



Snowmobile Trail Advisory Committee

SnowTRAC

Teleconference

October 7, 2005 at 2:00 p.m.

Staff called teleconference to order @ 2:00 p.m.

Members Present:

- JR Malesic, **Chair** - Anchorage
- Ken Lancaster – Soldotna
- Eric Morris – White Mountain
- Marianne Beckham – Anchorage
- Myles Yerkes – Skwentna

- Andy Morrison – Girdwood
- Mark Wilke – Juneau
- Frank Woods - Dillingham

Members Absent:

- Greg Barclay - Soldotna

Staff Present:

- Margaret Brodie – Admin. & Grants Manager
- Lani Eggertsen-Goff – Grants Administrator

Alaska State Parks Staff outlined that available funding (125K) for continuing the Grooming Pool (GP) that was a pilot program last year. Five park areas were suggested for funding, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Northern, Kenai, Other areas of Alaska. Staff requested the board's recommendations on which areas should be considered for Grooming Pool funding.

Board express concerns of expanding last year's Grooming Pool Pilot Program when current status of trails and funding is uncertain. A main goal of the Grooming Pool is to provide trail connectivity with legal access and trail marking using existing funds.

Last year \$70K was spent in the Mat-Su area alone. Based on a broad-brush analysis, Alaska State Parks staff estimates a cost increase of 20-25 percent, mainly due to increased fuel costs. Staff solicited interest from all five areas and had only received input from Mat-Su, Anchorage and Northern. Last year, the Mat-Su Park Superintendent selected trails to be groomed and the contactors who groomed the trails. Staff stated that State Park superintendents would follow procurement procedures under the Alaska State Park Central Office's direction.

The discussion moved to rates of pay to vendors and non-profits that actually perform the grooming services, having State Park staff implement the GP with or without the Board's close guidance and suggestions that Snowmobile Trail Grant funds should officially be split between trail projects and winter trail grooming.

A motion was made that SnowTRAC continue funding the Grooming Pool program and fund existing GP allocation of funds as follows: \$75K to Anchorage/Mat-Su; \$25K to Fairbanks, \$20K to Kenai; for a total of \$125K Ken Lancaster seconded the motion.

A friendly amendment to the motion was suggested to increase Kenai's allocation to \$25K to make the total funds actually add up to \$125,000. The motion was amended to reflect that.

Discussion on the motion included questions about existing trails and funding trails that haven't been considered by the SnowTRAC grant program, as well as legal access issues. Alaska State Park staff reiterated that DNR, SP superintendents and staff prior to grooming pool funds being used on trails must hammer out all legal access issues. Concerns were voiced about the GP becoming "permanent." The majority of the board pointed out the broad support for the GP concept since the first year was a success.

The motion was voted on, it passed by a vote of seven Yes and one No vote.

JR Malesic was elected unanimously as the board's new chair.

Discussion about the increase in registration fees ensued. There was also discussion of alternative methods to increase revenue to the SnowTRAC program, gas tax was the main alternative suggested.

The board discussed ways for members of the public to give the board and State Park staff input on how to increase revenues, a survey at snow machine dealerships was suggested, as well as more signage at trailheads to let folks know where their registration fees are being spent. It was agreed that this dialogue could continue in the future as a board item of business and in the meantime board members can solicit club and user input.

The final question raised was whether funding of an additional staff person could occur if registration fees are increased, staff acknowledged that as a possibility.

Next meeting agenda items:

Elect a Vice-Chair and discuss Ex-Parte communication.

The teleconference was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

