

**MINUTES**  
**SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Best Western Motel**  
**M-28 East**  
**Wetmore, Michigan**  
**December 6, 2007**

**Chairman Manson** called the meeting of the Snowmobile Advisory Committee (SAC) to order at 9:02 a.m.

**Members Present:**

Bill Manson, Chair, Region III, Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA), Grand Rapids  
Bill Lucas, Region II, MSA, Cadillac  
Jack Nelson, Business Community, Greenville  
Orville Olson, Representative at Large, Ludington  
David Thomas, Trail Sponsors, Marquette  
Jim Duke, Region I MSA, Munising

**Members Absent:**

Lee Murray, At-Large, Hopkins

**Ex-Officio Members Present:**

Randy Charles, USDA, Ottawa National Forest  
Lt. John Cischke, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Roscommon

**Staff Present:**

Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Lansing  
Steve DeBrabander, State Trails Unit Manager, DNR, Lansing  
Steve Kubisiak, Recreation and Trails Program Coordinator, DNR, Lansing  
Richard Kennedy, DNR, Lansing  
Debbie Begalle, DNR, Marquette  
Dan Moore, DNR, Newberry  
Loretta Cwalinski, DNR, Gaylord  
Ron Yesney, DNR, Marquette

**Mr. Manson** welcomed everyone. The Committee, DNR staff and the audience introduced themselves.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the October 23, 2007 SAC meeting was acknowledged.

Correction: Mr. Houk's name was misspelled in the Overview of Handbook Addendum Process section.

**MOTION:**     **Mr. Duke moved to adopt the October 23, 2007 SAC Meeting Minutes, as amended; seconded by Mr. Lucas.**  
                  **Motion passed; October 23, 2007 SAC Meeting Minutes were adopted.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Finance Subcommittee** -- **Mr. Olson** stated he will send a letter to Mr. Radabaugh outlining additional questions Mr. Olson has regarding the DNR's snowmobile budget.

**Mr. Olson** reported the SAC Finance Subcommittee recommends a “two-tiered” trail permit system to be implemented next year. The proposal would increase the cost of a snowmobile trail permit to \$35 if purchased before December 1 and \$50 if purchased after December 1.

**MOTION:** **Mr. Olson moved to increase trail permit fees for the 2008-09 snowmobile season to \$35 if purchased before December 1, and increase to \$50 if purchased after December 1; seconded by Mr. Lucas.**

**Mr. Manson** asked for discussion. **Mr. Thomas** requested revenue figures. **Mr. Olson** said he will discuss with Mr. Thomas after the meeting. **Mr. Manson** suggested the discount date be moved back to November 15. Discussion continued.

**AMENDMENT:** **Mr. Thomas moved to increase trail permit fees for the 2008-09 snowmobile season to \$50.00. If the permit is purchased before November 15, 2008 it would be discounted to \$ 35.00; seconded by Mr. Nelson.**

**VOTE:** **Ayes: Manson, Nelson, Thomas, Olson, Lucas, Duke**  
**Nays: None**

**Motion to increase snowmobile permit fees passed.**

**Mr. Radabaugh** requested the SAC Finance Subcommittee send him their snowmobile budget questions along with the supporting financial information for the basis for their recommended two-tier trail fee increase so it can be reviewed with the DNR budget office.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Mr. Manson** requested information regarding the 2007-08 snowmobile law enforcement grants be sent to Mr. Murray with a copy to him.

**Update on Transfer of DNR Grooming Responsibilities and Equipment Transfer** -- **Mr. DeBrabander** distributed a handout outlining completed, pending and canceled grooming equipment transfers. Five groomers have been transferred, two are pending, and three have been canceled. One tractor was purchased with Forest Development Funds, and therefore is not available to the snowmobile program. All trails will be groomed except for a 15-mile segment in Cheboygan County. The DNR is exploring grooming options for the 15-mile trail segment. Discussion ensued regarding equipment and grooming needs in Cheboygan County. **Mr. Manson** said he would like the grooming issue in Cheboygan County resolved before the holidays. **Mr. Nelson** requested purchase and maintenance records for the 1998 New Holland Tractor and 2001 Tucker Sno-cat 2000E groomer.

