



Snowmobile Advisory Council Law Enforcement & Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 1st, 2021

Via Zoom

Committee Members Present - Committee Members Present: Sam Landes- Chair, Joel Enking, Mike Holden, Don Mroteck, Erica Keehn, Bob Lang, Dale Mayo

Other Council Members Present: Lee Van Zeeland, Sue Smedegard

DNR staff attendance: Marty Stone, Jillian Steffes, Cathy Burrow, Annie Loechler

Tourism staff attendance: Drew Nussbaum

Public attendance: Nathan Matters, Dave Newman, other members of the public

1. Call to order at 7:05 PM

2. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting

Motion to approve September 2020 minutes by Mike, 2nd by Erica. MOTION PASSED

3. Agenda Repair

- Move public comment section to #5

Motion to move public comments from end of agenda to spot #5 by Mike, 2nd by Joel. MOTION PASSED

4. Committee Chair Comments – Sam Landes

- Lots happening, see agenda items to follow

5. Public Comments

- **Dave Newman (AWSC)** – Will weigh in with permission of the Committee as needed.
- **Holly Tomlanovich** – Thanks for willingness to discuss increasing aid to local law enforcement.

6. DNR Law Enforcement Report - Marty Stone, Law Enforcement OHV Administrator

- **Fatality Report** – Four fatalities this year, 3 on a public trail and 1 on open water. Three of the four did not have public safety class. Still under investigation, but speed likely an issue with many.
- **Operation Think Smart Before You Start** – Increased Law Enforcement presence on the trail. Initial feedback on the operation has been positive.

7. Snowmobile LE Issues on the Legislative Front

(1) Chapter 350 Road Right of Way Law Change Proposal

- Language still being drafted but coming together quickly. DOT involved. Hoping to have it introduced this session and go into effect next year.

(2) Updated J2567 Test and Relevance to Sound Enforcement

- Existing test in S. 350.095(2)(d) noise requirement threshold is difficult to perform in the field, and hard on the machine. The revised references will be equivalent at lower RPMs and easier to perform in the field. S. 350.095(2)(d) needs to be changed, from 88 decibels to 82 and reference 2020 standard rather than 2004.
- S. 350.095(1)(b) Noise Level requirements needs to be changed to “no machine may be modified or operated... “ with the addition of the words “or operated” as well.

(3) Trespassing Issues:

- Especially a problem lately in NW Wisconsin. Landowner involvement important to enforce trespassing issues....need landowners verification that the individual did not have permission to leave the trail. Verifying open/close trail dates also important. Having a written open/close trail policy helps local law enforcement issue citations. Having specific language in the land use agreements and easements with the landowner as far as open/closed trails.
- Use of Trail Cameras and Social Media has been helpful in identifying problem riders, will continue to be utilized.
- Wisconsin Snowmobile Laws Pamphlet (DNR) – Trespass content and references to open/closed trails could be expanded upon, Marty will look into this.
- New Hampshire law indicates riders must stay on the trail or have written permission from the landowner. Could this be an option in WI?
- Folks at the county level need to keep an eye on the [Travel Wisconsin](#) content to verify it is accurate and up to date. Drew Nussbaum can make updates at any time. Accurate and engaged snow reporters always needed.

(4) Snowmobile Safety Course Discussion

- Online Courses for Under 16 Years of Age
 - Wisconsin requires in-person class. If a minor completes an online course & gets certified in another state such as Illinois, Wisconsin must accept it. Hopefully this problem will be short-lived in time, the lack of in-person class opportunities here in Wisconsin due to COVID is what drove some parents to take the online class but they would have preferred to take a hands on class.
 - Instructor certification will be automatically renewed.
 - Suggestion to start classes in August, before kids get busy with school.
 - Still support for hands-on experience for kids ages 12 to 16.
- A Virtual Class (such as Zoom) would meet the requirements of in-person classroom instruction *IF* it were a real time interactive class (not a pre-recorded video). Not sure how to do the test in this manner yet – Drew Nussbaum has a suggestion of Zoom and Adobe Connect, he had some experience with that.

(5) Increasing Aid to Local Law Enforcement

- Some communities expressing concern that current funding is insufficient. With increased revenue from trail pass sales, perhaps an increase is in order? This issue should also be brought up to the Finance Committee.
- What has the pro-rate been in recent years? Somewhere between 50 and 64% annual pro-rate.
- Marty, Sam, etc will put together info, understand the demand and the available funds to date to come up with a suggestion and future recommendation, to then FWD to the Finance Committee.

(6) Placing “No Snowmobiling in Area” Signs by DNR on Sugar River Trail Ext in New Glarus

- Snowmobiles aren't allowed on the trail going into town, but the signs say “Snowmobiles prohibited in this area”, which misleading as snowmobiles are permitted in the right-of-way to access fuel. DNR Property Manager has been contacted but no satisfactory response. Marty will contact Parks to express the concern.

(7) Seasonal Safety Campaign

- DNR Message out 12/3/20 – Message was positive and well worded.
- Tourism Promotion out 12/2/20 – Brochures being circulated and posted on local FB pages. Developed collaboratively with DNR, Tourism, and Local Law Enforcement.

(8) Safety Concerns around Signing Issues on DNR Properties

- DNR Parks does not allow for named businesses on wayfinding signs (advertising) on their trails/properties. But specific landmarks (near Hilltop Bar) may be important for safety if a rider gets lost and/or needs assistance.

Motion to recommend that the law be changed to allow for business names be permitted on brown & white signs on public DNR properties by Don, 2nd by Mike. MOTION PASSED

- Tourism liaison Drew Nussbaum also supports this recommendation.

8. Committee Member Issues/Comments

Don Mrotek – January 23rd in Sawyer Co, 5 wardens, county rec officer and USFS law enforcement were patrolling. 134 contacts, 22 warnings, 5 citations. All that, and only one complaint. Went well.

Mike Holden – Positive change to the perception and presence of law enforcement on the ground.

9. Items for next meeting

Next anticipated meeting is the funding meeting in late August

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Joel, 2nd by Mike. MOTION PASSED