



**Snowmobile Recreation Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Zoom Meeting

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

Council Members Not Present: Tom Chwala

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

Tourism staff attendance: Drew Nussbaum

Public attendance: Nathan Matters, Dave Newman, other members of the public

**1. Call to order at 8:30**

**2. Agenda Repair**

- None

**3. Approval of previous meeting minutes**

**Motion to approve previous meeting minutes by Abby, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike. MOTION PASSED**

**4. Public Participation**

• **AWSC (Dave Newman)**

- Meetings cancelled this year.
- Working to eliminate 40' rule. Draft language says must be on a snowmobile trail as far from road surface as practical, and dim lights for oncoming traffic. Also working to modify sound test language.
- Signs on state properties cannot list name of business, but working to see if this can be changed.
- Working with conservation congress on holiday hunt.
- Have concerns about making GPS units mandatory next year. Road routes showing as funded trail, overlapping trails, poor quality GIS.
- Discussion on trespassing issues and what can AWSC do to help LE to combat the problem.

• **Tourism (Drew Nussbaum)**

- [Travel Wisconsin](#) is a valuable tool for monitoring trail opening and closings. Drew Nussbaum can make updates at any time. Accurate and engaged snow reporters always needed.
- Sue Smedegard has been appointed to the Office of Outdoor Recreation Committee and will be able to represent snowmobile interests.

• **Public –**

- **Leon Wolfe**– Lafayette Co trails are in good shape, come ride!
- **Cal Schmidt – Forest Co AWSC** – trespassing is an issue, folks going off trail, starting to lose trail permissions. GPS units are a problem for them, trails not showing up as funded.
  - **Nathan**: Mapping is provided by the county. Let me know when mapping is incorrect. I will be in contact with many county reps to clean up maps in future.

- **Fuzzy Moran** – Why haven't they received the final supplemental yet? Explanation that the audit completion deadline is Dec 1, but then counties have to pay the clubs, get back cancelled checks, and submit those to DNR to receive reimbursement. Funds not automatically paid out by DNR on Dec 1.

## 5. Chair and Vice Chair Comments

**Dale Mayo** – We got through 2020. 2021 is off to a rough start with COVID, but we'll get through it. The program is going well, adding accountability back into the program. GIS has helped clean up the miles and helped us add more miles to the program. GPS units is the final leg of this that will help tighten up expenses. Hard work will be rewarded.

**Bob Lang** – No comments

## 6. DNR Reports and Updates

- **DNR Grants Report – Jillian Steffes**
  - See meeting attachments for figures on snowmobile registration, trail pass sales, results of snow supplemental audit. New Miles continue to be reviewed by DNR Regional Project Managers for bridges, compliance with current laws (including 40' setback, etc) and grants written as that work is completed. Approx half of the New Miles approved in Sept have been written.
  - **Andy**- Why are reductions/deductions numbers so off with counties
    - **Jillian**: Lots of duplicate entries do not get caught until the auditing process.
  - **Andy and Sam**: Thank you to DNR staff
- **DNR Law Enforcement Report - Marty Stone, Law Enforcement OHV Administrator**
  - **Fatality Report** – Four fatalities this year (Northern WI), 3 on a public trail and 1 on open water. Three of the four did not have public safety class. Still under investigation, but speed likely an issue with many.
  - **Operation Think Smart Before You Start** – Increased Law Enforcement presence on the trail. Initial feedback on the operation has been positive.
    - **Mike Holden**: pleased with DNR presence on trails

## 7. Reports of standing committees

- **Finance Committee – Lee Van Zeeland**

What happens with the \$1+ million still in the fund? It rolls forward for the future – for future grant requests, emergency storm damage, supplemental, etc

- **Infrastructure Committee – Gary Hilgendorf**

Had Ad-Hoc meeting in December, there has been no need for a meeting since then. Some equipment requests but usually just adding a groomer, or a roller, etc. Nothing substantial. Still have concerns about making the GPS units mandatory next year, let's address further in the agenda. Sent Nathan pic of trails but since then he has fixed them all.

- **Sue Smedegard** - Question that came into the AWSC regarding that too many groomers are grooming with only 1-3 inches of snow. Abuse of system and unnecessary?
  - **Gary**- We don't need to micromanage clubs, but something will need to be done.
  - **Mike**- We rely on the club's honesty and can't always be looking over their shoulders.
  - **Annie Loechler**- Has heard from counties on the grooming issue. To change the mindset, it must come from the AWSC and Snowmobile Rec Council.

