

## SnowTRAC Meeting

January 20, 2004

Meeting called to order at 9:15 a.m. by Chair Marianne Beckham. Quorum present.

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Marianne Beckham - Anchorage  
Kenton Bloom – Homer  
Christine Noakes - Big Lake  
Mark Wilke – Juneau

Greg Barclay - Soldotna  
Matt Divens – Fairbanks  
Craig Seibert - Trapper Creek  
Frank Woods - Dillingham

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Bruce Friend - Anchorage (excused)

**Staff present:** Jim Renkert and Elisia Walsh, ASP

**Public:** Randy Crosby, Alaska State Snowmobile Association (ASSA)

### ALTERNATES OR PROXIES

Kenton Bloom nominated Mickey Todd as a proxy for himself. Todd has participated in various snowmobile groups including SNOWMADS. Marianne had no objections to Todd as a proxy for Kenton.

Greg moved “to approve minutes from April 25, 2003 as submitted.” Mark Wilke second. Motion approved.

### AGENDA ADDITIONS/REVISIONS

Marianne asked that the minutes be reviewed prior to the conflict of interest declarations. Mark requested to add in a discussion of SB 931, which you can obtain another copy of from Elisia. Matt motioned it be added. Chris seconded. Agenda addition approved.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Greg Barclay declared a conflict with grant application #10, Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers. Frank Woods declared a conflict with grant application #21, Curyung Tribal Council and #22, Dillingham Search and Rescue Team.

### STAFF REPORTS

Gary Morrison, Director of the Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, stated that the new person to replace Jim will be working in a combined position of Recreational Trails and the Snowmobile Trail program, so adjustments in time and priorities will follow, but no specifics are known at this time. Also, there will be a new board to replace the previous TRAAK board controlled by DOT, which has been transferred to DNR State Parks office. There is an Administrative Order in process to have the new board members appointed by the director of Alaska State Parks.

Jim Renkert announced his acceptance of a new position. At this time, it is not known who will be the replacement. In the meantime, Gary Morrison will assist. Also, in an attempt to clean up

previous grants to release some more funding, certified letters have been mailed out to all of the grantees requesting financial reports be sent in.

**Meeting recessed for a break @ 10:10 a.m.**

**Reconvened @ 10:20 a.m.**

#### **FY00 GRANT STATUS**

- Alaska State Snowmobile Association (ASSA) has never been completed. Grantee has been asked to return monies, but has not responded.
- Trail Mix and Juneau Snowmobile Club has completed the project from Lawson Creek Bridge to Lake Creek Trail improvements.
- The Point Mackenzie Trail Head, Mat-Su Borough kiosk has been completed.
- City of Wasilla Trail Head is complete.
- City of Wasilla Trail Grooming is still open. An extension to March of 2004 has been requested and granted.
- Mountaineering Club/Eklutna Cabin is complete.
- Eagle song lodge: A problematic project. The applicant is incorrect on some of the information and the Alaska State Parks (ASP) had erred on some of the problem. In addition to the Snowmobile grants is also a recipient for a couple of Recreational Trail projects as well. He will be working with the ASP staff to revise the grooming or give the money back. Discussion.

#### **FY01 GRANT STATUS**

- White Mountain Volunteer Fire Department cabin project is still open. At this time there is negotiations about reimbursement for labor costs.
- Copper Country Snowmobile Club is currently working on securing the rights to the trail easements.
- Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Trail Grooming, is still active.
- Brevig Mission is currently awaiting possibly more reimbursement from the State in the next fiscal year.
- Anchorage Snowmobile Club has not had much snowfall and is almost at the end of their grant.

#### **FY02 GRANT STATUS**

- Alaska Mountain Safety Center, Snow Sense for Snowmobilers, is one of the most successful grants completed. The brochure is now being used by the Canadian Avalanche and Bombardier.
- Fairbanks Police Department and Fairbanks Snow Travelers, borough wide safety and education program is still open.
- North Slope Borough is completed and the final payment has been sent.
- St. Michaels Trail Shelter, no contact.
- Interior Trail Grooming, Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail, no contact, no progress report and grant has expired.
- Ohogamiut Traditional Council in Marshall, no contact.
- Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers is complete and a reimbursement request is being processed.

