



Snowmobile Advisory Council Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 16th, 2021
via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Gary Hilgendorf, Dale Mayo, Bob Lang, Bev Dittmar, Joel Enking, Andy Malecki

Other Council Members Present: Abby Haas, Mike Holden, Erica Keehn, Sue Smedegard

DNR staff attendance: Jillian Steffes, Faith Murray, Kurt Byfield, Annie Loechler, Jeff Pennucci

Public attendance: Dave Newman, Pete Tatro (West Shore Snow Pistons), Jason Guthrie (Monroe Co Snow Alliance), other members of the public

1. Call to order at 9:00 AM

2. Agenda Repair

- none

3. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting

Motion to approve Aug 2021 minutes by Andy, 2nd by Bev. MOTION PASSED

4. Committee Chair Comments – Gary Hilgendorf

- We've had some recent ad hoc committee meetings on drags and on new mile rankings, we'll discuss the outcome and recommendations of those meetings today.

5. Public Comments

- Pete Tatro, West Shore Snow Pistons
 - Requests that the Council allow clubs who's winged drags are currently not meeting specs to have an opportunity to get those drags into specs and thus qualify for the higher drag rate.

6. DNR Report - Jillian Steffes

- The legislation to eliminate the 40' rule has not yet been signed by the Governor. The Governor must act on it by early December (either sign or veto), or else it passively becomes law. Exact date TBD, depends on when the legislature official sends it to the Governor.

7. Information & Action: Changes to the Future Equipment Rates

- Ad hoc committee met on 10/30 to discuss drag dimensions, in particular those that involve wings. Minutes from that meeting available at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/Aid/councils/src/20211030/Oct30_2021_AdHocWingedDrags_Minutes.pdf
- Ad hoc committee recommends phasing out the inclusion of wing dimension in the overall drag dimensions. Clubs can still use wings, but their reimbursement rate would not include those measurements EXCEPT for those drags already in use, that have been meeting the specifications – they may continue to stay in their current class (including drag dimensions) for a set amount of time.

Motion by Andy, 2nd by Bev recommend to the full Council to readopt the language from the 2017-18 equipment rates stating "Wings that fold down outside the frame do not increase frame width for funding proposes. MOTION PASSED.

- Bob contacted Arrowhead and Ultimate, no new winged drags were purchased this year.

Motion by Andy, 2nd by Dale recommend to the full Council to grandfathering those drags that were previously funded and meet the specifications, for a period of 10 years. MOTION PASSED.

- Original had hoc recommendation suggested grandfathered for as long as that grooming entity owns the drag, but discussion at the committee level decided on 10 years.
- This applies to a few A-1's, as well as some A-2's
- SPECIFICATIONS FOR GRANDFATHERED WINGED DRAGS (PREVIOUSLY FUNDED)
 - Wings increase frame width with all of the following conditions:
 - hydraulically operated
 - must cut and pack snow
 - similar structural **design** as main frame
 - **each** wing has 24" minimum width
 - extend full length of the main frame
- Point of clarification – This motion would *NOT* allow for drags that do not currently meet specifications to have an opportunity to alter the drag to get into specifications and get the higher rate. Those drags that were found to be out-of-compliance over the summer would remain at the classification that does not include wings.
- SNARS will include a “wings” checkbox on the grooming unit to allow for those drags with wings to be identified. If this motion passes the full Council, then after the 2030-31 season, those drags will be identified and their classification updated to reflect the specifications of their frame (minus wings).

Motion by Bob, 2nd by Bev to recommend to the full Council to adopt the language “Entire drag length and width must perform the same cutting and packing function. Modifications to original drag will not increase funding class.” MOTION PASSED.

- **Comment by Pete Tatro** –These winged drags do a good job, and are necessary given the narrow bridges we are working with. Expanding bridges to accommodate wider groomers is not cost effective. A higher rate for these winged drags seems justified.
- **Gary Hilgendorf** – Few clubs use these winged drags. After the Oct ad hoc, most of the comments who have reached out to Gary have supported removing wing measurements from the drag dimensions.

8. Information and Action: New Miles Ranking Tool

- An ad hoc committee met on 11/12 to review the New Mile Ranking Tool and make suggested updates. Summary from that meeting is as follows...

