

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SNOWMOBILE AND ATV ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

MAY 27, 2021 - MEETING MINUTES

Location: Webex Virtual Meeting

Meeting start time: 10:00am

Committee Meeting Attendees:

John Norbeck, DCNR
Jason Albright, DCNR
Todd Miller, DCNR
Jake Newton, DCNR
Stacie Amsler, DCNR
Troy Withers, DCNR
Nicole Faraguna, DCNR
Paul Zeph, DCNR
Seth Cassell, DCNR
John Hallas, DCNR
Ellen Shultzabarger, DCNR
Michael Hoffman, DCNR
Leslie Sarvis, DCNR
Aara Vinsh, DCNR
Karl Maul, DCNR
Tim Haydt, PA Game Commission
Sarah Iversen, PA House
Elizabeth Krug, PSSA
Bradley Gosser, PA Economic Development Association
Pat Caulfield, PA Economic Development Association
Emily Eyster, PA Senate
Nick Troutman, PA Senate
Griffin Caruso, PA House
Arline LaTourette, PSSA
Lucinda Barrick, PSSA
Melissa Morgan, PA Township Supervisors
Sarah Corcoran
Ethan Shaffer
Kathryn Klaber
Bradley Smith, Potter County ATV/UTV Club
Bob Monroe, Allegheny National Forest
Jack Clark, PaOHV
Eric Bruggeman, PaOHV

HANDOUTS:

Agenda
Meeting Minutes – October 28, 2020
House Bill 478

HANDOUTS continued:

PA Recreation Trail Grants Awarded – Round 26 and 26.5
ATV and Snowmobile Grants Awarded – Round 26 and 26.5
Registered Vehicles by County, May 3, 2021
SAAC Fiscal Report

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Jake Newton welcomed the Snowmobile and ATV Advisory Committee (SAAC) meeting attendees and noted the meeting would be recorded.
2. Jack Clark initiated introductions for all of the virtual attendees.
3. Jack Clark requested the October 2020 Meeting Minutes be approved. One revision was requested to the minutes prior to approval.
4. John Norbeck indicated that good snow cover last winter resulted in record breaking attendance for snowmobiling. The Bureau of Forestry (BOF) was able to redirect funds into grooming snowmobile trails. John Norbeck noted Nicole Faraguna will summarize the updated ATV policy change. Additional discussions would include the land acquisition change, fiscal code updates, and Alex MacDonald would summarize the grant opportunities.
5. Eric Nelson – HB 478: Legislative Report, this bill is proposed to open state lands to Off-Highway Motorcycles (OHMs). DCNR has concerns over trail degradation. John Norbeck indicated the wording in the last bill was vague and he had concerns about the broadness, which leaves a lot open for interpretation for where OHMs could ride. DCNR is not in favor of this bill. John Norbeck added that the pilot program for DCNR to pull together gave a full flavor of what it takes to have viable recreational opportunity.
6. Jack Clark – HB 478, Section 77A1 really is open to interpretation. Jack noted the Allegheny National Forest recognizes OHMs and allows the legal use on their property, which also happens to be funded through DCNR administered funds.
7. Eric Bruggeman questioned the source for where Eric Nelson referenced degradation of trails are being caused by OHMs. John Norbeck indicated there is evidence on skid trails, logging trails and logging roads on DCNR owned property.
8. Jack Clark stated that SAAC previously worked with Larson Design Group to update and revise the PA Motorized Trail Design manual, nearly 20 years ago. Jack requested the manual be updated again. John Norbeck indicated since electric ATVs, snowmobiles and e-bikes have come online, there is a future need to update PA Motorized Trail manual.
9. Snowmobile/ATV Accident Report and Youth Safety Statistics:
 - a. 8 new instructors were certified at Bald Eagle State Forest Training
 - b. 74 active Youth ATV and 83 active Youth Snowmobile exist presently
 - c. In 2020, ATV Safety Classes totaled 491 students
 - d. In 2021, ATV Safety Classes to 139 students
 - e. In 2020, Snowmobile Safety 16 students trained (all on-line, Kalcomy)
 - f. In 2021, Snowmobile Safety 0 students
 - g. 2020 ATV Accidents – 145 accidents, 123 known injuries, including 34 fatalities
 - h. 2021 ATV Accidents – 43 accidents, with 24 known injuries and 15 fatalities
 - i. 2020 Snowmobile Accidents – 5 accidents, with 3 injuries and 1 fatality
 - j. 2021 Snowmobile Accidents - 6 accidents, with 5 injuries and 0 fatalities

