

**Joint Meeting of the
SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (SAW) & ORV ADVISORY WORKGROUP
(ORVAW)
Draft Minutes
October 10, 2017 at 10:00 AM**

The meeting was held at Staybridge Suites, 855 W. Washington Street, Marquette Michigan and chaired by **Mr. Lee Murray**, SAW Chairman.

Welcome and Introductions

Action Items:

- Approval of the October 10, 2017 Meeting Agenda – The agenda was changed with the addition of Consumers Energy, Carsonite Sign Project, and Permanent Easements in the UP. Also the agenda items will be out of order. Agenda was approved by the entire Committee.
- Approval of the May 3, 2017 Joint Meeting Minutes – Approved as a record, **Mr. Dunn** and **Ms. Holley** to flesh out. Motioned by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Manson moved by all.

New Business:

- Consumers Energy (Consumers) Land Lease – Rob Bourgeois
Consumers has been working with the DNR on snowmobile and ORV use and mitigation opportunities on our properties in the Lower Peninsula. We are working with the individual snowmobile clubs using our corridors by implementing license/lease agreements. Mr. Manson asked if there is the possibility for one master agreement with the DNR. Mr. Bourgeois said it would be best to work with the individual groups. Also **Mr. Manson** wanted to know if there will be new trails added in Region 3. Mr. Bourgeois said we would address them on a case by case basis.

- Set List of Goals/Priorities - Brainstorming List - *Led by Jessica Holley*

Mr. Manson wanted to know how to proceed with the joint ORV/Snowmobile club use of equipment. If equipment was purchased with snowmobile dollars and used in the summer by the ORV club how is the funding split and what are the logistics of use.

Mr. Duke wanted to know how we will identify designated trails. Some of the trail use opens up trespass issues.

Mr. Maik brought up the issue of more ORV trails opening, where will the funding come from for the 7K miles of trail.

Mr. Dunn talked about the funding and equipment use by the combined clubs.

Mr. Yauk discussed working together. We are a better organization when we work together and move forward. We are helping each other out.

Mr. Keith Churill with Alger SORVA brought up the advantages of combining ORV and snowmobile clubs. We can coordinate grant projects, mobilize equipment, save money, and insurance rates have gone down. We have more help on the trail system as most folks work on both types of trails.

- Snowmobile Registrations - *Compiled by Paul Gaberdiel*

Information is provided by the Secretary of State with breakdown by county. There were 200K snowmobiles registered. Trail/permit sales vs. registration. For ORVs there are 400K ORVs, 230K licenses, and 183K trail permits.

- SNOW and ORV Financial - *Jacklin Blodgett (presented by Jessica Holley)*

\$130,366 is the combined total.

- Gogebic County Grant Sponsor Discussion - *Ron Yesney*

We almost lost trails 11 North and South as the snowmobile club failed. MSA became involved and Gogebic Region Trail Authority got the trails groomed, equipment fixed, and spruced up the finances. The West UP Trail Association (WUPTA) struggled with implementing grant projects. The new snowmobile club and existing ORV club battled over trail, the clubs were not working together and we at odds. A meeting was held to recommend ways to work together. Since it is the same trail, the ORV club could maintain in the summer and in winter, the snowmobile club could take over. It worked for a while, but it was still combative. Unfortunately the ORV club dissolved. The issue now is key grants for the connector from Marinesco to Ironwood was in play in this corridor which is important for the State trail. This also affected the snowmobile club. Both clubs were trying to do the right thing but could not work well together. We cannot roll the grant funding from the ORV club into the snowmobile club. **Mr. Dunn** asked if the ORV club had any grant dollars **Mr. Kakuk** said WUPTA is owed some re-imbusement monies. The project was bid out for engineering on the bridge structures on the rail-road grade property.

- Social Media Statement for Handbooks - *Ron Yesney*

Due to the combative nature between WUPTA and the snowmobile club in Gogebic County, the negative postings were giving motorized sports a bad name. People were getting turned off and unwilling to work with the grant sponsors and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The conflict between the snowmobile club and ORV club sponsors in Gogebic County gives motorized sports a bad name. It was suggested to develop a social media policy in the Grant Handbook, if sponsors used social media to harm the program they could be penalized.

Chairman Murray appointed a subcommittee to address social media. Mr. Yesney, Mr. Manson, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Yauk and Ms. Holley will phone conference within the next several weeks. The outcome will carry over to other programs: non-motorized, Parks, etc.

- Suggestions for Sponsor Handbook, Combined and Updated - *Don Helsel/Jessica Holley*

Mr. Dunn motioned to table the discussions for the suggestions for Sponsor Handbook in Mr. Helsel's absence. Mr. Shuler seconded.

