Snowmobile Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Location: Foggy's Steakhouse/Virtual Meeting
Date: December 1, 2022

Roll call

Present for the Snowmobile Advisory Committee (SAW):

- Chair, Don Britton
- Joe Bartlett
- Barry Bethke
- Keith Churill
- Joe Kuchnicki
- Scott LaCombe
- Karen Middendorp

Present for the Department of Natural Resources (department) Staff

- Jacklin Blodgett
- PJ Costa
- Anna Centofanti
- Michael Desnoyer
- Blake Gingrich
- Cpl. Mike Hearn
- Dakota Hewlett
- Jessica Holley-Roehrs
- Rob Katona
- Greg Kinser
- Scott Lakosky
- Tim Novak
- Ron Olson
- Paige Perry
- Scott Slavin
- Matt Torreano
- Nikki VanBloem
- Monica Weis
- Ron Yesney

Chair Don Britton called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM

Barry Bethke made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 15th meeting. Joe Kuchnicki seconded; motion carried.

Barry Bethke made a motion to accept the December 1st agenda. Joe Kuchnicki seconded; motion carried.

Karen Middendorp made a motion to allow the Chair to take agenda items out of order. Joe Kuchnicki second; motion carried.

Meeting minutes

Public Comment:

John Newman – Freda Update

Currently concentrating on reopening Trail 3 in Lake Linden bids out first to resolve that issue first, then look forward to assessing Freda

Virtual snowmobile grooming workshop MISORVA took on additional costs, thought the DNR would be helping pay for the costs, found out the DNR is unable to reimburse for the additional zoom costs

Rex Hyrns - Sign delivery order issues this year

We just received our order and have a month to get the order in. In the works to make ordering/delivery better next year

Question was asked about the DNR creating an off-trail riding map

The SAW Off-trail Riding Subcommittee was asked to create a map showing where off-trail riding is allowed, most state land is open to riding, however our co-managers decided against having a map due to timber issues or wildlife concerns, not wanting to advertise areas that many not be open to off-trail riding

Polaris will not post areas on their online mapping system.

Richard Kennedy adjusting the formula for fuel costs for the season

American Rescue Plan Act $2M going into the Lake Linden project

Club in Curtis is under the chamber of commerce and at the November 17th the chamber has locked the club out of the building and are not allowing the drivers to groom the trails. At the

March 9th meeting they allowed a raffle for a snowmobile which the club conducted successfully. The chamber was unhappy that not enough local people were allowed to purchase tickets and stated there is money unaccounted from the raffle, however all the money has been accounted for. Since then, things went downhill. Would like to change the grant from the chamber into a private organization. Could they run under another club's non-profit to work on the trails this year? Could subcontract and work through another club. The chamber would need a few failures to comply to have the grant taken away.

Business Items for Discussion

Ride Right Campaign - Jessica/Ron Yesney

Committee continuously working on messaging

Updated posters to grant sponsors, convention bureaus, MISORVA, and Novi show

Working with the DNR Marketing and Outreach, Press Releases

Jessica and Karen redistribute the messages

How to reach wider audiences

Will continue to work on and capture new ideas, safety issues and angles, fresh ideas – if you have any ideas, contact Jessica or Karen

Verizon Fleet Management Implementation - Jessica Holley-Roehrs

Implementation specifically of the hardware was expected to be complete by this time issue with wiring harnesses and a delay in scheduling the installations set the timeline back

60 installations were completed and are in the testing phase, the new wiring equipment is out in the field and the installer is contacting the clubs to schedule installation

Will not start the billing cycle until all units are installed

Several training opportunities are being conducted across the platform, once the units are running and assigned, the clubs will be able to look at the data

Will share the recordings of the training and opportunities with the group, Jessica to work with the interested clubs one-one-one

Working through some of the technical issues with Verizon

This project will continue to move forward, this first year will be a learning year, collecting and analyzing data and how this will best benefit the program

We will be able to set up the reports and tweak the system to fit our needs

It was asked if there will be a DNR employee hired to monitor the reports at the expense of the program

No staff to be specifically hired, the DNR contacts and other staff will monitor the program

The reports will be simplified and looked at by other DNR employees as well, looking at information that we already collect in a different and a streamlined format

If no GPS signal, the whole ride will be tracked and uploaded once there is signal available

It was asked if there a budget in place and will the costs increase each year?