**Update on Bridge Closures** -- **Mr. Kubisiak** reported he provided a detailed report at the October meeting and there is nothing new to report. Staff will have a conference call next week to review status of engineering bridge plans, engineer service contracts, and game out a strategy to secure funding for future construction. **Mr. Lucas** asked if the bridges will be replaced before next year. **Mr. Kubisiak** said funding for construction still needs to be secured and because of timing relating to grant cycles, it is unlikely all of the bridges will be replaced by next year. Staff will provide an update at the February meeting.

**Grooming Equipment** -- **Mr. Radabaugh** reported eight grooming tractors and eleven drags totaling \$1.3 million was approved by the State Administrative Board for fiscal year 2007. The

equipment will be purchased 100% by the snowmobile program. Agreements will be sent to the clubs next week. **Mr. Kennedy** read the list of approved equipment grants. **Mr. Manson** asked why there was a delay in receiving approval to purchase the equipment. **Mr. Radabaugh** explained the delay was caused by the state budget crisis coupled with the mandatory 30-day legislative review period for all fiscal year 2007 budget carry forward requests. **Mr. Manson** said he would like to know by the end of next April how much money will be available for 2008 equipment purchases.

**Grant Agreement Update** -- **Mr. Kennedy** reported to-date 13 grants are not executed. He read the names of the clubs. He requested the clubs send in their agreements as soon as possible. **Mr. Manson** said he received an email from Representative Elsenheimer stating that once the DNR received signed agreements from the clubs they could groom. He asked if staff was aware of it and wanted to make sure the clubs would be paid. **Mr. Radabaugh** said once the agreement is signed by the club and executed by the Department the agreement would become effective October 1, 2007.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**2007-08 Fuel Cost Adjustment** -- **Mr. Kennedy** reported fuel rate increased 31% from last year. Based on this increase the grooming reimbursement rate for 2007-08 will be adjusted to \$4.61 per mile. A letter will be sent to the clubs and their field contacts.

**2008 Meeting Schedule** – **Mr. Manson** distributed a proposed meeting schedule consisting of 6 meetings. **Mr. Radabaugh** noted executive directives and travel restrictions are still in place, and meeting frequency will require further evaluation before the schedule is finalized. **Mr. Manson** said February and April meetings are crucial and would consider adjusting the summer schedule if needed.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Forest Mineral and Fire Management**

**Mr. Yesney** reported on snowmobile activities in his area. Report attached.

**Mr. Moore** reported on snowmobile activities in his area.

**Mr. Charles, USDA Forest Service** reported on snowmobile activities for the three national forests.

**Mr. DeBrabander** reported the snowmobile trails have been mapped using global positioning units (GPS). The new maps are now posted on the Departments website in a PDF format that can be printed. Trail searches can be done on by county or region. **Mr. Manson** asked if the maps can be downloaded into GPS navigation units. **Mr. DeBrabander** said the DNR is aware of the interest and exploring the feasibility. To view the snowmobile maps on line visit [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr), click on *recreation & camping*, then *snowmobiling*.

### **Law Enforcement**

**Lt. Cischke, DNR Law Enforcement Division** reported counterfeit snowmobile trail permits have become an issue over the last couple years. He asked the public to notify Law Enforcement Division if they become aware of such illegal activity, or websites that instruct people how to counterfeit trail permits.

**Chief Greg Zyburt, Chocolay Township Police Department** reported complaints were down in Harvey last year and that overall the speed limit seems to be working. He noted grant funding for enforcement was substantial from last year.

**Mr. Manson** reported SB 530 passed the Senate and will go to the House next week. The Bill, if passed, will establish a stationary sound testing procedure for snowmobiles.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Ken Scott, MSA** said the DNR's 2001 Tucker sat outside the Twin Lake office for a year and a half and believes it is in disrepair. He believes if the Cheboygan club doesn't want it; it should go back to Tucker to be fixed and given to another club.