- Shared Trails Maps - *Display by Jessica Holley*

Ms. Holley provided the shared multi-use trails and where they intersect. Each section will have club names and contacts. Geographically this will show where neighbors clubs are and may be able to work with each other. The clubs will review before posting to the website.

- MDOT Requirements for Trail Use in ROW - *Jim Duke*

A MDOT representative at the pre-season meetings stated that permission from adjacent landowners will be required. The club in Munising has a MDOT permit in place. In the permit language it states that if you dispose of vegetation/trees in the ROW adjacent to their property, permission from the landowner will be required. The issue is one landowner who stated that would not give permission and this would hold up a key gap between Wetmore and Valco Road. We need clarification if we need the required permissions. **Mr. Gaberdiel** will get the MDOT Permit Handbook and forward to Mr. Duke. **Mr. Kobasic** will get in writing from the Luce County MDOT that we need to notify the adjacent landowners and permission is not required. He will forward that to Mr. Duke who will send to Mr. Yauk. **Mr. Manson** noted that State law allows snowmobile riding in the ROW on Michigan highways. It seems that this issue is interpreted differently depending on who in MDOT is reviewing the Handbook. **Mr. Manson** suggests moving forward since there is a permit in place.

- Adopt a Trail Information, Signage at Trailheads - *Jessica Holley*

It was suggested to use the Adopt-A-Park process to include sponsors on trailhead signs. We would need to know how to identify the sponsor and identify multi-use trails. **Ms. Holley** will dig deeper to see who can apply, businesses and how to apply and order signage. **Mr. Yesney** said it will be easier to sign State land rather than private property. What is the liability of the private landowners if work is done on their land? **Ms. Holley** will have information for the next SAW meeting and will share with Mr. Dunn.

- How to Manage the Decline in Volunteers - *Committee*

Mr. Maibe said it seems if you combine trails and clubs volunteers go up. **Ms. Holley** suggested combing work days and set up work bees on the multi-use portions of the trail. Mr. Keith Churill said combining the clubs has increased communication and made coordination of equipment and grant efforts easier. **Mr. Manson** said that there is a small core group of volunteers on the snowmobile side. Snowmobilers pay for their permits, why would they need to volunteer? The trails are good. What needs to happen is a controversy – close trails and not groom. That is why the snowmobile clubs started. There needs to be some public awareness happening. Snowmobiling is a social sport. Weekend warriors ride the trails but don't put in time to volunteer. Mr. Keith Lynch said the perception is I purchased a \$15K machine and pay for the sticker, why do I need to help? This gap needs to be bridged. Perhaps a person could get a discounted permit if they belong to an organization. How could we start this in Michigan and market this concept? **Mr. Shuler** said everyone wants maps. We put them at the Welcome Center and they run out. Chairman Murray said we need to make the club magazines, flyers, brochures easily available. Mr. Keith Churill said that social media is a big benefit. Their club posts when the trail is groomed, when they are having work bees, and other club updates. Mr. Keith Lynch echoed and said that the videos are drawing people in to dig deeper and reading more about the clubs. It was asked why snow shows are mostly downstate. Mainly because of the attendance and draw, it is not feasible to run a show for the vendors and the hosting venue.

- How to Manage the Trail Systems in the Future
No Discussion

Updates

- P.A. 288 – Progress of the Forest Roads Inventory Process - *Jessica Holley/Dennis Nezich*

NLP road inventory is due by 12/31/2017. The early June initial recommendation showed 87% of the roads that any vehicle could travel should open and 13% should be closed to ORV use. Inventory classification decisions based on special management plans, user conflict, and military use. There were three public meetings, website, email letters, and a web viewer map of planned open use where a comment could be posted on a specific road. Over 1,000 comments were received and after DNR review the recommended changes showed 84% open and 16% closed to ORV use. These recommendations will go to the NRC and then there will be another comment period with a final recommendation to the Governor for approval. A Land Use Order of the Director will be in place to enforce the recommendations and annually update a map by Counties of what roads are open. The UP and SLP are to be classified by 2018. Forty percent of the roads in the UP are inventoried with initial recommendations in January 2018. **Mr. Maik** asked if we collaborated with the US Forest Service; only the roads on State land were identified. **Mr. Dunn** wanted to bring up the fact that it is an unfunded mandate, so how do we take care of this issue? There are no current designated trails that will be lost. We were not approached by the legislature in any of their discussions.

