

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

June 1, 2022 - MEETING MINUTES

Location: In-person and Webex Virtual Meeting

Meeting start time: 10:05am

Committee Meeting Attendees:

John Norbeck, DCNR Deputy Secretary
Jason Albright, DCNR
Jacob Newton, DCNR
Leslie Sarvis, DCNR
Michael Hoffman, DCNR
Alex MacDonald, DCNR
Troy Withers, DCNR Motorized Recreation Specialist
Eric Nelson, DCNR
Dr. Jack Clark, Chairman of SAAC and Representing PaOHV
Eric Bruggeman, Secretary of SAAC and Representing PaOHV
Dennis Mann, SAAC Alternate PaOHV Assistant Director
Bradley Smith, SAAC Alternate, Potter County ATV/UTV Club
Elizabeth Krug, PA State Snowmobile Association
Cindy Barrick, PA State Snowmobile Association
Bob Kirchner
Tim Haydt, PA Game Commission, Chief of Public Lands
Bradley Gosser, PA Economic Development Association
Emily Eyster, Representing PA Senate
Daryl Busch
Don Reed
Bev Morris
Norm Strotman
Josh Bridge – Program Manager ANF
Tim Vetter - ANF
Nick Troutman – PA Senate
Evan Franzese – PA House
Nate Lotze
Rob Swales
Brian Smith
Dave Gustafson
Randy Green
Mark Huncik
Griffin Caruso
Johnathan Savant
Katie Barker

HANDOUTS:

Agenda – June 1, 2022

SAAC Members – May 2022

SAAC ATV/Snowmobile Accidents and Safety Trainings – June 1, 2022

SAAC Motorized Presentation – June 1, 2022

ATV and Snowmobile Summary of Funded Projects

PA Recreation Trails Grant Program – Summary of Project for Fiscal Years 2018-2022)

SAAC Meeting Minutes – November 10, 2021

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. John Norbeck welcomed the Committee and noted it is a busy time for DCNR. Budget season is underway and DCNR is providing information to legislatures about DCNR's needs. This time of year also results in our highest public use season for the lands DCNR manages. Agenda items John Norbeck highlighted were:
 - a. New ATV policy is 2-years old and serves as the basis of policy for use of current State Forest land.
 - b. Renovo connection status.
 - c. DCNR is looking to support non-profits and for-profits for ATV grants.
 - d. DCNR is exploring opportunities for explicit use of off-highway vehicles. The Paragon property in Schuylkill and Luzerne counties is potential acquisition for DCNR and plans to settle on this property in late July 2022. DCNR is currently completing master planning for this property's future use and are researching public/private partners to manage Paragon.
2. Minutes were sent out by Jake Newton and hard copies were made available. Brad Smith provided a second for the minutes. Minutes were approved with no comments.

ATV AND SNOWMOBILE TRAINING AND STATISTICS:

3. Troy Withers presented statistics:
 - a. In 2021, ATV Youth Safety Training occurred at Bald Eagle State Forest where 8-instructors were certified. As of May 17, 2022, 1 youth safety training occurred where 4-instructors were trained.
 - b. There are currently 50 ATV instructors and 23 snowmobile instructors in PA.
 - c. In 2021, 100 ATV safety classes were completed for 439 students.
 - d. In 2022, there were 27 ATV safety classes for 125 students thru May 17, 2022.
 - e. Snowmobile training in 2021 resulted in 6 Snowmobile safety classes to 21 students.
 - f. In 2022, 1 Snowmobile safety class was available with 0 students.
 - g. In 2021 there were 62 ATV accidents reported, with 51 injuries, including 21 fatalities (3 were under age 16).
 - h. In 2022, as of May 17th there were 11 ATV accidents reported, including 6 injuries with 2 fatalities.
 - i. In 2021, there were 2 snowmobile accidents reported, with 2 known injuries.
 - j. In 2022, 5 snowmobile accidents resulted with 5 known injuries, including 1 fatality.
 - k. On-line trainings totaled 325 in 2021 for snowmobiles
 - l. On-line trainings as of May 1, 2022 totaled 179 trainings for snowmobiles.

4. Jack Clark questioned if the on-line snowmobile training is recognized as a legitimate safety course by DCNR? Troy Withers confirmed that it is recognized. There is no online ATV safety training.
5. **ACTION ITEM** - Jack Clark asked Troy Withers if DCNR can further define the location of accidents by legal riding land or non-legal riding land? Troy Withers confirmed the reports break down public land vs. private land. John Norbeck agreed DCNR should breakout accidents from the 62 sources.
6. Registration of Active ATVs totals 276, 208 and Limited ATVs total 134,140.
7. There are currently 36,961 Active Snowmobiles and Limited Snowmobiles total 4,531.
8. Jack Clark questions if riding parks have been verifying registration and insurance? Troy Withers was unsure, but also believes title needs to be showed or proof of sale.
9. Jack Clark asked DCNR to confirm the placement of the pilot sticker. Troy Withers verified UTV's should install on the windshield, upper most center location. If there is no windshield, place sticker on front right fender for ATVs and UTVs.

