



Snowmobile Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday August 27, 2019
Dale's Weston Lanes, Weston, Wisconsin

Council Members Present: Bev Dittmar- Chair, Arlyn Baumgarten, Tom Chwala, Bob Lang, Lee Van Zeeland, Dale Mayo, Dave Newman, Sam Landes, Andy Malecki, Mike Holden, Gary Hilgendorf, Steve Moran, Nancy Olson; Jeff Schwaller

Council Members Absent: none

DNR staff attendance: Cathy Burrow, Jillian Steffes, Faith Murray, Ed Slaminski, Kurt Byfield, Annie Loechler, April Dombrowski

Public attendance: Drew Nussbaum (Dept of Tourism), members of the public

1. Call to order – 8:30am by Bev

2. Agenda Repair

Discussion: GPS Units:

3. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting

Motion to accept minutes from May 2 by Dale, 2nd by Jeff. MOTION PASSED

4. Chair and Vice-Chair comments

- Chair: (Bev Dittmar) –
 - We are heading in to a new era with computers – complete applications are essential, incomplete should be rejected.
- Vice-Chair: (Dale Mayo)
 - GIS data project has been a success, will give a much more complete representation of trails. Appreciate all the efforts from everyone.

5. Public participation

- **AWSC:** (Dave Newman)
 - Discussed proposed legislation to increase Chapter 20 spending authority, 40' rule, etc.
 - AWSA is accepting applications for snowmobile-friendly communities... application is on the AWSC website.
 - Dave is currently serving on a committee to balance recreational needs and anticipate new trends – will update quarterly.
 - Reminder to keep an eye on regional master plans – stay involved in the process.
- **Tourism Report:** Drew Nussbaum
 - Travel Wisconsin snow report. Top search parameter on travel.wisconsin from Nov – Mar was snowmobile trails. Check the map, if there's a county that isn't reported accurately volunteer to be a snow reporter.
 - Secretary-designee will come in Oct to AWSC fall meeting
 - Tourism has a new Office of Outdoor Recreation

- Snow Friendly Communities – application should be posted Sept 1st.
- **Public:** Mike presented a plaque to Cathy Burrow outstanding service from the IASA. Cathy Burrow has taken a position as a supervisor in the Financial Assistance bureau, and Jillian Steffes will be taking over as Snowmobile Grant Program Manager (based in Rhinelander)

6. DNR Report

- Grants Report: We have a total of \$3,896,450 available for funding development projects. This is based on the Chapter 20 cap. Additional funds remain in the account but untouchable due to Chapter 20.
 - HANDOUTS
 - 2 Financial Statements
 - Funding Spreadsheet
 - Total Trail Passes Sold
 - Snow Supplemental History
 - Snow Supplemental Requests from 18-19
 - Funded Mile Adjustments (by county) due to GIS Efforts
 - Supplemental – Almost 3.5 million in requests, although that may be reduced after auditing. There is sufficient funding to pay 100% of supplemental request.
 - GIS –Jillian – after reviewing data from counties, most counties went down on funded, 426 fewer miles on the ground than thought. Some counties haven't submitted satisfactory data yet. If any new mile projects are approved, grant project managers (aka CSSs) have to do their due diligence (archeological, endangered resources, required permits, etc.) ground truthing where the trail is prior to funds being available to the county.
 - New Staff – Kurt Byfield will cover the South Central Region
- Law Enforcement Report: April Dombrowski
 - Vacancy in Off Highway Vehicle program – we are looking to fill in September and have both admin and program specialist up and running before December.
 - Bureau of LE –
 - initiating two-year strategic plan, objective for trails initiative, sound enforcement (training officers), safe operation, and ride responsibly – targeted marketing – looking at crashes/fatalities tells a story where to market safety messages.
 - Simplify regulation pamphlets. Individual trifold “know before you go” – if ready to ride for the weekend, for all rec vehicles.
 - Trail signage handbook near completion – 4 grammatical errors away. Will be avail by Oct 1 (hopefully mid September)
 - Revamped annual report – combined all rec vehicles into one annual report – not just about statistics, but about the story of rec use in Wisconsin – including initiatives, marketing, branding. That's available on the website – take a look.
 - Recap: tying back to ride responsibly: 2018 stats – moved to a calendar year instead of season year – so snow stats/ 1-8 crashes, 19 fatalities. 29% crashes between 50-59age group. 37% killed in that age group.
 - 2019 so far – 16 fatalities – same theme, speed and alcohol – higher BAC levels – this has our attention for efforts moving forward.