## **FY03 GRANT STATUS**

- Mat-Su Borough in Big Lake expires in October 2004 and no progress reports sent.
- Alaska Snow Cats, Petersville is currently working on obtaining all of the required grants, as the grant award was set up on the premise that the grantee would obtain all the permits prior to the project. Discussion regarding the permit process.
- Aleknagik Bridge Crossings are complete. A progress report and a reimbursement payment were processed in the past summer, but have not been done since that time. Discussion followed regarding proper DOT permits and approvals even for small footbridges.
- Valdez Snowmobile Club brochures have been printed and distributed. They include a note regarding the SnowTRAC Committee as a source for funding.
- Iron Dog project is now closed.
- Curyung Tribal Council project is completed.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

None at this time due to staff out of office, but have approximately \$100,000.

## **TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT**

Fill out, sign and hand in to Elisia at the end of the day.

## **PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

Randy Crosby from Alaska Snow Cats, Petersville spoke regarding the frustrations he has experienced working with DOT and DNR on the permitting process for his project. Since the project has been problematic from the beginning, the estimated time and cost of the project are now delayed and he is doubtful that the grooming could be done at the same price quoted in the grant application. Is there a way that the applicant can be relieved of some of the duties and not have the problems dumped on them?

**Meeting recessed for lunch 11:30 a.m.**

**Reconvened at 11:48 a.m. WORKING LUNCH**

## **U.S. SENATE BILL 931**

Mark Wilke reported SB 931 currently in the works in Washington, D.C., which would provide money and funding for snowmobile avalanche education and prevention. Discussion.

Discussion continued into adopting a universal brochure and handbook by the SnowTRAC Committee versus having multiple grant applications for brochures and handbooks that all closely resemble each other. Greg recommended that after reviewing the booklets, "to adopt the ASSA Safety Booklet format as the Official SnowTRAC Safety Brochure for the State of Alaska pending approval by the ASP Director." Mark seconded it. A discussion follows regarding various booklets and brochures already out there from grant applications. Vote taken, all voted in favor. Motion passed pending approval from Gary Morrison, ASP Director.

## **SAFETY AND EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Open discussion and general comment on the grant applications. Overall the applications had generally poor documentation. It did not appear that some of the applicants put a lot of time into their applications.

Grant #1 – Big Lake Winter Trailhead, Mat-Su Borough. Scored below the 60-point minimum, **Score 46.**

Grant #2 – ASSRRT Equipment Grant, DNR/DPOR. Final score is below the 60-point minimum. **Score 51.**

Grant #3 – State of Alaska Safety Brochure, Lake Louise Snowmachine Club. Scored below the 60-point minimum. **Score 44.**

Grant #4 – State of Alaska Snowmachine Safety Handbook, Lake Louise Snowmachine Club. Scored below the 60-point minimum. **Score 43.**

Grant #5 – Snowmobile Trail Grant Program Public Awareness PSA, Porcaro Communications. Scored below the 60-point minimum. **Score 43.**

Grant #6 – Big Lake Multi-Use Trail Maintenance, Mat-Su Motor Mushers and ASSA. Scored below the 60-point minimum. **Score 13.**

Grant #7 – Petersville Road Winter Trailhead Project, Mat-Su Borough. Scored below the 60-point minimum. **Score 51.**

Grant #8 – Chugach State Park Anchorage Areawide Snowmobile Safety Initiative, Chugach State Park.. **Score 59.**

Grant #9 – Mat-Su Valley Snowmachine Safety & Helmet Program, Valley Health Communities. **Score 88.**

Grant #10 – Safety Signing for Caribou Hills Trails, Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers. Greg Barclay is removed from discussion due to a conflict of interest. **Score DQ.**

Grant #11 – Bethel Area Trailmarking & Snowmachine Helmet Program, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. **Score 88.**

Grant #12 – Project Kids, SNOMADS. **Score 79.**

Grant #13 – Purchase Snowmobile, DNR/DPOR, Hatcher Pass Management Area. **Score 72.**

