

**Grant Application Deadline: April 15<sup>th</sup>**

s. 23.09(26)(b), Wis. Stats.

**Supplemental Grant Application Deadline:  
August 1<sup>st</sup>**

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## **Guidelines for the Snowmobile Trail Aids Program**

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**A financial assistance program  
administered by the  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**



**PUB-CA-002 02/2022**

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County Law Enforcement Aids Program  
.....

## DNR Financial Assistance Contacts

***For trail and route related grants, contact the regional grants specialist below:***

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**Northeast Field Counties:** Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago

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**South Central Field Counties:** Adams, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Juneau, La Crosse, Lafayette, Marathon, Monroe, Portage, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Vernon, & Wood

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**Southeast Field Counties:** Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha

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**West Central Field Counties:** Buffalo, Clark, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pepin, Pierce, St. Croix, Trempealeau.

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### **Northern Field**

**Spooner Office Counties:** Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Polk, Rusk, Sawyer, Washburn

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**Rhineland Office Counties:** Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Price, Taylor, Vilas

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# Recreation Warden Administrative Area Map

Recreational Safety & Outdoors Skills Section Chief: April Dombrowski 608-852-9456

Recreation Warden Supervisor: Bob Kneeland 715-764-0716

Boating Law Administrator: Darren Kuhn 920-615-6075

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## Green Bay

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## Eau Claire

RW Jake Holsclaw  
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Vacant

## Viroqua

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## Fitchburg

RW Nick Webster  
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## Milwaukee Area

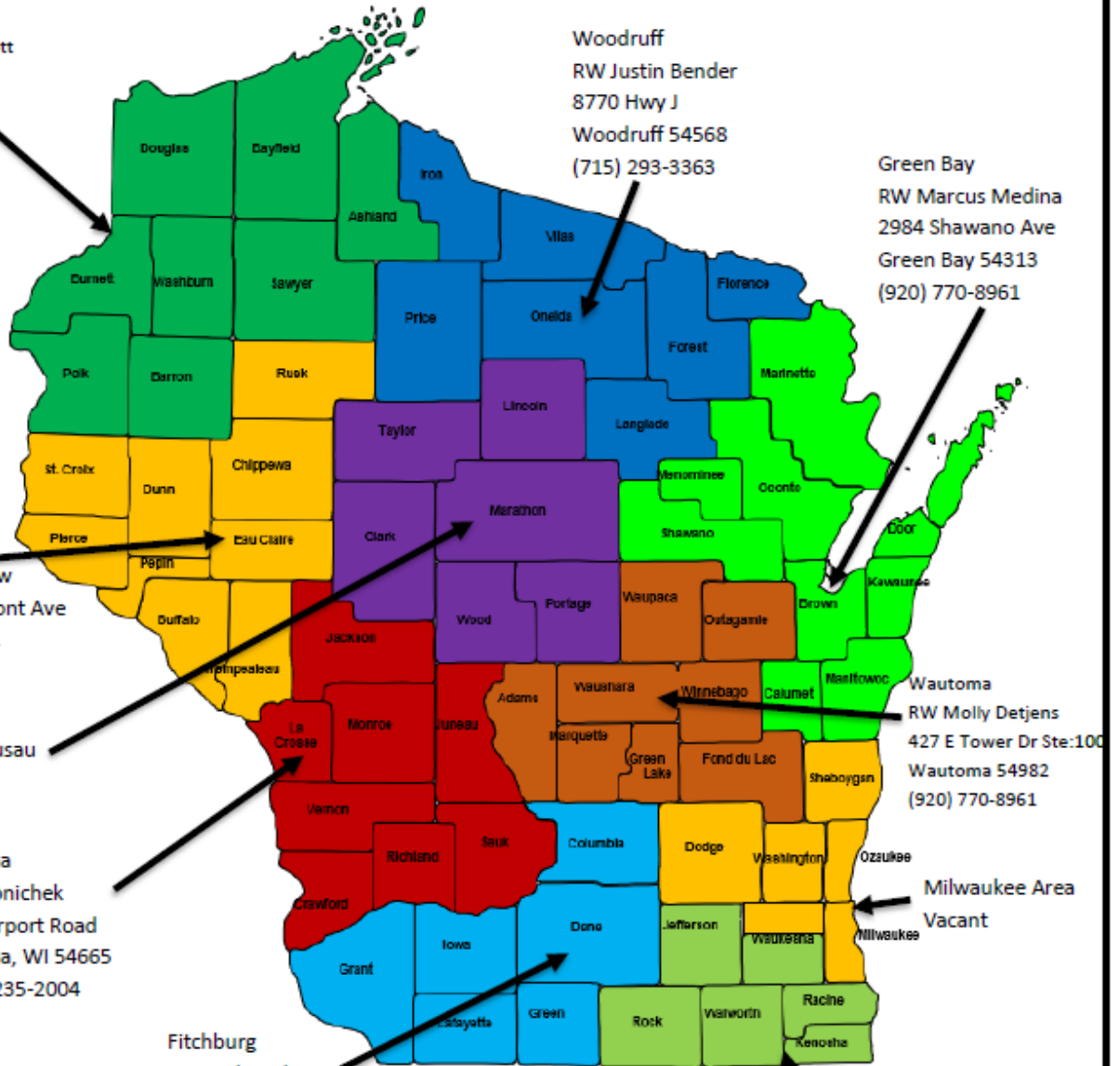
RW Jason Roberts  
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## Milwaukee Area

Vacant



## Introduction

The snowmobile grant program was created with the passage of Chapter 394 Laws of 1970. The Department of Natural Resources was authorized to administer a grant program for the acquisition, development, insurance and maintenance of public snowmobile trails. A Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council consisting of 15 members was created to advise the Department on matters relating to the administration of the program.

Through the efforts of the Snowmobile Recreation Council, the Department and organized snowmobile clubs, a number of changes and additions have been made to the original legislation. These changes have resulted in a program that fosters a safe, well-maintained snowmobile trail system throughout Wisconsin and effective enforcement and safety programs for all enthusiasts.