Jessica will send to the group the initial costs $3,285 and the $171 monthly fee – see attached

There is a set contract in place. For this first year or two we are paying a monthly contract for the full year. In the future, will see if we are able to cut back and pay only for the season.

The only increase in cost would be to install in new units.

2023 Groomer Workshop - Karen Middendorp

Moving forward in the planning for March 2nd, 3rd, and 4th

SAW meeting that Thursday

Registration package $175 includes everything but lodging, Kewadin $81/night

DNR to fund two representatives from each club

Karen working on securing more funding to pay for an additional representative from the clubs

Attend if you can, many contacts, educational classes, networking, manufacturers

Contact Karen if you have topics of interest

Would be good to have an ORV and Snowmobile Workshop, a good idea but not ready to have that implemented

Updates

USFS Update - Megan Impson

Ottawa National Forest

Working on the Land O'Lakes and Watersmeet bridges getting information from the clubs, engineering, working on funding

Holding a meeting with three National Forests and the DNR this winter regarding a snowmobile trail management agreement

Seeking to have representation at the groomer workshop

Novi Snow Show (October 2022) - Jessica/Cpl. Mike Hearn

LED booth, went well, very busy

Brought the LED snowmobile, kids we able to take pictures, big hit

Many ORV related questions

Permanent Easement Trail Update - Matt Torreano

The DNR has a program to purchase permanent easements, year round multi-use or snowmobile only, $8 from every permit goes into a fund to purchase these easements

To date, we have 187 miles at a about a $3M cost

Finishing up with an acquisition with Lyme Timber who owns 69K acres in the UP, will have acquired all the 167 miles of trail on their land

Trail in Iron Mountain connecting to the bridge over the Menominee River, about 3 miles but very important

There is a 40-acre parcel in Marquette connecting DNR land to the Lyme acquisitions

The railroad grade in Strongs is owned by the USFS, waiting on a review for clarity, the DNR will conduct title analysis to ensure we know who owns the land

Snow Country Trails Conservancy

SCTC came about from users who wanted to see trails secured for the future, worked to get legislation for the $8 from every permit to be set aside in the fund

Partnership with the DNR; SCTC can move quicker on securing some acquisitions than the DNR

$4.4M in the fund, spending about $700K a year, this year we spent $1.5M to account for the Lyme Timber transaction

Keweenaw permanent easements

The Nature Conservancy purchased a large portion of the land, and it seems we will have trail access, need to work out the details of the trail corridors and is in progress

Canada Creek

Canada Creek withdrew their sponsorship of this summer on 62 miles of trail

Asked clubs if they would be able to maintain, Greys Lake Dual Sporters stepped in and signing up to be a snowmobile grant sponsor to sign, grade, brush, working on insurance and the other fine details of sponsorship, maintenance on the groomer turned in from Canada Creek

Pinney Bridge Road – Greg Kinser

Moving forward working with staff and the road commission on securing a 16-foot trail corridor along the north edge of the ROW

Working on removing encroachments on the ROW

This year working with the road commission and this year's permit, the road commission supports the trail and will permit the usage same as the last few years

Fence poles down the middle of the trail, the poles in the county ROW we removed and placed on the private property. There are still some poles on MDOT property which were tagged by MDOT for removal. Continue to work on the poles and other encroachments.

