

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Motorized Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes



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| ORDER OF BUSINESS | 09/14/2021 | 6:30 PM | Zoom Video Conference |
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

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| MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY | Chair Dave Larson at 6:30 |
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B. ROLL CALL

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| ATTENDEES | Stephanie Blazich, Dave Larson, Ronald Krueger, Daniel Beauchamp, Al Marotz, Robert Budworth, Wayne Schmidt, Michael Kohl, Steve Draginis, Brett Weir, Steve Gehrke |
| EXCUSED | Brad Martinson |
| UNEXCUSED | Richard Marti, Rick Koenig |
| GUESTS | DNR: Kari Lee-Zimmermann, Martin Stone, Jillian Steffes, Brigit Brown, Dan Yankowiak; Organizations: Randy Harden, Rob McConnell, Dave Newman; Resolution Author Joel Taylor |

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

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| DISCUSSION | Chair Larson would like flexibility to allow movement in agenda. |
| ACTION | Motion to allow movement by Wayne Schmidt, second by Ron Krueger, motion carries |

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

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| DISCUSSION | Chair read Committee Mission Statement: The mission of the Motorized Recreation Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to provide citizen input on the use and management of motorized recreational equipment and devices on public and private lands and navigable waters, on behalf of all those who utilize these resources. The committee will review current and proposed policies for motorized recreation equipment and devices on public and private lands and navigable waters and provide recommendations that take into account the wide range of public and private property user's interests. Further the committee will explore opportunities to engage and collaborate with existing motorized focused organizations and will promote the safe and responsible use of motorized recreation. |
| ACTION | Motion to leave as is by Steph Blazich, Second by Ron Krueger, motion carries |

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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| DISCUSSION | Randy Harden, speaking as a certified safety instructor, spoke on concerns with resolution #550221. Concerned about safety of children and other passengers being on a machine not designed for multiple riders; restricts active riding. |
| ACTION | N/A |

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. CITIZEN RESOLUTION

JOEL TAYLOR, AUTHOR

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| DISCUSSION | <p>Citizen Resolution #550221 – allowing multiple riders on ATV’s for outdoor recreation: It was recently made illegal to have more than one rider on ATV’s in Wisconsin. This change has had a dramatic impact on the ability of people to pursue outdoor recreational activities. It is no longer legal for a parent to take their child out on a four wheeler to go ice fishing, bait bears, check trail cameras, check traps, etc. If a family can’t afford to buy a new UTV or ATV designed specifically for two passengers their only option is to walk. For years one of the primary focuses of the DNR, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, and nearly every outdoor or conservation group has been on recruitment and retention of young people to the outdoors. This new change is in direct opposition to that goal. The DNR has no data on how many, if any accidents on ATV’s were the result of or having a passenger or if it was a contributing factor. They have never collected that data. There are many other factors that they do have data on such as alcohol use, excessive speed, reckless driving, etc. that account for nearly all injuries or deaths on ATV’s. There is no reason that the DNR cannot change this rule to allow for a passenger on an ATV for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and trapping. They have other exceptions for helmet use for example. Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the DNR, Legislature, and the NRB to allow passengers on ATV’s for recreational activities?</p> <p>Joel Taylor: This rule is taking away the ability to get kids and others interested. Feels there is no data to support the problems or potential risks. Believes we are now putting a burden on everyone to get extra machines. He doesn’t want to break the law but would like to have his kids participating in the sport. Want to also keep people safe but thinks there is fair way to make this rule work.</p> <p>Motion to ask for clarification on this citizen resolution by Brett Weir, second by Ron Krueger – Motion carried: Discussion followed</p> <p>Ron Krueger: a rear seat attachment provides an opportunity to bring riders but is not allowed. Not sure where problem is coming from.</p> <p>Al Marotz: collecting incidents from safety courses and the ones reported are very minimal. ATV, UTV, and Boating only track casualties not injuries.</p> <p>Stephanie Blazich: Parents had to buy a new machine because of this rule.</p> <p>Brett Weir: Were safety officers contacted on this issue? Joel Taylor: Spoke to someone in the DNR, no data mining has ever been done to factor this change.</p> <p>Wayne Schmidt: can we get clarification on an aftermarket 2-UP seat? Martin Stone: These are clipped on the back of a single person machine. They are not to be used when vehicle is in motion. If the ATV/UTV is not meant to carry a passenger, the seat is void and illegal.</p> <p>Steve Draganis: Can’t have a rule with grey area. New machines are being made to carry multiple people and opening the road to unsafe practices & a world of problems.</p> <p>Steve Gehrke: Grandkid’s love riding and being outside but with the law in place, believes we are going to push the public away from the sport.</p> <p>Al Marotz: Can people be towed on a toboggan behind a ATV/UTVs? A 12-15 can ride on the road with a parents. Is that the same Machine? Marin Stone: Yes, there are no restrictions on towing people on toboggan behind ATV/UTVs. Also, yes kids in this age range can ride on the roads but they must be on their own machine from their parents and within talking range.</p> <p>Mike Kohl: Single rider can see the whole trail and his machine. Back riders can’t see what’s a head and can’t be seen by driver while moving. Leads to tipping issues.</p> <p>Ron Krueger: Would like the resolution amended to say machine that secondary seat will fit on.</p> <p>Martin Stone: All fatalities are tracked and injuries are attempted to be monitored, especially when a passenger was involved. Watch if passenger behavior is the cause of accident if possible.</p> <p>Daniel Beauchamp: Feels putting around wont hurt anyone. It’s the irresponsible drivers/riders that are going to hurt people.</p> |
| ACTION | Motion to advance by Brett Weir, second by Ron Krueger, motion passes on roll call vote; 6 to 4. |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: DAVE LARSON & AL MAROTZ DEADLINE: N/A | |

