

# SnowTRAC Advisory Board Meeting

## August 26-27, 2010

### Advisory Board

Mark Wilke – Co-chair; Southeast  
Joe Gauna – Co-chair; Anchorage  
Eric Morris – Rural Alaska  
Stephen Enochs - Fairbanks  
Ozie West - Disabilities  
Bill Luth – Kenai Peninsula; PWS  
Greg Shaffer - Interior  
Cynthia Hite – Mat-Su/CRB/Valdez  
Andy Morrison – Inter-Board Liaison

### Park Staff

James King – Parks Director  
Andre Kaeppele – State Snowmobile Trails Coordinator  
Sally Davies – Parks Administrative Assistant (note taker)  
Steve Neel – Parks Grant Administrator  
Kyle Kidder – Mining, Land and Water—Easement Section

### Public

Dan Mayfield – Big Lake Trails  
Erin McLarnon – Exec. Director, AK Trails  
Bruce Paulson – MatSu Trails Program  
Pat Daniels – Big Lake resident  
Jennie Daniels – Big Lake resident

## August 26, 2010

Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m. and introductions made

### Finalize and Sign Operating Procedures

Kaeppele: This is our second annual meeting. There is good potential for growth in what this board is doing and we are on track with our goals. Let's look at the Operating Procedures. The changes from the old 1990's procedures made for lots of revision.

Wilke: I believe that we adopted the procedures at the last annual meeting.

Kaeppele: We will then have the Director sign the official Operating Procedures document.

Wilke: Any last minute changes?

### **Operating Procedures Signed**

### Public Comment Period

Kaeppele: We have thirty minutes for public comments.

Daniels: Is there a request for snowmachine helmets?

Luth: Yes

Hite: Why do you ask?

Daniels: I am concerned on how the grant is being used.

Wilke: Do you have a particular issue?

- Daniels: The grant that has been awarded money last year charges different rates for the helmets. Safety classes are held at times when most people can't attend. There is no internet access to take safety tests. There is already a safety program at BigLakeTrails that has everything that the grant program says they are doing. I would like to see the funding for the grant help out BigLakeTrails. NAOI has no information for winter safety programs specifically for snowmobiling and winter sports.
- Wilke: I have spent a lot of time on NAOI's website and I find it is pretty easy to find what I am looking for. We awarded the grant to them because we are trying to put money in a program that is non-profit.
- Luth: But is it worthwhile?
- Enochs: Is there an accountability/responsibility in place for the funds that we distribute? Who is ultimately responsible to make sure they follow the rules?
- Kaeppele: These grants are on a reimbursable program. Administrators review the receipts and reimbursement request to insure they match the application. It is a pretty through accountability process. If a grant applicant doesn't meet the requirements they don't get funded again until they are in compliance.
- Shaffer: Do we have access to reports that the grantee send in? Can we see their tracking method?
- Luth: Let's continue with the public comments.
- Kaeppele: When the board reviewed the grant application with the helmets, we amended the grant to say that the money from the sale of the helmets go back into the program. Helmet sales are only a small portion of what NAOI does in their program. This program does do a lot of good for the community.
- Morrison: Perhaps we should talk to them regarding what is going on. We know this is not a perfect solution, but what do we do? We discussed as a board not to fund lots of small institutions.
- Hite: This is a big issue. We do need safety but we don't have funds to give everyone.
- Wilke: Thank you for coming today. We are out of time. We as a board felt compelled to put money where it would do the most good.

### **Review of New Grant Scoring Process**

- Wilke: Let's review Operating Procedure #21.
- Kaeppele: I didn't receive scores on some applications from some of the board members.
- Wilke: Make sure you get Andre the information on time.
- Kaeppele: If you didn't turn in scoring on some grants you should not vote on that particular grant.
- Morris: Let's go back to Operating Procedure #1 before we start on #21. I object to electronic copies of the grant applications. It took my computer several hours to download the information. I also can't print out all the grants to read them. It is hard for me to read all the applications on the computer screen.
- Wilke: As a grant scorer we really need a paper copy because we have to go back and forth between pages to score.
- Hite: Ask each board member if they want paper or electronic.

- Luth: Have the grantee send in 10 copies like it used to be required.
- Kaeppele: When we receive applications we are trusting applicant is honest in their information. It has only gone through a light review before it is sent on to the board to score. The applicants will go through a more thorough review before grants are awarded.
- West: What about a pre-review of the grants?
- Luth: If I have a question on the grant submission I just call up the applicant and get my answer.
- Wilke: If you are doing that then you should include all board members to the email so we all see the question and the answer.
- Gauna: If you do ask applicants questions then the board needs all of this information before the annual meeting starts.
- Wilke: When we discuss the grants and a board members score changes after the discussion, we need to change the scores on the page that has change and not just change the front sheet. This way we know which item changed.
- Gauna: I am for all funds go to grooming.
- Enochs: I don't want to see all the money go to grooming when funds could be used elsewhere in more viable program demands.
- Kaeppele: Is it better to look at scores, then grooming pools, before deciding on funding. We have double the grant applications and less funding this year.
- Morrison: I think that some of the grant funding should go to ORTAB.

### **Discuss and Score Grant Applications**

- Wilke: Do we accept a late application?
- Kaeppele: I go through last years grants and phone applicants to see if they are re-applying. I do this a week prior to the deadline.
- Morrison: What happens if the grant deadline is missed?
- Gauna: They don't get the grooming funding.
- Kaeppele: Last year we required a letter of intent to file an application. I don't think we should continue to be tolerant with late applications.
- Hite: I think there should be some leeway because it is a new application process this year.
- Enochs: I think everyone should be responsible for themselves.
- Luth: There was some confusion with the new forms.

Shaffer: If these organizations were always organized in the past and this time they submit a late application, I think they should still be looked at in the application pool.

Gauna: We should let late comers in this time but make it clear that it won't happen again.

Wilke: Let's have a motion on the lateness of the SnowMads application.

Hite: I motion we vote on accepting SnowMads application in the funding pool.

Luth: I second the motion.

Wilke: All those in favor?