The purpose of this guide is to outline the requirements of the components of Wisconsin's snowmobile grant programs.

This guidance will reference chs. 23, 340 and 350, Wis. Stats. and ch. NR 50, Wis. Admin Code.

## Funds for the Program

Snowmobile funds come from a variety of sources:

- Payment of a registration fee for each snowmobile maintained and operated for public use within the state. Registration funds are used for all aspects of the Wisconsin snowmobile program.
- A portion of the excise tax on gasoline calculated for 50 gallons of gasoline for every snowmobile registered by the last day of March each year. An additional 55% of that total is received from the excise tax and used for supplemental maintenance claims. This money is used to pay eligible counties for supplemental maintenance expenses in excess of \$300 per mile.
- Payment of an annual trail pass fee for all snowmobiles operated on public trails in the state, which is used for all aspects of the Wisconsin snowmobile program.
- As part of the 2013-15 Biennial Budget, Stewardship Program funds were designated for the Snowmobile/ATV/UTV grant programs. These funds are referred to as "Motorized Stewardship". The department has made \$500,000 available annually for ATV/UTV/Snowmobile project.

This source of funds has more restrictions than the general Snow/ATV/UTV funds: A 20% local match is required; this meaning no other state, federal, or volunteer funds or labor may be used on a project funded with Motorized Stewardship funds.

A Land Use Agreement of at least five-years duration is required on any project completed with Motorized Stewardship funds. Minimum useful life requirements on projects are as follows:

- 5 years – trail rehabilitation
- 10 years – bridges
- 20 years – capital improvements (support facilities such as: warming house, restrooms, trail-head, etc.)
- Perpetual – land acquisition

For more information, see the [Motorized Stewardship](http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/motorstew.html) page at: [dnr.wi.gov/aid/motorstew.html](http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/motorstew.html).

# Planning Requirements

## What are the Planning Requirements for Project Applications?

Counties are required to have a comprehensive plan approved by the County Board of Supervisors or designated committee and the Department of Natural Resources. [s. NR 50.09(4)(a)1, Wis. Adm. Code]

The County Board of any county, which, by resolution, indicates its desire to receive snowmobile aids for their snowmobile trails. [s. 23.09(26)(b), Wis. Stats.]

Counties that have previously met the planning requirements for the snowmobile trail grant program are required to maintain a current trail system map that shows trail locations, trail classifications and existing trail mileage by classification [s. NR 50.09(4)(a)2, Wis. Adm. Code]. Historically, those may have been submitted as printed maps. As of 2018, **the Department requires a current GIS data layer of the county's snowmobile trail system** be submitted to the Department to meet this requirement.

County snowmobile trail data layers should have the following minimum attributes assigned to the linear data...

- 1) Funding Status (Funded vs Unfunded, or Club vs County, etc.)
- 2) Identify ROUTE segments that are not eligible for funding (if included in the layer)
- 3) Name or number of the trail
- 4) Any additional attributes that may be useful, such as Club, Comments, etc.

The county must submit a comprehensive, current countywide trail layer to meet this requirement. Individual trail segment GPS files will not be sufficient.

## Eligible Applicants [s. 23.09(26) Wis. Stats.]

This grant program was established as “**Aids to Counties for Snowmobile Purposes.**” County and tribal governments are the only eligible applicant to the grant program, and will be the official recipient of any grant funds issued. In practice, however, county governments work closely with local snowmobile clubs to perform the work of maintaining the trails.

## Eligible Projects [s. 350.12(4), Wis. Stats., s. 23.09(26)(c), Wis. Stats.]

1. **Maintenance of snowmobile trails** - provides up to 100% of the cost up to \$300 per mile for activities associated with keeping a trail safe and enjoyable to use. Maintenance activities include the posting of signs, brushing, grooming of snow, minor repair of bridges, purchase of county liability insurance and the purchase of short-term easements or other land use agreements periods of less than 3 years.
2. **Major bridge rehabilitation** - provides up to 100% of the cost of major reconstruction or rehabilitation. This may include replacement when necessary to return a bridge on the existing trail system to a functioning, safe structure. The purpose of this category is to provide funds to make major structural repairs or renovation that would be beyond the ability of normal maintenance funding to accomplish.
3. **Trail rehabilitation** - provides up to 100% of the cost of repair or reconstruction activities that are necessary to improve a trail for user safety and enjoyment. The repairs or renovation may be for

the improvement of the trail for safety reasons or in response to natural events that adversely affect trail safety. Similar to bridge rehabilitation, the purpose of this category is to provide funds to undertake major trail repairs for safety that would be beyond the ability of normal maintenance funding to accomplish.

4. **Trail development** - provides up to 100% of the cost of constructing a trail. Activities include grading, initial signing and construction of bridges or other support facilities. Development also includes the purchase of land in fee simple and the acquisition of interests in land for a term of 3 years or greater.

## Distribution of Funds

### Distribution of Trail Funds [s. 23.09(26)(c), Wis. Stats.]

The distribution of funds in the trails program is based on the priority list established in s. 23.09(26)(c), Wis. Stats. The Governor-appointed Snowmobile Recreation Council makes funding recommendations in the following order. :

Maintenance of existing approved trails. This includes: purchase of county liability insurance, acquisition of easements of less than 3 years and signs.

