



## SnowTRAC Advisory Board Meeting

November 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004  
Atwood Building  
550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ste. 1980  
Anchorage, Alaska

Chair Marianne Beckham called meeting to order at 8:59 a.m. Friday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Quorum present.

### Board Members Present:

- \* Greg Barclay –Soldotna
- \* Marianne Beckham, Chair –Anchorage
- \* Matt Divens –Fairbanks
- \* Bruce Friend –Anchorage
- \* Mark Wilke –Juneau
- \* Frank Woods –Dillingham

### Board Members Absent:

- \* Kenton Bloom –Homer (unable to contact)
- \* Christine Noakes –Big Lake (moved, no longer on board)
- \* Craig Seibert –Trapper Creek (medical emergency)

### Staff Present

- \* Margaret Brodie –State Parks Admin. & Grants Manager
- \* Joy Bryant-Dolsby –Grant Administrator II
- \* Samantha Carroll –State Trails Coordinator
- \* Michaela Phillips –Admin. Clerk II

### Introductions

Since the last board meeting there is all new staff working with SnowTRAC.

During introductions some board members had concerns regarding audio recording of the meeting. Discussion ensued as to the legality of recording the meeting, the State's interests, and the board's meeting being a matter of public record. Marianne had asked Samantha to have a tape recorder to assist in obtaining adequate minutes for the meeting. Margaret informed the board that the recordings become State Record and must be maintained for a minimum of 3 years.

- \* Matt MOVED "to take minutes manually."
- \* Frank SECONDED.
- \* Discussion. Documents ultimately belong to the State and the decision is therefore up to the State.
- \* Mark MOVED "to table the motion."
- \* Matt SECONDED.
- \* Motion PASSED without objection.

### Agenda

Meeting Agenda approved.

### Grant Cycle & Marketing

Is it by fiscal year or calendar year? What is the grant application schedule? The current grant application cycle opened the beginning of September and closes December 15<sup>th</sup>. The amount of time available for notification of the opening of the grant application period is a big concern. The current notification time allows for little to no time for grantees to contact their local government and public for support. Discussion on types of notification including postcards, e-mails, newsletters, packets or some other form of notification could be provided ahead of the grant application cycle opening. Packets need to be produced or the State website could advertise the opening of the grant cycle. Larger emphasis needs to be made to assimilate funds. More money needs to be available for trails, grooming and signage. There

needs to be more consistency regarding the overall timeline of the grant cycle (a grant is effective the date the grantee signs the grant contract). The TRAAK Board has been dissolved and replaced with the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB). All grants presented to SnowTRAC will also be presented to ORTAB which will eliminate the perennial concern about duplicate granting to Grantees.

What are the current methods of public notice regarding marketing of the SnowTRAC Grants?

- \* Possible mechanisms for public notice:
  - bulletin boards
  - mass media faxes & mail-outs
  - DNR Public Information Center (PIC)
  - ASSA Newsletter
  - COAST Magazine
  - COMPASS piece
  - Trails Symposium
  - Website
  - Public Service Announcements (PSA's)
  - SnowTRAC members

### Minutes Approval

Marianne presented last meeting's minutes for review by the board and subsequent approval.

- \* Matt MOVED "to approve the minutes from last meeting, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004."
- \* Greg SECONDED.
- \* Discussion.
- \* Motion PASSED without objection and minutes APPROVED as submitted.

Break @ 9:51 a.m.

Reconvene @ 10:00 a.m.

### US Senate Bill 931

SB 931 Avalanche Funding passed. It is on the calendar in several house committees. However, it is a "lame duck" at this time. It can be resubmitted at the next legislative session; Mark will contact Stevens for this. This bill specifically earmarks money for avalanche training. Mark said he could use help looking for support for the bill through letters, phone calls, etc. Actual letters work much more effectively than anything else. We need to "tap" other western states' legislature and their senators for guidelines and ideas.