For 6                      Against 3      MOTION PASSED

**Project Name:      Alaska Snowmobile Safety**

- **Applicant:** North America Outdoor Institute (NAOI)
- **Funding:** \$15,000
- **Project Type:** Safety and Education
- **Land Owners:** N/A

**Project Description:**

Host a workshop with snowmobile stakeholders to review and comment on the safety curriculum developed from past projects and intended for use with this project. The final curriculum will be posted on the web and followed by a minimum of four live training sessions in southcentral and northwest Alaska. Participants will be eligible to purchase a discounted snowmobile helmet.

**Board Discussion:**

Wilke: Are there any conflict of interest?

Neel: They are pretty good on timeliness for quarterly reports, etc. They have two grants to finish up. There are not problems.

Wilke: What about the safety program?

Neel: When helmets are bought the money was put into a separate account to go back into the program. The effort was made to show the separation of dollars.

Wilke: Pat, have you seen the grant application?

Daniels: No

Wilke: They are asking for \$15,000 for a seminar on snowmobile safety.

Luth: She is moving money from one spot to another.

Gauna: There are lots of testimonials. I am not impressed one way or another. I don't want to see them take money from our funding.

Daniels: Why can't the funds be reduced and have them be required to fund some Iron Dog safety classes.

Hite: They already do that.

Gauna: We have to score the application and have them stand on their merit.

Morrison: We have to be careful that we aren't putting our entire safety fund in racing safety programs.

Daniels: It seems like Debra McGhan's program and her husband's business interests are double dipping in the state funds.

Kaeppele: The money isn't free. They have to provide services.

Mayfield: This group has never shown up to any meetings in the Big Lake area.

Luth: Or contacted any of the clubs. I feel the money is not deserved because of lack of outreach

Hite: We need some kind of safety. The board does not have time to start a safety program. We need someone else to put this on. That is why we use NAOI. I feel we need to fund this grant.

Gauna: Maybe they can request a grant next year and start putting a program together a safety program in the summer months for next grant application.

Morris: They remain suspect but they are the only game in town. We have to judge them on what is submitted in the grant application.

Morrison: I don't think we can question this too much. We need a safety program.

Kaeppele: This grant is a direct response to the board at the last meeting stating they want a statewide safety program.

Wilke: This application gives us a seminar and not snowmobile safety curriculum.

Enoch: What I am hearing is that there is no comprehensive safety program. Can we state what we want to see happen with this grant? What I am hearing is a lot of questions with this group. Is it a good use of the money?

Wilke: If we pull this grant, then there are no safety programs going on.

Hite: SnowTRAC needs to put out guideline goals of a safety program.

Kaeppele: Having the state do a safety program in-house competes with private enterprise.

Wilke: Curriculum and training is what the grant is asking for. Should we split out these two different programs?

Morrison: Are we required to give a certain amount of funds for safety?

Hite: No.

Wilke: Now is the time to change the scoring.

**Project Name: Iron Dog Safety Expo**

- **Applicant:** Iron Dog, Inc.
- **Funding:** (\$16,450)/(\$6963)/(\$23,413)
- **Project Type:** Safety and Education
- **Land Owners:** N/A

**Project Description:**

Free EXPO will promote safe outdoor recreation for snowmobiling, x-country skiing, etc. through presentations, seminars, and booths. Iron Dog racing sleds will be displayed along with safety and survival equipment required for the race. Numerous booths will educate the public on safe winter recreating, and provide educational materials and demonstrations.

**Board Discussion:**

Wilke: Any conflicts of interest?

Neel: They have a new project manager. There have been a few issues with timeliness of payment. Those issues have been worked out. Historical reporting shows there is no problem with grant reporting.

Wilke: Any misuse of funds?

Neel: I haven't seen any misuse from the documents turned in for reimbursement. There have been no additional line items added.

Mayfield: This event reaches the most public. There is a great return for the money spent.

Luth: This group doesn't care where they travel and whose property they ruin. I have a problem with this. Let's be real. With this grant we would be funding Iron Dog race and not the Safety Expo.

Kaepple: there is room for improvement. The Iron Dog race is benefitting from the grant. However, the race does pull people into the Safety Expo.

Morrison: I don't feel that funding a building is a good use of our funds.

Gauna: People are going to the Expo to see the racers and not the safety programs.

Wilke: The return on investment of a one day event is not something we normally fund.

Enochs: Arctic Man has a safety program that has raised safety somewhat.

Shaffer: Iron Dog draws crowds. If a safety Expo is there, it will be seen. Is it worth the investment?

Hite: Do we continue granting applications on safety because this is all we have? Why don't we use the money instead to create a safety program?

Morrison: Why aren't we approaching a university for an intern program on safety?

Gauna: Let's find a group like AK Trails for a program.

**Project Name: Haines Winter Trail Equipment**

- **Applicant:** Alaska State Parks
- **Funding:** (\$29,700)/(\$7,425)/(\$37,125)
- **Project Type:** Trail Maintenance and Development
- **Land Owners:** State of Alaska

**Project Description:**

This project is for the purchase of two snowmobiles, two groomers, fuel and associated safety equipment to provide groomed trails at multiple locations within the Haines area state park units and portions of adjacent Haines State Forest Land, enabling for improved and increased access for winter recreation.

**Board Discussion:**

- Wilke: This is a State Parks grant. There is a new ranger wanting to maintain trails with new equipment to ramp up their program for public benefit.
- Luth: This is a perfect grant for ORTAB. I motion this to be given to ORTAB.
- Gauna: Second.
- Wilke: Let's withdraw motion until we have had more discussion.
- Luth: Withdrawn.
- Wilke: Haines is the only area in southeast with riding trails like us. You can ride trails all the way to Yakutat. It would benefit even Canadian riders. This is becoming a large riding area.
- Luth: Can we fund a partial grant?
- Enochs: Shouldn't this money be going to non-profits and not to a state entity?
- Wilke: You are not the first person to bring this issue to the table. Many Parks grant application have merit.
- Kaeppele: A third of state budget funding comes from grants. We do not have internal funds to maintain the parks.
- Hite: I didn't see anything about snowmobile trails. All I saw was for ski trails.
- Gauna: Even a private business can request grants. It has always been allowed that Parks can apply for grants. I feel this should stop. They are very good at the application process. I think is a good application but I think this should be an ORTAB grant.
- Kaeppele: After the equipment is bought the trails will always be groomed at no extra expense to SnowTRAC.
- Wilke: this application has an economical effect for the City of Haines which is a depressed area.
- Luth: I motion that this application be passed on to ORTAB.
- Gauna: Second.