- **Law Enforcement and Safety Committee – Sam Landes**

- (See Feb 1, 2021 LE & Safety Committee Meeting Minutes for Details)

- AWSC representatives working with DOT and Legislature to draft a change to Ch 350 to eliminate the 40’ road setback rule.
    - AWSC representatives working on proposed legislation to update the J2567 sound test. (See LE committee meeting minutes for more details).
    - As the Sugar River State Trail comes into town, snowmobiles are not permitted on the paved trail BUT can legally ride in the highway ROW to access fuel. The currently posted sign is misleading. Marty Stone will reach out to DNR Parks Property Manager to see about rewording the sign to specify no snowmobiles on paved trail.
    - Per NR 45.05(3(f), signs that name businesses are prohibited on state lands due to advertising prohibition. Discussion among LE & Safety Committee that the name of a business is helpful for wayfinding – if a rider is lost or needs help, it’s easier to navigate if they can state they are near XYZ Resort. The addition of a simple business name on the existing brown/white business signs may be valuable for safety.
    - Wisconsin requires in-person classes for minors under age 16. However, if that minor completes an online course and gets certified in another state such as Illinois, WI must accept that certification. This raises concerns on safety as an in-person class may be best to teach safety. Most parents probably still prefer in-person, but had no choice during COVID. Proposal to begin in-person classes in August in 2021, before kids get busy with school. Additionally, a Virtual Class (such as Zoom) could meet the in-person classroom instruction IF it were a real time interactive class, not a pre-recorded video.

- **Tourism – Abby Haas**

- Encouraging clubs to promote the travel Wisconsin site in their FB posts, good one stop shop. More trail condition reports needed
  - Online interactive GIS maps? See GTS presentation later in the agenda.

**Motion from LE Committee to recommend that the law be changed to business names be permitted on brown & white signs on public DNR properties. MOTION PASSED**

- Tourism liaison Drew Nussbaum supports this resolution.

**8. Information and Action: Trail/grant issues**

- **Action required on grant, storm damage and/or amendment requests**
- Below are recorded questions/comments/discussion and the motion. Details on each project available in the meeting attachments.

Grant Number	County	Discussion/Questions	Motions
<b>Storm Damage Requests</b>			
S100	Oconto		<b>Motion to approve:</b> By: Andy, 2nd: Mike <b>Motion carried.</b>
<b>Amendment Requests</b>			

<b>31B</b>	Wood	If counties are hiring a project oversight company to manage the legwork, the preference is that the county foot the bill for that. As for the estimated additional equipment/materials, come back when solid numbers are obtained rather than just an estimate.	<b>Motion to deny:</b> By: Bev, 2nd: Sam <b>Motion carried.</b>
<b>NM-93B</b>	Pierce		<b>Motion to approve:</b> By: Bob, 2nd: Dale <b>Motion carried.</b>
<b>101</b>	Chippewa	Original application was to riprap at original bridge site. Erosion is significant enough that the project has changed to replacing the existing bridge at a new location. Council would like to see the application re-done to present estimates, etc on the standard application. Request will be reconsidered when paperwork is revised and submitted.	<b>Motion to deny until additional paperwork submitted:</b> By: Gary, 2nd: Andy <b>Motion carried.</b>

#### 9. Discussion: Online Mapping Tools Discussion and GTS Demo

- See PowerPoint Presentation from GTS attached to meeting minutes homepage.
  - **Nathan:** Will work with counties in future to clean mapping up and make entries more accurate.
  - **Nathan:** Important to sign up as an Administrator role in order to add people to GTS
- Does GTS show if trails are open/closed? Not at this time. Suggested to add a disclaimer that this doesn't show open/close status and direct users to Travel Wisconsin
- Display of advertisers. Good up-sell to advertisers on the print maps. Clubs will have to communicate with Nathan to add or remove advertisers. Abby would like the county to also have some oversight on that to keep them up to date (at far as removing?)

#### 10. Discussion: GTS GPS Unit Trackers

- 250 groomers currently have GPS units out of 930 active groomers listed in SNARS. Some of those 930 may be double-entries for the same pull unit with different drags, maybe more realistically 800 units. Only had to replace 1 bad unit in the past 2 years. Extremely reliable. Some initial set-up growing pains. Gary wants to encourage clubs to get the GPS units, but concerns about making this mandatory next year because there are still so many problems with the GIS maps.

#### 11. Discussion: Groomers on Routes

Ad Hoc Committee to discuss further. Gary, Joel, Dale, Andy, Lee, Mike, Sue, Sam, Bev

#### 12. Council Members' Matters

Joel – Mentioned nine traffic counters on trails, will share findings once more info is found

Sam – Blue Mounds Master Plan comment period closed. Trail from 2010 is preferred alternative in final draft, NRB is next. Polk Co voted to get snowmobiles back on Stower Seven Lakes Trail. Pending lawsuit currently.

Sue – Thanks to DNR

Dale – Thanks everyone

#### 13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Abby, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gary. MOTION PASSED

DRAFT