

1 **SnowTRAC Meeting Minutes 8/28/2014 - APPROVED**

2 **SnowTRAC Members Present:**

- 3 Dan Mayfield – Chair – Mat-Su/Copper River Basin Rep.
- 4 Erin McLarnon – Co-Chair – Mat-Su/Copper River Basin Rep.
- 5 Andy Morrison – Chair – ORTAB/SnowTRAC Liaison
- 6 Stephen Enochs – Fairbanks Rep.
- 7 John Scudder – Anchorage Rep.
- 8 Cynthia Hite – Anchorage Rep.
- 9 Jim Stanford – Southeast Rep.
- 10 Gary Anderson – Kenai Peninsula/Valdez/Prince William Sound Rep.

11
12 **SnowTRAC Members Not Present:**

- 13 Mark Leary – Western Alaska Rep.
- 14 Doug Boulden - Kenai Peninsula/Valdez/Prince William Sound Rep.

15
16 ***Note** – Adam Baxter (Fairbanks Rep.) recently resigned and is no longer a SnowTRAC member.

17
18 **DNR Staff Present:**

- 19 Jamie Walker – Administrative Operations Manager
- 20 Darcy Harris – Alaska State Trails Program Coordinator
- 21 Steve Neel – Alaska State Parks Grants Administrator
- 22 Justin Wholey – Resource Specialist - Alaska State Trails Program

23
24 **Others:**

- 25 Debra McGhan – North America Outdoor Institute (AAIC Representative)
- 26 Rick Northey – Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers President
- 27 Jay Northey – Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers Administrator
- 28 Kevin Kastner – Iron Dog Inc.
- 29 Harry Holt – Lake Louise Snowmachine Club President
- 30 Alan Echols – Denali Highway Trail Club
- 31 Mark Nordman – Iditarod Trails Committee
- 32 Rex Shattuck – Chief of Staff to State Representative Mark Neuman

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39 **Thursday, August 28, 2014**

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41 **Board Elections**

42 **Motion**

43 Gary Anderson nominated Dan Mayfield for the Chair position. Stephen Enochs nominated Erin
44 McLarnon for Co-Chair. Cindy Hite seconded both nominations.

45 **Vote**

46 (8 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

47 Dan Mayfield is the new Chair and Erin McLarnon is the new Co-Chair.

48

49 **Public Comment**

50 Rick Northey stated his concern about declining revenue for current SnowTRAC funding, and how side
51 by side ORVs are degrading groomed trails in the Caribou Hills.

52

53 Harry Holt was concerned about funding, as well; he supports educating the public about snowmobile
54 registration, and talking to legislators about increased SnowTRAC funding. He said that it had been
55 difficult getting easements for trails on state land, and that he had spent \$65,000 on easements so far.

56

57 John Scudder (speaking for Randy Crosby) brought up the issue that miners are going to access the
58 Petersville area in winter by truck, and had done so last year as well. The concern he has is that the
59 trucks degrade groomed trails and collapse snow bridges. Others in the room that dealt with similar
60 situations offered advice.

61

62 **Iditarod Trail Presentation & Discussion**

63 A SnowTRAC grant was submitted by the Huslia Tribal Council in 2012, and was approved. The applicant
64 was not able to use the money in the upcoming year, and the money was set aside specifically for a
65 safety project in rural Alaska for the 2014/2015 SnowTRAC grant cycle. There were no applicants for this
66 money. Mark Nordman, from Iditarod Trails Committee, gave a project proposal to SnowTRAC to appeal
67 for the \$15,000. The project consists of clearing an extremely rough section of the Iditarod Trail where
68 there was an extensive forest fire; roots have become elevated and need to be mulched to make the
69 trail safer. Mr. Nordman stated that in its current state the local villages cannot use it without damage
70 to equipment and personal safety concerns.

71

72 SnowTRAC raised concern that this project may not fit the safety description, but more a trail
73 development project. There was also question by the board whether it was more benefit to the Iditarod
74 and Iron Dog races than the rural communities nearby.

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78

79 **Motion**

80 To accept Mark Nordman’s proposal as stated, with the caveat that he will submit a grant in 30 days.
81 Then it will be up to the Director to make the final decision. Gary Anderson seconded.

82 **Discussion**

83 There were concerns that this method of allocating funds was unfair if the application period were not
84 reopened for everyone to apply.

85 **Vote**

86 (0 yea, 8 nay) Motion Failed

87

88 **Motion**

89 Erin McLarnon moved that the board advises the director to extend the application due date to October
90 15th, and to put out a press release to re-advertise the \$15,000. Jim Stanford seconded.

91 **Discussion**

92 There was some discussion by the board members to wait until next year’s grant cycle to offer the safety
93 funds again, instead of extending the application period. Darcy Harris explained that October 15th would
94 be too soon of a date to process everything required.