**For 8                      Against 1                      MOTION PASSED**

**Project Name: Winter Trail Grooming Glennallen**

- **Applicant:** Copper Country Snowmobile Club
- **Funding:** (\$4,800)/(\$1,632)/(\$37,125)
- **Project Type:** Trail Maintenance and Development

**Project Description:**

Trail Grooming and Signing for approx. 73 miles of winter recreational trails. These trails are from Glennallen to Tolsona and connect to crosswind and Lake Louise areas.

**Board Discussion:**

- Wilke: They are requesting to be included in the grooming pool for specific trails. Are there enough users on these trails? Are there any conflicts of interest?
- Kaepple: They have all the legal documents in the application. This group has been grooming these trails in-house for many years. This year they have applied for funding.
- Wilke: They also made reference to signage but didn't ask for any funds for that.
- Gauna: Grooming the trails twice a year is better than nothing.
- Morris: The trail is going to cross Ahtna land. This is not much of a permit from Ahtna.
- Luth: this permit expires Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> of this year.
- Gauna: I don't see where the designated Ahtna land is on the map submitted.
- Wilke: I need a motion to approve these trails to the grooming pool.
- Luth: Do we let them into the grooming pool?
- Gauna: Not today. They haven't proved that they have access for 5 years.
- Wilke: When we look at these grants, how many have actual access?
- Gauna: SnowTRAC requirements say 5 years access. Not a 6 month permit.
- Morris: I motion to include these trails to the grooming pool as stated in the grant application.
- Hite: Second.
- Gauna: I motion an amendment to the motion that it is clear that there will be a 5 year access permit. And do riders need a permit from Ahtna to ride on permitted trail.
- Wilke: I second Joe's amended motion.
- Kaepple: I am concerned about the trails in general. If the trails are only groomed twice a year there may not be many users.
- Morris: There has to be a priority list on what trails get groomed.

Gauna: Even though these trails get added to the grooming pool does not guarantee they will get funded in future years.

Wilke: Let's have a vote on Joe's amended motion to add these trails to the grooming pool if they meet the stipulations.

**For 8      Against 1      MOTION PASSED**

**Project Name:      Grooming Pool Administrative Snowmobile**

- **Applicant:** Alaska State Parks
- **Funding:** (\$8,000)/(\$5,000)/(\$13,000)
- **Project Type:** Trail Maintenance and Development

**Project Description:**

This funding would allow the state snowmobile trails administrator access to the statewide snowmobile trail system through the purchase of snowmobile. The snowmobile would be used to conduct trail site visits for a variety of purposes including to identify access issues along trail, inspect trail systems for proper maintenance, distribute trail resources such as signs, make public contact to discuss trail related issues, etc.

**Board Discussion:**

Wilke: Are there any conflicts?

Kaeppele: I pretty much laid it out in the grant the need for a snowmobile for the grant admin staff. If there is a trail issue this is a good tool for the administrator to get to the trails.

Luth: The administrator needs a snowmobile to do the duties. Why a Ski-Doo?

Kaeppele: The state uses this manufacturer. We are familiar with this machine.

Shaffer: Renting one is \$200 a day. For \$8,000 that is 40 trips. Also, renting doesn't have maintenance.

Kaeppele: We have staff that can maintain the machine.

Morrison. I have rented snowmachines. They are not consistent in quality.

Morris: I personally want to know what is going on with the trails and conditions. I think a snowmachine for the grant administrator to use is a good idea.

Wilke: Didn't Parks purchase a snowmachine and trailer last winter?

Kaeppele: We purchased one with ATI funds.

Wilke: Why aren't these types of purchases put into the capital budget? I think it is a good idea for a snowmachine. I just think it should come out of the capital budget.

Mayfield: I am concerned with what message you are sending the public if a snowmachine is approved for the state and not a public entity.

Wilke: The Director has sole authority on how this money is spent.

Enochs: Andre should have a machine to do his job and I think the state should provide it. But earlier I heard that anyone can apply for a grant so this is not out of line.

Gauna: I think this should go to ORTAB. I am opposed to using funds that are not for trails.

Shaffer: If there are more requests than there are funds then I think the funds should go to help trails.

Luth: We as a board have asked Andre to look at the trails and let us know what is going on. This is not a requirement of the state. If we ask him as a board to supply us with information, then we need to provide him with the tools.

Wilke: Carefully consider your score on this grant because it is an unusual one.

**Project Name: Repairs and Maintenance to Snow Cat**

- **Applicant:** Lake Louise Snowmachine Club
- **Funding:** (\$10,920)/(\$2,730)/(\$13,650)
- **Project Type:** Trail Maintenance and Development

**Project Description:**

This funding would allow the Lake Louise Club to purchase parts needed in order to repair their Bombardier 400 Snow Cat used for grooming area trails.

**Board Discussion:**

Wilke: Any concerns?

Kaepple: The machine is old and worn out. It needs a lot of maintenance and the club doesn't have a lot of money to pay for repairs. They need this equipment because of the width of trails in that area.

Morris: They haven't met requirements. They don't have a 25% match. There are also no supporting letters.

Luth: The volunteer mechanics are their match.

Morris: They have no hours, wages, etc., listed for the match if they are using volunteers.

Wilke: There are no quotes, no list of parts and just not enough information. How much will the grooming program suffer without this grooming machine?

Luth: It is pretty important.

Gauna: It is the only machine they have.

Luth: This is an accident maintenance request not a regular machine maintenance repair.

Gauna: There should have been quotes. This is a poorly put together grant.

Enochs: I concentrate on the intent of the grant.

Gauna: The grant application clearly states in the instruction sheets that you need 3 quotes. I don't think there should be much leeway if you don't go the minimum.

Wilke: We can discuss this more tomorrow.

## **Project Name: South Fork Montana Creek Trail Safety Improvements**

- **Applicant:** Montana Creek Motor Musers
- **Funding:** (\$4,000)/(\$1,333)/(\$5,333)
- **Project Type:** Trail Maintenance and Development

### **Project Description:**

The proposed project will fund the rental of a small dozer to correct site distance problems to improve safety on the trail. Additionally the trail we be widened along portions that have been narrowed into a tight gully due to erosion.

