

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (SAW)**

Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2011

Approved December 8, 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 II Representative, Grand Rapids
Don Britton, At-Large Representative

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Jim Radabaugh, State Trails Coordinator, FMD, Lansing
Steve Kubisiak, FMD, Lansing
Todd Neiss, Acting State Trails Operations and Construction Unit Supervisor, FMD, Lansing
Cpl. John Morey, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Gaylord
Loretta Cwalinski, Secretary, Administration, Gaylord

PUBLIC ATTENDEES

Bradley Potter, Western Michigan Snowmobile Council (WMSC)
David Low, WMSC
William R. Caskey, Kalkaska County Snowmobile Association (KCSA)
Mary A. Caskey, KCSA
John L. Hurry, Ogemaw Hills Snowmobile Club
Joe Kuchnicki, Harbor Springs Snowmobile Club
Bill Stegenga, Bader & Sons Co.
Jim Dickie, Michigan Snowmobile Association

WELCOME

Chairman Murray called the Snowmobile Advisory workgroup (SAW) meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, October 18, 2011 in Roscommon, Michigan.

Chairman Murray would like to add the Rogers City spur to the December meeting agenda.

MINUTES

The minutes of the June 21, 2011 meeting were acknowledged.

Mr. Manson noted that the Motion on page three needs “in a timely manner” added. **Mr. Radabaugh** asked for clarification; “DNR shall notify SAW within a week” will be corrected and added to the minutes.

Motion was made by Mr. Britton, seconded by Mr. Green to adopt the corrected minutes of the June 21, 2011 meeting. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Military Bridge Subcommittee Update

Mr. Duke reported that the Sno Valley Riders Club does not want to spearhead the project, but in a discussion with Khris Kennedy there is a need for the bridge. Gail Scott has offered to do the paperwork, but the club has to be the sponsor. Mr. Yesney advised that there is a trail counter ready for this season on that trail.

Chairman Murray asked if MSA should be involved. The club seems to feel the DNR should be doing the paperwork for the trail. **Mr. Radabaugh** suggested looking at the counter numbers, and perhaps check with USFS at the end of season and see if they would be interested in taking the lead.

Mr. Manson suggested writing a letter to the club saying they need to work with SAW and get involved to get it done. **Chairman Murray** and **Mr. Radabaugh** will talk about a solution

Grooming Rate Workgroup Update

Mr. Manson noted that Mr. Filley needs to be added to the Workgroup listing. Three items were discussed; fuel, labor, and routine maintenance. Summary: They felt the labor currently used was adequate. Average speed of seven miles per hour is a good rate. \$2.15 was decided consistent. Fuel formula they came up with, currently at \$2.07 per mile, was adequate. Routine Maintenance raised questions primarily due to inconsistent reporting. The Handbook explains that category; however some were recording under Grooming Maintenance. The \$4.74 per mile will probably need to stay the same this year. Headings on sheets should be changed from Routine Costs to Routine Maintenance. Groomer Maintenance changed to Major Groomer Repairs. The Workgroup has offered to continue to look at the whole reimbursement because looking at percent ‘ownership’ was in question, along with a few other details.

Mr. Radabaugh suggested working with specific clubs this season.

Mr. Wood asked about separating drag versus power unit on reporting as well. Could old equipment mixed with new be skewing numbers as well? **Mr. Filley** questioned groomer maintenance not being on reimbursement form. Discussion continued.

Chairman Murray would like to see a permanent committee and asked Mr. Manson if he wanted to offer anything up for a vote at this time.

Motion was made by Mr. Manson, seconded by Mr. Wood that SAW recommends to the Department to redesign the weekly reimbursement form and provide guidance on completing the form - get that approved by the Department and use it with a minimum of

six clubs to gather the correct information on their weekly reimbursements, to be implemented this season. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

The permanent subcommittee members are Mr. Manson, Mr. Filley, and Mr. Wood.

Mr. Radabaugh explained and reviewed the closed meetings act. Four persons meeting would require a public meeting notice by the Department.

Motion was made by Mr. Manson, seconded by Mr. Britton, that after the subcommittee met they have agreed to continue with the \$4.74 per mile as the current grooming rate, and to be reviewed at the December meeting. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

Consistency in Grooming

Mr. Britton advised that he's spent much time researching this topic – many clubs are double grooming. He said it's difficult for field contacts to justify additional grooming. Field contact goes by grooming schedule, temperature, etc. **Mr. Britton** would like to have the same information as field contact. The direction used to be three days a week, then five, now unlimited.

Mr. Britton would like to know what the Department tells the field contact on what the grooming requirements are. **Mr. Radabaugh** will review Mr. Britton's original questions. Discussion continued.

Chairman Murray would like to see these details as an agenda item for next meeting.

Mr. Manson has concerns about that discussion on restricting criteria, because there are changing circumstances that are unique to immediate weather and conditions. **Mr. Britton** will continue with committee work and bring more information to the December meeting. **Chairman Murray** asked for SAW to share ideas.