***NOTE: Club signing program referenced in s. 23.09(26)(c) is an obsolete cardboard sign program no longer in use.***

1. Major bridge reconstruction or rehabilitation
  2. Route signing program (*see note below*)
  3. Trail Rehabilitation
    - a) Mandatory Trail Relocation
    - b) Discretionary Trail Relocation
- Development of New Trails
- a) New bridges
  - b) New trails
  - c) Facility development / non-trails
  - d) Acquisition of land interests

#### **Route Signing Program: Timing Logistics Make Grant Funding Difficult**

While s. 23.09(26)(c) Wis. Stats lists route signing as an eligible expense, the timing of the grant application process makes it difficult for eligible applicants (counties and tribal governments) to utilize grant funds for this purpose. In order to remain eligible for reimbursement, costs cannot be incurred until **after** both parties have signed the grant agreement (fall/winter of application year, *if selected for funding*). But when a county/tribe opens their roads up as routes, they are responsible for signing those routes **ASAP**. The catch-22 is that the applicant need to sign the routes as soon as they are opened per their ordinance, but grant funds wouldn't be available for several months **AFTER** an application is submitted. To utilize grant funds, a county would have to loosely commit to opening routes in their application **IN THE FUTURE**, but not **ACTUALLY** open routes (and purchase and install signs) until they get a signed agreement in the fall/winter. Even if the timing is just right, there is no guarantee of grant funding. All grant applications are shared with the Governor's Snowmobile Council for funding recommendations in the summer.



## **Important Points About Maintenance** [s. NR 50.09(4)(d), Wis. Adm. Code]

- Counties are required to groom and maintain snowmobile trail developed on lands assisted with snowmobile aids. [s. NR 50.09(4)(d), Wis. Adm. Code.]
- Trail maintenance is extremely important to improve trail usability and enjoyment. Frequent grooming of heavily used trails is needed to eliminate moguls. Ideally, heavily used trails should be groomed immediately after each new snowfall. Once-a-week maintenance is recommended for lightly used trails.
- County maintenance of snowmobile trails will be reimbursed up to 100% of the actual cost of maintaining the trails up to \$300 per mile per year. The county has flexibility in how the funds are managed within the county trail system.
- Eligible maintenance activities include but are not limited to: trail grooming, trail mowing and brushing, trail sign and post replacement, bridge and culvert repairs, plowing of parking lots and access roads, grading and bulldozing of trails, transporting of grooming equipment, upkeep of toilets and shelter facilities, the repair and replacement of trail facilities lost because of vandalism and normal wear and the materials, labor and equipment rentals to accomplish these activities. Maintenance also includes the purchase of liability insurance by the county to protect its interest in providing the trails and acquisition of short-term easements of less than 3 years.
- Minimum widths to be groomed must be 6 feet for one-way and 8 feet for two-way trails. Maximum width to be groomed shall be 12 feet for two-way trails unless the amount of snowmobile traffic and safety warrant grooming to a greater width (prior approval by the Department is required).
- Only those trails previously approved by the Department and included in a maintenance agreement are eligible for reimbursement of maintenance costs. Additional trail miles can be added as they are approved by the Governor's Snowmobile Council and the Department. Maintenance costs for these additional miles of trail are not eligible for reimbursement until a maintenance amendment agreement is processed.
- Counties may request advance payments from the Department of up to 50% of the signed grant contract amount for maintenance. To be eligible for maintenance advance payments a county must have settled all maintenance claims from previous years.
- Counties must have entered all expenses in the Snowmobile Automated Reporting System (SNARS) and submitted to the DNR for audit purposes, along with a request for reimbursement within 6 months of the expiration date of the grant, unless they are requesting supplemental in which case the deadline is August 1. [s. NR 50.09(4)(f)4, Wis. Adm. Code]

## **Supplemental Maintenance Payments** [s. NR 50.09(4)(f), Wis. Adm. Code]

- Counties may apply for supplemental maintenance funds when their eligible maintenance expenses from the previous season exceed \$300 per mile. [s. 350.12(4)(bm), Wis. Stats.]
- In order to be eligible for a supplementary maintenance payment, three conditions must exist:
  1. The county must apply prior to August 1. This means that reimbursement claims must be submitted to the DNR field office prior to August 1.
  2. The county must have expended the entire contracted amount at \$300 per mile for eligible maintenance expenditures.
  3. The county must have spent at least \$200 per mile for eligible grooming expenses the previous season.

- All counties qualifying will be subject to a cap of \$250/mile for all eligible non-grooming expenditures.
- All counties qualifying are subject to a cap of 3 times the per mile maximum (\$900 at the current rate of \$300/mile)
- Counties requesting supplemental maintenance payments must have entered all expenses in the Snowmobile Automated Reporting System (SNARS) and submitted to the DNR regional office for audit purposes, along with a request for supplemental funding, by the August 1 deadline. [s. NR 50.09(4)(f)4, Wis. Adm. Code]
- Based on a preliminary review of all requests received and availability of adequate funds, the Department will forward to counties payment equal to 50% of the requested amount – capped at 50% of the eligible claim amount (number of miles x \$900) by September 15 each year.
- After a comprehensive Department review of all supplemental claims for eligible costs, thresholds and caps, the Department will make a final payment to all counties for the balance of what is due. If total available funds are insufficient to cover 100% of claimed eligible costs, final payments will be prorated. The Department will notify counties by letter of the final prorated percentage mailed on or before December 1 each year. This letter is the authorization that the county needs to issue a final payment to the clubs, associations, or alliances. The county may claim reimbursement of the final payment from the DNR Financial Assistance Contact when the county has received the canceled checks or bank statements with checks highlighted from all the club or association recipients.
- All qualifying counties may submit claims for the original contracted amount for maintenance at any time during the project period.

**Bridge Rehabilitation** [s. NR 50.09(4)(e), Wis. Adm, Code]

- Eligible repairs for assistance include: replacement of entire structure including approaches and abutments, repair to the superstructure of the bridge, replacement to the entire deck and railings, repair or replacement of protective riprap around abutments or footings.
- Costs that are **not** eligible include: replacement of bridge railings only, patching of decking, grading or minor repair of approaches, bridge repairs necessary to bring the bridge structure within existing codes, reinforcement of bridge structures to accommodate weights in excess of 25,000 pounds and deck replacement for the sole purpose of accommodating larger grooming equipment.

