

**SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (SAW)  
MEETING MINUTES**

**February 15, 2011**  
Approved June 21, 2011

**Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center  
104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, Michigan 48653**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Lee Murray, Chairman, At-Large Representative  
Al Green, Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSA), Region II Rep., Cadillac  
Bruce Wood, Trail Sponsors Representative  
Rich Filley, Trail Sponsors Representative  
Jim Duke, MSA, Region I Representative, Munising  
Bill Manson, MSA, Region III Representative, Grand Rapids  
Don Britton, At-Large Representative

**DNR STAFF PRESENT**

Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, FMD, Lansing  
Steve Kubisiak, Acting State Trails Operations and Construction Unit Supervisor, FMD, Lansing  
Loretta Cwalinski, Secretary, Administration, Gaylord

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT**

Randy Charles, USDA, Ottawa National Forest

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

Danny Daggy, Pere Marquette Snowmobile Club Inc.  
Norman Rockwell, Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club (OHSC)  
John Hurry, OHSC  
Bud Martin, OHSC  
Don Carroll, OHSC

**WELCOME**

**Chairman Murray** called the Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW) meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 15, 2011, in Roscommon, Michigan.

A few items to be added to the agenda were discussed. **Mr. Manson** said he has been made aware, from several sources, that there will be no money left for groomer replacements. He would like to see Groomer Replacement Budget added to the Agenda. Anti-Terrorism Insurance Costs was added to the Agenda.

**MINUTES**

The Minutes from the December 9, 2010 SAW meeting were reviewed.

**A Motion was made by Mr. Duke and seconded by Mr. Britton to accept the minutes as corrected. They were unanimously approved.**

## **BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Military Bridge Update**

**Mr. Kubisiak** said he spoke recently with Ron Yesney; he has followed up with the bridge fabricator, still no firm costs on bridge replacement. As soon as he receives it, he will forward to the SAW. In addition, he will follow up on the trail counter that was installed, as it has been malfunctioning. Trail Counters and Military Bridge will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Ron Yesney is not transferring, he will stay in Marquette – the Recreation Specialist for the Eastern Lower Peninsula will be Paige Perry.

### **Snow Processor Demo Proposal**

**Mr. Green** is reporting for Keith Litchfield, Bader & Sons, and will table his discussion until the next meeting. **A motion was made by Mr. Green to table that discussion until June. Mr. Wood seconded – all approved.**

### **Review Grooming Reimbursement Formula**

**Mr. Manson** said it had been several years since formulas were discussed. He'd like to see new data obtained and the formula reviewed again.

**Mr. Radabaugh** had the minutes from a February 2005 meeting discussing the formula and the criteria that decided the per mile rate.

**Chairman Murray** asked Mr. Manson if there were any flaws specific to the formula.

**Mr. Manson** said he feels the labor rate should be looked at. Discussion continued. **Chairman Murray** appointed Bill Manson, Rich Filley, and Bruce Wood to a subcommittee to review trail grooming reimbursement rates.

### **Allowable Set-up Time After Grooming**

**Mr. Britton** handed out an insert from the handbook to discuss Snowmobile Trail Specifications. He personally feels that grooming in the morning or afternoon is rather a waste of time, no set-up time for the trail. He thinks there should be something mandated on proper set-up time.

**Mr. Manson** said that MSA probably started pushing more for daytime grooming – by afternoon in high traffic areas, trails were in really bad shape. Discussion continued with varied input.

**Mr. Green** added to keep in mind that it is volunteers that are grooming; it's difficult to tell them when they should be there. Also, trails can look like they weren't groomed ten minutes after they were.

**Mr. Britton** would like to see a position from the DNR.

**Chairman Murray** asked Mr. Radabaugh if there have been problems or discussion on 'when?' **Mr. Radabaugh** said it depends on several factors – lack of snow, usage, etc. They've heard both extremes – trail didn't need to be groomed, but groomers are out; trail needs to be groomed, no grooming, etc.

**Mr. Manson made a motion, supported by Mr. Britton, to make a recommendation to the DNR to encourage nighttime grooming with supplemental daytime grooming in areas as needed, dictated by traffic.**

**Mr. Duke** said he has a problem with the word 'encourage' – he feels there should be a firm stand; you can't expect much when using 'encourage.' Discussion continued.

**Motion was reviewed again after discussion - All supported the motion.**

**Mr. Manson** said that they will take this issue to the subcommittee to see if there will be a recommendation for incentives, and to decide on 'encourage' vs. 'required.'

**Chairman Murray** would like to see suggestions from staff to the SAW for wording on the Motion, and brought to the June meeting.

#### **Snowmobile Registration Decals**

2013 stickers are failing in adhesive. **Mr. Kubisiak** said that Law Enforcement Division has not had any issues in the field yet.

**Mr. Duke** said he has two stickers that are easily pulled off and more instances mentioned.

**Mr. Manson** said he put his stickers on in a warmer temperature, and used a heat gun to seal the adhesive.

**Chairman Murray** asked if Mr. Kubisiak had discussion with the Secretary of State (SOS); he has but they mentioned they've only had one e-mail complaint. **Chairman Murray** asked that Mr. Kubisiak contact SOS again and try to resolve the problem. Also, riders should not be penalized. **Chairman Murray** would like this added as an agenda item for next meeting.

#### **Field Staff Groomer Replacement Budget**

**Mr. Wood** said that several staff have mentioned there will be no equipment replacement this year. Will there be, if not, why?

