



Snowmobile Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 30th, 2023

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, Pat Anderson, Cathy Burrow, Kurt Byfield, Jacob Holsclaw, Jeremy Holtz, Ann Kipper, 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 pervious minutes by Bev, 2nd by Gary. MOTION PASSED

4. Chair and Vice Chair Comments

- **Dale Mayo** – When I joined the Council 10 years ago, communication between the Council and AWSC was strained, but we've made great strides in communication. We've introduced SNARS and GIS'd the trails to tighten up funding. We've spent down our reserve and are oversubscribed this year which will lead to some tough choices. We'll make our decisions based on what we think is best for snowmobiling in the state, without bias or favoritism. Thank you to all.
- **Bob Lang** – In our positions, we get a lot of questions from the public and general snowmobilers. That's not a bad thing. If we poise a question to you, it is because we need to be able to answer the questions that come to us. We're doing our best.

5. Public Participation

- **Dave Newman (AWSC)**
 - Requested \$400k increase to Aids to Local Law Enforcement, were able to get a \$200k increase.
 - New AWSC President Lori Heideman, and VP Greg Roscizewski
 - Fall Workshop is Oct 20-21 in La Crosse
- **Sam Landes (AWSC)**
 - Blue Mounds State Park – 2 pending lawsuits.
 - Stower 7 Lakes – Pending legal decisions, currently shut down to snowmobiles and equestrians but that decision is being challenged.
 - Military Ridge – MOU between City of Verona and DNR in progress, master plan may need to be updated.
 - SB105/AB88 – (Signage advertising business on state lands) Through Senate, waiting on Assembly
 - SB2298/AB130 – (Increasing supplemental cap). Hearings have been held, has bi-partisan support.
- **Drew Nussbaum (Dept of Tourism)**
 - A 13-page talking points document has been created highlighting snowmobiling and what we do. Available upon request.
 - Snow report – no changes to the way the report functions for this year. Will go live around Nov 1st, and start to focus on snowmobiling Dec 1st.

- In the 22-23 season on snow report, 1.6 million of the 1.7 million page views were to the Snow Report.

6. DNR Report

- **Jillian Steffes – DNR Grants Report**
 - Snowmobile Funding Report FY23, Available Funds FY24
 - 2023-24 Snowmobile Funding Summary
 - Snowmobile Trail Passes Sold
 - Snowmobile Active Registrations
 - Snow Supplemental Prelim Requests 22-23
 - Snow Supplemental Seasonal History (past 10 years)
- Financial Trends – We bring in about \$12 million in revenue annually. We have been spending more than that over the past few years. The surplus that accumulated when the trail pass system came online has been spent down, so we have less available funds this year than in the past few years.
- County Coordinators Workshop is scheduled for Oct 5th. Target audience is county staff who work with the motorized recreational trails and associated grant programs.
- SNARS and GTS training session will be offered online this fall, and at the AWSC Workshop
- An email was sent out requesting clubs submit all data in SNARS within 30 days. DNR will work with counties to see if this is the most effective deadline or if they have an alternate suggestion. Ultimately, clubs need to enter and submit their activities ASAP, especially reviewing grooming activity promptly so that any problems with the GPS can be addressed immediately.
- Many of the applications were incomplete this year. This cannot continue, *complete* applications need to be submitted by April 15th.
- **Jacob Holsclaw – DNR Law Enforcement Report**
 - Warden service saw \$195k increase for snowmobiles and ATV/UTV for use on patrol, which will be helpful in replacing aging machines. Wardens and 40 sheriff's departments logged 26,000 hours of snowmobile patrol last winter. Sheriff's departments were reimbursed at a pro-rated amount of 60% in past years. With the increase in budget, we should be closer to 91% in the future.
 - Last winter (Jan 2022), all wardens were out on the trail trying to coordinate with Safe Snowmobile Week.
 - Last year, 2,400 miles were patrolled, 108 citations, 225 warnings, 5 citations for OWI.
 - Updating safety curriculum and testing for in-person and online courses. Working with AWSC and other instructors to update curriculum.