### Program Goals & Steps to Accomplish Them

- \* Money on the ground
- \* Safety & Education
- \* Access
  - Maintain Current Trails
  - Establish New Trails
  - Expand Current Trails
- \* Economics
- \* Registration Fees used for Snow Mobile purposes
- \* More Fun, Exercise & Recreation
- \* Recognize the "customer"

Discussion, the following represents comments and/or suggestions to reach goals: 1) The Board needs to set and work toward goals, which include trail production and maintenance; 2) Rural representation needs to be considered. There are major safety and access issues within the villages and hub areas in rural Alaska that need to be addressed and worked on. SnowTRAC and the snowmobile community cannot accomplish these goals alone; 3) Concerns that the money is leaving the hands of the snow machine users. More grant money needs to be seen on the ground, being used by the clubs and organizations and to promote and develop safety. Negative views toward the registration and SnowTRAC need to be addressed and alleviated if possible. More people involved in the sport would help. Maintaining a positive image with the public when SnowTRAC funds are being used by the State is impossible. The State should not be allowed to utilize these funds as they have other resources available. Perhaps the Board needs to grade/score grant applications from the State on a harsher scale. However, the State shouldn't be shut out; securing easements could be a responsibility of the State. The board can recommend to the Director to discourage the State/DNR -Parks from apply for grants from SnowTRAC; 4) The Board does not support any extra money used for non-approved projects outside of those by and for snow machine users. This is a public grant cycle and therefore, is open to everyone.

Board members expressed the following sentiments: Over 75% of grantees do not perform the projects they apply for grants for. The planning and consequently the follow through, is not happening. The State has closed down on many of these grants and collected nearly \$60k in unused grant funds back from these non-compliant grantees. Many snow machine clubs are shut out of the grant application process because of the requirement of upfront funds matching for certain purchases such as equipment. The scoring process should be looked at and possibly revamped, and non-performers vs. performers, those in non-compliance need to operate at least at the base level of those in compliance. They need to work harder. This will show our "customers" where their money is going. Performers should be rewarded. Allow performers to apply for higher grant amounts. Non-performers are put essentially on a "blacklist", they may apply for grants, but are not put forward by the Grant Administrator to the Advisory Board –You. Applicants are not informed why their grant application was denied and no grant was awarded. There should not be any policy in effect that penalizes the good because of the bad. Do not make requirement for 50% down for production and grooming grants. The State needs to push non-compliant grantees for repayment, they do not get any further funds or ability to even apply for new grants if they are non-compliant. Money for trail building and equipment is provided with no expectation of the grantee paying upfront. Samantha handles the grant applications prior to their award. The Grant Administrator handles the grants after they are awarded. Non-compliance grantees cannot receive new grant funds until past non-performance grant funds are repaid. The Board feels that the State should not be making decisions as to which grant applications are put forward to the board for review and scoring. But, non-performers need to step-up to the performers range. Non-compliant grantees cannot apply for new grants until they are in compliance with all past grants. The State takes too long in reimbursing grantees for the 50% upfront. Many grantees are small entities and have trouble coming up with such a large amount of funds upfront. Often times they have to get loans.

Staff responded that, essentially, yes, if they (Applicant) owe money to the State they can submit an application but they will not be considered until their previous non-compliant grants are repaid and brought into compliance. They can submit a plan that will have the same value of the old grant and essentially changing the scope of their grant. The State will try to provide reimbursement funds sooner and expenditures for propagation of the grant (use & intent), the whole scope of the project. Yes, the State has been lax in the past with reimbursement payments, but is working on the issue and aiming for a turn-around time of 5 days.

- \* Open discussion regarding grant applicants.
- \* Mark MOVED "to allow for 50% upfront payment on SnowTRAC grants."
- \* Bruce MOVED "to table SnowTRAC 50% upfront payment until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m."
- \* Frank SECONDED.
- \* Mark WITHDREW his motion.
- \* Discussion.
- \* Motion PASSED without objection.
- \* Discussion on scope change is tabled until tomorrow at 1:30-2:15 p.m.

