



## Snowmobile Recreational Council

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Rib Mountain Conference Center & Dales Weston Lanes, Weston and via Zoom

**Council Members Present:** Dale Mayo – Chair, Bob Lang – Vice Chair, Lynsey Burzinski, Ann Degenhardt, Joel Enking, Abby Haas, Gary Hilgendorf, Mike Holden, Tara Krall, Sam Landes, Andy Malecki, Don Mrotek, Sue Smedegard, Holly Tomlanovich, Erica Volker

**DNR staff attendance:** Jillian Steffes, Pat Anderson, Kurt Byfield, Chris Halbur, Jacob Holsclaw, Jeremy Holtz, Jeff Pennucci

**Public attendance:** Lori Heideman (AWSC), Dave Newman (AWSC), Rebekah Luedtke (WCFA) 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 Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Holly MOTION PASSED

#### 4. Chair and Vice Chair Comments

- **Dale Mayo** – This will be a difficult meeting, we are severely underfunded and registration and trail pass revenue is down. If you've got a bridge that can wait a year or two, we may ask you to wait so we can fund a more urgently needed project. The bridge inspection reports helped a lot this year.
- **Bob Lang** – Some of the cost increase requests are almost an increase of 50%. May need to consider putting a cap on this, if the request exceeds the original by a certain percent the application, we may consider that as a new project.

#### 5. Public Participation

- **Lori Heideman (AWSC)**
  - From the last legislative session, bill on signage on state properties and bill on increasing supplemental aid cap both passed.
  - Recently met with the Governor's Office regarding the future of Stewardship
  - Fall Workshop is Oct 26-27 in Wisconsin Dells
  - AWSC hosted the International Snowmobile Congress in Green Bay in June. 425 Attendees enjoyed breakout sessions, groomer and tourism round tables, ACSA meetings
  - International Association of Snowmobile Administrators met, Jillian Steffes elected as Secretary
  - Sam Landes and Jeff Schwaller inducted into Iron Dog Brigade Hall of Fame
  - Dave Newman inducted into the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame
  - Beginning stages of a new economic impact study via OREC

#### 6. DNR Report

- **Jillian Steffes – DNR Grants Report**
  - Snowmobile Funding Report FY24, Available Funds FY25
  - 2024-25 Snowmobile Funding Summary
  - Snowmobile Trail Passes Sold
  - Snowmobile Active Registrations

- Snow Supplemental Seasonal History (past 10 years)
- Low/no snow year had an impact. Registrations relatively stable, but new machines and new registrations down. Trail passes down about \$1.5 million. No supplemental requests.
- Trend of the program – cost requests are increasing annually. \$13 million in requests this year, up about \$4 million in average in past years. We do not have sufficient funds to cover the requests. Our starting balance coming into this year is \$1.8 million.
- **Jacob Holsclaw – DNR Law Enforcement Report**
  - Some snow in central and southern part of the state, about 10 to 14 days of open trails, so enforcement focused there.
  - 3 fatalities, 2 from one incident. All involved collision with another snowmobile and on public trails. Solo fatality in low Co may have involved drug use on the part of the operator. The incident involving 2 from one group in Juneau Co appeared to be a collision related to speed and lack of familiarity with the area.
  - Will do another safe snowmobiling event, depending on snow conditions.
  - Outdoor Skills Trainers responsible for managing and assisting safety instructors.
  - New outdoor skills trainer hired in the north, Katie Wrenschen in Rhinelander.
  - Map of coverage is available on the DNR website.
  - Ryan Serwe is working through the aids to local law enforcement audits. Marathon and Sawyer didn't meet the min hours (40) and min # of citations issued. Will have final figures by mid-Sept.

**7. Reports of Standing Committees**

- **Finance Committee – Sue Smedegard**
  - See action items under #8
- **Infrastructure Committee – Gary Hilgendorf**
  - Going to have to make some tough decisions, let's do what's best for the whole program.
  - See action items under #8
- **Law Enforcement & Safety Committee – Sam Landes**
  - Trespassing fine of \$230 is too low, needs to be increased.
  - Looking into video surveillance as a tool to record trespassing issues. Are they legal on state properties? TBD
- **Tourism – Abby Haas**
  - Positive impacts in the southern counties from the 10-14 day season, and negative impacts from lack of trail opening in the north. Local businesses saw the impact in both regions.
  - Vital to keep the snow report up to date, even if it's just re-committing the continued open or closure of trails.

