



## Snowmobile Advisory Council Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Wingate by Wyndham, 2065 Airport Drive, Green Bay WI and via Zoom

**Committee Members Present:** Gary Hilgendorf - Chair, Joel Enking, Bob Lang, Andy Malecki, Dale Mayo, Don Mrotek

**Other Council Members Present:** Lynsey Burzinski, Abby Haas, Mike Holden, Sam Landes, Sue Smedegard, Erica Voelker, Leon Wolfe

**DNR staff attendance:** Jillian Steffes, Missy Vanlanduyt, others

**Public attendance:** Dave Newman and other members of the public

### 1. Call to order 15 minutes after the Law Enforcement & Safety Committee

### 2. Agenda Repair

- Move the Bridges item up

### 3. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting

Motion to approve November 2021 minutes by Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob. MOTION PASSED

### 4. Committee Chair Comments – Gary Hilgendorf

- Disappointed that DNR decided to reimburse some of the winged drags for the higher (A1) rate for 20-21.
  - Comment from Jillian – Argument came down to exact wording of the definition of wing width. Council meant for the wing width measurement to be EACH wing, but the word each was not included thus could be interpreted as total/combined wing width. Dept agreed to fund only those grooming units that could make the argument on this one word. If the drag clearly did not meet length or other specs, they were not covered. And clubs were told this would only cover the 20-21 season – language has now been clarified.

### 5. Public Comments

- None

### 6. DNR Funding Report

- HANDOUTS
  - Snowmobile Active Registrations
  - Snowmobile Trail Passes Sold
  - Snow Supplemental Requests 20-21
  - Snow Supplemental Seasonal History (1990 through present)
  - Expenses in SNARS Exceeding Supplemental Cap of \$900/mile
  - New Mile Award Status for 21-22
  - Cost Increase Requests

### 7. Discussion: Bridges on State Trails

- DNR Parks cannot apply for Snowmobile Trail Aids grants to repair bridges. If DNR Parks has a county partner (such as Florence on the Nicolet State Trail), then the county can apply. If no county partner, then DNR Parks has to find alternate funding sources to repair bridges.
- Concern expressed by Council members to have problem structures identified early, and fixed in a timely fashion. Additionally, Snowmobile funds 100% of the repair on many structures, even though other users benefit. Only fair if other funding sources chip in for other structures.

- Missy Vanlanduyt (DNR Parks) –Dept gets a small portion of snowmobile funding, but it is used for maintenance. Dept doesn't use snowmobile funding for trestle repair. Stewardship (\$3 million every 2 years), Land and Water Conservation (federal) and Recreation Trails (federal). Legislature sets the budget on what is available to the Dept for these projects. The *ENTIRE* DNR Parks program budget is about \$50 million annually. That's for every park, every building, etc. The backlog for linear state trail repairs needed is \$350 million. There are over 700 trestles on the states' linear trails. Costs far exceed the available funding. Many of the railroad trestles are 50 to 150 years old, and failing at a rate faster than the Dept can repair them. For this biennium, Dept submitted a request for \$5 million for a handful trestle repairs (on Elroy Sparta, Buffalo River). This problem is going to get worse before it gets better. Relocations and bridge closures are going to be a reality. Average trestle repair is \$1 million each, and replace 1 to 3 trestles per year.
- Council requests a list of bridges/trestles that have been identified as needing work sooner than later.

#### 8. Information: Groomer Tracking Systems GPS Units

- 685 GPS units installed this year. About 30 had to be replaced. A few got very wet, others were actually fine but had installation errors.
- GTS has a team of 2-3 people who have been making changes to geofences as needed.
- GTS's funded miles are *MORE* than DNR's count of funded miles. Further investigation is needed to find out where the differences are.
- GTS was good about checking in with DNR when they got a request from a club to "correct" funding status on a trail. DNR would confirm or deny.
- It's become clear that there are a lot of road routes incorrectly identified as funded trail. The only way to fix these is to identify them one by one – bring them to Jillian's attention and DNR will tell the club and county to move the trail off the road or lose the funding, as we cannot pay for route miles. Definition of trail vs. route is in statute, not something we have wiggle room on.
- Most feedback has been positive. The biggest complaint was lack of a confirmation that corrections were made. Requests were addressed but not confirmed.

#### 9. Discussion: Examples of Trail vs. Route vs. Other

- With the elimination of the requirement for trails to be 40' away from the road, some clarification on what is a trail vs. what is a road route is helpful.
- Trail must be 10' minimum **groomed** width (or 8' for one way trails), off the traveled portion of the road. If a portion of that 10' is *ON THE ROAD*, or is not capable of being groomed (deep ditches), then it does not qualify as a trail.
- Also needs to be signed, or at least capable of being signed. We don't require blazers on both sides of the trail (as it may cause complications with plowing if it's near the road), but if one of your blazers would go through the road concrete, that's not capable of being signed.
- Trails along town roads can be right next to the travel portion of the road, but has to be at least 10' away from the traveled portion of a STATE or COUNTY highway.