### Appointment of Advisory Board Members

Discussion on number of board members as stated by Director, Gary Morrison. Gary wants to see representation on this board be more area influenced. Future appointments to the board will be by area representation instead of organization affiliation. All members of SnowTRAC must be pro-snowmobiling. No term limits apply. However, the grant terms will be staggered. Reappointments are subject to the discretion of the Director of State Parks. The matter of alternates arose. Each board member should have an alternate to serve in their stead if they are unable to attend. Alternates must be presented and approved in advance of the meeting at which they will alternate for the regular member.

#### ORTAB

- \* no double funding
- \* 30% motorized
- \* 40% diversified multi-use
- \* receive copy of all SnowTRAC grant applications
- \* 15 Board members
- \* Letter of Interest to State Parks Director –December 1<sup>st</sup> deadline

#### Overall-

- \* Keep 9 Board members
- \* All Statewide At-large
- \* More telephonic meetings
- \* Letters of Interest to State Parks Director

Adjourn for Lunch @ 12:12 p.m.

Reconvene @ 1:30 p.m.

### Grant Application Scoring –Training

Introduction of Grants Administrator Joy Bryant-Dolsby

1. Review Grant Application

2. Review Grant Application scoring sheets
  3. Discuss Grant Cycle
  4. Discuss scoring procedure
  5. Discuss "conflict of interest"
- \* Joy –we want to make the process object not subjective. It needs to be fair and equitable. We need to provide the applicants with a description of the process and a scoring sheet as these may help them in writing their application and determining a scope they can accomplish.
    - public funds
    - public process
    - fair & equitable
    - as objective as possible
  - \* Matt –disagreed with the "conflict of interest" clause.

Currently, if a board member is a member of an organization applying for a grant they must declare their "conflict of interest" and remove themselves from the scoring and discussion of that particular grant. Open discussion regarding "conflict of interest" and grant scoring.

The combined grant application scores are calculated by combining each voting board member's scores then averaging that number by the number of board members scoring the applications. Grantees and the board member with a "conflict of interest" should be allowed to discuss the grant application with the scoring board members. Scoring sessions should be open to all to lobby for a grant application.

### Rundown of Scoring

- \* Applicants must answer all questions.
- \* Applicants must complete the entire application before their application is eligible for consideration and scoring.
- \* Applications must contain all necessary permission documentation from all involved landowners.

The board and the State (Grants Administrator) need to occasionally contact the authorizing landowners for verification that access is still permitted.

The board should contacts grantees to allow them to better inform the board members and help consider for award. How is it verified that all involved parties have been properly notified and necessary permission has been obtained and recorded? How far is the State going to take verifying that all points meet? Permission needs to be for the entire duration of the grant project. Also needs to be long enough for access to the project. In other words, if access permission only lasts as long as development takes no one will be able to utilize the improved areas/results.

Why are grantees given 2 years for their grant project? There were problems completing their projects under that amount of time. If they are unable to complete within the time frame they need to change the scope of the project.

Organizations applying for grants need to be considered. Some organizations are better suited than others to apply for and complete a project. There needs to be a consistent grant cycle. Stop letting grantees "off the hook" when they fall short. There should be a maximum on extensions of project time. Accountability is the issue. They need to underestimate themselves and their project/productivity goal. That way they are more likely to complete the project and if they fall short, prior to closure of the grant time they can approach the board and apply to re-scope.

Many areas suffer seasonal/weather-associated pit-falls, the board needs to provide some flexibility in these matters. They need to deal with it. A year could be good, it could be bad. They will need to comeback next year and apply again. There are many factors involved, we shouldn't close the door, doing this may cause applicants not to apply. There should be exceptions on a case-by-case basis and a limit to the grant cycle. For grant terms longer than 1 year, the grantees should be required to check-in and provide annual progress reports to the State/SnowTRAC Board. That would be very helpful, even quarterly reports.

The board should consider the State's position including administrative costs. What % of Samantha's time will be available for SnowTRAC? Samantha is still very new to this position and has been in training nearly since her hiring. She has yet to fully develop her position. Tina Long will be the Grant Administrator for SnowTRAC, Karen Husa is our Accounting Clerk and will be providing the financial support for SnowTRAC.

