

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

November 21, 2022 - MEETING MINUTES

Location: In-person and Webex Virtual Meeting

Meeting start time: 10:05am

Committee Meeting Attendees:

Jason Albright, DCNR
Jake Newton, DCNR
Leslie Sarvis, DCNR
Michael Hoffman, DCNR
Alex MacDonald, DCNR
Troy Withers, DCNR Motorized Recreation Specialist
Dr. Jack Clark, Chairman 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
Arline LaTourette, PA State Snowmobile Association
Tim Haydt, PA Game Commission, Chief of Public Lands
Emily Eyster, Representing PA Senate
Daryl Busch, PA State Snowmobile Association
Norm Strotman, PA State Snowmobile Association
Nick Troutman, PA Senate
Evan Franzese, PA House
Grant Gulibon, PA Farm Bureau
Griffin Caruso, PA House
Bradley Gosser, PA Economic Development Association

HANDOUTS:

Agenda – November 21, 2022
SAAC Members – November 2022
SAAC ATV/Snowmobile Accidents and Safety Trainings November 1, 2022;; Registrations – November 19, 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 21, 2022

MEETING SUMMARY:

1. John Norbeck was traveling today with spotty cell phone reception, so Jake Newton gave the following report on his behalf:
 - a. The ATV Pilot program is in the second year with an update on it later in this meeting.

- b. The Registration Fee Committee has been formed with participants from all interested parties including this committee, PTAC and CNRAC.
 - c. Work on DCNR's Catawissa Recreation Area project has begun. A focus group meeting was held in August with attendees from stakeholder groups in attendance. Two consultant groups have been enlisted to assist with this project: The Markosky Engineering Group and their subcontractor Larson Design Group. The public commentary period opened up 2 weeks ago and users are encouraged to participate with what they think this project should include to meet their needs. There is a user group survey in progress for feedback and is open until December 16, 2022. Dr. Jack Clark commented that this is a well done survey with open-ended questions and encouraged all meeting attendees to participate.
 - d. DEP is also involved and has put additional funding into this project towards abandoned mine cleanup to do restoration of the Catawissa Creek.
2. Minutes were sent out by Jake Newton and hard copies were made available. Denny Mann made a motion to accept corrected minutes with Dr. Jack Clark providing a second to his motion. Minutes were approved accepting the request from Brad Smith for a correction of spelling/location on item 14 under the category ATV Pilot Project Status changing Oswego Borough to Oswayo Township.

ATV/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 November 19, 2022, 1 youth safety training occurred.
 - 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 41 ATV safety classes for 332 students thru November 19, 2022.
 - e. Snowmobile training in 2021 resulted in 6 Snowmobile safety classes to 51 students.
 - f. In 2022, 3 Snowmobile safety classes was available with 42 students through November 19th.
 - g. In 2021 there were 62 ATV accidents reported, with 51 injuries, including 21 fatalities, 3 under age of 16.
 - h. On-line trainings totaled 325 in 2021 for snowmobiles with 288 completed by youth under 16 years of age
 - i. On-line trainings as of November 19, 2022, totaled 199 trainings for snowmobiles with 142 completed by youth under 16 years of age.
 - j. In 2022, as of November 19th there were 70 ATV accidents reported, including 64 injuries with 11 fatalities, 2 under the age of 16.
 - k. In 2021, there were 2 snowmobile accidents reported, with 2 known injuries with 0 fatalities.
 - l. In 2022, 5 snowmobile accidents resulted with 5 known injuries, including 1 fatality.
4. Jack Clark questioned if DCNR can report how many adults get training certificates when taking the snowmobile safety training course online. Troy responded that this information is available. Dr. Clark was happy to hear that Troy is looking to break down the statistics for more granularity

of where the accidents occurred, i.e. public vs private land, township road vs. trail, etc. This was a request/action item from the June 1st, 2022, SAAC Meeting/Minutes.