10. Jack Clark – A problem exists where trainers can't get certification cards to individuals who possess the instructor's certification. Troy Withers said COVID is the problem and DCNR needs to have someone in the Central Office. Jack Clark noted the ATV Safety Institute (ASI) training has been working and very helpful. Troy Withers indicated some instructors have produced their own certificate, which is not preferred.
11. Jack Clark confirmed there is funding available for safety training, not specific to youth, and any adults that want the hands-on training should be able to receive it.
12. Arline LaTourette agreed with Jack's opinion, very supportive. PSSA prefers in-person training. Adults like broad training. Troy Withers understands the request, but DCNR can't provide adults with own certification.
13. Troy Withers provided a summary of registered vehicles by county, including: 193,159 active ATVs, 121,519 limited ATVs. There are 28,812 snowmobiles active and , 4,094 limited snowmobiles.
14. Troy Withers noted the snowmobile hotline for trail openings has been discontinued and was recessive. Most trail users have preferred to call and speak with Districts directly where bi-weekly updates are required.
15. Troy Withers noted PA LAW for snowmobiles and ATV has been updated to include helmets be DOT approved.
16. Troy Withers summarized some updates that will occur as part of the DCNR/ATV Pilot Mandate. DCNR is reviewing the OHV trail manual for dust control, sign plan operation and guidance, aggregate and materials to be provided to municipalities and placement of signs for joint use roads. DCNR is working to develop public notice for informational signage.
17. Troy Withers – DCNR is working through the business implementation, sticker and database for registration. DCNR was also reviewing insurance, titling, form of payment, and utilization of a credit card system. Additional information will need provided to the Rangers for enforcement.
18. Jason Albright summarized the locations of the 2021 Draft ATV Pilot project and referenced a draft map of Potter County. DCNR had shared the maps with Townships on 5/27/21. The proposed 2021 Draft ATV Pilot project contains about 50-miles of trail/road connections, including PennDOT Roads and municipal roads. Jason focused on areas of State Forest Roads and noted the goal for future pilot projects would be to connect toward Haneyville, which will consist of some trail armoring.
19. Jason Albright confirmed PennDOT is reviewing 11.75 miles of PennDOT state routes that are under consideration. PennDOT is doing their own review of these specific state route segments.
20. Jason Albright summarized the pilot program, once fully implemented would total 195 miles of Township Roads that would be available. The sum of Trail, Township, PennDOT, and State Forest roads would consist of 264 miles in 2022, once implemented.
21. As part of the ATV Pilot project, fiscal code language was referenced to review the fee structure, and assumes a \$40 resident and \$60 non-resident fee structure for an annual pass. John Norbeck clarified the fee structures will be needed for future trail building and support for the local communities use of the roads.
22. Liz Krug raised a concern about the safety classes and would like more safety information. Concern about effects of snowmobile trails that will be used as part of the ATV connection.
23. Renovo Connector Trail – Troy, proposed to be constructed late 2022. Concern over slopes of stabilization, of 10-15%. The development process has looked at switchbacks and the need for open arch, natural bottom structures. Not anticipating starting construction until summer of

2022. Complete Phase I by late summer of 2023. Need PennDOT approval or this connection may not be readily feasible.

24. The Montana plate registration issue was discussed and Todd Miller indicated this is a case that could have large implications. This appears to violate Chapter 75 of the vehicle code. It was noted a person transferred an ATV to an LLC as a Quadracycle which can be street legal in Montana. Todd noted a registered Quadracycle vehicle in Montana is not legal in Pennsylvania.
25. Seth Cassell of DCNR highlighted the Motorized Recreation Acquisition future Forest Planning and Information division goals. DCNR has a new policy and strategy on acquiring lands to enhance motorized recreation. Currently, DCNR is making good progress in Schuylkill and Luzerne Counties to acquire 5,600 acres. This is a new concept for DCNR in that they would manage the property, but purpose would be for motorized recreation. DCNR is looking at a master motorized recreation plan. This has good environmental benefits, as it works to restore abandoned mine lands, clean-up mine drainage sites, maintain hemlock growth stands and maintain, abandoned mine tunnels for bat hibernacula.
26. John Norbeck noted this facility will be dual-use funding and will include opportunities for full size vehicles, OHVs OHMs, and snowmobiles.
27. DCNR summarized the Fiscal Report on Motorized Accounts (handout), restricted ATV and restricted snowmobile funds, plus liquid fuels, including \$1,000,000 per year.

