



Off-Road Vehicle Council Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2020
Zoom Meeting

Council Members Present: Rob McConnell – Chair, Adam Harden – Vice Chair, Dave Traczyk, Jim Wisneski, Bobby Donahue, Mike Biese, Dan Thole

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

Public attendance: members of the public

1. Call to order at 9:00 am
2. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Motion to approve January 23rd, 2020 by Jim, 2nd by Mike. MOTION PASSED

3. Agenda Repair -

- None

4. Elections

- Jim nominates Rob McConnell as Chair of the ORV Council, 2nd by Dave. 2nd call for chair, 3rd call for chair.

Motion by Dan to close nominations for Chair of the ORV Council and cast unanimous ballot for Rob McConnell as Chair, 2nd by Bobby. MOTION PASSED

- Jim nominates Adam Harden as Vice Chair of the ORV Council, 2nd by Mike. 2nd call for vice chair, 3rd call for vice chair.

Motion by Rob to close nominations for Vice Chair of the ORV Council and cast unanimous ballot for Adam Harden as Vice Chair, 2nd by Dave. MOTION PASSED

5. Chair Comments

- Rob - Good to see some grant requests from new areas of the state

6. DNR Reports and Updates

- Update on Grants Awarded from 19-20 Cycle Applications

Rehab/Dev Applications 19-20	# of Projects	Grant Funds
Approved by Council	36	\$1,281,882
Grants Awarded by DNR	34	\$1,112,600

Of the two projects not yet awarded, we are waiting on updated cost estimates from the applicant (Tri County, Cheese Country).

- Budget for 20-21 Grant Awards – won't have budget until after July 31st. Budget info will be available at the next meeting. But vehicle registration trends are steady and/or growing.
- Intro to Grant Timeline/Process

April 15th – Applications are due to the DNR

Spring – DNR Grants Staff do a preliminary review of the applications, and prepare them for review by the Council

August – DNR learns how much funding is available for grant awards based on year-end reconciliation of registration and trail pass sales. Governor’s Council makes recommendations to the DNR on which projects to fund.

Fall – DNR Grants Staff do a more in-depth review of the project proposals.

- Checking for potential endangered species, archaeological impacts
- Determining if any timing restrictions are necessary
- Making sure the applicant is aware of and pursuing required permits

Fall/Winter – After the additional review is complete, grant agreements are written and sent to the applicant. At this point, work can begin.

Because of this lengthy timeline, we often advise applicants to plan for construction the year AFTER they apply for a grant. We are unable to make funding decisions prior to August as that is the very earliest we find out what funds we have available to spend.

- One project to the “Rehab” category, not included in the original materials. Snowmobile Council requested that Iron County’s Ledvina Bridge Rehab be considered by the ORV Council ... UPDATE – later learned it was not open to Winter ATV, will be withdrawn from consideration from ATV funding.

7. Information and Action: Trail/grant issues

A. Action required on storm damage and/or amendment requests

<u>Project</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Amt Req</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Motion</u>
Storm	Oconto	\$15,000		Motion to recommend funding by Dan, 2nd by Mike, passed unanimously.
#90 Cost Inc	Polk	\$18,751		Motion to recommend funding by Jim, 2nd by Bobby. Motion passed unanimously.
#91 Cost Inc	Forest	\$92,550	What is the weight limit on the new bridge?	Motion to recommend funding by Jim, 2nd by Bobby. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Review ATV/UTV grant applications for completeness; request additional information if needed. New Mile applications will be reviewed at a later date.

Comments and questions recorded on the Funding Spreadsheet

Additional discussion during this time included;

- While Snowmobile Council has made it a policy to fund bridges up to 25,000 lb load limit, ORV Council has made no such promises. In previous years, ORV Council has asked applicants to provide a cost estimate at both 14,000 lb (the weight limit currently listed in Ch. NR 64, Wis. Adm. Code) as well as their preferred weight limit (often 25,000 lb) so that the ORV Council can see the price difference and make an informed decision. Would like to continue to see this information provided by applicants.
- In previous Council meetings, it was made clear that rehab grants will not be issued for Durasoil projects. When the ATV Maintenance rate was increased from \$450/mile to \$600/mile, it was with

the intention of having those funds available for Durasoil. If applicants want to use this product, they should use maintenance dollars.

- The ORV Council continues to want to see applicants apply to federal Recreational Trail Aids program when the project is eligible for those dollars (on public land). This helps stretch the ATV/UTV registration money. Council continues to strongly encourage applicants to apply for RTP.
- Members of the Council continue to voice a preference for native soil trails. Council members feel they'd rather pay more to maintain a native soil trail as opposed to a built up, "road like" trail with miles of gravel surfacing. Gravel and pit run may be needed in trouble spots, but not ideal for the entire trail surface.
- While campgrounds are technically eligible for 100% grant funding from the ATV/UTV program, Council members still prefer to fund projects where the applicant or other user groups also contribute funds (therefore requesting less than 100% from the ATV/UTV program). Funding decisions in August may reflect this.

8. Council's recommendations to DNR on implementing grant funding changes from Legislation ATV/UTV SB-583 AB-652

- New funding categories introduced in 2019 Wisconsin 183.
 - 1) Production of trail maps and a statewide digital information application for providing safety, regulatory, and riding opportunity information.
 - 2) Acquisition and maintenance of communications equipment for providing support to organizations that meet the eligibility requirements under sub. (5m) (b).
 - 3) Development and placement of safety information signs

The Department will need to either amend NR64, OR receive direction from the ORV Governor's Council to develop policy in lieu of NR64 changes to allow for us to implement these new categories. We need to 1) determine the priority ranking of these new categories (how do they fit it with our existing priority categories), 2) define these terms – what are eligible items, what does a complete application look like, and 3) modify our existing grant application to accommodate these new categories.

- Council agreed to meet on **July 15th, 2020** to address this topic. Location TBD.

9. Emergency Storm Damage – When to accept outside normal grant cycle?

- Grant applications must be received by April 15th annually to be considered for funding. Grantees sometimes request consideration for out-of-cycle funding for "emergency storm damage". Department looking for input from Council on what constitutes an emergency storm damage situation. Snowmobile Council passed a resolution recommending the Department accept these when there is a State or Federally Declared Emergency. ORV Council declined to pass a resolution on this issue at this time. Discussion on why ATV/UTV storm damage may want to be more flexible included the idea that snowmobile trail damage may happen off-season, thus giving more time to repair the trail, while ATV trails may be damaged during the active use season.

10. Council member items

- Jim – What is the status on increasing the spending cap under ATV/UTV grants?
 - Response from Randy – hope to have legislation introduced in the next session.
- Bobby

- Machines over 2,000 lbs cannot be registered. Some popular models exceed that, is there potential that may be increased?

Response from Randy – it's been discussed, but COVID-19 halted any progress

- Bobby's comments continued.
 - Some dealers are misrepresenting those larger machines to buyers and informing them that they can be registered, when in fact they can't. Stronger message (to dealers?) from DNR would be appreciated to help resolve this problem.

11. Public Comments

- Randy Harden (WATVA)
 - Some trails are seeing heavy increase in use while others are seeing significant decrease in use. Unsure of the reason, possibly word-of-mouth and misinformation that some of those underutilized trails are closed.
 - Continue to encourage people to sign up for the trail ambassador program.
 - Continuing education about responsible speed, legal and responsible lighting on machines, and more.
- Don Mroteck (Snowmo Council)
 - May be beneficial for Snowmo Council and ORV Council to have another joint meeting.

12. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Adam, 2nd by Bobby. MOTION PASSED