7. Reports of Standing Committees

- Finance Committee: Dave Newman:
 - Reviewed financial reports Cathy referred to
 - 3.9 for new development, projects, new miles, reserve, storm damage etc.
 - After funding 18-19 supplemental requests at 100%, still 1.8 million left in the supplemental reserve
 - Trail pass seems to be working
 - Reminder, “new miles” will be \$300/mile for not just this year but all future years.
 - Major storm damage for this past summer, we need to make sure we can cover that.
- Infrastructure Committee: Gary Hilgendorf
 - Discussion on the GPS mapping, etc. 426 miles of maintenance funding returned to the program, discussion in awarding at least that many “new miles”.
 - Six counties haven’t submitted satisfactory GIS data – committee recommendation to not award those counties new miles.
 - Grooming rates changes: Move fully tracked trucks from category A to AAA
 - GPS trackers: Make this a fundable item under maintenance
 - New miles: Committee reviewed New Mile projects scoring 10 or higher yesterday. No funding recommendations made.
- Law Enforcement and Safety Committee: Sam Landes
 - 40’ rule: Working on new legislative language to replace existing requirement that trails be at least 40’ from road surface (or have headlight barrier).
 - Reintroduction of OWI legislation.
 - Sound complaints are a concern, DNR LE is making this topic a priority. Signage and enforcement may help. Off trail riding – working with LE and tourism, remind riders to ride safe and responsibly.
- Tourism: Lee Van Zeeland:
 - Discussion on engaging business owners, and the need to educate businesses on financial impact of snowmobiling

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

FINANCE MOTION:

Recommend to the council holding back 2 million of funds for storm damage and reserves in addition to left over supplemental. Remaining would still cover all grant requests and new miles (ranking over 10).

Motion Passed Unanimously.

INFRASTRUCTURE MOTIONS

Recommend to the council not funding new miles to counties who did not submit satisfactory GIS data.

Counties: poor data: didn't meet minimum requirements – no usable Clark, Green, Grant, Iowa, Price, Portage, St. Croix and Wood. Took Monroe off after further discussion
 Opposed: 4 Bob, Nancy, Dave, Thomas

Motion Passed.

Recommend to the council allowing tracked truck to move up into higher categories.

Trucks: minimum 1-ton (4-wheel drive), minimum payload of 3,500 lbs., fully-tracked with a minimum manufactured 15,000 GWV track system. Moved from Category A to AAA

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Recommend to the allow lease of GPS units from Groomer Tracking System to be a maintenance eligible item.

- **Action item: an Ad Hoc committee will be created to address issues & clarify guidelines.**
- Discussion including leasing, working with groomertrackingsystems (GTS), the automated reporting, and an upcoming guidance for clubs. It is volunteer at this point.
- Initial guidelines to clubs being drafted, but highlights include: Notify the county, Work with GTS to set geofence, work with groomers to correct. Installation per manufacturers instructions. Tracker will shut off after 10 minutes of no movement Tracker will shut off if over 15 mph.

Motion Passed Unanimously

9. ACTION ITEM: Storm damage review and possible funding recommendations

Grant Number	County	Discussion/Questions	Motions
S1	Oconto	Will need to work through FEMA process before grant funds can be awarded.	No motions
S2	Pierce	No FEMA Discussion on anchoring bridges.	Motion to approve: By: Andy, 2nd: Mike Motion carried.
S3	Monroe	No FEMA Discussion in insurance, county is self insured	Motion to approve: By: Fuzzy, 2nd: Arlyn Motion carried.
S4	LaCrosse	Discussion on resetting bridges, insurance	Motion to approve: by Bev, 2nd: Andy Motion carried.
S5	Langlade	Will need to work through FEMA process before grant funds can be awarded.	No motions.
S6	Price		Motion to approve: By: Lee, 2nd: Sam Motion carried.

S7	Barron		Motion to approve: By: Bob, 2nd: Dave Motion carried
Amendment Requests			
A-1	Florence	Bids came in higher than expected	Motion to approve: By: Lee, 2nd: Sam Motion carried.
Bridge Rehab			
A-1	Calumet	Discussion on culvert size determination	Motion to approve: By: Bev, 2nd: Sam Motion carried.
B-1	Fond du lac	DNR is doing internal review on bridge. Amended request	Motion to approve: \$15,000 By: Joel, 2nd: Fuzzy Motion carried
C-1	Manitowoc	\$47,920 Two 25k quotes.	Motion to approve: By: Sam, 2nd: Tom Motion carried
#1	Douglas	No questions	
#2	Polk	Revised, \$31,298	
#3	Rusk	Revision – Water Regs recommend a bridge (56' x 12') as opposed to the original culvert proposal. Revised Amt - \$68,200	
#4	Washburn		
#5	Chippewa	Revised, the bridge has to be set higher	
#6	Chippewa	No questions	
7	Chippewa	2nd estimate obtained	
8	Dunn		
9	Jackson	Questions answered	
10	Jackson	Project received grant funding <10 years ago, not eligible for another bridge rehab grant. Should be funded out of existing maintenance	
11	Juneau	State trails <i>should</i> be FEMA eligible, but language in the MOU between DNR Parks and Counties may need review/editing to clarify for FEMA purposes.	
12	La Crosse	Questions answered.	
13/14	La Crosse	Option 1 (#13) preferred, \$16,000	
15 - 17		No questions	
18	Vernon	Couldn't get a second estimate due to widespread damage and demand on contractors	
19	Dane	Couldn't get a second estimate due to widespread damage and demand on contractors. Will be competitively bid out.	
21 - 24		No questions	