5. The ATV and SMB Instructor database will be updated on March 1st each year moving forward.
6. Denny Mann requested that he be allowed to present a half hour PowerPoint presentation from the PA Trail Foundation at the 2 DCNR Train the Trainer Classes that are on the schedule for the near future. Troy responded that he would ask the trainers to include him. Denny also reported that he had looked for ATV safety trainers for classes to be held at the trailhead at the Delaware State Forest. He found only 1 DCNR trainer available. At that time there were 4 ASI trainers available, but Troy said DCNR would not be able to use them because they were not volunteers and would charge the class participants a fee to be in the class. Denny stated that this was untrue, that the participants have 3 free classes with ASI and potentially would have a nominal amount to pay.
7. Brad Smith asked Troy if the ATV class dates have been decided for next year. Troy believes that they will be scheduled the first or second weekend in April. Brad said there were 1 or 2 individuals from Potter County that are interested in becoming certified instructors.
8. Registration of Active ATVs totals 278, 885 and Limited ATVs total 134,140.
9. There are currently 37,437 Active Snowmobiles and Limited Snowmobiles total 4,531.

ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot Project Status

1. The second year of the ATV Pilot Project has produced good results per Jason Albright. There are 477 miles for 2022, as compared to 2021's season that totaled 264 miles. Last year, 14 townships had participated and in 2022 there are now 18 townships with 397 miles of township roads. In addition, there are 46 miles of existing Susquehannock ATV trails, 22 miles of PENNDOT roads, and 12 miles of state forest trails. In 2021, the trails only connected to 13 businesses; however, in 2022 there are now connections to 30 businesses.
2. There are 2 main trail heads: Denton Hill and Pine Mountain. Five public restrooms have been made available for riders.
3. There were 1,887 pilot passes sold the first year. This year there were about 3,650 passes sold. Electronic reservations will be sold next year online.
4. Most riders are local with the second largest group of users coming from the southeast part of the state, reflecting private camp ownership or usage.
5. Businesses have given positive feedback to DCNR and the amount of negative feedback from locals is decreasing. Enforcement actions which were pretty much warnings to riders in 2022 have increased, especially on holiday weekends.
6. No significant environmental impact has been seen. Wildlife will continue to be monitored for impact.
7. Assessments are being compiled in the Sproul and Tiadaghton State Forest usage and roads. Rogue trails and hotspots are being identified for action. There is little illegal use in Tiadaghton, but Sproul has a long history of illegal riding.
8. Penn State University has supported this project in several ways, including an Economics Study, a Resident/Camp Lease Holder Survey, as well as Sound Monitoring out of Colton Point State Park. DCNR is doing a Satisfaction Survey and looking at an enforcement summary. No significant negative feedback was reported. Lighting issues were the most prevalent warnings handed out

by law enforcement. This danger is about light bars with LED lights mounted on ATVs that are too bright and are against the law. Speeding was also on the list of enforcement issues. Enforcement agents used these incidents as an opportunity to educate ATV users.

9. The amount of miles for the trail is proposed to increase another 146 miles in 2023. The field portion of the pilot ends September 24, 2023. Work will continue to completion for all the identified trails.
10. The portions of the snowmobile trails being used in this pilot have been armored. Jason said that this remediation from ATV usage causing rutting will be done yearly to ensure the trails are ready for snowmobile season usage. A motorized maintenance workforce is being hired for this important yearly work.
11. Dr. Jack Clark alerted Jason that there has been no PENNDOT representation on SAAC since the COVID Pandemic and suggested we extend an invite to them to return for their important input. Norm Strotman commended Jason on the cooperation that has been achieved with PENNDOT on this pilot. Norm asked if DCNR has additional insurance through the state for riding this trail. Jason assured Norm that ATV riders are responsible for being properly licensed, registered, and insured and DCNR does not have additional insurance.