**Mr. Radabaugh** said there was an \$8 million appropriation this year, and discussed the monies allocated and balance shortfall. At this point, there's a 12% drop in trail permit sales, which can affect these balances.

**Chairman Murray** asked that any negative information be curtailed from staff on shortfalls.

**Mr. Green** wondered if staff couldn't try to reverse the rumors in the field by contacting the clubs and dispelling the rumors of unavailable funds at this point since it is too early to tell. Discussion continued. Supplemental funding could be available due to less grooming in certain areas across the state.

**Mr. Radabaugh** encouraged the groomers to send in their reimbursement request as soon as possible, to get a better handle on the grant balance.

**Mr. Manson** asked about 2010 Special Maintenance Projects, and would like to have it e-mailed to the SAW before the next meeting.

### **Insurance Costs**

**Mr. Manson** said he spoke to one of the grant sponsors about the anti-terrorism costs and they feel this fee should be covered. Don Reed has been told that Lansing has kicked back that portion being paid on his insurance. **Mr. Radabaugh** will look into that issue and get it resolved.

**Mr. Manson** thought he remembered Mr. DeBrabander had sent a note out that those costs should be covered.

**Mr. Britton** added the policy has to be written by April 1 – there's not much time.

**Chairman Murray** asked to put this item on the June agenda for further information and discussion if necessary.

**Mr. Filley** said he quickly wanted to add that shopping for comp insurance is a smart thing – a great way to save the program money. Perhaps have someone in to talk to the SAW about insurance, maybe compare two or three companies.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Forest Management Division**

**Mr. Kubisiak** reported that approximately 30% of snowmobile maps are downloadable to GPS units now. He encouraged everyone to take a look and see what they think. On the trail line, there will be icons that look like a radio tower which will start the process of downloading to GPS.

**Mr. Wood** said he would like to see the trail from Mancelona east to Lakes of the North added to the DNR's website. Mr. Kubisiak will follow-up on that. He added there is a system for numbering the trails, but could possibly take a suggestion if the clubs have one. Mr. Wood will get a recommendation for a trail number to Mr. Kubisiak.

**Mr. Radabaugh** updated the status of the Administrative Rules filing for the Snowmobile Trail Easement Sub-account. This rule set has met the 15-day joint-session requirement of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). Our rules are among 22 rule sets currently being reviewed by the new administration and State Offices of Administrative Hearings, and Rules (SOAHR) hasn't been given the okay to file any new rule sets with the SOS.

He also mentioned that the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) needs trail users support for reauthorization in the next Federal Transportation budget. The RTP does not have an advocate in the new Congress membership and is in jeopardy of not receiving funding support. Michigan ranks second, after California, in the amount of RTP funds the state receives for trail projects; it is the funding source for many of the state trail bridge projects. Fiscal Year 2011 allocation to Michigan is nearly \$5 million. He suggests all trail supporters go to the American Trails website for current information about the status of the RTP program. There are upcoming hearings for public comments; the closest are in Ohio and Indiana this next week.

**Randy Charles, USDA, Ottawa National Forest** said there's no update from the Forest Service at this time.

### **PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**John Hurry, OHSC**, wanted to make a comment on grooming that was expressed earlier. They have a new field contact this season – he's suggested grooming at night and it's worked out well. Also, he'd like to express thanks to the SAW and Mr. DeBrabander in particular over their erosion problem and the rocks used. He also asked about signs for next season.

**Chairman Murray** said there was about a two-hour discussion at the last meeting about signs – he suggested looking at the meeting minutes for starters. **Mr. Wood** added that short of one issue, the sign discussion was complete. Issue of contention was the curve sign. He wants to know the status of signs.

**Mr. Kubisiak** said that he had a discussion with Mr. DeBrabander and Mr. Radabaugh, and the DNR will be making a recommendation to the SAW within the month.

**Bill Lucas, Cadillac Winter Warriors**, wanted to say that he has a problem that with 70 clubs total, one club getting two groomers at the same time. He feels some of the clubs that don't get equipment at all should be; he'd like to see clubs that are entitled to a new groomer get only one at a time.

**Mr. Green made a motion that the SAW advise the DNR to allow only one piece of equipment a year to a club. No support – motion died.**

**Mr. Manson** asked where the reports for trail proposal status are on the DNR website. On the homepage go to the Recreation and Camping link, Snowmobiling, Trail Sponsors dropdown, then choose Recreation Trail Proposal Status Report Summary.  
([http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10365\\_14824---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10365_14824---,00.html).)

**Mr. Britton** asked Mr. Radabaugh about the permanent trail issue – there will be a meeting in March, and there are hopes something will be completed this program year.

**Mr. Manson** added a comment about permanent trail issue – if we could get \$5 or \$6 million dollars in there, it could go a lot farther. He asked everyone to think about it, add some ideas and brainstorm.

**Mr. Duke** added that he was on the antique snowmobile ride recently where he was asked about Trail Closed signs – if that is an approved sign, why are clubs paying for them?

**Mr. Kubisiak** said the DNR will purchase these signs and supply them to the clubs when needed. Signs are being ordered now and will be made available.

**Mr. Green** asked that at the next meeting information on the corridor between Copmish and Meesick be discussed.

**Mr. Manson** asked Mr. Kubisiak if he would e-mail Rodney Stokes' letter to the SAW.

**A motion was made by Mr. Filley at 12:09 p.m., seconded by Mr. Wood, to adjourn the meeting. All supported the motion.**