#### 10. Discussion: Grooming vs. Packing

- **GROOMING** is with a drag. (*Even if the trails aren't open yet*)
- **PACKING** is before trails are open or after a heavy snowfall, with a roller or packer bar or not pulling anything. That is non-grooming. User should invalidate the GPS entry, and manual entry under non-grooming (and likely will earn more per hour that way anyway)

## 11. Information & Action: Review of Equipment Rates, Eligible Equipment

- Rollers

**Motion to move all rollers out of grooming unit class specifications and into class 9205 equipment rates (non-grooming) by Dale, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Andy. MOTION PASSED**

If operating with a puller and roller, that work would be considered non-grooming, and can be valued at the operator + puller + attachment.

- Wings

**Recommendation to readopt the 2017-18 language stating that wings that fold down outside the main frame do not increase the drag width for funding purposes by ad hoc committee (Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bev). MOTION PASSED**

**Recommendation to grandfather those winged drags that previously met the specifications for a period of 10 years funding purposes by ad hoc committee. MOTION PASSED**

Those winged drags that have been funded and met the previous wing specifications (below) may continue to use the class they were previously funded at (not having to move down in case) until summer of 2032.

From 21-22 Specifications

Wings increase frame width with all following conditions:

- hydraulically operated
- must cut and pack snow
- similar structural material as main frame
- each wing has 24" minimum width
- extend full length of the main frame

**Recommendation to adopt the language that the entire width and length of drag must perform the same cutting and packing function. Modifications to the original drag will not increase the funding class by the ad hoc committee. MOTION PASSED**

**Motion to adopt the New Miles Ranking changes as proposed by DNR to the 23-24 season by Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob. MOTION PASSED**

Original recommendation from ad hoc was to adopt the changes for 22-23, but insufficient time to implement this for the April 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 deadline. Recommendation was amended and passed as a motion.

**Recommendation to adopt the grant application appendix for Trails Adjacent to Roadways by the ad hoc committee. MOTION PASSED**

- **New Equipment/Rate Requests**

Request from a club to consider changing 410 from “Motorized mower over 23” (self-contained)” to “Motorized mower at 20hp or greater”. Discussed the cost of the equipment and depreciation, request denied.

**Motion to deny request to alter 410 class description by Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dale. MOTION PASSED**

## 12. Information & Action: Reimburse Groomers on Routes (as non-grooming)

**Motion to reimburse groomer time as non-grooming transport time when the groomer is traveling on a route that is an integral part of a single funded trail, at the rate of 50% of the assigned groomer rate by Joel, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Andy. MOTION PASSED**

Motion originated as a recommendation from an ad hoc committee meeting from April 2021

Has to be an integral part of a funded trail. For example, grooming on a funded trail, travels on ½ mile on route, and come back onto funded trail. Not all routes qualify.

Groomer Tracking Systems will need to do some additional coding in SNARS and GTS, and review of routes in GIS. Will work on this over the summer.

Can the programming disregard the MPH speed when on those integral routes? Something to ask Nathan.

## 13. Information & Action: Trails Between Water

Trails across water are not eligible for grant funding, per NR 50.09 (4) (c) (2) (f). Should we be funding trails that only lead from water to water? DNR staff had been under the impression we only fund trails that lead to water if there is something else at the water’s edge (services, parking, population center, etc.). Is that the Council’s understanding as well?

Discussion among Council members that yes, that was their understanding historically as well, did not fund trails to water unless there is something at the water’s edge. But may want to change that opinion now. In some counties such Sawyer, there is no choice but to cross water.

Further discussion about the liability risk taken on by those who mark the water trails across water. If that is a liability risk, does that extend to leading riders onto water by funding the to-water trails?

No consensus reached, discussion will be tabled until future meeting. Pending new mile requests that are affected will be put on hold until Council can clarify position.

## 14. Committee member reports, comments and items

**Gary** – Additional ad hoc motions to bring forward.

**Motion to keep the audit ad hoc committee active and encourage penalties against false reporting by Dale, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Don. MOTION PASSED**

Further discussion encouraging DNR to pursue consequences against fraudulent entries. Ad hoc might look into recommending some penalty structure.

**Motion to clarify that periodic inspections of equipment should be the responsibility of the Snowmobile Council by Dale, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob. MOTION PASSED**

**Motion to recommend the audit ad hoc committee do a field visit to one or two counties' grooming equipment a year to ensure accurate reporting by Dale, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Bob. MOTION PASSED**  
Council members should go out with the county coordinator, and invite DNR CSS to attend.

**15. Items for next meeting**

Revisit the "trails to water" discussion (Item 13 above)

**16. Adjourn**

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