ATV PILOT PROJECT STATUS

10. The Connector Trail status was provided and Troy noted there was mileage added to the regional ATV pilot project and is mostly on Township roads. There are 475 miles for 2022, as compared to 2021's season that totaled 264 miles. These connections include 57 miles of state forest and trails. Last year, 14 townships had participated and in 2022 there are now 18 townships. In 2021, the trails only connected to 13 businesses, however, in 2022 there are now connections to 31 businesses.
11. The pilot project is continuing to work to connect towards Haneyville. In the 2022 riding season, access to the Black Forest Inn has been completed.
12. Memorial Day weekend serves as the opening for the pilot project trails. There were 1,755 pilot passes sold as reported by Troy Withers on June 1, 2022.
13. **ACTION ITEM:** DCNR continues to experience the Montana reciprocity issue. Todd Miller to draft a guidance document on this registration issue.
14. There was only one accident associated with the ATV pilot as reported June 1, 2022 in Oswego Borough.
15. One Township asked DCNR not to map or have a preferred route located in their Township.
16. It was noted Billy Lewis Road in District 13 was removed.
17. Sweden Township is looking at using existing trails currently to expand the pilot connections.
18. Jason Albright indicated he is working on relationship building with counties, municipalities, and PennDOT currently. Feedback received pertains to comments on sanitation along the trail, dust, lack of enforcement and the occurrence of organized events.
19. Dust mitigation is proposed and will allow for \$10,000 of reimbursement to municipalities. Jason Albright indicated the focus of dust control in 2022 will be for the preferred routes. Use of best management practices from the dirt and gravel roads will be followed. Chris Nickolas from the Potter County District will be providing information to municipalities.

REGIONAL TRAIL STATUS

20. The status of the Sproul Forest District's closure of the Whiskey Springs Trail "Hulling Branch AMD" was provided. The DCNR website says winter closure and entire trail closed except for sections open Friday – Sunday, and will consist of a five-year project, ending by 2027. The

project should be over in 2026 or 2027. Jason Albright indicated the project started in the end of 2021 and resulted which required the winter season to be closed entirely. There will be 42-miles remaining open on Friday – Sunday in the summer season. Access to trailheads will remain open. The schedule for the phases of construction include: First phase: 2021 – 2023 and the second phase 2024 – 2025. The central parking area will be closed in the first phase. It was noted camping ended several years ago at the central parking lot.

21. Bloody Skillet / Snow Shoe/ Monument tunnel status: Jason Albright met with community of Orviston. The 2021 budget did not allow for the planning study to occur which will include a study on sustainability and to prioritize a maintenance schedule. The planning study was defined as four tasks:
 - a. Kato Orviston Road to Beech Creek.
 - b. Tunnel on Kato side, need to inspect.
 - c. Unincorporated private land.
 - d. Social survey with Oriviston

BUDGET AND GRANT SUMMARY

22. John Norbeck confirmed the 2022/2023 fiscal year includes a budget of \$900,000 for the northcentral pilot project.
23. Snowmobile and ATV Advisory Committee 2022 motorized funding grants were summarized by Alex MacDonald.
 - a. ATV Management Restricted Account:
 - i. Registration fees
 - ii. Used for DCNR for ATVing, including grants
 - b. Snowmobile Management Restricted Account:
 - i. Registration fees
 - ii. Used for DCNR by snowmobiling, including grants
 - c. Recreation Trails Program:
 - i. Portion of federal sales tax for on/off highway fuels
 - ii. Allocated to states based on fuel sales and population
 - iii. Same amount received since 2009.
24. Chapter 77 of the Pennsylvania Code, Snowmobiles and All-Terrain Vehicles Subchapter A, § 7706. Restricted Account is defined as:
 - a. The department shall draw moneys from the respective restricted accounts for use in **performing any activities necessary** to carry out the purposes of this chapter, including registration and certificates of title activities, training, education, enforcement activities, construction and maintenance of snowmobile and ATV trails and acquisition of equipment, supplies and interest in land. All moneys deposited in these accounts shall remain in them to be used as specified in this section. With the exception of trails used by both snowmobiles and ATV's, under no circumstances shall the department expend any moneys from the accounts except for the activity that generated those accounts.
25. **ATV Management Restricted Account**
 - a. Typically, there is 1– 1.5 million dollars per year
 - b. Two grant rounds per year
 - c. Eligible for municipalities, non-profit and for-profit organizations