### **Board Discussion:**

Wilke: Any conflicts of interest?

Kaeppele: It requires permitting. The safety issue is a reasonable request. Are we spending funds for year round use?

Luth: This trail is degrading.

Morris: This is this the type of trail that SnowTRAC should be funding. Where is the match in the application? They are crossing CIRI land. There is no permission from property owners. Their Corp of Engineers permit expired in 2007.

Hite: Don't they need all of this before the grant was brought to us?

Morris: If they want to get funds to pursue legal access, then yes. But they shouldn't be asking for funding before this is done.

Wilke: Work is not being done on CIRI land. There is an easement in place on the road which is CIRI land.

Kaeppele: Most of the trail is a public easement on state land. We will need to look on the ADL to see what can be done with this trail.

Gauna: This is what Kyle will be looking into.

Luth: Even if we approve this grant it doesn't mean they will get funded.

Kaeppele: I think more information should be coming with these grants.

Morrison: Did they complete the application in a timely manner?

Gauna: Parks staff used to get us more information with the applications before they were submitted to the board.

Hite: We are asked to make judgments before we have all the pieces to the applications.

Gauna: I want the applications to be more thorough before they come to us.

Wilke: I think the requirements are good just the way they are. If after we approve funding and the applicant can't get the permits, etc., then they don't get funded.

Kaeppele: Will this erosion control have to be done every year?

Luth: No.

**Project Name: Caribou Hills Trail Grooming**

**Board Discussion:**

Wilke: Any conflicts?

Luth: Their grooming pool and adding trails to groom are two separate requests.

Hite: I make a motion to move this application to the grooming pool?

Luth: Second.

Wilke: Discussions?

Gauna: Tinker will have to get permission from the Borough for 5 years for grooming.

Wilke: Those in favor of moving this application to the grooming pool?

**For 9 Against 0 MOTION PASSED**

**Project Name: South Fork Montana Creek Trail Groomer Purchase**

- **Applicant:** Montana Creek Motor Musers
- **Funding:** (\$12,500)/(\$4,167)/(\$16,667)
- **Project Type:** Trail Maintenance and Development

**Project Description:**

The proposed project would fund the purchase of a wide track snowmachine to pull groomers. Currently the Motor Musers have three machines and one is approaching retirement and incurs extensive maintenance costs. The new machine will maintain the club's ability to groom with three drags.

**Board Discussion:**

Wilke: Any conflicts?

Kaeppele: This trail has been inspected. They had adequate equipment to do the job.

Luth: How many machines does it take to groom 10 miles of trail?

Gauna: There are no bids and the title is misleading. They don't need this.

Wilke: If there are no other comments then turn in your scores.

**Project Name: Mid-Valley Trail Maintenance Project**

- **Applicant:** Mid-Valley Trail Club
- **Funding:** (\$11,672)/(\$18,909)/(\$30,581)
- **Project Type:** Trail Maintenance and Development

**Project Description:**

The Mid-Valley Trail Club grooms and maintains approximately 60 miles of winter trails and trailheads within the mid-valley section of the Susitna River. The funds requested will provide the club with a four-stroke snowmobile dedicated to the grooming effort.

### **Board Discussion**

Wilke: Any conflicts of interest?

Kaeppele: This is a well written grant. There is a genuine need for equipment. They have shown that the equipment will be put to good use.

Luth: They have never requested equipment in all the years that they have been grooming. They do need an equipment upgrade.

Morris: The match is the re-sale values of club owned equipment? I don't understand this. It is a good application though.

Gauna: I motion to move this to ORTAB. We shouldn't be buying equipment.

Morris: We have been inconsistent in our funding. Until the board finally decides what we will fund we will keep getting equipment and maintenance requests.

Gauna: We have to stop buying equipment. The money should be used for grooming.

Morrison: What I am hearing is that you want the applicant to buy their own equipment and we provide the grooming funds.

Gauna: Yes. Have the business man buy all of his equipment and then come to us for grooming funds.

Kaeppele: I think requests should be allowed to include equipment and maintenance.

Wilke: I motion to move this grant to ORTAB.

Gauna: Second.

**For 1      Against 8      MOTION FAILED**

### **Allocate Grant Funding**

Kaeppele: Program funding is \$235,000 this year. Twelve percent goes to administration and this leaves you with \$206,000. Add in the leftover funds from previous years and SnowTRAC's budget this year is \$342,865.

West: I make a motion to approve the 5 highest scored applications.

Enochs: Second

Wilke: Those in favor of funding the 5 highest scored grants?

**For 4      Against 5      MOTION FAILED**

Wilke: Any ideas on how to rank these grants?

Enochs: I feel it should go with the score. The score reflects what we like about the application.

Hite: This conversation has gone on every year. We have to grade according to scores. It is the most objective method and defensible to the public.

Morris: I suggest we revisit the requests and see if we need to reduce funding.

Hite: I motion to fund the top four average scores.

Morrison: Second.

Luth: We should consider partially funding the NAOI grant as we are less concerned with the courses than actually developing the curriculum. I suggest we fund them to develop the curriculum, but not to teach the courses.

Wilke: Is it really worthwhile to dissect a project by changing the funding amount?

Hite: We should fully fund the highest scored projects, it is our process.

**For 6          Against 2          MOTION PASSED**

### **Allocate Grooming Pool Funding**

Kaeppele: This year we have a deficit of \$34k in our grooming funds.

Luth: The Snowmads should be penalized for submitting a late request.

Wilke: Make note that the Big Lake Funding request has sky-rocketed from last year.

Mayfield: Last year was our club's first year grooming and we were learning the ropes. This year after seeing the trails and talking to the public, we've realized that we need to provide much more extensive grooming and maintenance of our heavily used Trail System. This year we will be hiring contractors with the large snow cat equipment. These are some of the reasons our requests have gone up.

Gauna: I suggest we adjourn for today and take this up again tomorrow.

***MEETING ADJOURNED 4:30 p.m.***

## **August 27, 2010 Meeting**

Meeting called to order at 8:40 a.m.