25	Forest	Additional review needed, leave to grant specialist	
26 - 27		No questions	
28	Price	Council would like county to get a 25k bridge vs. county's 14k proposal, and is suggesting funding at \$36,300 to help cover the higher cost (~10%)	
29			Motion (by Bob) to recommend funding projects A1 to 29, with modifications noted above, minus projects 10 and 14. 2nd by Joel. Motion approved unanimously.
Trail Rehab			
30	Vilas		Motion to approve: by Bev, 2nd: Fuzzy Motion carries.
Application	County	Discussion	Motions
Mandatory trail relocation			
31 - 34		No questions	
35	Oconto	Multiple options being evaluated, covering different landowner possibilities.	Motion to recommend funding on all projects in this category with contingency on 35 requiring easement: Bev, 2nd: ____ Motion carried
Discretionary trail relocation			
36	Sauk	Discussion – if complications and cost increases are encountered, stop work and contact grants staff.	
37 - 41		Questions answered	Motion to approve 36-41 by ____ Second by: Sam Motion carried.
New Bridges			
42 - 44		No questions	
45	Rusk	Application withdrawn by applicant	
			Motion to recommend funding projects 42-44 by Bev., 2nd by Jeff Motion carries.

New Miles Funding

Discussion on the completeness of applications and additional reviews needed on many of the new mile applications. Suggestion to give grants staff additional time to review, and have council reconvene in a month.

Common problems include:

- Lack of quality maps (not using the GIS created by the county)
- Multiple trails in the same application (should be separated)
- Insufficient 'justification' to gateway eligibility questions
- Trail longevity: public/ private/ permanent easement. The entire trail must be on public land to earn max points. If trail crosses multiple holdings, the shortest duration of easement/permission determines the points.
- Some discussion on how to measure parallel trail.
- Discussion on eligibility to fund trails TO lakes. Yes, they can be funded if properly justified (ie, providing service to a population center, can support a high volume of use, etc)

11. Council elections

Cathy ran the nomination and election process.

Dave nominated **Bob Lang** as Council chair. Jeff nominated **Bev Dittmar** as Council chair. Written ballot results: 5 for Bev, 9 for Bob. **Bob Lang appointed new Council Chair.**

Gary nominated Dale Mayo as Vice Chair. **Dale appointed Vice Chair** through unanimous ballot.

New committee assignments will be forthcoming.

12. Council member items

Dave – Conservation Congress meeting scheduled for Sept 7, snowmobiles will be on the agenda. Invited council members to the AWSC fall workshop.

Sam – Wisconsin River Bridge Great Sauk Trail topic is ongoing. Economic assessment includes snowmobile use. Stay informed on property master plans, go online and make sure you're signed up for notifications.

Steve – Good to see GIS efforts have resulted in a more accurate count of miles.

Nancy – Let's try to make sure we award new miles all over the state. Look for ways to improve the scoring, make sure all counties get a chance at the new miles.

Jeff – It's been 17 years since new miles awarded. We may experience some turbulence getting through the process but it's very positive to see new miles going out

Gary – Regarding new miles, the total miles in SNARS will need to reflect the GPS miles. Grant agreements are with counties, not club. Thanks to everyone for sticking with the new miles discussion – its new to all of us. The trackers will help straighten out issues. All in all moving in right direction.

Bob – Make note that Dave Peterson is missing. He was very active and deserves recognition. Thanks to Bev for all her work – an honor to follow in her footsteps. Thanks to council members current and past, grants staff, and the public

Mike - Thanks to council members. Even with disagreements has come together in the end. Thanks to Jillian and Cathy and Bev.

Andy – Thanks to the staff CSSs- council members – and audience. Without your support wouldn't get work done.

Bev – Been on the board since 1983 – been through six governors. Has seen a lot of change in the program. We are heading in the right direction. There was a time when we policed ourselves with a good job – but today we are making a system to last. Good weather, good sleds, can aid lots of miles. The council now is one of the best – we can disagree and still work as a unit – our CSS overworked, underpaid, they need help. Thanks to all. And Bob will get some young blood in here.

13. Next meeting:

- Thursday, October 3rd from 10 am to 2pm. Will plan on establishing satellite locations at major DNR service centers and connecting via technology.
- Monday, Feb 10th in Eagle River area.
- Tuesday, June 16th in Tomahawk for preliminary application review
- August 24-25-26 for Funding Meeting (exact days TBD)

14. Adjourn: 3:30pm motion to adjourn by Sam, no second, attendees dispersed.