Ad Hoc Committee of the Governor’s Snowmobile Council

Reviewing New Miles Ranking
Friday, Nov 12, 2021 in Tomhawk, WI

Attendees: Bev Dittmar, Gary Hilgendorf, Andy Malecki, Dale Mayo, Sue Smedegard, Jillian Steffes

Proposed Changes to the New Mile Ranking Sheet

- To the header, add Date of Application, and Miles Requested.
- To the header, reiterate that applications must be complete, and one application for each trail.
- Add a requirement of a minimum score of 5 points. It is a workload issue for counties to be continually resubmitting low scoring projects. Any project without deductions is capable of scoring at least 4 points, with county priority points.
- To the gateway questions, add #4. “Segment must be 1 mile or greater in length.”
- To the “Maps” section, add words “(Must Provide All)” under “Maps attached”.
- To the 2nd bullet under maps (countywide), add verbiage “Map should show how the requested new mile segment fits into the trail system, and what it connects to.”

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- To the 3rd bullet under maps, change to read “Provide aerial/topographical map (printed/PDF) for each segment. Map should show more detailed view of the trail, but still clearly show trail location and connections.”
- Eliminate the 4th bullet under maps
- To the Justification and Bridges question blocks on page one, add the words Required, to help drive home the idea that these should not be left blank.
- To Question 1: Trail Longevity, change the last sentence in the intro to “County must provide copy of said easements/LUAs with application, if not on public land.
- To Question 1: in the 0 points block: add the words “ or continuously renewable”
- Eliminate question 5 (Grooming Equipment) and re-number
- To Question 7: Deductions, add a new deduction “Trail dead ends at a single service, where that service is available within **5 miles** (spurs to single services are a lower priority, unless those services are not available anywhere else on the trail system nearby)
- Remind applicants that incomplete applications will be denied.

- A copy of the proposed revisions to the New Mile Ranking is available in this document following the meeting minutes.
- Additional suggested changes; Add definition to “funded”. Reiterate that a project that scores 5+ will not automatically be approved, but will be reviewed and recommendations made by the Council.
- Can we provide sample LUA’s somewhere? AWSC often has some, and DNR will see about adding some to our webpage.

Motion by Andy, 2nd by Bev to recommend to the full Council adopting the changes to the New Miles Ranking Tool for the 22-23 application season. MOTION PASSED

Funding for new segments of trail if the 40’ Rule is eliminated – Jillian Steffes

- If the 40’ rule changes, there may be trails that were not previously receiving funding (due to non-compliance) that could now be eligible for funding. Clubs/counties will need to identify those, and apply to the Department for additional maintenance funding. If those trails are part of a “funded” trail, the DNR has drafted a new application appendix titled “Trails Adjacent to Roadways Appendix”.
- County maintenance agreements will not be automatically increased to award new miles for the newly compliant trails. An increase in financial commitment from the Trail Aids program may require a recommendation from the Council. To that end, we need to review these potential increases in miles and cost, and tally up how many miles per county that amounts to.
- DNR will review those requests. We will check that they aren’t already receiving funding, and also do a drive-by review to verify that the trail is separate from the road and marked/maintained as a separate trail.
- Clubs/counties will be encouraged to submit the “Motorized Recreational Grant Application” and the associated “Trails Adjacent to Roadways Appendix” ASAP upon passage of the bill, so that DNR staff can begin review over the winter months. No particular deadline, but the sooner they are submitted, the sooner for potential funding increases to the county/club.
- To qualify for funding, the trail needs to be separate from the road surface, marked and groomed as a snowmobile trail, and part of a currently funded trail. If the trail is part of an unfunded trail, or completely separate from funded trails, they need to utilize the traditional New Miles application.
- A draft copy of the “Trails Adjacent to Roadways Appendix” is attached below at the end of these minutes.
- DNR will email county coordinators ASAP upon passage of the bill to give instructions on how to apply.

Motion to support implementation of the Trails Adjacent to Roadways Appendix by Andy, 2nd by Bev. MOTION PASSED.

9. Member reports, comments and items

- None

10. Items for next meeting

- Add the topic of 50% groomer rate payment for transporting groomers on road routes integral to a funded trail to the next agenda
- Next meeting of the Infrastructure Committee is Feb 3rd. Location, etc TBD but in the St. Germain area
- Infrastructure Committee will also meet on Friday, June 17th to review newly submitted grant applications involving bridges. Location likely Rhinelander area.

11. Adjourn

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