### **Allocate Grooming Pool Funding (continued)**

- Wilke: Floor is open to discussion on what we will cover today. I will start with my issue. The 5 ft. rule for trail width is not working for snowmobiles/grooming. We need to work with DNR to change this rule to a wider width.
- Morrison: If we are going to increase registration fees we need to get a comprehensive map of Alaska 's existing trails. Do you have any maps at this time we can see?
- Kaeppele: Yes. They are on the website.
- Gauna: We need to talk about prioritizing trails for grooming.
- West: How many trails are RS2477?
- Kaeppele: Very few. RS2477 trails weren't incorporated in the trail system because there were better routes available.
- Gauna: We need to finalize yesterday's grooming scores.
- Morrison: Are we still allocating funds the same as prior years?
- Wilke: We used to do them regionally.
- Luth: We really should give a dollar amount for each request.
- Morrison: Do they have to perform the work before they are paid?
- Gauna: State Parks checks paperwork and then writes the reimbursement check.
- Morrison: the amounts are just a guideline to start the process.
- Luth: Teri Zell and Wayne Biessel request a guideline to start the process.
- Hite: There should be a cut from the board for each group that is applying for grooming funds to make up for our shortfall.
- Kaeppele: It might be worth taking the time to consider each area. I think it is fair to take a percentage from each group but some areas perform better than others.
- Gauna: Let's look at the history of each one.
- Wilke: We have a duty to look at each grant with reason and thought.
- Kaeppele: We have to make a decision today.

## **Public Comment Period**

- Daniels: I need more clarity on how grants are scored and decided. As a business person the numbers need to make sense. Shouldn't a committee also make the numbers make sense? How can we get a safety program started? Why are we wasting time to let certain groups override decisions of small group applications? I want a veteran's program and a children's program. I am willing to donate the first \$5,000 today. If we continue to sponsor maintenance and equipment purchases, the previous grantees will start changing their applications to get accommodated for funding because SnowTRAC keeps changing their own Operating Procedures.
- Wilke: AK State Snowmobile Assoc. is a program that can accept your money to help create a safety program that meets your needs.
- Morris: Why don't you put in a grant application to start a safety program and you can use your money as match?
- Gauna: I think ASSA is the group that can help you.
- Morrison: There are other good associations and clubs that can help you.
- Daniels: NAOI gets money every year and I am upset with their safety courses and helmet program. They say they cater to children, but all of their courses are at inconvenient times, and children cannot attend.
- Kaeppele: NAOI always provides the services outlined in their grant. I have attended their classes, have purchased helmets, and in the courses I have attended, there were children present.
- Hite: Are you willing to donate money and time and work with NAOI to make sure they are providing a safety program you agree with?
- Daniels: They already get money from the state and only provide minimum programs.
- Hite: As a public entity, why don't you go to NAOI and find out why they are not providing you what you need for your complaints?
- Gauna: Asking SnowTRAC to fix the problems you obviously have with NAOI is a request we can't grant.
- Wilke: It takes lots of funding to develop a comprehensive safety program. It is not a simple task. It is going to take years.
- Daniels: This group puts in for money year after year.
- Kaeppele: The opinion of the public from the surveys gathered so far, is that safety programs have the lowest priority. We need to put the funding where the public wants it.
- Morrison: There is a lot of safety that needs to be done in rural areas first. We know it is a great challenge and we are trying to work it out.
- Daniels: I am just trying to bring more awareness to the safety program and the unfairness of granting funds to only one applicant.
- Gauna: No one else has applied. We have no other options.

Kaeppele: If you are serious about funding a program, I can put you in contact with someone that can help you set up a safety program that meets your needs.

### **Allocate Grooming Pool Funding (continued)**

Wilke: It is time for us to get back to grant scoring from yesterday.

Luth: The first 4 grants have been approved. Big Lake was shorted last year. Petersville gets lots of snow. Caribou can be reduced and Hatcher Pass should be fully funded. Overall, most groups used less funds last year because of the lack of snow.

Gauna: Can you say everyone who has gotten money met grant requirements?

Kaeppele: There was some difficulty in getting everyone to send in their reports.

Gauna: What are the requirements?

Kaeppele: Reports are due monthly. Some businesses aren't as organized as others.

Wilke: If we take money away because they are slow in reporting, is that fair if they are providing good service?

Gauna: Who knows when reporting is late?

Kaeppele: Teri Zell and Wayne Biessel. We provide them \$11,000 a year to do this.

Wilke: We never discussed a 30 day reporting period. It was an arbitrary number thrown out.

Kaeppele: Reporting is very important. If we get a heavy snowfall late in the season and the groups have not provided their reports and reimbursement requests, we don't know how much money we have left to move to the groups that need it.

Shaffer: Maybe in the future we should penalize the late reporting, but until we get everything worked out we should only penalize lightly.

Luth: The paperwork that needs to be turned into Teri is very simple. It takes about 10 minutes for do.

Kaeppele: I hate to start penalizing groomers that are late with their paperwork but are doing a good job grooming the trails.

Morrison: We are progressing as a club because now we are questioning the lateness of the reports. Let's use the prudent reserve for filling in what we need for grooming.

I move that we approve the grooming pool requests as is and use the prudent reserve as necessary.

Wilke: Second.

Enochs: I think we need to see where we need to cut without using prudent reserve.

West: Yukon Quest and Chena River Area will be requesting more money in future years.

Shaffer: Andre, do you have last year's grooming request amounts.

Kaeppele: There was about \$30,000 left over that was not used.

Morrison: The amount requested by Yukon Quest is small considering the amount of trails they groom.

Hite: Call the question.

Wilke: There is a motion to use the prudent reserve to fully fund all requests. Let's vote.

**For 5                  Against 4      MOTION PASSED**

## **Review of Generally Allowed Uses**

Gauna: Let's review the regulations.

Morrison: Why are some trails 10,000 pound limit and some trails 15,000 pound limit?

Wilke: Snowmachine versus vehicles. Large vehicles need a permit to be on trails. Groomers need a permit for their equipment.

Kidder: When easements are written it doesn't state summer or winter use.

Kaeppele: The easements allow the same activities as what is generally allowed.

Shaffer: What would be helpful in the permit to state the PSI of vehicles.