B. DNR LIAISONS REPORTS

MARTIN STONE, BRIGIT BROWN, JILLIAN STEFFES

Martin Stone, Law Enforcement: Increase in off highway use since 2000. This past year had 38 ATV/UTV fatal crashes; 18 ATV, 19 UTV – this is a crash increase from years before. Trying to expand safety and usage. 28 fatal snowmobile crashes. 12 of which involved alcohol. Implied the think smart before you start campaign at the start of 2021. In partnership with County Sheriff’s Departments around the state, the Department of Tourism, and the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs, the Division of Public Safety and Resource Protection launched Wisconsin’s first annual **Think Smart Before You Start** campaign on January 22, 2021. The campaign was a weekend-long effort directed at snowmobile safety messaging, heightened enforcement and increasing our visibility to the public. Focusing on snowmobiles, the **Think Smart Before You Start** campaign is part of the larger **Saving Lives Initiative**, which is an over arching public safety campaign for all recreational vehicle types (ATV/UTV, boat, OHM, snowmobile). The goal of the **Saving lives Initiative** is to increase awareness for the safe and responsible use of all recreational vehicle types. A combined total of more than 1,500 snowmobilers were contacted by patrol officers. Over 350 warnings and 48 citations were issued during the course of the weekend, including 2 OWI arrests. Trail pass/registration violations and trespassing were the most common violations encountered.

Brigit Brown, Rec. Trails Management: Dan Yankowiak is transitioning into working with the WCC. Excited to announce that draft ATV/UTV Trail Guidelines will be out for public review this fall. DNR will also be updating administrative code regarding property management, going through administrative process for the next few months and then expect the timeline to be approximately as follows

NR 45/DNR land management admin code updates

Public hearing on scope statement – November 9, 2021

- DNR drafts rules – Feb 2022-Feb 2023
- Public hearings on rule proposals - July/Aug 2023
- New rules effective – July/August 2024

- Policy on closures of department lands, in whole or part, for non-species reasons (focused on protection of public health, safety, and welfare and resource and property protection)
- Master planning (link to DNR property master planning: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fl/PropertyPlanning/index>)
 - Southwest Savanna (group of all DNR properties in the southwest part of the state) – several motorized-related issues
 - Yellowstone: we had proposed an ATV campground to connect to the ATV route and trail system in the area. Low level of public support, support instead for having this area be a wildlife area.
 - New Glarus spur, request for snowmobile use
 - Expect to have this plan go to the NRB in December
 - Also have in progress 2 landscape-level plans in the central part of the state around Devil’s Lake and to the west, and Rib Mountain SP
- Blue Mound SP: The draft master plan prepared by the department was approved by the Natural Resources Board in May. It includes several improvements to non-motorized trails, including rerouting several sections of single-track mountain bike trail and adding Class 1 electric bicycle use to existing bicycle trails. It also includes a snowmobile trail that would connect club trails north of the park to the Military Ridge State Trail, primarily utilizing a former service road through the valley in the eastern part of the park known as Pleasure Valley. This trail will be located east of the cross country ski trail network, and the hiking/snowshoe trail segment presently utilizing the former service road will be relocated.