**NOTE!** Ch. NR 50, Wis. Admin Code currently references a max design weight of 14,000 lbs, but the Department is in the practice of awarding grants for up to 25,000 lb design load at the recommendation of the Governor’s Snowmobile Council, due to the increasing size of groomer units. Grants for bridges with a design weight limit of more than 14,000 will require a variance to Ch. NR 50.

- Cost sharing assistance for the purchase and installation of prefabricated bridges shall be limited to structures with a maximum design load of 25,000 pounds unless there are circumstances which lead to a capacity greater than 25,000 pounds for no demonstrated increase in cost.
- Cost sharing for the purchase of materials and construction of bridges built on site by either contractors or clubs shall be limited to a maximum design load of 25,000 pounds unless there are circumstances which lead to a capacity greater than 25,000 pounds for no increase in cost.
- Counties may request an advance payment of up to 75% of the signed contract amount for an approved bridged rehabilitation project.

- For bridge rehabilitation projects that involve total deck replacement, the deck must be reconstructed to a width of at least 8 feet, free from obstruction.
- For bridges 'built-on-site', the design plans must be stamped by a professional engineer and approved before a grant can be issued.
- When a bridge rehabilitation project is located on an abandoned railroad grade and involves total deck construction or replacement, the width of the bridge, free from obstruction, shall be at least 10 feet.
- Bridges or culverts that have been developed or improved through the use of rehabilitation funds are not eligible for rehabilitation funds for a period of 10 years, with the exception of a natural event that affected bridge safety or other circumstances requiring Snowmobile Recreation Council approval.
- NOTE: See [Bridge Guidelines CF-005](#) for detailed information on bridge projects.

**Emergency Storm Damage** – If a bridge or trail experiences significant damage due to a state or federally declared storm event, applicants may be able to submit a grant application for emergency repair funding outside of the normal April 15<sup>th</sup> application deadline cycle. Please contact your DNR Financial Assistance Contact (page i) for more information.

### **Trail Rehabilitation** [s. NR 50.09(4)(g), Wis. Adm. Code]

- Eligible costs for cost sharing assistance include: clearing of trees from storm damage to re-establish the trail corridor, filling and grading to re-establish trail tread damaged as a result of erosion and widening and straightening trail segments to improve visibility.
- Costs that are **not** eligible include: brushing, signing and similar activities conducted as part of routine maintenance, costs associated with bringing a trail up to standards listed in the development section, construction of a new bridge or culvert with an inside diameter of greater than 24" or rehabilitation or replacement of a bridge or culvert with an inside diameter of greater than 24". Construction or repair of bridges or culverts with an inside diameter of greater than 24" will be classified as bridge rehabilitation projects, as opposed to trail rehabilitation projects.
- Trail segments eligible for rehabilitation must be a minimum of 3 miles in length and must have been in the county's funded trail system for a minimum of 10 years from the date of the application.
- Trail segments that have been improved through the use of rehabilitation funds cannot be eligible for funds for a period of 10 years. The exception to this would be a natural event that affected trail safety during the period.
- The total amount of a county's applications for any given year cannot exceed 10% of the total funded county trail miles.

### **Development**

- Counties may receive aid to develop snowmobile trails, facilities and areas on public lands designated by the county board, leased lands, or lands under agreement with the Department.
- Eligible costs for development projects include: trail grading, brushing and construction, trail signing, construction of bridges or culverts, construction of support facilities, purchase of lands in fee simple title and acquisition of land rights (*i.e.*, easements) for a period of 3 years or greater.

- Counties may make application for up to 100% of the cost of county trail development costs not to exceed \$500 per mile unless recommended by the Snowmobile Recreation Council and approved by the Department. Counties may request a 75% advance at the time of project approval.
- Aids for development of trail shelters or sanitary facilities shall not exceed \$5,000. Aids for a combination building including shelter and sanitary facilities shall not exceed \$10,000. Structural approval of shelters and sanitary facilities must be obtained before construction. Projects exceeding these amounts require a variance from s. NR 50.09(5)(e), Wis. Adm. Code.
- Every effort should be made to utilize existing public sanitary and shelter facilities. When construction of these facilities is necessary, basic facilities should be constructed whenever possible. Basic facilities could include "Adirondack" type trail shelters and one-unit, pit-type sanitary facilities.
- Required trail design and construction specifications:
  1. Minimum graded width for one-way trails is 6 feet and maximum 8 feet.
  2. Minimum graded width for two-way trails is 10 feet and maximum 12 feet.
  3. Minimum turning radius is 25 feet.
  4. Minimum cleared height above trail is 10 feet.
  5. Sustained grades and slopes will be a maximum of 25%.
  6. Approved, fully reflectorized snowmobile signs must be used.
  7. Night travel on or in the vicinity of highways must be in the direction of vehicular traffic in the nearest lane unless:
    - The snowmobile trail is located at least 40 feet from the roadway, or
    - is separated from the roadway by a head lamp barrier.
 s. 350.02, Wis. Stats.
  8. Snowmobile trails shall not be routed over bodies of water. If stream crossings make bridging necessary, bridges should be at least 8 feet wide. If the bridge is located on an abandoned railroad grade, the bridge shall be a minimum of 10 feet wide free from obstruction.
- Desirable trail design and construction specifications
  1. Trail horizontal sight distance should be a minimum of 50 feet. Snowbanks at road crossings should be cut back to provide adequate visibility in both directions on both sides. Snowbanks should be kept low at trail crossing points to permit easy exit from or entrance back on to the trail. 'STOP' signs must be installed on trails at all road crossings.
  2. Approaches to grades and slopes should be as straight as possible. Because of limited sight distances, steep hilltop crossings should be constructed and groomed wider than the normal.
  3. Access to trails should be controlled where possible. Caution signs should be used to indicate trail intersections. Trails should be routed away from areas that will attract undesirable traffic or uses.
  4. The location of the trail should be varied through topography and land characteristics to maintain user interest and to take advantage of interesting features.
  5. Trails should cross contours at right angles where possible. Routing trails alongside slopes should be avoided.
  6. Route trails away from areas designated in Department wilderness policy, game preserves, winter browse areas, experimental stations, nurseries, plantations, eagle and osprey nests, residences and other areas of anticipated conflict, particularly areas which may be damaged by trail development or snowmobile use.