Morrison: Who is the person to make these changes? Maybe there should be a paragraph that talks about winter vehicles.

Kaeppele: Instead of changing general allowed use permits how about changing easement agreements to meet groomer needs? That process seems much easier.

Wilke: The Commissioner of DNR has the authority to change the statute. Changing each trail easement is time consuming.

Morrison: Only 10-20% of the trails are affected by this. Single easements make sense.

Gauna: Changing the 5 ft. width to 12-16 ft. widths make more sense.

Kaeppele: Twenty foot swaths of cleared land for trails across any state lands would not be supported by Parks or most of the public.

Wilke: What about the width of a snowtrack grooming machine? Are there any examples of trails where we can't get the machines through the trails?

Gauna: Petersville, Deep Creek, Big Lake.

Luth: Also Corral Trail.

Kaeppele: The problem with public access easements is that they don't allow for any additional use or public activities other than what is stated in the generally allowed uses.

- Kidder: If we took a list of trails to the Commissioner that we have a vested interest in and that are being constricted by the 5 ft. rule, we could get an exemption.
- Hite: Would it go to public comment?
- Kidder: I am not sure.
- Gauna: The Commissioner might not need to go to public comment with a categorical exemption. The exemption would be attached to trails already in existence. We are not asking exemption on trails that are not established.
- Kidder: If we do exemptions it is only on easement. You will still have to negotiate with other agencies.
- Paulson: We have borough easements up to 20 ft. A state construction easement should allow this.
- Wilke: Let's make suggestions to change the allowable use document and not get side-tracked on other issues.

### **Prioritize Trails for legal Status Research and Easement Adjudication**

- Gauna: Let's look at this list of easements to see which easement needs to be worked on first.
- Kidder: Many of the trails cross multiple land sections. Some don't have a file or applicant. The ones listed in green have been completed or partially completed. Easements are in yellow.
- West: There is a fair amount of BLM trails pending in the Northern Region.
- Gauna: Let's get this easement list cleaned up and send it to the SnowTRAC/Groomers Board with all information so they can prioritize which easements need to be completed first.
- Kaeppele: We can do another review after the groomers have seen the list and we have their input.
- Morrison: We need to start looking at this for the future on how we can start connecting these snowmachine trails that are now in existence. How do we get maps to start looking at this issue?
- Kaeppele: All of our trails have been locally adopted that lead to different areas. They didn't think about how the trails could be connected. We now need to plan the connecting of trails with the system that has developed these trails.
- Shaffer: Maybe we hire a consulting firm to figure out how to look at the big picture to see how the trails can connect.
- Wilke: We lack time and resources to deal with this issue.
- Gauna: It can be done but small groomers don't want to lose what they have.
- Shaffer: I am getting the feeling that we love this idea but no one wants change. We have to change to make progress.
- Morris: Our stated goals are for a statewide trail system. We also need to connect rural communities to the trails.

Hite: People need to see maps on trail connecting to get people on board for fee registration increase.

Enochs: Trails easements are a big issue in the Interior areas.

Wilke: Kyle, how many state workers are working on easements for the state?

Kidder: Two.

Morrison: I don't think it is too far-fetched to identify inter-connecting trails as one of our future goals.

## **Review Grant Instructions Applications and Score Sheets**

Morris: In what way is a native corporation a government? On the score sheet they are under government. To make the score sheet less confusing is a goal.

Kaeppele: Applicants have no problem navigating through the paperwork.

Hite: Advisory has been taken out of the application. Why can't we give our advisory opinion on the grants?

Kaeppele: There are key elements of application that can't be ignored. And that is the support for the grant from the public,

Hite: We should have 25 points as an Advisory Board member where we can advise.

Shaffer: Identify the grants with a code number. The titles are confusing if group names are similar. I do agree we need a section where the board can comment on the grant.

Luth: I go with Cindy's and Joe's idea that the score sheet needs a section for the board to make comments on the grant.

Gauna: There needs to be a place to score on the return of investment and benefit if awarding a grant.

Kaeppele: We don't want to lose the importance of the score sheet.

Enochs: A document that explains how to fill out a grant is needed.

Kaeppele: I'll put you on the list for the next grant writing workshop.

Morrison: We really need to go through the instruction booklet. It helps to get an understanding on how the grant works. We need to be accountable to the credibility of the scoring. We need to read between the lines on the applications. We don't need our own section. If we make changes with the score sheet the changes should also change in ORTAB scoring.

Morris: There are threshold requirements that applicants have to meet and we don't need our own section on the score sheet.

Wilke: Our experience in these areas should be used in scoring the spreadsheet. That is why we were elected. Let's not be afraid to use our knowledge when scoring.

Mayfield: Everyone who applies for a grant should be able to write one.

Daniels: Would more people attending the meetings change your way of scoring the grants?

Morrison: I would like to combine grant application and score sheet together. In years past I got the score sheet with the comments. It was a great learning tool.

Kaepple: Those are on the website with the minutes, the awarded grants.

Mayfield: There needs to be better instructions in the application portion for adding trails.

Wilke: What are some of the procedures we can fix?

Enochs: We should discuss timely grants.

Morris: It is spelled out clearly as a requirement, but we keep accepting late grants.

Morrison: While constructing the new application there were a few missed deadlines. If we are hard about timeliness we will lose applicants.

Shaffer: A process to suggest is a "3-strike" method. We are helping the community build a service.

Morris: Rules apply to the future. We can't ask the public to have their ducks in a row if the board can't do the same.

Kaepple: One solution is to create a deadline one month prior to final deadline for review. That way there is time for applicant to fix what is wrong. If they miss the final deadline then they are out of consideration.

Gauna: I think they should meet requirements or let's change the deadline rules.

Wilke: I motion that our policy as the Advisory Board is to not accept any late applications.

Hite: Second.

Luth: I call the question (Question is read)

Wilke: Let's vote.

**For 8 Against 1 MOTION PASSED**

Morrison: When we make a resolution like this, where will it be documented?

Kaepple: All motions are documented in the minutes.

Gauna: Mark has some questions on the score sheet itself.

Wilke: Some of these questions don't apply. Let's start with the safety/education score sheet.

Shaffer: Can we start on page one?

Wilke: There is no match for a safety grant. It shouldn't require 2 points.