7. Reports of Standing Committees

- **Finance Committee – Sue Smedegard**
 - We don't have the same funds available that we've had in the past, but we've been able to fund a lot of new trails, bridges and rehab projects in the past few years. Will have to make some tough decisions today.
- **Infrastructure Committee – Gary Hilgendorf**
 - SNARS is going well, 691 trackers in the groomers.
 - Equipment rates/grooming rates – we will recommend they stay the same for this season
 - Storm Damage – 20 counties requested \$899,787. \$645,000 has been paid out to date. We've discussed what policies we should have moving forward.
 - DOT rates vs. contractor invoices – in admin code, there are set rates for grooming and club members, but contractors are free to set their own rates. If a club member is operating as a contractor, they need to have a professional invoice, contract with the club and/or county, and club/county need to provide an opportunity for other contractors to bid on the job as part of fair market practice, transparency and professionalism.

- **Law Enforcement & Safety Committee – Sam Landes**
 - Aid to Law Enforcement comes out of a segregated fund. We requested an increase of \$400k but got \$200k. We will see how it goes this season and may ask for more if we need it.
 - The American Council of Snowmobile Associations has been wrestling with the topic of trespassing.

- **Tourism – Abby Haas**
 - Clubs are encouraged to continue to utilize social media, and share other ideas/tools that demonstrate the impact of snowmobiling in communities.

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.
Motion Passed.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MOTIONS

Recommend to the Council to establish that time spent by groomers going around swamps that aren't frozen yet be eligible for funding at 50% of the non-groomer rate, under non-grooming expenses.
Motion Passed.

Recommend to the Council to adopt the existing (previous year) rates for the 23-24 season.
Motion Passed.

- Routes which are utilized to go around swamps that aren't yet frozen need to be identified and approved by DNR. Clubs should identify those routes on a map and send them to the County (grantee), who should in turn send them to DNR Project Managers. Once approved, they will be identified in GTS.

LAW ENFORCEMENT & SAFETY COMMITTEE MOTIONS - None

TOURISM MOTIONS - None

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

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

App #	County	Discussion/Questions	Motions
Storm Damage			
80	Tri-County		Motion to recommend funding: By: Gary, 2nd: Lee Motion carried.
83	Monroe		Motion to recommend funding: By: Joel, 2nd: Andy Motion carried.

App #	County	Discussion/Questions	Motions
Amendment/Cost Increase			
79	Oconto		Motion to recommend funding by Joel, 2nd by Andy. Motion carried.
Bridge Rehab			
1 - 37	Multi Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to recommend funding projects 2, 3, 7, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37: By: Abby, 2nd: Andy Motion carried
Trail Rehab			
38 – 51, 70, 76	Multiple Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to recommend funding 51: By Sue, 2nd Don Motion Passed.
Mandatory trail relocation			
5, 21, 53 - 61, 69	Multiple Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to recommend funding 21, 53, 54, 55, 56, 60 By Abby, 2nd Joel Motion Passed. Motion to recommend funding 69 at \$500k this year and Council will commit \$250k each of the next two years pending acquisition of the grade on the other side of the bridge by Dane, and permitted snowmobile use of the entire trail system to the Pine Parking Lot By Sue, 2nd Gary Motion Passed.
Discretionary trail relocation			
62 - 68	Multiple Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	Motion to recommend funding 63, 65, 66, 67, 68 By Abby, 2nd Joel Motion Passed.

- Projects that seemed to be the most urgent need were prioritized over those where the trail would remain open and usable. Projects that were a limited time opportunity (such as rec wings) were prioritized. Projects where other grant funds were contributing (ask to the snowmobile program <100%) were prioritized.

Motion to stop funding projects with \$186,647 remaining and re-evaluate remaining projects at the February meeting by Sue, 2nd by Mike. MOTION PASSED

10. Council elections

Sue Smedegard and Abby Haas nominate Dale Mayo as Chair.

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

Abby Haas and (?) nominate Bob Lang as Vice Chair.

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

11. Committee member items

- Dale – Thank you for the vote of confidence. Will review committee assignments, reach out if you have a specific request.
- Bob – Not an easy day, hopefully people will understand why we made the decisions we did.
- Sue – Thanks everyone, hope you understand how difficult our decisions were and wish we had more money too.
- Abby – Take your friends snowmobiling
- Gary, Andy, Lynsey, Lee, Mike, Sam, Don, Joel – thanks everyone

12. Items for next meeting

- Review bridge ranking documents.
- Next meeting will be in conjunction with the groomer show. First Wed/Thurs of Feb.
- Next year's funding meeting will be the last week of August, or the 2nd week of Sept to avoid first week of school conflicts.

13. Adjourn

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