7. Guidelines describing the techniques of posting standardized signs are found in a separate publication titled [Trail Signing Handbook CF-023](#).

Recreation facilities developed or lands acquired in fee simple under the assistance of this program shall not be converted to uses that are inconsistent with the purposes of this program without the approval of the Department. The Department will not issue such approval unless there is evidence that otherwise inconsistent uses are essential to and in accordance with an approved comprehensive plan for the area.

### **Sign Eligibility (under maintenance, development, rehab, etc):**

#### **Eligible signs provide:**

- safety/caution information
  - location information – CTH A, Corridor 7
  - directions to services and locations
  - directions for trail use including:
    - Stay on Trail

#### **Ineligible signs:**

- Signs with business names and/or advertising.
- Conversational signs such as:
  - Trail maintained by ABC Club
  - Your registration dollars at work
  - This trail is a privilege not a right, etc.
  - Memorial signs

### **A Word About Land Acquisition**

Counties may receive grant assistance for either maintenance or development projects to purchase lands or secure easements, leases, permits or other appropriate agreements, permitting use of private property for snowmobile trails and facilities if such easements, leases, permits or other agreements provide public access to the trail or facility. The cost of any lands, leases, easements, permits, or agreements acquired by the county through condemnation will not be eligible for reimbursement. Counties shall provide certification to the Department that such lands, easements, leases, permits or other appropriate agreements have been secured. [s. NR 50.09(4)(b)7, Wis. Adm. Code.]

- Bridges, culverts, toilet facilities, parking lots or shelters constructed with snowmobile funds and costing more than \$3,000 must be located on lands where the county has secured ownership or an easement of at least 3 years duration.
- Counties must provide certification to the Department annually that all necessary private property easements, leases, permits or other appropriate agreements have been secured for snowmobile trail use. [Certification of Snowmobile Trail Verbal Easements, Leases, or Permits Form 8700-094](#) is provided as a resource.
- Counties may enter into Land Use Agreements with the Department to use lands owned or leased by the Department for snowmobile trails, facilities, or areas. The request for Land Use Agreement must be signed by the County Board Chair or authorized official and be accompanied by a copy of the resolution authorizing the individual to sign the Land Use Agreement. There is no insurance requirement or fee for counties authorized to operate a trail on Department land.
- Private snowmobile organizations may also enter into Land Use Agreements with the Department to use lands owned or leased by the Department for snowmobile trails, facilities, or areas for a period not greater than one year. There is no fee, but there is a requirement of liability insurance.
- Appraisals are required whenever lands are to be purchased in fee title. Appraisals must follow Department guidelines. The land acquisition process can be complicated. For this reason, it is important to start your project early and communicate with your DNR Financial Assistance Contact.
- Requirements of cost shared leases or permits as an eligible cost of maintenance or development:

1. The value of a short-term easement, lease or permit may be based on the rental rate of land. The fee value may be one percent per month of equalized or assessed valuation.
2. A minimum term of four months between December 1 and the following March 31 is required and the easement, lease or permit must be irrevocable.
3. An annual fee of 10 cents per rod may be paid if the assessed valuation procedure is not used. The minimum payment for any one landowner is \$5.00.
4. The width of snowmobile rights-of-way shall not exceed one rod unless approved by the Department. The easement or lease should contain as a minimum the right to sign, right of limited construction, right to maintain and the right to use any snowmobiles. Grant funding under this program is limited to the minimum land area necessary for the snowmobile trail.

## FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS

All forms and documents used for this application process can be found on the DNR website at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/Aid/SnowmobileTrails.html>

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

### How to Prepare Your Application

The checklist below will take you through the necessary steps for preparing a successful project application.

1. Contact your Community Service Specialist to discuss your project idea and plans.
2. Prepare Your Application
  - ✓ Complete DNR Form 8700-159, [Outdoor Motorized Recreation Trail Aids Application](#) (required), indicate the type of assistance for which you are applying and complete the project narrative.
  - ✓ Attach a copy of the authorizing resolution (required)
  - ✓ Attach a copy of maps; see page 2 of the application for a list of maps needed based on the project type. (required)
  - ✓ Submit a copy of your current countrywide snowmobile trails in a GIS format indicating funding status of the trails. (*shapefile, GDB, etc*)
3. Forward the completed application and all supporting materials to your DNR Financial Assistance Contact by the April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Applications will be reviewed over the summer, with the Governor's Snowmobile Council making funding recommendations to the Department, and actual grant agreements written in the fall or winter. Applicants should refrain from beginning on-the-ground work until a signed grant agreement is in hand, in order to remain eligible for reimbursement.

### Authorizing Resolution [s. 23.09(26), Wis. Stats.]

The official resolution adopted by the county must:

1. Formally request financial assistance from the Department.

2. Authorize a representative of the county to act on behalf of the county to sign documents and take necessary action to complete the proposed project.
3. Resolve that the applicant will meet the financial obligation of the grant.

### **Detailed Project Description**

1. For **Maintenance** include:

- A concise statement of the grooming activities and the type of grooming equipment used.
- Certification that all easements, leases, permits, or other agreements secured grant public access and use of land for snowmobiling. The County shall maintain a current file for all easements, leases, permits or other agreements that shall include the name of the property owner, description of the property, duration and amount paid for the easement, lease, permit or other agreement, date owner was contacted and name of the county or snowmobile club representative who obtained the easement, lease, permit or other agreement. [Certification of Snowmobile Trail Verbal Easements, Leases, or Permits Form 8700-094 is available for use for tracking easements by the County.](#)
- An estimate of any county liability or short-term acquisition costs that the county will be paying, if any.