Shaffer: There needs to be a group name and a project name to avoid confusion.

Hite: There should be more points for Safety and Educational Projects.

Morris: Part of the issue is putting score points on a narrow detail project narrative.

Morrison: A good goal would be to make our score sheet mimic our application.

Wilke: Can we keep this simple and just change the score sheet?

Kaeppele: As we improve the score sheet we have to keep in mind what the application instruction states.

Wilke: Section II has too many points. It should only have 5 points. Section III has been asked to score labor hours.

Gauna: There is no point per line value.

West: Take out some of the descriptions and condense it to 3 or 4.

Shaffer: Can the match be something they own?

Morris: Match shouldn't be something the club already owns.

Wilke: Match should be sweat equity.

Kaeppele: If applicant meets the requirements then they are submitted.

Shaffer: It isn't up to the state to confirm the legitimacy of the match. They met requirements and it is up to us to decide in our scoring if we want to fund.

Wilke: Section IV has some comments that should be in the application.

Hite: Two of the questions are pretty much the same.

Wilke: I will take time to go through the score sheet and present it to everyone at the next meeting.

## **Registration Fee Increase**

Gauna: I don't know what else to say about increasing registration fees. We have been discussing this for years.

Enochs: I don't see it being thought out to where it is presented in a way that everyone can understand.

Wilke: We all see things from our own experiences. I have a tough time understanding the resistance to a \$5 increase. The benefits will be for everyone.

Gauna: DMV collects the registrations and the Legislature allocates to the State Parks the requested funds. If you ride a snowmobile on a state or federal land your machine has to be registered.

Shaffer: The Interior doesn't see a lot of the money so that is why they are so against the increase. My job is to help them understand why the increase so I can educate.

West: A lot of people won't pay it because of the belief that most of the money stays in Anchorage.

Enochs: Not all of the registration money collected has been given back to Parks.

- Kaeppele: There have been some years that we were given more than 100% of the money. But 100% of the money is allocated every year.
- Wilke: By state law, if you collect taxes the money has to go into the general fund. Parks asks for the line item dollars from money totals provided by DMV. Our purpose is to make sure we get our money each year. The state makes sure it is in their budget request from the Legislature.
- Enoch: We need a plan to make the fee increase a reality.
- Morrison: We need to find out why the majority of the public is saying no to the increase. Maybe we need to look at other possibilities, like gas tax portion for snowmobiles.
- Shaffer: Does DMV give us reports on new machine bought versus renewable?
- West: Increase the fees and tell the people where the registration dollars are going. Example: so much for grooming, so much for safety programs, so much for signage. Do the increase as a phase-in program.
- Gauna: We have suggested this. The resistance is coming from the Fairbanks area. The board members in that area need to educate the snowmachiners.
- Wilke: Knowing the program is a good one should be your argument for raising fees. Ignore all the negative responses and focus on the positive responses and grow from there.
- Enochs: Because the majority of grant money goes to Anchorage, the Interior sees no benefit to raising fees.
- Wilke: We were getting lots of grant applications in the past from the Interior and we awarded many of them. Then they stopped coming in. There were no new grants from them again this year.
- Mayfield: the vision for a statewide trail system starts with the Advisory Board. You can't do this unless you have funding. To get funding, let the vision be communicated to the public for support of the increase.
- Kaeppele: The major of surveys returned stated that a \$20 registration fee per year was a reasonable amount. Some even suggested \$40.
- Hite: We need to push the survey to all the clubs as an action item.
- Wilke: What would be the top 4 priority task for fee increase for SnowTRAC to implement?
- Morrison: This is something the Legislators will vote on. What is our timeline to put this in front of them?

#### **Top 4 Priorities for SnowTRAC That Fee Increase Will Support**

1. Comprehensive Safety
2. Rural/State/Trail Marking, Stakes, Tripods/GPS
3. Statewide Trail Program to Connect Communities
4. Expand Trail Grooming Program

Wilke: There is some confusion with the instructions and the application scoresheets. I have found some inconsistencies.

- Gauna: A couple of years ago SnowTRAC decided that it would be easier to have one form for application review between SnowTRAC and RTP.
- Wilke: The scoresheets don't always match what is included in the application. The result is that some scores become unnecessarily inflated. The scoresheet should be revised to better represent the overall public benefit of the project to the snowmobile community. Right now the majority of the scoring emphasis is on how well a project is written, instead of the inherent value of the project for the sport.
- Gauna: I suggest the scoresheets are inherent with the application so that scores can be directly tallied as the application is reviewed.

Additionally we need a better and more streamlined process for adding trails to the grooming pool.

## **Meeting Wrap-Up and Task List**

- Hite: Before we wrap-up the meeting, I would like to make a motion to fund the Lake Louise Snow Cat Repair Project. This is one of the most heavily used trail systems in the state, and they need properly maintained equipment to provide safe, well maintained trails for the public.
- Gauna: Second Motion.
- Enochs: I disagree, we have already decided on the funding line for the grant applications, and this project was not included.
- Shaffer: I feel the club should be able to cover the maintenance costs, the membership is as high as 54,000. That seems like enough membership dues to take care of items like equipment maintenance.

**For 6            Against 3    MOTION PASSED**

- Gauna: Motion to stop buying machines for grooming.
- Hite: Second
- Morrison: Maintenance costs should be included in the club's hourly rate. This is the direction we will have to go to get towards a model of professional contracting.
- Hite: I am concerned that contracting would cut out some of the smaller businesses.
- Enochs: I agree, we should be supporting the trail clubs, not state administered contracting.
- Morrison: We need to spread the word that we would prefer professional contractors (with equipment) for grooming, and get away from purchasing equipment.
- Enochs: If we go to contracting, we run the risk of having to pay Davis Bacon wages.