**Bruce Wood, Jordan Valley Trails Council** said his club may be interested in taking the Department's 2001 Tucker. Mr. DeBrabander will follow up with Mr. Wood.

**Bud Martin, Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club** asked questions about equipment and said he needs a new groomer.

**Don Carroll Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club** believes ORV grants come out too late and would like to see executed grants in hand by September 1.

**Al Green, Cadillac Winter Promotions** said they have a '96 John Deere tractor that is not part of the cost-share program but had to be repaired. Mr. Green was advised to notify his field contact and submit the repair bill for review and consideration for reimbursement. **Mr. Green** asked how they should go about getting reimbursed for a fuel containment system they built for their groomer barn located on national forest land. The work was done last summer. **Mr. Kennedy** said these types of issues need to be discussed sooner. **Mr. Kubisiak** said expenditures made in a previous fiscal year without a grant are not eligible. Discussion continued. **Mr. Manson** said to make a request in writing as this is a new issue.

**Mr. Nelson** asked **Mr. DeBrabander** about the 2001 Tucker at the Twin Lake Office, and why it just sits there not being repaired. **Mr. DeBrabander** said we don't know if repairs are needed, and if no one wants the equipment it would not be a priority to be repaired.

**Gail Scott, Gogebic Area Grooming, Inc.** stated she feels the 2001 Tucker should be sold and the money returned to the program.

**Martin Cottle, Sault Snowmobile Association** said their club was initially approved for new equipment, but was just informed it has been denied due to discrepancies with the information that was originally submitted on their application. He asked the DNR to reconsider his application. **Mr. DeBrabander** said his request will be reconsidered based on the new information.

**Bob Forry, Manistique Sno Busters** expressed his frustration with the state and other government entities, but asked everyone to have a bit more understanding with folks who are overworked due to cutbacks. He said it works both ways and it is important to have positive communication. He added that he's talked to folks that won't purchase trail permits this year because they heard from media coverage that the trails will not be groomed. He believes this negative publicity is hurting sales and the snowmobile program.

**Mr. Radabaugh** added that he's been inundated recently by e-mails and phone calls with negative comments based on information from websites, chat rooms, press releases, and inaccurate media coverage, and that it is negatively affecting the program. He asked that the trail grant sponsors help stop the misinformation.

**John Houk, Presque Isle Sno-Trails** asked for a status report on the Rogers City North and South trail proposals. Staff advised the Rogers City North proposal is in Lansing and is currently under review. The south route involving the quarry is ongoing because the quarry changed ownership again. The DNR has initiated discussions with the new owner and will be meeting with them to discuss route alternatives.

**Gerald Reese, Manistique Sno Busters** said speaking as a lifetime MSA member the MSA does have power of the press. He sees management reacting rather than acting and believes the current management style is not productive. He feels that it would be more productive for everyone involved to take on an action-oriented style.

**Paul Tesanovich, representing State Senator Mike Prusi** pointed out to everyone that state budget issues years ago are not the way they are now. He said it's a challenge working under the current situation with an uncertain state budget.

**Bob Stein, Munising Visitors** asked about the groomer replacement program and why there is not a person on staff who can give value estimates on groomers.

**Bruce Wood, Jordan Valley Trails Council** stated that when trading equipment, this club had a scenario about having backup equipment, and not having to sell equipment back to the program.

**Al Green, Cadillac Winter Promotions** said they have four groomers, but bought two of them privately. They feel they are being unfairly treated because of that.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, February 5, 2008 (tentatively)  
10:00 a.m.  
Gaylord, MI (location to be determined)

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Public Present:**

Paul Tesanovich, Senator Mike Prusi	Jim Dickie, Mid-MI Council
Don Carroll, Ogemaw Hills Snow Club	Bud Mardy, Southern MI Snow Council
Bob Stein, Munising Visitors	Denny Zoet, Western MI Sno Assoc.
Bud Martin, Ogemaw Hills Snow Club	Brian Callaghan, Tip of Mitt Sno Ccl
Bradley Potter, W MI Snow Council	Dave Becker, St Helen SnoPackers
Gerald Reese, Manistique SnoBusters	Stan Gerou, Munising
John Shiels, Manistique SnowBusters	Bob Bobinac, North Ctry Snowseekers
John Houk, P.I. & NE MI Council	Sandy Keeze r, St Helen Snowpackers
Kaye Houk, P.I. & NE MI Council	Ken Stigers, Keweenaw Trail Services