- \* The board would like to meet with Tina to become familiar with her and her involvement with SnowTRAC.
- \* They would also like to stay with a 2-year grant term.
- \* Grant applications concentrating on safety and education will remain at a higher importance level than all other grant applications.
- \* Need to check old meeting minutes for previous discussion regarding percentage designation.
- \* Question to change or leave Section III Support for Project, subsection C which currently reads:

-Project is consistent with management or land use plans approved by the local governing body or other lands uses or interests, and/or consistent with prevailing safety practices.

- \* Mark MOVED to remove Section IV subsection H. for Grooming, Development or Acquisition project –project will provide an important missing (trail) link or connection.
- \* Greg SECONDED.
- \* Discussion.
- \* Motion APPROVED without objection.

### 2005 Application Cycle

- \* Grant Cycle Timeline DISCUSSION
  - January 1<sup>st</sup> –Applications Available
  - April 1<sup>st</sup> –Application Due Date
  - May 1<sup>st</sup> –Applications Out to Board for Review/Scoring
  - Mid-May –Application Scoring Due
  - May 30<sup>th</sup> –Grant Awarding/Notification
  - July 1<sup>st</sup> –Funds Available in Bank
  - August 1<sup>st</sup> –Funds Available to Awarded Grantees

Close of meeting @ 4:00pm



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550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ste. 1980  
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Chair Marianne Beckham called meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Quorum present.

### Board Members Present:

- \* Greg Barclay –Soldotna
- \* Marianne Beckham, Chair –Anchorage
- \* Matt Divens –Fairbanks
- \* Bruce Friend –Anchorage
- \* Mark Wilke –Juneau
- \* Frank Woods –Dillingham

### Board Members Absent:

- \* Kenton Bloom –Homer (unable to contact)
- \* Christine Noakes –Big Lake (moved, no longer on board)
- \* Craig Seibert –Trapper Creek (medical emergency)

### Staff Present

- \* Margaret Brodie –State Parks Admin. & Grants Manager
- \* Samantha Carroll –State Trails Coordinator
- \* Michaela Phillips –Admin. Clerk II

### Old Business

Membership on board, appointment, is the board fully staffed at this time, is there a rotation. There needs to be a wider representation of the state through this board is desired. Currently, the board is at 8 members + staff. Missing 1 board member + TRAAK/ORTAB liaison. The TRAAK/ORTAB liaison will be a non-voting board member, thought they will help review & score grant applications. Re-appointment of board members and the number of board members is up to DNR –Parks. The State will solicit for board members soon to fill positions up at the turn of the year and wants a good representation across Alaska instead of organizational representation. All applications for board appointment need to be submitted to the Director no later than January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 for those positions expiring in January and March. What are the mechanisms of solicitation? Is it open solicitation area by area? The board will provide listings of contacts to staff, job descriptions for board members. Selection of board members needs to take into consideration the positions requirements regarding dedication of time, conflicts of interest regarding affiliation/association with clubs/organizations.

### Ethics

What are the board's feelings regarding ethics? The member declares their conflict of interest before they even handle the grant. Need to take into consideration that board members having a "conflict of interest" still represent an area and the interests of that area. We need to set limits on what is considered a conflict of interest. Will board members with a "conflict of interest" with a specific grant application be able to discuss the grant application with the other voting board members, since they can't score it, they can at least provide some backup about the project? What are the Attorney General's Guidelines? Board members should refrain from voting on specific grants.

- \* Samantha provided the board with copies of the State of Alaska's Conflict of Interest Guidelines which includes the State's description of "personal interest".
- \* Samantha provided Ethics forms for each board member to review and sign.

Equipment purchased through grant projects is property of the State, grantees may purchase the equipment at "fair market value" after 5 years.

The board needs to recognize the effort put forth by applicants just to apply.

- \* In the current grant cycle, which opened the beginning of September, applications are due December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

- \* The board needs approximately 2 weeks to review and score the grant applications.

Break @ 9:48 a.m.

Reconvene @ 10:00 a.m.

