



**Snowmobile Advisory Council**  
**Law Enforcement & Safety Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Monday, August 30th, 2021  
Weston Lanes and Mountain Bay Conf. Center, Weston, Wisconsin  
And via Zoom

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

Other Council Members Present: Bev Dittmar, Abby Haas, Gary Hilgendorf, Sue Smedegard, Lee Van Zeeland, Sue Smedegard, Leon Wolfe

DNR staff attendance: Marty Stone, Jillian Steffes, Annie Loechler, Kurt Byfield, Faith Murray, Jeff Pennucci

Tourism staff attendance: Drew Nussbaum

Public attendance: Dave Newman, other members of the public

1. **Call to order 15 minutes after Infrastructure Committee adjourned.**
2. **Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting**

**Motion to approve February 2021 minutes by Dale, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mike. MOTION PASSED**

3. **Agenda Repair**

- None

4. **Committee Chair Comments – Sam Landes**

- Lots happening, see agenda items to follow

5. **DNR Law Enforcement Report - Marty Stone, Law Enforcement OHV Administrator**

- As of 03/20/2020 there were 19 fatal snowmobile crashes during 2020 in Wisconsin
  - 11 occurred on public trails
  - 5 occurred on frozen waters
  - 2 occurred on roadways
  - 1 occurred on private property
  - 12 of the 19 crashes involved Alcohol. Speed continues to be contributing factor as well.
- Wisconsin DNR partners with the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs by working together and collaborating on safety messaging, law & rule changes, emerging trends, snowmobile safety training, and expanding snowmobiling in Wisconsin. This is a great partnership in which we've seen great dividends.
- We initiated "Think Smart Before You Start—Snowmobile Safety Campaign" in January 2021 to coincide with International Snowmobile Safety Week. Its intent is to promote safe snowmobiling and to get wardens & local law enforcement out onto the trails.
  - We intend to conduct the campaign again in 2022.
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> campaign in 2021 was a great success
    - Over 100 wardens & local LE participated
    - Officers patrolled 2,400 miles of trails & 248 frozen lakes
    - 1500 snowmobilers were contacted
    - 350 warnings were issued
    - 48 citations were issued, including 2 OWI arrests
    - No trail pass and trespass were the 2 most common violations observed
    - Wardens were distributing free Culvers ice cream coupons to reward safe behavior
- We are also partnering the Department of Tourism to spread snowmobile safety messaging.
- Safety messaging put forth by Wisconsin DNR include:
  - Zero alcohol. No drinking before or during your ride keeps you safe on the trail.

- Slow down. Speed is a contributing factor in nearly all fatal snowmobiling accidents. Drivers should proceed at a pace that will allow ample reaction time for any situation. Drive at moderate speeds, and drive defensively, especially after sunset.
- Stay on marked trails or, where allowed, on the right shoulder of the road. Be alert for fences, tree stumps and stretched wire that may be concealed by snow.
- Avoid traveling across bodies of water when uncertain of ice thickness or water currents. Rapidly changing weather & moving water in streams and lake inlets also affect the thickness and strength of ice on lakes and ponds. Snow cover can act as a blanket and prevents thick strong ice from forming.
- Never travel alone. Most snowmobile accidents result in personal injury. The most dangerous situations occur when a person is injured and alone. If you must travel alone, tell someone your destination, planned route, and when you will return.
- Carry a first-aid kit and dress appropriately, your first-aid kit should include a flashlight, knife, compass, map, and waterproof matches. Always wear a helmet with goggles or a face shield to prevent injuries from twigs and flying debris. Wear layers of water-repellent clothing and make sure you have no loose ends that might catch in the machine or tangle in equipment.
- This August we conducted sound level enforcement training for 30 conservation wardens & a county patrol deputy.
  - This training was all inclusive and included snowmobile sound level training and testing standards.
  - Training included sections on snowmobile mufflers & their modifications.
- A total of 186 in-person snowmobile safety classes took place in 2020.
  - 216 in-person classes were held in 2019
  - 93 in-person classes have taken place to date in 2021

- **Students certified**

	In-Person	Online	Total
2021	2,021	6,222	8,243
2020	3,358	6,479	9,837
2019	4,208	5,785	9,993
2018	3,687	4,245	7,932

## 6. Snowmobile LE Issues on the Legislative Front

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

- Remove language requiring min 40' distance from roadways for two-way trail after darkness. Headlights must be dimmed within 500' of passing anyone on the roadway. Testimony was given on August 31<sup>st</sup>. May get to the floor for voting in Sept or Oct.

### (2) Updated J2567 Test and Relevance to Sound Enforcement

- Same bill as above.
- 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.
- S. 350.095(2)(d) noise requirement threshold changed from 88 decibels to 82 and reference 2020 standard rather than 2004.

### (3) Trespassing Issues:

- Trails need to be well marked so it's clear if rider is on or off the trail
- Needs to be clear if the trail was open or closed. Typically county makes announcement/press release and is reported on news. Should be sufficient.
- Trail cams may be helpful as well. They can be placed on public land, but need to have owner name & address on the camera, can't be around campgrounds or bathrooms. Some other requirements listed in hunting regs on how long you can leave them in place, etc.
- Social messaging outreach about the importance of staying on the trail, public shaming of perpetrators?

#### (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.
  - AWSC still recommends to parents that they enroll kids in in-person classes in WI.
- WI could do 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). Test has to be administered “live”, maybe via Google Classroom or Adobe Connect?

#### (5) Increasing Aid to Local Law Enforcement

- For 2020, the pro-rate for aids to local law enforcement was 54% to a total 45 counties. Counties spent a total of \$730,311 but DNR only has \$396,000 available. 67% the year before (46 counties), and 81% (55 counties) the year before. Downward trend in the ability of the program to cover local law enforcement expenses. And fewer counties participating in recent years – counties may not be investing in the local law enforcement (highest year was 62 counties. 2014 was the last year that the program was able to reimburse at 100% (34 counties)
- Request for report of which counties applied, for how much, etc.

**Motion to support increasing Aids to Local Law Enforcement to \$800,000 by Mike, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Don. MOTION PASSED**

- The allocation is set by spending authority, would need legislative action to increase that cap. Maybe incorporate in the next state biennial budget?
- ORV Council and WATVA also working to increase the ATV/UTV contribution to this program, no success yet.

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

- **Sugar River Trail** extension into the Village of New Glarus currently does not allow for snowmobiles to use the trail per the current master plan - snowmobiles need to be able to access fuel. Snowmobiles have used this section of trail for 20 years. Advocates are working on getting the master plan changed to add snowmobiles. Discussions are ongoing between DNR and Village.
- **Blue Mounds State Park** – master plan was approved with snowmobile trail in its historic location, as proposed in 2010. Friends group filed judicial review request. As of now, no injunction, should be open for use this coming winter.

#### (7) Seasonal Safety Campaign

- DNR Message will continue *Think Start Before You Start*, will begin work in the next month.

#### (8) Safety Concerns around Signing Issues on DNR Properties

- DNR Parks has indicated they want to work with each property/trail, etc. Handle on a case by case basis at the local level.
- Sam intends to reach out to Parks for more info on how this will be handled for this coming season.

#### 7. Public Comment

- None

#### 8. Committee Member Issues/Comments

**Don** – Would like guidance on how to proceed with signage of named businesses on DNR property (#8 above).

**Bob** – Good work on the Blue Mounds issue, Sam. It’s been a long effort.

**9. Items for next meeting**

- None

**10. Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn by Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dale. MOTION PASSED**