For all other project applications, you must include a detailed explanation of the project with dimensions of bridge designs, include topographic maps, air photos, plat book maps clearly detailing your project location, Town, Range, & Section and GPS location. The air photos can be downloaded from the county website or from the DNR Surface Water Data View at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/surfacewater/swdv/>. Also describe the project terrain (*i.e.*, wetlands, uplands, stream crossing, etc.)

2. For **Bridge Rehabilitation Project** include:

- County map and a topographic map showing the trail system and the location of the bridge including water course name, air photo, wetland and plat map showing the trail segment overlaid on all the maps.
- Bridge rehabilitation cost summary supplement. This supplement will require 2 quotes for installation of prefab bridge structures and 1 estimate for decking and railing replacement projects.
- Construction plans for bridge showing length, width, rail height and types of materials to be used.
- Color photograph of the bridge site, both approaches.
- Narrative description indicating when bridge was initially constructed and the source of funds for the construction and any subsequent major repair.
- Bridge Ranking Sheet

3. For **Trail Rehabilitation Projects** include:

- County maps and topographic maps showing segment proposed for rehabilitation; copy of the required maps; topographic, air photo, wetland and plat maps showing the trail segment overlaid on all the maps.
- A description of the work activity and a breakdown of costs. Use Form 8700-014, *Recreation Grant Project Cost Estimate Worksheet*.

4. For **new development or acquisition**, or **maintenance** funding on an existing but previously unfunded trail:

- County maps showing trail location and its relationship to other existing trails; copy of the required maps; topographic, air photo, wetland and plat maps showing the trail segment overlaid on all the maps.
- Plat or topographic map showing location of trail easements, bridges, culverts, rail crossings, shelters, toilets, parking lots and new trail construction.
- A description of the work activity and a breakdown of costs. Use Form 8700-014, *Recreation Grant Project Cost Estimate Worksheet*. Where the construction of a new bridge(s) is required, the new bridge cost summary supplement should also be completed. This supplement will require 2 quotes for installation of prefab bridge structures.
- New bridge cost summary supplement. This supplement will require two (2) quotes for installation of prefab bridge structures.
- Bridge projects located on private property, the county and landowner will need to sign a Capital Improvement Acknowledgement, in which the landowner acknowledges that the bridge will belong to the county, and not become property of the landowner. A draft/sample of the language located on the Snowmobile Trail Aids webpage at [Capital Improvement Acknowledgement Example](#) [PDF]

## **Project Grant Awards**

Upon approval of your project, you will receive an electronic copy of the signed contract from the Department outlining the approved project scope, project period and grant amount. The individual authorized by resolution should sign this contract and return it to your DNR Financial Assistance Contact. The signed contract may be scanned and sent via e-mail or the hard copy may be mailed. A copy of the signed contract should also be retained in your project files.

**Caution** *Unless specified in the contract, costs incurred prior to the start date of the contract signed by the Department will not be eligible for reimbursement. [s. NR 50.05(13), Wis. Adm. Code.]*

## **Changes to the Project Contract - Amendments**

Requests for changes to the project contract in either the scope of the work, project period or approved grant amount must be submitted in writing to the DNR Financial Assistance Contact before the project end date expires. Major changes in either the scope of the work or approved grant amount must be approved by the Snowmobile Recreation Council.

Documentation for amendment requests will vary. Requests for additional time must indicate why the project cannot be completed by the end date and be accompanied by a detailed status report.

Requests for the addition or deletion of scope items must justify the need for more or less scope and be accompanied by a revised cost estimate worksheet. Requests for changes in scope must be submitted and approved by the Department before the grantee can begin work on the items. Requests to amend project costs may be submitted when project activity costs are higher than estimated or when a work activity is expanded.

**Note** *No amendments will be approved for maintenance grant contracts, except in the event of approved trail re-routes or approved new miles.*



## **Bidding**

For activities that encompass public construction, counties must comply with state bidding and contract requirements. Examples of public construction would be the construction of a large bridge structure on-site or the purchase and installation of a prefabricated bridge. Counties should check with their corporation counsel on current bidding thresholds and notice standards involving public construction activity. The Department has also prepared a plain-English guide for local governments receiving DNR grant funds; see [Procurement Guide for Local Governments](#)

**Caution** *It is recommended that you do not award bids to contractors before you have a signed grant agreement from the Department for your project. Department review of your proposal may uncover necessary project changes to accommodate protected species and resources. Additionally, any costs incurred prior to having a signed agreement may not be eligible for reimbursement. If the county accepts the risk to proceeding without secured grant funding, you may proceed with awarding bids at your own timeline.*

## **FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Administrative Expense Eligibility**

County administrative costs are not eligible to be claimed on snowmobile grants UNLESS they qualify as direct costs. There is no provision in the program to include general administration as an eligible expense.

Direct costs include:

- **Force account**—the performance of a development or maintenance project with the workforce and resources of the county, including personnel, services, equipment and materials.
- **Fringe benefits (associated with force account labor charges)**—the employers' contributions or expenses for social security, employee's life and health insurance plans, unemployment insurance coverage, worker's compensation insurance, pension retirement plans, etc. The fringe benefit rate is an eligible expense.

Indirect costs are not grant-eligible and include:

- Costs not directly assignable to a grant, program or project. Such costs are generally administrative in nature, are incurred for a common or joint purpose, or are not readily assignable to a project or program. Examples include: office heat, light, utilities, administrative salaries, secretarial services, postage, etc.

<b>Examples of eligible and ineligible county administrative costs</b>	<b>Status</b>
One hour spent on the phone obtaining answers from a club secretary regarding the club's claim.	Eligible
One hour spent on the phone responding to tourist calls for trail information	<b>Ineligible</b>
Two hours spent inspecting trails documented to a grant maint. code on a time sheet.	Eligible
A determination that 25 percent of annual time (2080 hours) is snowmobile related work resulting in 520 hours being charged to the snowmobile program.	<b>Ineligible</b>
Time and mileage spent attending snowmobile council meetings	Eligible
Time and mileage spent attending sport shows or tourism publicity functions.	<b>Ineligible</b>

Club administrative time is not eligible for reimbursement.