- d. Uses: Development, maintenance, land acquisition, planning, design, education equipment purchase
 - e. No match requirement
- 26. Snowmobile MGT Restricted account**
- a. Typically, \$100,00 per year
 - b. Two grant rounds per year
 - c. Eligible for municipalities, non-profit and for-profit
 - d. Uses: Development, maintenance, land acquisition, planning, design, education equipment purchases
 - e. No match requirement
- 27. Recreation Trails Program**
- a. \$1,991,226 annually since 2009
 - b. One grant round per year
 - c. Eligible for municipalities, non-profits, for-profits, state agencies, federal agencies
 - d. Uses: Development, rehabilitation, maintenance, education,
 - i. Not offering land acquisitions or equipment purchases
 - e. 20% match required
 - f. Federal approval process and federal requirements
- 28. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) PA Recreation Trails Program** – FHWA program for motorized and non-motorized recreation trail use, authorized through 2025. Each state receives apportioned funds and administers its own program. DCNR has a memorandum of understanding with PennDOT to administer the funds.
- 29. PA Recreation Trails Program**
- a. \$1,991,226 – Total apportionment
 - b. \$139,389 - 7% for Administration of PRT program, PA Trails Advisory Committee meetings, statewide planning, etc.
 - c. \$1,851,877 split 30-30-40
 - i. \$555,563 - 30% motorized
 - ii. \$555,563 - 30% non-motorized
 - iii. \$740,751 - 40% Diversified (multiple uses)
 - iv. \$99,563 - 5% for education, WeConservePA, Greenways and Trail Summit, mini-grants, OHM youth training, etc.
 - d. \$19,913 – 1% give-back to FHWA, which leaves DCNR with \$1,831,964 for project use.
- 30.** Alex MacDonald showed an attachment for the 30-30-40 split. If DCNR doesn't get enough applications, they give funding to Bureau of Forestry to use on development, maintenance and rehabilitation.
- 31.** For restricted account, 87% of all money goes into ATV and 13% goes into snowmobiles funds and has no bearing on how the RTP is operated.
- 32.** Norm Strotman noted that Clearfield County receives grants for non-motorized use and they want to know why they can't use for motorized trails? Alex responded if RTP funds under non-motorized, then that is an issue for the trail group as the funds need to be used for non-motorized. Alex suggested Keystone funds and Environmental stewardship funds don't have restrictions on motorized or non-motorized.
- 33.** Alex MacDonald provided handouts of the regional advisors' contact information.

34. Jack Clark asked about restrictions on liquid fuel funds that comes into the grants. Alex, indicated the restrictions are predominantly for use on joint use roads.

OPEN DISCUSSION

35. Registration fee workgroup update – Jack Clark indicated the committee had one meeting on May 2, 2022. The committee consists of two members representing ATVs, two from snowmobiling, 1 from DCNR, and 2 from the Recreation Trails committee (ATV and snowmobile). Lots of topics were discussed, but they need to meet more frequently. Looked at PFBC for comparison on fee structure.
36. Eric Bruggeman questioned the use of grant funds for maintenance projects. Alex indicated very little specific requests for maintenance projects. **Action Item:** Jason Albright will look into maintenance numbers regarding miles of trails completed and motorized special activity agreements.
37. Liz Krug suggested we need to revisit registration fees. Mini-grants are very paper intensive and is waste of time for 2-3 thousand received.
38. Jack Clark suggested an update to the trail construction design manual is needed. Sustainability is a big issue and would like to update the trail manual. Jason Albright indicated they would have to work with procurement staff. Alex indicated it depends on amount needed will determine how it could be contracted.

USER GROUP CONCERNS

39. Liz Krug requested more opportunities for all users across the state.
40. Denny Mann summarized PaOHV updates: There has been a large overhaul, as Brad Smith replaced Denny's seat on PaOHV as Vice President. There are several new directors. Activities for the group include continued follow-up of the dirt bike registration bill. One in house with State Representative Armanini and one in Senate with Mike Regan. ATV simulator training will start in Bedford on June 4th. Five additional trainings scheduled for this summer and PaOHV is always looking for volunteers.
41. Tim Haydt indicated the PA Game Commission (PGC) Hunter/Trapper education course now includes an ATV education slide as PaOHV requested.
42. Tim Haydt asked DCNR to keep PGC informed about the elk range related projects associated with the feasibility studies for the pilot projects.
43. Cindy Barret offered a comment on safety training. If PSSA needs new snowmobile instructors, they need to contact Troy Withers. In order to stay active, they either need to conduct a class or assist with the class and need 1-2 trainings every year. There is concern by PSSA if we can't get youth to classes, the snowmobile trainers can't keep snowmobile instructor certifications. Troy Withers indicated there is no law mandated for snowmobile training to be hands-on training.
44. Liz Krug had invited the American Council of Snowmobile Meeting Executive Director. Attendee had no comments.
45. Brad Gosser – The DCED appreciates trails are connecting with more businesses.
46. Kaity Barker – The Keystone Trails Association appreciates efforts to minimize illegal riding.

Next meeting is scheduled for Fall 2022.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30pm