SAW Committee Appointments

Chairman Murray advised that **Mr. Wood** and **Mr. Green** appointments are up.

Motion was made by Chairman Murray, seconded by Mr. Filley, to support the reappointment of Mr. Green and Mr. Wood. Motion for adoption unanimously carried.

Mr. Green would like to see MSA support as well. MSA needs to write a letter, and Mr. Green and Mr. Wood are also asked to write letters for reappointment.

Policy/Procedure to Fund and Repair Snowmobile Trails Damaged by Unauthorized (illegal) ORV/ATV Use

Mr. Green said there were 16 items brought to him by a grant sponsor in Lewiston – they would like to see guidance on addressing those repairs. This is very costly to the snowmobile fund for ORV damage. **Mr. Green** would like to see SAW work with MSTAC and get Policy and Procedures to obtain those repair funds in a timely manner.

Mr. Kubisiak explained ORV damage and how it is assessed for repairs versus trail maintenance. The club needs to apply earlier in the year – funds are issued in October.

STAFF REPORTS

Forest Management Division

Mr. Radabaugh mentioned the charts for grants that were handed out. Some are pending – waiting on information from the various clubs. He advised that the clubs have been notified.

Mr. Neiss reported there are nine groomer grants that total \$1,689,571.60 – seven drag grants approved for \$167,315. Grand total is \$1,856,886.60.

Mr. Manson asked about MDOT's sealant on M-60 Bridge – he would like to know for sure if that trail will be open this season.

Mr. Radabaugh advised that the Department will purchase Kinross Township's groomer and transfer it to Sault club. **Mr. Wood** asked how the maintenance would occur. **Mr. Radabaugh** said they are still within formula and added they will look closer at it, but they should be one mile under the formula.

Mr. Britton asked about the amount of contingency for Keweenaw \$3,000 – it is a typing error that Richard Kennedy will correct. Also under West Shore, Groomer Utility – should not be \$3,000.

Law Enforcement Division

Cpl. Morey gave an update on the online Snowmobile Safety Course and as of yesterday it is officially ready to use. The address is www.snowmobilecourse.com/usa/michigan. The cost is \$29.95. The link is not yet set up on the Department's website. **Cpl. Morey** explained that it could take three to four hours to complete the course, which includes a final exam at the end. The question was raised how there will be age verification; **Cpl. Morey** will look into that and advise.

USDA Forest Service was not present.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Mr. Potter asked about insurance for groomers; he feels they are paying far too much, still paying on the original value of the cost of groomer. Should they look into it for a reduction? Wondering what the Department would like to see as coverage. **Mr. Manson** said they should only have collision on it for what it's worth. **Mr. Britton** added to call their agent and list it as actual value. There's nothing in the Handbook for guidance. Advised to get with insurance company and review value.

Also, **Mr. Potter** asked about Lam Track – they've spent lots of money in repairs and hoped to have gotten a new groomer a few years ago. They feel they'd be better off to rent one instead of continuous repairs. They want to know if the Department has a problem with them renting equipment. Can the Department lease? The club would do the lease; bring a proposal to the Department.

In addition, could Mr. Radabaugh look into why West Michigan Trails Council has not received their new groomer as promised from a few years ago? **Mr. Radabaugh** will get back with Mr. Potter.

Mr. Hurry said they have not received their reimbursement yet. It is supposed to be in the mail. Shows as processed, and it should be there.

Mr. Low has a staging area concern - he was told they couldn't spend any money until project was approved. It's approved, but not funded. How can they get the engineering report if they can't spend any money? Current staging area is privately owned, with a ten year lease – they are hoping to spend money to move forward. Grant needs to be executed first and then they can move forward. **Mr. Radabaugh** will look into it and call Mr. Low.

Mr. Wood wanted to know how staging areas are marked – the Department supplies signage, but also they are noted on the snowmobile maps. If we pay to have a lot plowed, there should be signs. Staging area signs can be part of the cost of the project.

Mr. Duke said he has asked for a block of rooms at White Pine Lodge in Munising and Foggy's Restaurant in Christmas for the December SAW meeting. Saturday's meeting will also be held at Foggy's Restaurant.

Mr. Manson referenced the Drummond Island issue; seven landowners have pulled their permits for the snowmobile trail there and bridges may also be pulled.

He added that the Snow Chasers advised the grade from the Sault to Strongs at Salt Point is up for sale. The owner has acreage on both sides of the trail and the grade. It is said that there is lease money paid, but there is question on Department ownership. **Mr. Radabaugh** will check with Real Estate Division to clarify ownership.

Last topic is surplus lines insurance. There's still a regulation question as to the reimbursement of those charges. **Mr. Manson** will continue to research, would like that also to be added to December agenda.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup will be December 8, 2011 at 9:00 a.m., Foggy's Restaurant, Christmas.

Mr. Manson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Wood. Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.