### Grooming Pool

The State uses old funds that have expired –roughly \$60k

- \* Who controls?
- \* How do they control?
- \* Where do the funds go?
- \* How much funds go out?
- \* Is there a set amount of funds available per area?
- \* Are the funds given to an area get taken back if say, no snow, or they are unable to use the funds in the timeframe given?

How do we determine the amount of funds given to an area? Who gets what and how much? The amount of funds received should be based on the number of riders/users in an area, urban vs. rural. Also, snowfall needs to be taken into consideration. Certain areas are affected differently by weather, variable cost by the type of equipment being purchased, distance of the trail. There should be a maximum a group can use per year. Don't want to see more funds going to just one area that will only benefit a small amount of users. The board needs to coordinate with the Park Supervisors to get a run down of needy areas/trails, etc. A standard needs to be set for the grooming pool. Will funds taken from the Grooming Pool be in the form of a grant or a contract? With grants the grantee chooses who does the work, where to buy the materials, etc. With contracts the State chooses by using the bidding process. We need to look at other organizations, entities, states, provinces. How did they accomplish what we are trying to accomplish? How do they manage these same projects? In Oregon the State owns all equipment and contracts out to specific groups to use the equipment and maintain trails. Will the State maintain and groom illegal trails? (NO) There are many unstable variables to consider. Do you pay by the hour or by miles groomed? What type of equipment is used to groom, snow machines or larger equipment? The board needs to decide the most important needs and let the State choose the contractors. Do we want to appropriate a specific dollar amount yearly to grooming trails? Perhaps SnowTRAC should apply to ORTAB for grant funding for the Grooming Pool, creating more funds for SnowTRAC. No equipment should be purchased with Grooming Pool funds. The Grooming Pool is a good opportunity to get a positive image of SnowTRAC out to the public. We need to look at other methods for getting SnowTRAC more money i.e. the tourism industry. How long does SnowTRAC have to allocate and spend these funds? SnowTRAC has 5 years after expiring the grant to spend these funds. Where is it kept? It is kept in the capital fund. Where does the money go if not spent? The funds are absorbed back into the State's General Funds if not used within timeframe. The board needs to pick one deciding factor to fund, start small and grow gradually. These funds need parameters, where does the State want to see this money spent i.e. private, park, public? These funds can be used on all legal trails.

- \* assign an area
- \* give the State parameters within an area and what needs to be accomplished
- \* try different areas alternately
- \* market our success

Pilot project. Cannot accept any grant applications from the same area that is receiving funds from the Grooming Pool. Perhaps we should notify statewide we are initiating a pilot program and let them come to us.

- \* Signs need to be posted stating that grooming of the trails was paid for with funds from the SnowTRAC Grooming Pool.
- \* Need maps showing good access, well groomed, legal trails.
- \* Failure can be transposed to update the pilot in the future and improve.

Boroughs may start stepping in and contributing funds or support.

- \* Mark MOVED "SnowTRAC recommend to the State to develop a Grooming Pool Pilot Project."
- \* Greg SECONDED.
- \* Discussion.
- \* Motion PASSED without objection.

Research is needed to help develop the Pilot Program.

- \* Frank MOVED "to amend the motion to recommend to the State to focus on the Mat-Su area including the drainages of the Yentna, Susitna, and Matanuska rivers and develop protocols and parameters with a minimum of monthly updates for the Grooming Pool Pilot Program."
- \* Mark SECONDED.
- \* Further DISCUSSION of Grooming Pool Pilot Program.
- \* Motion APPROVED without objection.

### Delegation of Funds

- \* administrative costs –currently the State receives 10%
- \* signage
- \* advertising
- \* grooming

How much money are we looking at? \$20k per year is paid to the State to cover administrative costs. This does not cover the total incurred expenses.

- \* Mark MOVED “the Board recommend to the State to spend the remaining un-appropriated grant funds on the Grooming Pool Pilot Project.”
- \* Bruce SECONDED.
- \* Motion APPROVED without objection.
- \* Grooming Pool Pilot Program needs to happen this season.
- \* State will do the footwork for getting the contract filled.

Adjourn for Lunch @ 11:32 a.m.

Reconvene @ 12:55 p.m.