A request for a contested case hearing with the department and a petition for review of the Plan with the Dane County Circuit Court. Both petitions are presently pending.
- Two upcoming DNR property planning efforts, we expect will kick off early 2022:
 - Western Coulees and Ridges, and North Central Forest (see map at link above for the areas that are covered)

Facilities:

- DNR properties can’t apply for ATV/UTV grant funding. Instead we have a small allotment set aside in state budget. E.G. existing allotment doesn’t cover even the UTV per mile maintenance funding. So we made an effort to increase the amount available to state properties and were successful via a set aside in the current state budget.
- Implementation of new trails and routes at NHAL, Woodboro State Wildlife Area
- Major maintenance projects at Flambeau River SF, Tuscobia ST
- Funding is also being used to increase regular maintenance at properties such as Black River SF, Richard Bong SRA, Flambeau, and Tuscobia. We’re also partnering with the local ATV club on the Buffalo River ST and DNR engineers to test dust abatement products. Welcome Dan Yankowiak!

Jillian Steffes: NR Grants – offer grants to partners. April 15th deadline. Funds come from the registrations. Fall and winter is when grants will be distributed. Counties can request additional funding if need be. This year, type A or B snow groomers must carry GPS units for reimbursement.

DISCUSSION

ACTION

N/A, Information only.

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE

DEADLINE

C. WATVA CURRENT ISSUES**RANDY HARDEN**

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| DISCUSSION | New bill for road routes & speed limits. Towns can make their own speed for ATVs/UTVs on their roads. OWI bill in the works: trying to tie all off road vehicles together for OWIs. Dirt and town roads are having issues with donuts & destruction of property. Amend reckless behavior to be held liable for damages of person/property. Also working on updating the rules to included off road vehicles can be legal emergency vehicles. Working on increasing the rate per mile funding. Still in need of more wardens and law enforcement since usage of machines is so inflated. Working on making singage to inform the masses. |
| ACTION | N/A, Information Only. |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |

D. ORV COUNCIL**ROB MCCONNELL**

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| DISCUSSION | Randy and Jillian thoroughly covered his remarks. |
| ACTION | N/A, Information Only. |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |

E. OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOCYCLES**BRYAN MUCH**

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| DISCUSSION | No report as Bryan was unable to attend |
| ACTION | N/A |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |

F. AWSC/SNOWMOBILE RECREATION COUNCIL**DAVE NEWMAN**

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| DISCUSSION | Currently we have 603 clubs protecting the program. This year, they approved almost all projects. 450 miles of new trails were put in. Recommended more funding for snowmobile law enforcement. Bill moving forward for 2 way travel on trails within 40' of roadway. Been working with the DNR and DOT for noise levels on sleds. |
| ACTION | N/A, Information Only. |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |

G. FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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| DISCUSSION | Nothing is currently planned. Zooms seems to be best option for meetings in the foreseeable future. |
| ACTION | N/A |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

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| DISCUSSION | <p>Ron Krueger – Great meeting& look forward to the future. Thanks Kari. Daniel Beauchamp – Great meeting. Al Marotz – Participation was great, WATVA meeting/ride participation. Wayne Schmidt – concern for people being screwball and trails being closed. Increasing enforcement is a must and education is key. Respect other riders. Michael Kohl – Hands on courses update? (these are being considered still) Brett Weir – Facebook admin and editor list emailed out (breakdown of who does what). Would like all videos turned on. Steve Gehrke – Great meeting. Dave Larson – Thank you & commitment is appreciated. Thank you all liaisons and committee members.</p> |
| ACTION | N/A |

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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| MEETING ADJOURNED | 8:50 PM – motion by Brett Weir, second by Ron Krueger, passed unanimously. |
| SUBMITTED BY | Stephanie Blazich, Committee Secretary |
| DATE | 09/26/21 |