Larry Harris, Southern MI Sno Council	Al Green, Cadillac Winter Promotions
Bob Forry, Manistique SnoBusters	Bob Bowers, Munising
Gail Scott, Gogebic Area Grooming, Inc	Rob King, Heart of the North Council
Ken Scott, MSA	Bruce L. Wood, Jordan Valley Trls Ccl
Allen Cottle, Sault Sno Assoc	Dale Israels, Sec. MSA
Martin Cottle, Sault Sno Assoc	Tom Myers, Mid_MI Council
Karen Middendorp, MSA	Don Reed, Seney Snow Assoc; MSA
Greg Zybert, Chief Chocolay Twp Police	Rick Brown, MSA
Don Wing, NW Ccl; Cadillac Winter Promo	Stephen King, MI Snowmobile Magazine

## **Western Upper Peninsula Recreation Specialist Report December 5, 2007 – Ron Yesney**

### **Trail Proposals:**

**Republic to Humboldt to West Ishpeming** – Moose Country Snowmobile Club has submitted a proposal to use two connected State owned railroad grades as a snowmobile trail. The grades being proposed include the Republic to Humboldt – 9 miles, and the Humboldt to Ishpeming, commonly known as the Greenwood Grade, – 13 miles. This trail would create a loop trail between Republic and Ishpeming and would relieve traffic congestion on trail #8 and trail #5. The proposal is currently in Lansing

**Dukes to Sand River** - Trails Inc. has submitted a proposal to connect the Marquette to Munising trail with the Chatham to Little Lake trail. The proposed trail would be 13 miles in length and would include lands owned by the U.S. Forest Service, Forest Land Group, and Michigan DNR. This proposal has been sent to Lansing. If the proposal is approved, the next step would be to seek formal approval from the Forest Service for use of their portion of the proposed trail.

**Buck Lake** - A trail proposal has been approved to reopen a segment of trail # 3 in the Ottawa National Forest north of Watersmeet that was closed in 2002 due to land control issues. The new proposal will reroute the trail off of private land, onto USFS property. Engineering is set to begin this spring with the trail opening the following year.

**Republic Township** – An expedited trail proposal has been submitted by Moose Country in order to reroute a portion of the connector trail between Trail five and the Republic to Amasa Trail, #18. This was needed to get off of some property owned by Escanaba and Lake Superior Railroad.

### **Issues:**

**Silver City** – There is a landowner in Silver City that is unhappy with the current location of snowmobile trail (#1). A portion of Trail #1 passes through Silver City using the ROW of M-107 and accesses the Porcupine Mountains to the west. Several options for reroutes have been examined. To date, no alternate routes have proved viable.

**Marquette County Road Commission** – The road commission is continuing to seek funding from local snowmobile clubs for work done in roadway ROWs relating to snowmobile activity. Big Bay 550 club received a bill last year for \$580.04 and this year for \$83.42 relating to maintenance done at snowmobile crossings. These bills remain unpaid.

**Longyear Realty Company** - Longyear Realty, a major corporate landowner in the U.P., has requested that the DNR develop a one permit system for all snowmobile trails on their properties. To go to this system they were directed to send a letter to MDNR

officially requesting the change. They have not yet sent a letter officially requesting the change.

**Gogebic County Committee** – There is a committee from Gogebic County that is working toward acquisition of approximately 19 miles of abandoned railroad grade between Wakefield and Ironwood. There are three grades of interest, all of which are important to snowmobiling. The committee is currently researching grant sources and alternatives for title work. These grades are a very high priority for the West U.P.

\*For more information or questions on any of these projects, feel free to contact me at 906-228-6561.