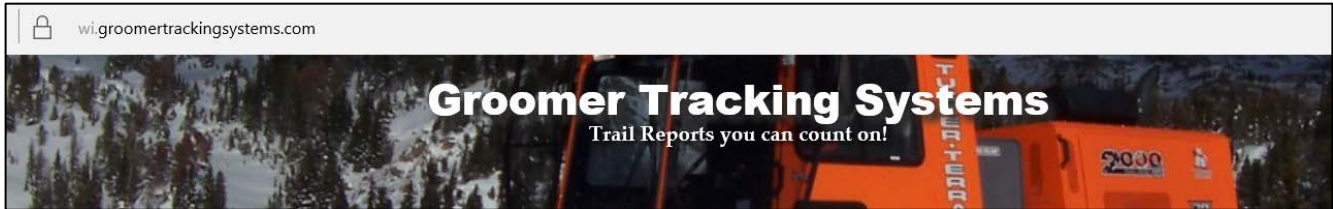
## **Financial Administration During the Project** (*Grantee's Responsibilities*)

The fiscal controls and accounting procedures used to record project costs and state grant receipts are based on generally accepted accounting standards and principles. You must:

- Establish a separate account to track project expenditures.
- Itemize all project expenditures in sufficient detail as to the exact nature of the expenditure and provide evidence of that expenditure.
- Maintain payroll vouchers for force account salaries and wages. All county employees working on a snowmobile project should fill out daily timesheets or "logbooks". All time associated with the project needs to be clearly documented.
- Maintain daily timesheets or "logbooks" of all snowmobile club members performing maintenance activities showing hours worked and a description of the activity. The Department establishes labor rates for non-grooming maintenance performed by snowmobile clubs or associations, i.e. volunteer labor.
- Cross-reference each expenditure with the supporting purchase order, contract, voucher, invoice, receipt, cash register slip, etc. These supporting documents should contain the signature of the individual authorized to approve such expenditures.
- Maintain daily records of county-owned or club owned equipment actually used on the project. These daily records must show the type of equipment used, actual hours of use and type of work for which the equipment was used. The time equipment while at the job site but not in use (idle time) is not eligible.
  - For equipment such as trailers, trucks, etc., allowable rates are established annually in the county's agreement on equipment rates with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.
  - For grooming equipment, allowable rates are established by the Snowmobile Recreation Council. A schedule of these rates is available from your DNR Financial Assistance Contact or the [Snowmobile Trail Aids](#) web site.
  - For equipment not included above, the actual rate should be computed. The rate should include hourly depreciation and hourly operational costs. Any generally accepted method of computing depreciation which reflects acquisition costs, useful life and usage factors is acceptable.
- Submit a certification that land control documents permitting access and use of private lands for snowmobiling are on the file for the entire length of the trail.

## **Documenting Expenses**

A centralized database referred to as the [Snowmobile Automated Reporting System \(SNARS\)](#), created by and maintained by Groomer Tracking Systems, Inc. has been created to house all snowmobile trail maintenance records. Clubs can enter their expenses here, and county administrators will be able to approve (or reject) those expenses, as well as upload documentation on their own administrative expenses. Use of the SNARS database is compulsory to obtain reimbursement for maintenance expenses under this program.



Expenses to be recorded in SNARS by clubs and counties include;

1. Vendor invoices, which support the eligibility of the costs, claimed. This extends to the original vendor invoices when snowmobile clubs or associations purchase materials and are then reimbursed by the county.
2. Canceled checks that support the costs claimed. If the bank does not return canceled checks, a copy of the bank statement is acceptable. This extends to the canceled checks of snowmobile clubs or associations making purchases and being reimbursed by the county.
3. Machine usage records that substantiate the use of each equipment item for which costs were claimed. These records should be kept on a daily basis and show the hours, dates, and project function for which the equipment was used.
4. Labor records supporting the hours worked, dates and hourly rates of individuals working on trail maintenance activities.
5. Invoice for liability insurance. If such insurance is provided through a rider to the county's general policy, documentation of how the cost was equitably allocated to the snowmobile program should also be available.

**Caution – PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL DATA**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) takes seriously its responsibility to protect all confidential data that are collected as the DNR administers its programs. For DNR grant programs, “confidential data” typically includes:

- Personal -- Social Security number, date of birth, driver’s license number, signature
- Financial -- Bank account numbers on cancelled checks and statements. Credit card numbers on submitted receipts. Account and credit balances or limits. Federal or Wisconsin tax returns.

The DNR is often sent unnecessary confidential data that are attached to proofs of payment, receipts, or other documents in support of a reimbursement request. Please protect confidential data by **blackening out – also called “redacting” – bank account numbers, credit card account numbers, and other confidential data** before proofs of payment are sent to the DNR. Please do not redact check numbers from bank statements.

**Claims for Reimbursement**

Claims for payment will be on a reimbursement basis except for project advances. To be eligible for reimbursement, all costs must be incurred within:

- The project time period shown on the contract
- The scope of activity defined in the contract
- The grant amount shown in the contract

To request reimbursement, the county must submit the following documents to their DNR Financial Assistance Contact.

1. Completed [Grant Payment Request \(Form 8700-001\)](#)
2. Completed [Grant Payment Worksheet \(Form 8700-002\)](#)
3. Photographs of rehab/development work done (required for non-maintenance).

Claims must be submitted within six months of the project end date. [s. NR 50.09(5)(L), Wis. Adm. Code.]

