



## Snowmobile Advisory Council Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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

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

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

**DNR staff attendance:** Jillian Steffes, Kurt Byfield, Jeremy Holtz, Annie Loechler, Jeff Pennucci

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

1. **Call to order 15 minutes after the Finance Committee adjourned**
2. **Agenda Repair - None**
3. **Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting**

Motion to approve June 2022 minutes by Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dale. MOTION PASSED

#### 4. **Committee Chair Comments**

- **Gary Hilgendorf** – none

#### 5. **Public Comments**

- None

#### 6. **DNR Report**

- **HANDOUTS**
  - Snowmobile Funding Report FY22, Available Funds FY23
  - 2022-23 Snowmobile Funding Summary
  - Snowmobile Trail Passes Sold
  - Snowmobile Active Registrations
  - Snow Supplemental Prelim Requests 21-22
  - Snow Supplemental Seasonal History (1990 through present)

#### 7. **Information: Groomer Tracking Systems**

- 679 units were sent out over the past winter, at a cost of \$171,722.50 to the program
- ~200 new GPS units will be sent out in the coming months to replace the oldest GPS units in circulation. Clubs are asked to mail the old units back to GPS
- GTS is in the process of identifying which road routes may be “integral to the funded trail”, for the purpose of being able to reimburse time spent traveling on those routes at 50% of the groomer rate as non-grooming “groomer transport”. Not all routes fall into this category, only those that are integral to the funded trail. Results of GTS’s work here is preliminary and will be reviewed by DNR
- GTS has been attempting to increase speed of SNARS through programming updates, but ultimately the server itself will need to be upgraded to increase the speed anymore than it is now. The volume of records in SNARS is the cause of speed issues. The cost to upgrade the server is \$15,000. Currently, SNARS maintenance is paid out of the Grants program operating budget, not the Snowmobile Program. Grants (CFA) cannot afford this upgrade at this time. A budget issue paper has been submitted by DNR to allow for

the use of Snowmobile Program funds to pay for SNARS maintenance. If successful, this could allow for the Gov Council to recommend to the DNR to use Snowmobile funds to upgrade the server.

#### 8. Information & Action: Equipment Rates

- Equipment Ad Hoc proposed some changes to the snowmobile program non-grooming equipment rates to bring them more in line with recent DOT rates.
- Proposed increasing labor by \$1/hour
- 410 mower now includes a pull-behind in addition to self contained
- 932 category now includes Fecon head
- 215, 217 and 218 are now all FULLY tracked. Half tracked would be reimbursed as tired.
- All skid steers (regardless of tracked/tired) are under 203-207

**Motion to recommend to the full Council adopting the revised equipment rates. Motion by Joel and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Leon. MOTION PASSED**

- FYI, at a previous Infrastructure meeting, a recommendation was made to increase groomer rates by \$10/hr. To be discussed more at the next Full Council meeting.

#### 9. Information & Action: Trails Between Water (or To Water)

- Anecdotally, in the program, staff's understanding was that we did not fund trails that led to water unless there was a service at the water's edge such as a parking lot. In review of past Council motions, there was nothing official noted as the Council preference. We cannot fund trails OVER water per Statute, no change or debate to that, but what is the Council's preference on funding trails to the water's edge?
- Discussion about safety concerns about leading riders to a water crossing that we wouldn't fund. But these trails exist regardless of funding status, and in some areas there is little choice but to have trails that cross water to keep the trail open.

**Motion to recommend to the full Council allowing for trails to water to be considered fundable, on a case-by-case review basis. Motion by Bev and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Andy. MOTION PASSED**

#### 10. Information & Action: Review snowmobile "New Mile" grant applications

- Applications were confusing and some had inaccuracies. For example, one project was asking for new miles when Council members know for a fact that much of that is road route. Council members separately spent several days each going over the applications. Would like to review these as a group, but not today. Propose a separate, future meeting to do this.
- Counties identified 29.1 miles of trail that was previously not funded due to the 40' rule but now eligible. All of these were sections of trail within an existing funded trail stretch.

**Motion to recommend to the full Council funding the miles that became eligible due to a change in the 40' rule. Motion by Andy and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dale. MOTION PASSED**

- Discussion about not funding trails under a mile. There is not much value to the program for such short spurs, and takes significant staff time to review and approve each new mile project. Jillian is willing to make an executive decision to fund short stretches of trail within a currently funded linear trail, treating that as a data correction. For a totally NEW, previously not funded trail, there is a desire to focus, for now, on longer trails.

**Motion to recommend to the full Council to not fund new miles under 1 mile in length, for this year.  
Motion by Andy and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dale. MOTION PASSED**

- Discussion about lightly use roads where half of the road (1 lane) is plowed, and the other half of the road (1 lane) keeps a packed snow base and groomed. Is that an eligible trail? Some Council members feel yes, some feel no. No consensus.

**11. Committee member reports, comments and items**

- None

**12. Items for next meeting**

- Set up an Infrastructure Committee meeting in the next few weeks to review the New Mile applications in detail.
- Review the “is this a trail” photos and definition that were brought to the Council in March 2022, with particular eye towards the scenario of a half-plowed, half-groomed road.

**13. Adjourn**

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