



Snowmobile Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 30th, 2022

Rib Mountain Conference Center & Dales Weston Lanes, Weston and via Zoom

Council Members Present: Dale Mayo – Chair, Bob Lang – Vice Chair, Lynsey Burzinski, Bev Dittmar, Joel Enking, Abby Haas, Gary Hilgendorf, Mike Holden, Sam Landes, Andy Malecki, Don Mrotek, Sue Smedegard, Lee Van Zeeland, Erica Volker, Leon Wolfe

DNR staff attendance: Jillian Steffes, Cathy Burrow, Kurt Byfield, Jeremy Holtz, Annie Loechler, Jeff Pennucci

Tourism staff attendance: Drew Nussbaum

Public attendance: Dave Newman (AWSC) and other members of the public

1. Call to order at 8:30 AM

2. Agenda Repair - None

3. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting

Motion to approve June 2022 minutes by Bev, 2nd by Andy. MOTION PASSED

4. Chair and Vice Chair Comments

- **Dale Mayo** – Council is tasked with advising the Department on how to fund projects that benefit the entire state. GPS units have helped, first year with it being required and by year-end many seemed happy with the units. Some equipment rate changes are being recommended for the upcoming season.

5. Public Participation

- **Dave Newman (AWSC)**
 - Working with legislators to try and increase Aids to Local Law Enforcement from \$396,000 to \$800,000 annually, via state budget or joint finance action.
 - Beginning to contemplate how to go about raising the supplemental cap in admin code.
 - Met with DNR to discussion options to resolve the current code prohibition on business-name signs on state property. No resolution yet.
 - AWSC Fall Workshop will be Oct 21-23 in Rothschild
- **Drew Nussbaum (Dept of Tourism)**
 - Snow report should be up and running in Oct. As always, contact me or Jeff Anderson anytime if you need changes. Accuracy is important, the public will trust what the snow report says for conditions and open/close status. Also #1 traffic getter for Tourism!
 - Abby Haas and Drew have put together a snowmobile talking points document. Trail pass sales, registration #'s, safety messaging, etc. Contact Drew if you would like a copy.
- **Club member from Price County**
 - Our county has printed posters for the trails that read “Snowmobilers stay on groomed trails. Don’t trespass.” Sharing, FYI.
- **Club member from Monroe County**
 - It can be very challenging to get two estimates on bridge projects. Contractors have plenty of work right now and aren’t looking for work. RESPONSE from Dale: Contractors can put in an estimate without coming out to the site (desktop), it’s just an estimate. This is an important cost control measure for us. If there is no comparison with a bridge estimate, we write the grant for one value, and the bids will all come in line with that grant value.
- **Ed Slaminski representing ATV/Snowmobile club in NW**
 - Costs continue to rise on fuel, equipment, etc. Anything the Council can do to help defray the increasing costs is appreciated. RESPONSE from Dale: Stay tuned!

6. DNR Report

- **Grants Report**
 - Snowmobile Funding Report FY22, Available Funds FY23
 - 2022-23 Snowmobile Funding Summary
 - Snowmobile Trail Passes Sold
 - Snowmobile Active Registrations
 - Snow Supplemental Prelim Requests 21-22
 - Snow Supplemental Seasonal History (1990 through present)
- **Law Enforcement Report**
 - See LE & Safety Committee Minutes (8/29) for full report.

7. Reports of Standing Committees

- **Finance Committee – Lee Van Zeeland**
 - Interested in getting a meeting with DNR accountants to better understand and perhaps redesign the financial statement. Current version is confusing. We believe we have \$7.5 million available, we intend to set aside \$200k for GPS units, \$1 million set aside for future, and therefore have \$6.3 million available for projects at this time.
- **Infrastructure Committee – Gary Hilgendorf**
 - We had an ad hoc committee meeting in May to discuss equipment rates. In June, we took a preliminary look at grant projects and discussed equipment rates again.
 - We don't feel comfortable making any New Mile recommendations at this time given the quality of applications, will be scheduling a separate meeting to look at the requests in detail. To date, we've already funded over 1,400 new miles in the last 3 years.
 - We've discussed raising the supplemental cap as well, in support of that but the cap is in code and will take some time to change.
 - FYI 679 active GPS units out there right now. Some of the older units will be replaced, watch for your new unit to come in the mail or at the AWSC workshop. Return the old units to GTS if you can.
 - FYI grandfathered groomers from 2017 will now be in class B as they should be, grandfather period has expired.
- **Law Enforcement & Safety Committee – Sam Landes**
 - Best of luck to Marty Stone in your retirement, thank you for your service.
 - At the International Snowmobile Congress, we learned that Ontario has a short video regarding trespassing that is required viewing to purchase your trail pass online. We'd like to see Wisconsin do something like this.
 - Snowmobile safety classes are back to being in-person. A few points of confusion that will be cleaned up in regards to understanding the change in the 40' rule and the sound testing.
- **Tourism – Abby Haas**
 - Discussed other businesses and encouraging other businesses to promote snowmobiling. The businesses are the ones who ultimately benefit.
 - QR Code coasters at the local establishments have been well utilized, patrons can scan the QR code to find your local snowmobile area map or any other webpage you wish to direct them to.

8. ACTION ITEM: Action on recommendations arising from committee reports.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MOTIONS

Recommend to the Council to set aside \$200,000 for Groomer Tracking System GPS units and keep \$1,000,000 in nonresident trail pass revenue in reserve and make \$6.3 million available to awarding to pending grant requests.