95 **Vote**

96 (2 yea, 6 nay) Motion Failed

97

98 **Motion**

99 Jim Stanford moved to leave the money (the money set aside for a rural Alaska safety project) exactly
100 where it is right now, where the director allocated it, and await further instructions from him as what he
101 wants to do with these funds. Erin McLarnon seconded the motion.

102 **Vote**

103 (8 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

104 These safety funds are considered not available for this year.

105

106 **Funding Discussion**

107 The board discussed different challenges faced by the grant program; most being related to a lack of
108 sufficient funds to support the program fully. When asked about point of sale snowmobile registrations,
109 Rex Shattuck explained that his office had gotten complaints and members of the public had expressed
110 that they did not want them; the legislature is sensitive to these comments. When asked, Shattuck said
111 resolutions from SnowTRAC, ORTAB, and snowmobile clubs could possibly help their cause in the
112 Legislature.

113

114 **Grant Scoring Discussion**

115 The board recounted that no grants were funded last year. This year there were two grant applications
116 submitted. One project was “Nationally Certified Snowmobile Safety Training” from AAIC; Debra
117 McGhan was present to give a brief talk about it, and answer questions from the board. The other

118 project was the “Iron Dog Snowmobile Safety Expo.” Kevin Kastner was available to explain the safety
119 expo and answer questions.

120

121 **Motion**

122 Erin McLarnon moved to fund both of these Safety & Education grants as written. Steve Enochs
123 seconded.

124 **Discussion**

125 SnowTRAC briefly discussed funding the grants at a reduced rate (at the same percentage that the
126 grooming applications would be funded).

127 **Vote**

128 (6 yea, 2 nay) Motion Passed

129

130 **Grooming Pool Discussion**

131 The dollar amounts requested for grants and grooming are significantly more than funds available, so
132 SnowTRAC brainstormed ways to distribute the money.

133

134 **Motion**

135 Erin McLarnon moved to allocate each grantee (returning groomers) 50.56% of their requested amount.
136 Stephen Enochs seconded.

137 **Vote**

138 (8 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

139

140 **General Discussion**

141 The board discussed ways to receive more funding for the program. Erin McLarnon explained her idea to
142 create a non-profit multi-use trail user group to help bring in money for multi-use trails, winter and
143 summer, motorized and non-motorized. She explained that a broad user base can bring in significant
144 funds. She explained that non-profits (as opposed to the State of Alaska) have more opportunities for
145 fund-raising. Some board members weren't in favor of a multi-use trails non-profit. There was also
146 discussion of raising money with optional SnowTRAC license plates for highway vehicles.

147

148 The board generally agreed that staying with the State's management of SnowTRAC is the best route,
149 but investigating the possibilities of a non-profit is important, too. SnowTRAC then discussed how
150 legislative action is probably the most likely way to receive more funds for the program.

151

152 **Motion**

153 Jim Stanford moved that within the next 30 days every board member will forward to Dan Mayfield one
154 or two ideas on ways to expand revenues for the SnowTRAC board. Erin McLarnon seconded.

155 **Vote**

156 (4 yea, 4 nay) Motion Failed

157

158 **Motion**
159 Dan Mayfield moved to have the board establish a Legislative Action Committee. Erin McLarnon
160 seconded.

161 **Vote**
162 (8 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

163 The committee will include Dan Mayfield, Andy Morrison, Jim Stanford, and Stephen Enochs.

164
165 Rex Shattuck said he would draft a letter to the DMV to ask how the registration reminders are sent
166 (letters that are sent in the mail to remind folks to update their snowmobile registration). He said he
167 would CC Dan Mayfield for distribution to the rest of the the SnowTRAC board.

168
169 The SnowTRAC discussed implementation of a statewide trail system; they noted that there are few
170 fueling stations in remote areas. Rex Shattuck suggested that economic benefits may encourage
171 legislative support, and the legislature could potentially grant money for an economic study.

172
173 The next topic was about the mission and goals of SnowTRAC. The board generally agreed that the
174 mission of SnowTRAC was to promote a statewide trail system, and that safety was to be supported by
175 pursuing a standard signing of trails. Adequate funding of at least \$500,000 annually was also a goal.

176
177 The board also talked about grooming standards; they requested that there be a place to add a required
178 funding formula on the returning groomers' applications.

179

180 **SnowTRAC Members Discussion**

181 Darcy Harris explained that Adam Baxter had resigned from SnowTRAC, and that Mark Leary and Doug
182 Boulden had not submitted scores or participated in the last year for unknown reasons. The board
183 suggested that Dan Mayfield (Chair) speak to Mark Leary and Doug Boulden, and make a
184 recommendation to the board of what to do about their lack of involvement. The board expressed to
185 State Parks that they wanted more involvement in the committee member selection process.

186
187 **Motion**
188 Dan Mayfield moved that the SnowTRAC board recommends that Gary Anderson be extended another
189 two years to his full three year term on the SnowTRAC board. Stephen Enochs seconded.

190 **Vote**
191 (8 yea, 0 nay) Motion Passed

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-Meeting adjourned 4:53pm-