### Equipment Cache

- \* All equipment purchased with State Grant Funds is State property.
- \* Other entities may utilize equipment for other grant projects.
- \* After 5 year the equipment can be purchased at “fair market value”.

After the grant project term is up, the grantee may provide the same service using the same equipment from the cache and provide progress reports on the usage. No grant funds can be used to purchase equipment. If all equipment purchased with grant funds is property of the State, what happens to the interests of the grantee that put up a percentage of the cost of the equipment to purchase at the onset of the grant period? We need to follow suit with other states that have developed snowmobile programs. Some states buy all the equipment then contract out for jobs to be completed with that equipment. Push purchases for larger/expensive equipment to ORTAB.

- \* Issue TABLED for later discussion.

### Snowmobile Registration

Registration is SnowTRAC’s sole source of revenue. Need to get the “customer” to want to register, also market what SnowTRAC and the State are doing with their money, and show them they are getting a lot of product for the price. The public does not want to pay the fees. More signs need to be posted showing exactly where and how the registration funds are being spent. Fish & Wildlife, Alaska State Parks, etc. need to be out enforcing the regulation for registration. Appeal to dealers to push the registration fee and work toward raising the price of the fee. DOT can provide a listing of all registered machines by area. Enforcement of the registration needs to include monitoring trails, stopping riders for verification of registration and citing those not in compliance. Re-registration of machines is a key issue. Perhaps can influence financial lenders and insurance companies to push them to register and maintain registration. Offer a rebate if they re-register and have dealers push the issue when machines are brought in for service. Need PSA’s, newspaper coverage, mass media faxes, etc. Clubs/organizations need to require members to register new machines and continued registration of old ones. Show the “customer” exactly where their money is being spent.

- \* Current fine for not registering machine is \$20.
- \* Need standard (DOT) regulations that include:
  - Registration
  - Certification
  - Fines
  - Speed Limits
  - Insurance Requirements
  - Age Requirements
- \* SnowTRAC Board is only an advisory board and does not make legislation

This is too big a project to be completed in 1-2 meetings; it might well take a couple years. Should the board be taking on this issue of regulations? Should it be a combined effort with ORTAB and any other involved entities? We recommend to the State to consider increasing fines for non-compliance, registration fee increases, and enforcement options.

- \* Fines do not go to SnowTRAC.
- \* Fees do go to SnowTRAC.

- \* Mark MOVED "to have SnowTRAC Advisory Board continue analyzing snowmobile rules and regulations and make recommendations for changes."
- \* Greg SECONDED.
- \* Motion APPROVED without objection.

The board needs to meet and invest the time to complete the task. The motion needs a timeframe. This is a great opportunity to define the concept. The Board has completed most of the legwork, just need to coordinate all the information. Take 2 years with quarterly meetings to complete this. Could do within 10 meetings. Including legislation of other states with developed programs will make the job easier. Two 2-day sessions over a 2-month period

- \* Meeting I
  - o Safety & Equipment
  - o Insurance
- \* Meeting II
  - o Speed Limits
  - o Licensing
- \* Meeting III
  - o Fines
  - o Fees
- \* Meeting IV
  - o Rules of the Road

### Travel Policies & Procedures

- \* Samantha provided an updated copy of the State's regulations on travel.
- \* Michaela provided reimbursement requests for all Board members in Travel status to review, sign and return.

### Tabled Issues

- \* Continued discussion on grant funds regarding advance and reimbursement.
- \* Continued discussion on scope changes and length of grant terms. Scope changes will be made on a case-by-case basis with analysis of the grantee's performance, capabilities, etc. The grant administrator will make the determination.
- \* Continued discussion on the equipment cache.

### Staff Stuff

- \* Board members will provide Samantha with information for a database for future public contact.
- \* Collect travel and ethics forms from Board members.
- \* Mark welcomed all staff and expressed his appreciation for their hard work these 2 days of meetings. Unanimous concurrence.
- \* Frank MOVED "to adjourn."
- \* Matt SECONDED.

Meeting adjourned @ 4:00 p.m.

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Michaela K. Phillips