could take a small break and we had this conversation; One I will never forget.

Ed: "Well, what do you think?"

Jerome: "It's hard to believe that it grew in this much."

Ed: "What would it take to bring it back?"

Jerome: "A lot of work. To start, a Forestry Mulcher would be a must. Bulldozers, tractors, and excavators as well. I'd think it would take a month just to clear the land."

Ed: "Is it possible to do?"

Jerome: "Anything's possible Ed"

Ed: "Would it be feasible or worth it to do?"

Jerome "Probably not."

Ed: "Should I do it?"

Jerome: "Well, of course you should. You would bring much happiness to a lot of people."

That's all that it took. Those words were all it took to get me to start working on what would turn out to be the most difficult thing I have done in my life.

Next time, I will go over what it took to bring Zoar back, the magic that happened and the results of six months of demanding work.

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