ATV Budget Amounts for 2020/2021

- a. Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Grants = 1,296,000
- b. Bureau of Forestry Personnel = \$388,500
- c. Bureau of Forestry Operations = \$591,500
- d. Bureau of Administration Services – Operations = \$543,000
- e. Bureau of Administration Services – PennDOT Operations = \$871,000
- f. Bureau of Parks Operation = \$10,000

Snowmobile Budget Amounts for 2020/2021

- g. Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Grants = \$91,000
 - h. Bureau of Forestry Operations = \$113,900
 - i. Bureau of Forestry Grants = \$10,000
 - j. Bureau of Administration Services – Operations = \$95,650
 - k. Bureau of Administration Services – PennDOT Operations = \$264,450
 - l. Bureau of Parks Operation = \$50,000
28. ATV registration fees total \$3,557,452 revenues to date.
 29. Snowmobile registration fees total \$569,311 revenues to date
 30. Sales Tax Commission was \$275 revenues to date
 31. Financial statement and the audit is posted on the DCNR website.
 32. Stacie Amsler noted during COVID, PennDOT has been processing applications, however they are backlogged with an estimated 49 day to turnaround. They hired another person recently for processing.
 33. Jack Clark and Liz Krug suggested more funding is needed due to the need to maintain ATV and snowmobile trails. Both suggested raising registration fees.
 34. Alex MacDonald provided a 2020 grant round summary for the registration funds and how the PA Recreation Trail Program FFY 2021 rounds 26 and 26.5 would be allocated. Alex noted the total PA Recreation Trail set-aside was \$1,991,226 for the round 26 and 26.5. Nick Troutman

questioned when are RTP grants administered and announced? Alex indicated they are announced with C2P2 announcement in the fall.

35. User Group Concerns – PSSA

- a. Question states liability for accidents on snowmobile state trails, how is insurance handled. Norbeck – Commonwealth is Self Insured. Liz, so State has no responsibility. John, accidents are frequent and State doesn't accept those responsibilities.
- b. Liz and Bob Monroe, Training for snowmobile groomers is needed, but can't get training. Bob suggested Liz reachout to the District. Troy, no standardized training from DCNR exists.

36. Eric Bruggeman suggested the PA Game Commission (PGC) consider the inclusion of safety information in their curriculum. Tim Haydt would follow-up with Eric to discuss further.

37. Bradley Gosser noted he is pleased with progress DCNR is making from an economic standpoint.

38. Bob Monroe provided a summary for the ANF which still has high motorized use. The ANF still have daily and annual passes. They combine funds with DCNR for heavy and light trail maintenance. Recently the ANF installed about 4,000 paver blocks in areas of turns where soils needed armored. Currently the ANF has a new 12.9 mile connector proposed toward Marienville and will use approximately 4 miles of municipal roads to make this connection. The public comment period was just completed and the majority see the value to connect to the community for economic growth.

39. Bob Monroe stated the ANF has annual fees of \$35, but is trying to increase fees, however this is a long federal process.

40. Nick Troutman – Senate Representative for ATV Recreation and Tourism commented that many communities are looking to promote and bring people in from out of state for economic growth.

41. Emily Eyster – No comments, but wants to properly funded.

42. Sarah Iversen – No comments.

43. Griffin Caruso – Budget concerns were noted.

44. Public Comments

- a. Brad Smith – Represents the Potter County ATV/UTV Club and cares about water quality and cares about environmental issues. He attended the 2021 ATV Youth Safety training, and understands the challenges from working the home, would like to get cards out quicker. Brad has received his instructor card.

45. Arline LaTourette made a nomination for current officers to go forward. Brad Gosser seconds the motion.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:22pm