



Snowmobile Advisory Council
Law Enforcement Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 2, 2023
St Germain Community Center, Weston and via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Sam Landes (Chair), Joel Enking, Mike Holden, Bob Lang, Andy Malecki, Dale Mayo, Don Mrotek, Erica Volker

Other Council Members Present: Lynsey Burzinski, Bev Dittmar, Gary Hilgendorf, Abby Haas, Sue Smedegard, Leon Wolfe

DNR staff attendance: Jacob Holsclaw, Jillian Steffes, Kurt Byfield, Jeremy Holtz, Jeff Pennucci

Public attendance: Dave Newman (AWSC), Drew Nussbaum (Tourism) and other members of the public

1. **Call to order at 10 minutes following Infrastructure**
2. **Agenda Repair - None**
3. **Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting**

Motion to approve August 2022 minutes by Mike, 2nd by Don. MOTION PASSED

4. Committee Chair Comments

- **Sam Landes** – Aid to local law enforcement, signs on state properties will be addressed later.

5. DNR Reports and Updates – Jake Holsclaw, LE OHV Administrator

- 2022 Snowmo Safety Classes
 - 6184 Students certified through the online safety class
 - 4241 Students certified during in person classes
 - 10,425 total students for 2022!
 - 502 instructors who actively taught in 234 classes
- 2022 Enforcement Data
 - Rec Patrols are averaging over 10,000 hours of snowmobile patrol each year over last 3 years
 - 38 to 45 Sheriff's Department Patrols have received reimbursement over last 3 years
 - 960 citations and warnings were issued with 2 warnings = 1 citation
 - Conservation wardens issued 290 snowmobile citations / no data for warnings
- Grants to law enforcement patrol is pro-rated based on supply/demand. Over the past three years, the pro-rate varied between 54% to 67%. Total costs reimbursed between just under \$400k and as much as over \$700k.
- Fatality trend – for CY2022, there were 16 fatalities. Of those, 10 involved alcohol.
- 2022-2023 Season Safety Messaging
 - Don't drink and ride
 - Speed limits and driving after dark
 - Pay attention to stop signs and posted trails
 - Ice safety
 - Off trail riding
 - Safety courses
 - Review regulations before riding
 - Mentor with experienced riders
 - January 20 th to 22 nd "Sled Safe" campaign
 - January 27 th to 28 th Recreation Warden Group check in Iron and Oneida Counties
 - Message campaign leading up to Superbowl weekend
 - Reminder we are conducting trail inspections post crash

6. Snowmobile LE Issues on the Legislative Front

(1) Trespassing Issues:

- Make sure trail open/close is well published, keep websites and social media up to date, etc.

(2) Instructor Updates - Misunderstanding of the new 40' rule and the updated Stationary Sound Test

- More education needed of the INSTRUCTERS to make sure they understand these topics. AWSC has sent out accurate info, but continued communication needed.

(3) Updating Test

- Updates to test ETA 23-24 season. AWSC has some suggested changes, Jake will review.

(4) Aid to Local Law Enforcement

- AWSC and Council agreed to increase from \$396,000 to \$800,000. Dave Newman (AWSC) and Sam Landes will get it into the budget if possible, working with legislators. If successful, that will go into effect for 23-24 season.
- Last two budgets have tried to eliminate the \$1.2 million in tribal gaming revenue. Need to continue to explain why that's important, both from the Dept side and the AWSC side.

(5) Glacial Drumlin Surfacing and Blue Mound State Park

- Blue Mound SP – Iowa Co Court dismissed the cases against the Dept, friends group challenged, expect ruling by end of March.
- Glacial Drumlin – A section from trailhead in Cottage Grove to Heather Drive has been paid. Attempt to eliminate snowmobiles from that section. Sam worked with DNR and the trail will remain open to snowmobiles.

(6) Failing Structures on DNR Managed Properties (400 State Trail, Buffalo River ST)

- DNR is looking at failing structures on the Elroy Sparta, Buffalo River, and beyond. Reroutes may be needed for the grooming equipment, but we want to keep snowmobiles on the trail if a bridge is sound enough to keep it open to summer use.

(7) Update on Safety Concerns around Signing Issues on DNR Properties

- Draft of bill is being circulated to legislators for support. Sen Felzokwski and Rep Swearingen are taking the lead. Club support needed to help get other legislators on board. Dept of Tourism is in support.

(8) Recommendation from DNR LE on a Portable Decibel Reader for the updated Stationary Sound Test.

- Pricing is coming down, now \$300-\$400 each. Jake will investigate the newer units and make sure the quality of the unit is sufficient to support citations.

7. Public Comment

- Drew Nussbaum (Tourism) – The 400 State Trail is having a 30th anniversary this year
- Gary Hilgendorf & ?? (in Price Co) - Bridges on USFS lands are also failing, and USFS staff say it's going to be ~5 years to get them repaired/replaced. Request by Drew Nussbaum to get bullet points/details to aid in talks with USFS. Jenifer Bratsch is now with USFS, she's aware of 6 snowmobile bridges that are in urgent need of repair. Seeking out funding and working to address this quickly.
- Leon Wolfe – Incident on a Black River Falls crossing this year, rider fell in. Signage warned riders not to cross but they did anyway. Does the crossing need to move?

8. Committee member reports, comments and items

- Mike Holden – Hearing complaints about inadequate signing. This is a safety issue. Continue with education and trail inspections. Jake – When there is a serious crash, LE is doing a site report and going to clubs if signage appears to be insufficient.

- Bob Lang – This is some good info, could Sam create a newsletter that includes topics like Blue Mounds?
Sue – I can send the AWSC minutes to the Gov Council members, as much of that is included there.

9. Items for next meeting

- None

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Joel, 2nd by Don. MOTION PASSED