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to increase the Snowmobile Supplemental Cap to 5 times the base maintenance rate, with the Council having the authority to consider approving exceedances to that cap on an individual basis upon review.

Motion passed.

- Supplemental cap is set in admin code. Process for DNR to change admin code is slow, could also be done with legislation
- Four counties are routinely over the cap and not being reimbursed at 100% for their work. Would like to help cover those costs.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MOTIONS

Recommend to the Council to defer the New Mile recommendations to a future meeting.

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to not fund New Trail/Mile requests under 1 mile the 22-23 grant cycle.

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to increase groomer rates by \$10/hour for each class for the 22-23 season.

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to approve changes to the non-grooming equipment rates and labor.

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to approve the 40' rule New Miles.

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to allow for trails to water to be considered fundable, on a case-by-case review basis.

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to keep an audit ad hoc committee active.

Motion Passed.

- Regarding not funding New Trail/Mile requests under a mile – this motion does not include small sections within a funded trail that is now legal due to the change in the 40' rule. Those can be approved directly by DNR.
- The financial impact of raising the groomer rates by \$10/hour would likely be \$500,000 to \$750,000 increase in costs to the program, primarily under supplemental.

- Non-grooming equipment rates were reviewed in comparison to the last three updates from DOT, and many were changed as a result. Equipment and Labor Rates for 2022-23 Season will show the as-adopted rate changes. See Sept 29 Infrastructure Committee minutes for more detailed notes on what else has changed.
- Approx 30 miles of trail that were previously not eligible but are now eligible were grouped separately from traditional New Mile requests, and approved by the Council.

LAW ENFORCEMENT & SAFETY COMMITTEE MOTIONS

Recommend to the Council to support a change to GoWild to add a required viewing video, once it is available.

Motion Passed.

TOURISM MOTIONS - None

9. ACTION ITEM: Review of and funding recommendations for grant applications

- Below are recorded questions/comments/discussion and the motion. Details on each project available in the meeting attachments.

Grant Number	County	Discussion/Questions	Motions
Amendment Requests			
83	Monroe		Motion to approve all in this category: By: Andy, 2nd: Sam Motion carried.
Bridge Rehab			
1	Forest		Motion to approve: By: Sam, 2nd: Leon Motion carried.
2	Forest		Motion to approve: By: Mike, 2nd: Bev Motion carried.
3 - 40 but not including projects listed above.	Multi Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to approve all projects in this category except 32. Project 40 to include 5 year LUA contingency: By: Andy, 2nd: Gary Motion carried
Trail Rehab			
41 – 45	Multiple Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to approve all in this category: By Bob, 2 nd Bev Motion Passed.
Mandatory trail relocation			
46 - 52	Multiple Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to approve all projects in this category except 48 By Sue, 2 nd Mike Motion Passed.

Discretionary trail relocation			
53 – 56, 61, 70	Multiple Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to approve all in this category except 55 By Gary, 2 nd Andy Motion Passed.
New Bridges			
57 - 64	Multiple Counties	Concerns about expense, value to the program	Motion to approve all in this category except 60 By Sue, 2 nd Gary Motion Passed.
Non-Trail			
65 - 68	Multiple Counties	Concerns about expense, value to the program	Motion to deny By Andy, 2 nd Mike Motion Passed.

- Council did not feel that non-trail support projects were a good use of the program funds at this time, especially in light of not having funded New Mile trail requests, and upcoming Wisconsin River Bridge.
- Several grant project estimates were updated on-the-day when 2nd estimates for bridge projects were received and shared with the Council.
- Progress is being made on a snowmobile bridge over the Wisconsin River in Sauk and Dane county. May receive a significant (multi-million dollar) grant request in the next cycle. Bridge may be \$7-8 million dollars, both Sauk and Dane have pledged \$2 million each. RFPs in progress, will get a more accurate cost estimate in the future.

10. Council elections

Bob Lang and Lee Van Zeeland nominate Dale Mayo as Chair.

Motion to close the nominations for chair and pass a unanimous ballot for Dale by Leon, 2nd by Gary.
MOTION PASSED

Dale May and Lee Van Zeeland nominate Bob Lang as Vice Chair.

Motion to close the nominations for chair and pass a unanimous ballot for Bob by Bev, 2nd by Gary.
MOTION PASSED

- Dale will be reviewing committee assignments, let him know if you want to serve on a particular committee

11. Committee member items

- Bev, Lee, Dale, Gary – Good work everyone
- Bob – Even though we have a healthy balance in the financials, I'm glad we're making financially responsible decisions and reviewing projects in detail to ensure quality and accuracy.
- Andy – Looking forward to New Miles meeting
- Sue – We do go through these in detail and make decisions with the best interests of the state in mind.
- Abby, Lynsey – Lots to learn but glad we are all going through these in detail.

12. Items for next meeting

- DNR is working on a County Coordinator training session for the county-employed trail coordinators. Likely a full day, in person with Zoom option. Content will start with 101 level intro, and progress into more complex topics like bridge inspections and bidding, etc. Looking for volunteers to help lead sessions.
 - One item might be “top 20 application problems”.
 - Reinforce communication between the county and the clubs. For example, following the funding meeting, clubs may not even hear what projects were funded or not.
- Bridge guidelines are out of date, Jillian is looking for a DNR Engineer to help update content.
- Will schedule a meeting with Infrastructure to review New Miles for Sept 16th. Then will have a full Council meeting to finalize recommendations, probably by Zoom.

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Gary, 2nd by Sue. MOTION PASSED