Sproul Forest District's Update on Whiskey Springs Parking Lot/Trails

1. The latest status of the Sproul Forest District's closure of the Whiskey Springs Trail connection is that thousands of limestone trucks are working in this area. Jason Albright said that again this year the central parking lot and trail access will be closed except for local access to sections open Friday – Sunday. This five-year project, ending by 2027, includes the need for acid mine reclamation for which the bidding process will soon be open for contractors to do this work.
2. Troy said that relationships with township supervisors have improved as a result of DCNR attending to enforcement activity.
3. Registrations are 57-58 days out which is higher than the desired goal of 45 days to get tags back to registrants. Grace has been extended by enforcement leniency.
4. Troy is working on reciprocity with other states due to the lopsided situations. Dr. Jack Clark requested Troy share his findings to help the registration committee with information he may have about reciprocity.
5. Troy stated that DCNR would like to move on naming 2 Master Trainers to duplicate with snowmobiling training what is in place for ATV training. PSSA has done 2 training sessions for DCNR personnel due to this missing piece. Troy encouraged PSSA to send ideas/suggestions his way for the process of getting 2 snowmobile safety Master Trainers.

Outdoor Recreation Presentation

1. Nathan Reigner, PHD, DCNR Director of Outdoor Recreation, gave a presentation on his mission for the state in his area of responsibility. He covered all the benefits of outdoor recreation that include all areas of health and wellbeing: physical, mental, social, and public. Included in his presentation were the impact of economics, both macro and micro, for our state, which ranks 6th among states in the nation! Nathan views his job as helping the Commonwealth with understanding the impact in both monetary and nonmonetary benefits. He offered to partner with SAAC to start working on what needs to be done to maximize these benefits for

communities across the state and how to go about it for ATVers and snowmobilers. Dr. Jack Clark agreed to set up opportunities for SAAC members to take advantage of this offer.

2022 Motorized Grants

1. Reports on the DCNR ATV Grants showed the status of 32 open grants while the DCNR Snowmobile Grants reflected 6 open grants. Dr. Jack Clark asked if the privately owned ride parks, who have been given DCNR grants, ensure that all ATVs/UTVs/OHMs allowed on their trails are registered and insured. Alex MacDonald informed us that there is no DCNR process in place to ensure that the registrations are current. Troy Wilthers reported that one of the ride parks does check, as he has experienced this himself. He cannot speak for other ride parks.
2. Nick Troutman asked about the dates for requesting grants. Alex MacDonald and Leslie Sarvis confirmed that 2022 grants are closed, that the spring grant round opens the first of February and is due in by the last business day of March and the second round opens on the first of August and is due in by the last business day of September. Nick also asked about the success rate for grant recipients. Alex said on average 2/3 of the grants are funded and Leslie thought the rate varied from ½ to 2/3 of the grants being funded based primarily of eligibility.

Registration Fee Work Group

1. Dr. Jack Clark reported the Registration Fee Committee has been working hard on the complexities that have to be taken into consideration for the ATV/Snowmobile registration fee proposal. This committee believes that the liquid fuel reimbursement should be more robust, especially after learning that the Fish and Boat Commission get between \$11-12M vs. the \$1M coming to our two groups. The disparity seems to have been caused by the abandonment of a survey given yearly to ATV/Snowmobile groups which is still being used to survey the Fishing and Boating user groups. A subcommittee has been formed to further research this problem. By adjusting the liquid fuel amount, there may not be as great a need to significantly increase the ATV/Snowmobile Registration Fee. The committee will continue to research the fee increase.

Updating DCNR Trail Construction Standards Manual

1. Dr. Jack Clark asked for an update to the DCNR trail construction design manual. The manual needs to be updated to address UTVs and Off Highway Motorcycles usage on trails. Jake Newton suggested the formation of a subcommittee to work the redesign of the manual with Forestry and DCNR. Dr. Clark agreed to this approach.

User Group/Public Comments

1. There were no user group or public comments.

SAAC Officer Elections

1. Nominations for officers were opened by Jake Newton. Liz Krug as Vice Chair of the committee has decided to step down as has Eric Bruggeman as Committee Secretary. Norm Strotman nominated Dr. Jack Clark as SAAC Chair with Brad Gosser seconding the motion. All members were in agreement. Liz Krug nominated Norm Strotman as Vice Chair with Dr. Jack Clark seconding her motion. All members were in agreement. Liz Krug then nominated Arline LaTourette as Committee Secretary with Brad Gosser seconding her motion. All members were in agreement
2. Dr. Jack Clark then made the motion to adjourn the meeting with Brad Smith seconding his motion. All members were in agreement.

Next meeting is scheduled for spring, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Arline LaTourette, Committee Secretary