Piles of snow in the ROW, currently nothing in the law that specifically prohibits the disruption of trail activities when it is not on state land, clearer when it is on state land

Trail Closures - Ron Yesney

Trail 15 Baraga to Chassell closed this year, need a temporary bridge on Trail 15, working to permit the temporary and replacement in the future hopefully open this winter

Trail 15 south of Amasa USFS bridge deemed unsafe, meeting next week to discuss and re-open to put temporary bridge over the existing bridge for two years, seek funding for a permanent bridge

Trail 16 there is a three-mile gap from Sagola to Trail 5, looking at options to make connections

Trail 5 in northern Marquette County west of Big Bay through end of January, due to logging will have to go through town to get around

Trail 2 Reroute due to change in ownership of the ski hill in Gogebic County

Private landowner gave permission to use a portion of the railroad grade to US 2, private landowner gave permission

City of Wakefield is allowing the trail to run along US 2 with a two week notice revocation

Bessemer Township allowed us to use their land as well

Trail proposal is in the works, about $5K in work

Not ideal, but able to open the trail around Christmas, will need to reroute off US 2

Lake Linden Construction Funding/Bidding - Ron Yesney

Bid project out in smaller packages due to DTMB and engineering company belief that there aren't many companies to complete jobs that big

Six of the seven bid packages went out

Pre-bid meetings scheduled for December 2nd

Matt worked with the landowners to obtain easements for permission to install new culverts outside the DNR 100-foot corridor

Work to be completed by December 1, 2023

Miners Castle Trail / H58 Reroute - Ron Yesney/Karen Middendorp

The trail runs through private forest land across one mile of H 58 and then up to the National Park Service land/Miners Castle

Alger County Road Commission let us know we need to vacate the H58 portion because they are repaving in 2024

Would not be feasible to run along ROW of the road due to costs to widen the road it would be more costly than the other option

We worked on a reroute option that ran through high ground and would have worked, however we are unable to pursue that reroute due to the land being in a conservation easement which does not allow building a structure/bridge on the land

The other option for a reroute would entail moving the trail off H58 at a cost over $1M

Met with UP Deputy Director Stacy Welling-Hughey who will be meeting with the local entities and trying to come up with a solution and possible other funding sources maybe with the NPS for federal funding

MISORVA discussions about the $1.2M didn't go very far

Ron Yesney to update at the March meeting, may know more and have discussion for funding options

Free Snowmobile Weekend February 11th-12th - Karen Middendorp

MISORVA and DNR worked in partnership to get legislation passed for the weekend to coincide with ISMA's national 'Take a friend riding' campaign

Snow Fund Financials - Michael Desnoyer

See attached PPT presentation

September 15th is the DNR deadline for the DNR to repurpose the club grants

If the project had been started and will not be completed by the end of grant deadline, on a case-by-case basis, it could be extended

2026 sunset on the $52 permit price/every five years would need a legislative change to increase the price

Equipment Subcommittee - Joe Kuchnicki

Nine machines will be delivered for this season: North Country, Chippewa Sno-Kats, Big Bay 500, Hiawatha Trails, Alger SORVA, Grand Marais, Indian River, Lewiston, and Irons

ORVAW Workgroup - Snow Groomers Karen Middendorp

The ORV community believes that they should be allowed to use snowmobile equipment during the summer

The snowmobilers have been paying throughout the years to allow the clubs to purchase equipment

Is there a way to share equipment, yes, but we need to have a lot of conversations

Change legislation to change the ORV funding to allow equipment purchases

Perhaps the clubs can work together and join forces

A subcommittee has been formed with the snowmobile and ORV clubs to discuss how to move forward

DNR Regional Trails Specialist Project Highlights - DNR Staff

Ron Yesney thanked the UP staff for all the work has been completed, along with the work from the contacts and clubs

On the east end, projects out of St. Ignace will be completed by next summer

Millecoquin Bridge to be funded and completed next year

Charcoal Grade in Newberry FRD helping with funding the three bridges and culverts

Three bridges on the grade from Christmas to Grand Marais in the process of engineering, hoping to have them completed next year

Looking at the 11 bridges on the Haywire Grade, at least one needs to be replaced hoping to start engineering next summer

Projects in the LP

Paige Perry

The Cheboygan Bridge project has been completed

Bridge Road

Little Black River Bridge

Cheboygan County reroute issue continuing, the landowner is not interested in a permanent easement

Alcona County issues

Rogers City Spur moving forward, EGLE permit for a culvert in the ROW, and an MDOT permit and permissions from the road commission