- More Shared Routes, Maintenance, Signage – Carsonite signs - *Jessica Holley*

The clubs have installed the new posts and removed the old triangles. On the combined trails, the backers for the snowmobile trails will be screwed to the posts. Mr. Bob Lambert asked if mile markers would be used for rescue information. Any 911 placards in the UP? **Mr. Yesney** said that there are some in the east UP and in Gogebic County. Each County has its own Emergency Manager. **Mr. Kobasic** said it would be nice to have mile markers but there is redundancy as enhanced 911 can get a GPS from a cell phone. Mr. Keith Lynch asked about using equipment for both winter and summer. Clubs have both old and new equipment. How can we brush around signs – is there any weed killer that would be more effective? Vinegar might be an option. It was pointed out that any use of chemical control on State land would have to come from an approved list and applied by a contractor who has an applicator license.

- Permanent Easements in the UP - *Matt Torreano*

Two years ago we brought contractors on board to help with permanent easement acquisitions for snowmobile trails. The monies from snowmobile permits were set aside for these purchases. We redesigned and streamlined our lengthy acquisition process. Since the trail is vetted and in place, seeking out division review is a lengthy redundancy. Big Bay/Trail #14 is a snowmobile only easement and the survey is complete, the fee schedule is in place and our next step is to purchase the parcels. Weyerhaeuser corporate property is a multi-use trail. Instead of purchasing all easements at once, it was decided to start with Ontonagon County. The title review and the appraisals have begun. Next step is to have our contractor initiate purchase. France and Bray in Chippewa County is a multi-use trail where we are making offers to purchase.

Mr. Bob Lambert asked if we are working with Longyear. **Mr. Torreano** said we are having informal discussions. There is some hesitancy for multi-use trails but it seems we could work it out. **Mr. Manson** asked about the status on the grade in Strongs. **Mr. Torreano** said the title is still in review and it is taking longer due to the Railroad ownership.

- Map of Shared Roads with Trails
- Interactive Map updates - *Jessica Holley/Kim Kennedy*

We are working on a map with different layers that will eventually incorporate the Open/Closed roads from P.A. 288.

- Combined Trails, Brushing and Signing Rates - *Jessica Holley*

Mr. Dunn asked about multi-use trails where two clubs are brushing to a width. ORV 72" and Snowmobile 11' width. Is there a set standard and how is it going to be paid and to which club? **Mr. Manson** said we need a shared trails map and take into consideration brushing along railroad vs. winding trail through the woods. We need rates and more information. Mr. Bob Lambert said there is the feeling within the snowmobile clubs that when ORV clubs come in, ORV clubs are encroaching on their easements and feel they will lose their easements. **Mr. Manson** also asked about grading. **Ms. Holley** stated we need to have a concrete vision of where we have shared trails and how to address these issues. How do we pay each club? One club might not get brushing funded. Mr. Keith Churill said with combining both the ORV and snowmobile clubs on multi-use trails the funding comes from both clubs. We are trying to get the brushing to both standards. Mr. Keith Lynch with Delta County SORVA said there are issues that cannot be addressed by either club: blow-downs, signs damaged, seasonal changes, etc. Mr. Dave Smithers with Chippewa County SORVA asked if a subcommittee could be formed with an action item/timeline for this issue. **Mr. Dunn** will put these issues with the equipment subcommittee and get direction from the DNR. **Ms. Holley** will provide the committee with a map of the shared trail segments.

- Upcoming Dates:
Lower Peninsula Pre-season Snowmobile Meeting Dates

SAW October 19, 2017 – Shanty Creek in Bellaire

SAW December 7, 2017 – Foggy's Steakhouse in Christmas

2018 NOHVCC Conference in Grand Rapids

Mr. Shuler shared that there will be meetings, workshops, and field days. Industry will bring equipment and put on presentations. Share your ideas for presentations/workshops share both Mr. Shuler and Ms. Holley.

2019 ISC Conference in Grand Rapids

MSA will be hosting the conference.

- Next Joint Meeting – April 14th or 21st 2018 in the LP – Mr. Dunn, Ms. Holley, and Mr. Yauk to finalize via conference call.

- Round-Robin – Committee Member Closing Comments

Mr. Maiké wanted to point out that working with the government, things take so long because we want to make sure things are in order so we do not have to go two steps back to get things accomplished.

Mr. Shuler said sign-up for the NOVACC conference next year.

Mr. Dunn said it may seem like we aren't doing anything but we are moving forward and getting along. It does take time.

Mr. Duke asked folks to register for the MSA convention October 20th – 22nd at Shanty Creek.

Mr. Yauk wanted to thank Ms. Holley for all her efforts for getting all the sponsors, clubs, and interested parties to the meetings. He also thanked both Consumers Energy and the Hiawatha National Forest for their information today.

Public Appearance – None

Meeting adjourned at 12:52.

DRAFT