**For 2            Against 7    MOTION FAILED**

## **Task List**

- 1) Memorize and recite the 4 priorities that the fee increase will support. Approach your representative and relay this information. (For Board)
- 2) Approach Division of Lands Commissioner about a categorical exclusion to the generally allowed uses for snowmobile trails. Among other things, exclusion should allow grooming and maintaining trail to 20ft in width. (For Kyle Kidder)
- 3) Identify disabled snowmobile user groups and relay information to Ozie. (For Board)
- 4) Encourage SnowTRAC applicants to also apply for the Recreational Trail Grant Program. (For Board)
- 5) Schedule and organize videoconference for the Reg Fee increase and involve ASSA. (For Andre)
- 6) Prioritize trail lists with groomers and send to board. (For Andre)
- 7) Review application scoresheet and revise as needed. (for Mark)



# Grooming Pool & Snowmobile Trail Grant Expenditures

2010/2011

## GROOMING POOL

### Southcentral Grooming Areas

	Requested	Appropriated	Final Score	Comment
Big Lake	\$ 22,287	\$ 22,287	N/A	Recommended
Petersville	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	N/A	Recommended
Lower-Susitna Drainage	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	N/A	Recommended
Mid-Valley Trail Club	\$ 16,640	\$ 16,640	N/A	Recommended
Lake Louise	\$ 23,939	\$ 23,939	N/A	Recommended
Willow Area Trails	\$ 19,000	\$ 19,000	N/A	Recommended
Caribou Hills	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	N/A	Recommended
Denali Highway	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	N/A	Recommended
Hatcher Pass	\$ 32,235	\$ 32,235	N/A	Recommended
Snowmads	\$ 20,200	\$ 20,200	N/A	Recommended

Copper Country	\$	4,800	\$ 4,800	N/A	Recommended
Montana Creek Motor Musers	\$	5,000	\$ 5,000	N/A	Recommended
Admin	\$	11,000	\$ 11,000	N/A	Recommended
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>250,101</b>	<b>\$ 250,101</b>		

**Interior Grooming Areas**

Yukon Quest	\$	15,000	\$ 15,000	N/A	Recommended
Chena River Recreation Area	\$	12,480	\$ 12,480	N/A	Recommended
Admin	\$	1,000	\$ 1,000	N/A	Recommended
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>28,480</b>	<b>\$ 28,480</b>		

**Southeast Grooming Areas**

Juneau Snowmobile Club	\$	10,000	\$ 10,000	N/A	Recommended
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>		
<b>TOTAL GROOMING POOL FUNDS REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>288,581</b>	<b>\$ 288,581</b>		

**Snowmobile Trail Grants**

Mid-Valley Trail Maintenance Project (MVTC)	\$ 11,672	\$ 11,672	83.57	Recommended
CHCH Trail Grooming	See in Grooming	See in Grooming	N/A	See In Grooming
S. Fork Montana Ck. Trail Safety Improvements (MCMC)	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	80.43	Recommended
Alaska Snowmobile Safety (NAOI)	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	72.43	Recommended
Grooming Pool Admin. Snowmobile (DNR)	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	70.43	Recommended
Winter Trail Grooming (CCSC)	See in Grooming	See in Grooming	N/A	See In Grooming
Repairs and Maintenance to SnowCat (LLSC)	\$ 10,920	\$ 10,920	50.57	Recommended
Haines Winter Trail Maintenance (ASP)	\$ 29,700	\$ -	68.71	Sent To ORTAB
Iron Dog Safety Expo (Iron Dog, Inc.)	\$ 16,450	\$ -	54.43	Not Recommended
South Fork Montana Ck. Groomer Purchase (MCMC)	\$ 12,500	\$ -	54.43	Not Recommended
<b>TOTAL GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$ 108,242</b>	<b>\$ 49,592</b>		<b>TOTAL GRANT FUNDS APPROPRIATED</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$ 396,823</b>	<b>\$ 338,173</b>		<b>GRAND TOTAL FUNDS APPROPRIATED</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	<b>\$ 342,865</b>	<b>\$ 342,865</b>		<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>
<b>PRUDENT RESERVE FUND</b>	<b>\$ (4,692)</b>	<b>\$ (4,692)</b>		<b>PRUDENT RESERVE FUND</b>
<b>FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION</b>	<b>\$ 338,173</b>	<b>\$ 338,173</b>		<b>FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION</b>
<b>DEFICIT</b>	<b>\$ 58,650</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>		<b>DEFICIT</b>

2010 - 2011 Available Funds	
\$	
206,800	Program Fundling 2010-2011
\$	
85,987	RTP Funds
\$	
50,078	Rollover Program Funding
\$	<b>Total Funds</b>
<b>342,865</b>	<b>Available</b>

FUNDING BREAKDOWN	
\$	
288,581	Grooming Costs
\$	
49,592	Grant Costs
\$	
<b>338,173</b>	<b>Total</b>

## Snowmobile Trail Grant Program - 2010/11

				Scores											
Ref. #	Project Name	Funding Request	Funding Allocated	M.W.	J.G.	B.L.	S.E.	A.M.	C.H.	E.M.	J.A.	O.W.	G.S.	Average	Cumulative \$
1	Mid-Valley Trail Maintenance Project (MVTC)	11,671.96	11,671.96	90	70	92	85	90	74	84				<b>83.57</b>	\$ 11,671.96
2	S. Fork Montana Ck. Trail Safety Improvements (MCMM)	4,000.00	4,000.00	85	69	77	90	79	83	80				<b>80.43</b>	\$ 15,671.96
3	Alaska Snowmobile Safety (NAOI)	15,000.00	15,000.00	73	31	80	75	94	75	79				<b>72.43</b>	\$ 30,671.96
4	Grooming Pool Admin. Snowmobile (DNR)	8,000.00	8,000.00	95	1	63	83	85	75	92				<b>70.57</b>	\$ 38,671.96
5	Repairs and Maintenance to SnowCat (LLSC)	10,920.00	10,920.00	65	57	74	55	70	33	-				<b>59.00</b>	\$ 49,591.96
6	Iron Dog Safety Expo (Iron Dog, Inc.)	15,000.00		65	23	46	56	80	43	68				<b>54.43</b>	\$ 64,591.96
7	South Fork Montana Ck. Groomer Purchase (MCMM)	12,500.00		68	31	67	35	77	63	40				<b>54.43</b>	\$ 77,091.96
8	Haines Winter Trail Maintenance (ASP)	29,700.00		92	47	72	97	84	45	44					\$ 106,791.96
				SnowTRAC Board											
<b>Total =</b>		<b>\$ 106,791.96</b>	<b>\$ 49,591.96</b>	Conflict of Interest = *											