Swan River Bridge

Carmuse project

Scott Slavin

Completed culvert replacements on Trail 5

Manistee River Bridge on Trail 37 conducted a kick-off meeting

Two other bridge projects on Trail 6 going out for bid in March

Working with a partnership out of Traverse City for additional funding for the awarded $2M grant for the Betsie River Trail which includes a bridge over Bear Creek and moving the trail onto state ownership

Round Robin/Closing Comments - SAW:

Ron Olson – would like to get together as a group, planning a facilitated meeting to discuss where we are and where we want to be in about 15 years considering weather predictions, how to invigorate the sport, get younger people involved, and new snowmobile technology/e-snowmobiles

Jackie Blodgett discussed how to work with the clubs if grant money isn't spent and repurpose to funds so we don't have to seek a supplemental

Karen Middendorp

Camp Grayling expansion the program is very vague and will double in size

If they expand how will that affect the users, would like the DNR to be proactive and keep the motorized program intact in the area

Joe Kuchnicki

Thanked Karl Davenport for all his hard work on the Equipment Subcommittee, also a thank you to Richard Kennedy

Thanks to the clubs who maintain and fix their own machines

Thanks to the clubs who can run their machines on tires as opposed to tracks, if you can run on tires do so to save wear and tear and cost of the tracks

Scott LaCombe

Don't be afraid to buy grease and use it, make sure the drivers have actually greased the machine

Joe Bartlett

Attend the FRD Compartment Review meetings to discuss issues with trail and forestry issues

Any type of countermeasure from the department to prevent an incident like logging truck fatality last year

The Ride Right Committee is working on safety messaging

Don Britton

Study the maintenance equation for groom per mile, normal wear and tear and preventative maintenance

Joe Bartlett resigning from the committee and Chair Don Britton thanked Joe for his service on the committee

Jim Kelts interested in the position and MISORVA recommends Jim Kelts as the Region 2 representative on the SAW Committee Adjournment

Future meetings will be in-person with a hybrid feature and plan for logistics and equipment

Karen Middendorp made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:53 PM. Barry Bethke seconded; motion carried.