Grant #14 – Winter Trail Markings & Signing, Mat-Su Borough. **Score DQ.**

Grant #15 – Kroto Creek Snowmobile Trailhead Sanitation & Safety Project '04 & '05, DNR/DPOR. **Score 69.**

Grant #16 – Youth Snowmobile Safety Awareness Program, Kenai SAFE KIDS Coalition for the Central Peninsula Area. **Score 95.**

Grant #17 – Mat-Su Parks Snowmobile Signs & Safety Project, Mat-Su Parks & Outdoor Recreation. **Score DQ.**

Grant #18 – LSDA Snowmobile Safety Rodeo, Lower Susitna Drainage Association. Scored below the 60-point minimum. **Score 58.**

Grant #19 – Klehini Valley Backcountry Rescue, Northern Nights Adventure. **Score 60.**

Grant #20 – Hooper Bay Police Dept. Snowmobile Patrol Vehicles, City of Hooper Bay. Scored below the 60-point minimum. **Score 57.**

Grant #21 – Snowmobile & Avalanche Safety, Curyung Tribal Council. Frank Woods did not participate in this grant rank or discussion due to a conflict of interest. **Score 79.**

Grant #22 – Ice Rider Suits for Dillingham Search & Rescue, Dillingham Search & Rescue Team. Frank Woods did not participate in this grant rank or discussion due to a conflict of interest. **Score 87.**

Grant #23 – Snowmobile Safety for Middle & High School Students in NSBSD, North Slope Borough School District. **Score 79.**

Grant #24 – Operation Safe Trail, DNR/DPOR. **Score 72.**

Grant #25 – Avalanche Awareness & Hazard Recognition, BAART. **Score 72.**

**Collection of signed score sheets.**

**FUNDED GRANTS**

**Safety and Education Projects**

9. Valley Healthy Communities	\$ 8,725.00
11. Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corp.	\$14,728.88
12. SNOMADS, Project Kids	\$15,000.00
13. DNR/DPOR Hatcher Pass Mgt.	\$ 7,523.00
15. DNR/DPOR Kroto Creek Trailhead	\$ 9,800.00
16. Kenai Peninsula SAFE KIDS Program	\$15,000.00
19. Northern Nights Adventure	\$15,000.00
21. Curyung Tribal Council	\$ 5,996.56
22. Dillingham Search & Rescue	\$ 4,248.00
23. North Slope Borough School District	\$15,000.00
24. DNR/DPOR Operation Safe Trail	\$14,286.00
25. BAART	<u>\$15,000.00</u>

**TOTAL** **\$140,307.44**

## **DATE & AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

Sunday and Monday, April 4-5, 2004 at the Trapper Creek Lodge.

### **Agenda Items Are:**

Statewide safety program  
Review the existing State regulations & statutes  
How often does committee need to meet?  
Grooming pool  
Operating procedures  
ASP info about new and old appointments  
Grant amount adjustments  
Election of officers  
Proclamation in support of HB 931

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mark Wilke commented on the issue between skiers and snowmachiners and the only area available for winter recreation. Chris Noakes commented The WSA does all the big snowmachine events. Talked about getting Winter X up in Alaska. It could bring a lot of economic value to Alaska. Matt Divens stated that the Fairbanks Snowmobile Club observed that it is too difficult for small groups to apply for the grants due to the fact that it is only a reimbursement set up. A point was made that you can request the money up front, but it is difficult to get awarded. Frank Woods said that the winter trails project, covers a large area. Who approved stuff at DOT for the winter trail markings? Received a lot of calls regarding the project due to the small ad in the paper. Greg Barclay observed that the biggest problem for his area is working with the State and the trails and the bridges washed out from the flooding. Craig Seibert mentioned two things. One, gives credit to Crosby about the grooming. Two, the reason why Bruce stepped out this year was a celebration of Polaris' anniversary. At Saturday at noon a group of riders will leave Trapper Creek in support of women in snowmachining and breast cancer awareness. Chairperson Marianne explained that she had survived a terrible car accident and will be hoping to ride again. Encourages people to watch out for the drunk coming towards you and has enjoyed working with everyone and the hard work on the grants. Said farewell to Jim who has been a great support. Also, the committee needs to think of who they want to be chair next..

**MEETING ADJOURNED 4:45 p.m.**