### **Auditing for All Claims except Supplemental Maintenance**

For counties that do not request supplemental maintenance payments, the financial audit of claims will take place as a part of each county's year-end Single Audit. Counties requesting reimbursement for non-maintenance grants are not required to submit financial documentation (invoices, canceled checks, equipment or labor records) with their payment claim. After the Single Audit is completed, the Department may perform additional financial audits of these claims to augment work done in the Single Audit.

For bridge rehabilitation, trail rehabilitation and development, copies of contracts with the private sector or public nonprofit organizations should be retained by the county. If project activity requires public bidding, a copy of the bid tabulation and proof of bid publication must be kept by the county and provided upon request and at the single audit.

Contact your DNR Financial Assistance Contact with additional questions.

### **County Cost Records Available for Audit**

Except where supplemental maintenance payments are requested, the Department will make payments to counties before a financial audit is performed. Each county will repay to the Department any costs later found unallowable as a result of financial audit.

In order to minimize the possibility of disallowed costs, counties should maintain a clear audit trail supporting the eligibility of all costs, including costs that the county has reimbursed to snowmobile clubs or associations.

### **Required Documentation For Supplemental Claims** s. NR 50.09(4)(f), Wis. Adm. Code

For counties meeting the conditions and requesting supplemental maintenance payments beyond \$300 per mile, the reimbursement claim must be submitted by August 1. Full documentation (invoices, canceled checks, equipment or labor records) must be entered in the Snowmobile Automated Reporting System (SNARS) to support the costs claimed for the initial \$300 per mile payment as well as the supplemental maintenance request. Counties may choose to claim the initial \$300 per mile payment prior to requesting supplemental maintenance payments under the reduced documentation requirements of single audit. See [Supplemental Payment Guidelines CF-017](#) for detailed information on supplemental maintenance.

## OTHER IMPORTANT TRAIL INFORMATION

### Trail Signing

A separate publication, [Trail Signing Handbook CF-023](#) is available on the web site or from your field Community Services Specialist.

### Roles of the Department and County in Snowmobile Trail Inspections

The Department's basic responsibilities in the snowmobile aids program are fiscal and environmental in nature. Your Community Services Specialist conducts trail inspections and program reviews to ensure that snowmobile funds are being properly used. In a similar manner, the Department monitors all pertinent state laws, codes, permits and approval procedures associated with trail development and maintenance activities. The Department can withhold funds because of poor trail signing and grooming, insufficient financial documentation, or failure of the county to follow required state laws and codes relating to the development or maintenance of snowmobile trails.

***While not required by statute or code, the county should strongly consider initiating its own inspection and trail monitoring program. The county, not the Department, is responsible for the safety of the trail. The county is liable for all hazards and accidents arising from improper trail maintenance. It is in the county's interest to conduct regularly scheduled inspections of trail signing and grooming to minimize the chances of a claim of negligence being made against the county.***

## SNOWMOBILE RAILROAD CROSSINGS

### Snowmobile Rail Crossings

Current law provides a system of regulating snowmobile railroad crossings that are not located on public highways. There are crossings that most of us would recognize as private crossings. Under the law, a snowmobile organization must apply for a permit to construct a new crossing. For a crossing that has been used by snowmobiles for at least five (5) winters in that last 10 years, the snowmobile organization must certify that \$2,000,000 of liability insurance coverage indemnifies the rail authority for damages resulting from the design, construction and use of the crossing. This is an annual certification to the Department and the appropriate rail authority for all existing crossings.

A separate publication is available that outlines the requirements of creating or maintaining a snowmobile rail crossing. Contact your DNR Financial Assistance Contact for a copy.

## OTHER SNOWMOBILE INFORMATION

### Snowmobile Route Intoxicated Operation Law and Trail Crossing Sign Program [s. NR 50.10, Wis Adm. Code]

Cities, villages and towns are eligible to receive up to 100% cost sharing assistance for the initial purchase of snowmobile route signs that connect authorized trails or which offer entrance to or exit from trails leading to such a municipality. Similar cost sharing assistance is available for the purchase of signs explaining the intoxicated snowmobile operator law along snowmobile routes and also large

highway trail crossing warning signs. Eligible items include signs, posts and fasteners. Labor is not eligible.

Towns, cities and villages are authorized by s. 350.04(2), Wis. Stats., to establish ordinances designating highways or sidewalks under their jurisdiction for use by snowmobile operators. These snowmobile routes must be signed with approved snowmobile route signs.

Cities, villages, or towns interested in applying for snowmobile route, intoxicated operation law and trail crossing warning signs should contact their field Customer Services Specialist prior to April 15<sup>th</sup> each year.

## **IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT ROUTE SIGNS**

- Separate STOP, regulatory or caution signs for snowmobile operators are not necessary on a snowmobile route since the operator must conform to regulations provided for highway traffic. Snowmobile trail signs will be necessary to direct the snowmobile operator off the route and onto a trail. These signs should be positioned to avoid confusion for an automobile driver.
- All snowmobile route signing is the responsibility of the municipality designating the route. The posting of the signs should only be done under the direction and supervision of the municipality. *In addition, the placement of these signs should only be placed by individuals that are highway maintenance professionals and are employed by the State Highway Dept., County Highway Dept., or the local municipalities' highway dept.*
- All snowmobile route signing insofar as practicable should be placed between the path intended for snowmobile use and the edge of the highway right-of-way. In no case shall snowmobile route signing be closer than 2 feet to the outer edge of the highway shoulder.
- Snowmobile route signs may not be erected on highway right-of-way until permission has been received from the authority in charge of the maintenance of the highway.
- Sign shapes, sizes, colors and posting techniques are found in the [Trail Signing Handbook CF-023](#).

## **COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT AIDS PROGRAM**

### **Law Enforcement Aids** s. NR 50.12, Wis. Adm. Code

The county snowmobile enforcement aids program exists to encourage the development of county snowmobile patrols to function as a law enforcement unit for the enforcement of snowmobile regulations embodied in chapter 350 of the state statutes.

For more information on this program see the [Snowmobile/ATV County Law Enforcement Patrol Manual LE-503](#).