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

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MOTIONS**

**Recommend to the Council to revisit project funding requests in February with any funds returned to the program.**  
**Motion Passed Unanimously.**

**Recommend to the Council to commit \$250,000 to the Sauk Co Wisconsin River Bridge project from FY24. Voted 14 to 1 (Tara Krall)**  
**Motion Passed.**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MOTIONS (continued)**

**Recommend to the Council to commit \$215,000 to the contract with Groomer Tracking Systems, LLC for SNARS and GPS Units**

**Motion Passed Unanimously.**

**Recommend to the Council to make \$1,359,114 available for grant requests.**

**Motion Passed Unanimously.**

**INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MOTIONS**

**Recommend to the Council to adopt the existing (previous year) rates for the 24-25 season.**

**Motion Passed.**

**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.

<b>App #</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Discussion/Questions</b>	<b>Motions</b>
<b>1</b>	Washburn	County would prefer a complete replacement, but Council prefers redecking to save funds.	<b>Motion to recommend funding a cost share on the redeck by Gary, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sam. Motion carried.</b>
<b>83</b>	Columbia		<b>Motion to revisit in the future but defer for now in order to move onto higher need projects by Sue, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Don. Motion carried 12 to 3 (Sam, Andy, Dale)</b>
<b>84</b>	Oneida	Multiple motions recorded in spreadsheet. Was initially deferred but ultimately funded.	<b>Motion to recommend funding by Sam, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Erica. Motion carried.</b>
<b>85</b>	Douglas		<b>Motion to recommend funding by Don, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Abby. Motion carried 14 to 1 (Gary)</b>
<b>Bridge Rehab</b>			
<b>2 - 47</b>	Multi Counties	Notes and discussion recorded in funding spreadsheet (meeting attachments)	<b>Motion to recommend funding projects 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 41, 43, 82: By: Sam, 2nd: Mike Motion carried</b>

Trail Rehab/Relocations/New Bridges		
48 - 77	Multiple Counties	Briefly reviewed but insufficient funds for this category
Subsequent Categories		
78+	Multiple Counties	Not considered at this time.

- Projects that seemed to be the most urgent need were prioritized over those where the trail would remain open and usable.
- Bridge Inspection Reports were not required but were helpful in highlighted high-need projects. Bridge inspection reports can be paid for out of maintenance if the bridge is on a funded trail. County trail coordinators can work with their county highway departments to try and have rec bridge inspections done under the same contract as highway bridge inspections, and at a reasonable price (some counties report paying about \$250 per inspection)
- Some of the bridges appeared to have been damaged by oversized equipment. Unfair to ask the snowmobilers of Wisconsin to pay to replace a bridge if the club chose to buy and run an oversized groomer on it.
- Mike Peterson (Washburn) discussed their relocation project to address safe crossing of Hwy 53 in Trego.
  - County and club attended many meetings with DOT from 2015 through 2022, and were reassured the connection would be reestablished.
  - DOT has stated they HAVE provided a crossing, but local community and Co feel the crossing is unsafe.

**Motion to write a letter of support to indicate the Governor’s Council is in favor of finding a safer Hwy 53 Crossing in Trego to the Governor, Legislation, DOT Secretary, DNR Secretary** by Sam, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike.  
**MOTION PASSED**

## 10. Council elections

- Dale Mayo is looking to pass the baton as Chair, and is not seeking reelection.

Dale Mayo and Abby Haas nominate Bob Lang as Chair.

**Motion to close the nominations for chair and pass a unanimous ballot for Bob Lang** by Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Holly.  
**MOTION PASSED**

Bob Lang and Sue Smedegard nominate Sam Landes as Vice Chair.

Gary Hilgendorf and Holly Tomlanovich nominate Sue Smedegard as Vice Chair.

**Paper ballots distributed for votes, counted by Cathy Burrow and Ed Slaminski. Sue Smedegard is elected Vice Chair with 8 votes** to Sam Landes’s 6 votes.

## 11. Committee member items

- Dale - A lot of excellent work, been a wonderful experience
- Bob - don't always agree, but work together to get things done. Will talk about changing committees, reach out by email what you're interested in, Bob and Sue will discuss what to do.
- Andy - thanks to all, good decisions today
- Holly - first full council meeting, what we did was fair, equitable
- Lynsey - agrees with everything said, lots of hard decisions
- Don - Same
- Sam - attended Polaris 70th anniversary, then went to Artic Cat, factories and people are thinking last year is a hiccup. Industry doing well.
- Ann — very interesting, coming in at such a difficult part of the process, appreciated everyone introducing themselves
- Abby - good meeting
- Erica - glad we're able to meet in person, beneficial
- Mike - thanks to Dale for leadership and time as chair. Sad for those whose grants weren't accepted.
- Sue — Thanks to Dale for the leadership over the years. thank you for the vote of confidence electing me as vice chair, looking forward to working with you all in that capacity. Thanks for all the hard work today, good decisions. Grave concerns about some that we couldn't fund.
- Gary - good work, infrastructure has to dig deeper on some of the questions - thanks to everyone for all the help.
- Tara - thanks to all, good meeting, interesting sitting on this side.

## 12. Items for next meeting

- Next meeting tentatively Feb 6<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the Groomer Show in St Germain.
- We will reconsider funding projects that weren't funded today at the Feb meeting, with any funds that were returned to the program between then and now.

## 13. Adjourn

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