Snowmobile Trail Improvement Fund Updated Through: 9/30/2022	**FY 2020 Actual to 9/30/2020**	**FY 2021 Actual to 9/30/2021**	**FY 2022 Actual to 9/30/2022 (Books Not Closed)**	*FY 2022 Projected*	*FY 2023 Projected*	*FY 2024 Projected*
Beginning Fund Balance (Unreserved Amount)	***$3,723,800***	***$6,466,300***	***$3,316,400***	***$3,316,400***	***$5,736,900***	***$5,961,300***
Revenue:						
Snowmobile Trail Permits	*$6,295,900*	*$6,553,200*	*$7,047,300*	*$6,908,400*	*$6,929,200*	*$6,965,900*
Common Cash Earnings	*$143,900*	*$15,900*	*$80,500*	*$72,100*	*$276,000*	*$232,300*
Miscellaneous Revenue	*$4,000*	*$22,000*	*$113,500*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*
Gas Tax Revenue	*$3,039,000*	*$3,132,900*	*$3,276,400*	*$3,262,600*	*$3,429,200*	*$3,558,200*
Total Revenue	**$9,482,800**	**$9,724,000**	**$10,517,700**	***$10,243,100***	***$10,634,400***	***$10,756,400***
Expenditures:						
Operations: (45150)						
Salaries, Wages, & Fringes	$1,366,200	$1,405,200	$1,384,400	*$1,440,300*	*$1,718,400*	*$1,730,400*
CSS&M	$33,800	$92,600	$53,600	*$110,000*	*$136,500*	*$136,500*
VTS	$58,400	$43,300	$44,900	*$65,000*	*$65,000*	*$65,000*
Travel	$10,700	$700	$1,800	*$18,500*	*$22,500*	*$22,500*
Other-Misc.	$28,700	$30,700	$21,300	*$40,000*	*$40,000*	*$40,000*
Sub-Total Operating Expenditures	$1,497,800	$1,572,500	$1,506,000	*$1,673,800*	*$1,982,400*	*$1,994,400*
Operations Overhead						
11000 - Executive Direction	$8,400	$9,500	$9,700	*$9,700*	*$9,700*	*$9,900*
50905 - Legal Services	$2,200	$2,200	$2,200	*$2,200*	*$2,200*	*$2,200*
10010 - Unclassified Salaries	$6,600	$8,100	$8,400	*$8,400*	*$8,800*	*$9,000*
16020 - Information Technology Services & Projects	$74,400	$74,400	$74,400	*$74,400*	*$75,500*	*$77,000*
11610 - Finance and Operations	$70,100	$73,600	$73,600	*$73,600*	*$73,600*	*$75,100*
11700 - Accounting Service Center	$15,700	$17,700	$17,700	*$17,700*	*$17,700*	*$18,100*
13010 - Property Management	$15,500	$15,900	$15,900	*$15,900*	*$15,900*	*$16,200*
45600 - Law Enforcement	$0	$0	$0	*$0*	*$400*	*$400*
52400 - Marketing and Outreach	$45,600	$48,200	$47,800	*$47,800*	*$102,100*	*$104,100*
64500 - Snowmobile Local Grants	$6,378,600	$4,183,800	$7,948,600	*$8,090,400*	*$8,090,400*	*$8,090,400*
T64510 - Snowmobile Trail Groomer Pilot	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	*$100,000*	*$0*	*$0*
B36050 - Civil Service 1% Assessment	$24,800	$0	$27,000	*$27,500*	*$28,500*	*$29,100*
U24000 - DTMB Central Admin Services	$47,300	$0	$0	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*
B48974 - Treasury Fees	$2,100	$3,100	$2,800	*$2,800*	*$2,800*	*$2,900*
Capital Outlay & Work Projects						
C88080 - Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance	$55,800	$860,200	$1,592,700	*$2,833,500*	*$683,500*	*$683,500*
W6450019 - Snowmobile Local Grants FY19 Work Project	$1,903,000	$1,359,800	$247,700	*$437,200*	*$0*	*$0*
W6450021 - Snowmobile Local Grants FY21 Work Project	$0	$0	$0	*$196,000*	*$0*	*$0*
Sub-Total Operating Overhead	$8,700,100	$6,706,500	$10,118,500	*$11,937,100*	*$9,111,100*	*$9,117,900*
Total Expenditures	**$10,197,900**	**$8,279,000**	**$11,624,500**	***$13,610,900***	***$11,093,500***	***$11,112,300***
Lapses/Changes in Reserves	***$3,457,600***	***($4,594,900)***	***$3,527,300***	*$3,570,300*	*$683,500*	*$683,500*
Ending Fund Balance (Unreserved)	**$6,466,300**	**$3,316,400**	**$5,736,900**	***$3,518,900***	***$5,961,300***	***$6,288,900***

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DANIEL EICHINGER
DIRECTOR

VIA E-MAIL

TO: Snowmobile Trail Grant Sponsors

FROM: Tim Novak, State Trails Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Division
Department of Natural Resources (DNR-PRD)

DATE: July 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Snowmobile Trail Grooming Verizon Fleet Management Program

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has entered into a contract with Verizon Connect for the following hardware and service.

Sol-Telogis Government Fleet Enhanced Verizon Solution

Standard equipment/fleet	Qty. 171 vehicles
Installation standard	Qty. 171 vehicles
One time charge	$19,232.25
Monthly recurring data charges @ $3,285.10/month	
	(6 months November-April) $19,710.60/year

Of all of the positive features for this fleet management software solution, by simply tracking and analyzing the snow trail grooming equipment maintenance and downtime trends on these $250,000 machines, we should begin to see a positive return on investment within a few seasons. The DNR-PRD Trails Section staff is excited to take this next step in embracing advanced technology to improve the efficiency of the snow program and assist in the positive future management of our snowmobile trail grooming fleet.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Ms. Jessica Holley-Roehrs, Motorized Program Specialists, at 517-331-3790, at holleyj1@michigan.gov; or Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 30257, Lansing, Michigan 48909.

Attachment

cc: MTAC
SAW
SAW Equipment Subcommittee
FRD/PRD Field Contacts
PRD Trails Staff