



Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2026

DNR Service Center, Rhinelander, WI and via Zoom

Council Members Present: Rob McConnell (Chair), Mike Biese (Vice Chair) (via Zoom), Ed Slaminski, Daniel Thole, Dave Traczyk, Jim Wisneski

DNR Staff: Jillian Steffes, Pat Anderson (Zoom), Kurt Byfield (Zoom), Chris Halbur (Zoom), Jeremy Holtz, Jeff Pennucci (Zoom), Sarah Steinbacher

Public: Members of the public

1. Call to order – 10:00 AM by Rob

2. Agenda Repair

- None.

3. Approve Minutes

Motion to approve minutes of the previous meeting by Bobby, 2nd by Jim. **Motion carries.**

4. Chair Report – Rob McConnell

- Changes with NR 64 were implemented, but a few items were changed that perhaps caused other complications, such as adopting DOT's window tint details caused problems with some Polaris and Can-am machines. Looking into grandfathering those in future legislation. Police officers have been checking and enforcement, but it is not currently DNR's intent to try and enforce.
- Give the financial shortfall, an increase to registration fees and non-resident trail pass sales would be very useful to continue to maintain the off-road trail systems. Nothing is likely to happen on that front until 2027, after elections settle.

6. Public Comments

- None

7. DNR Report – Jillian Steffes

- HANDOUTS
 - Spreadsheet of FY26 Grant Requests
 - Copies of Grant Applications Available Online
- Maintenance agreements for the 2026-27 season should go out the door this week.
- Snowmobile did a preliminary review of grant applications in June. SNO significantly oversubscribed as well.
- SNARS for ATV; Hoping to get a statutory change to allow us to use ATV funds for development and maintenance of a maintenance tracking system, to replace paper and PDF logs. Greater efficiency – rates set, calculations automatic, no math errors, etc.
- ATV Maintenance Tracking Guide now available on our website. Explains eligible and ineligible costs.

- Bridge Inventory nearly complete. Looking like 330 to 350 bridges on the ATV trail system. That number could climb as counties remember 'oh yeah, that snowmobile bridge is also a winter ATV bridge'.
- The 'surplus' referred to in the past has been slowing drawing down. We've been awarding close to our max allowed in grants, and Law Enforcement & Safety has been performing more training and safety campaigns (they utilize the safety funds). There is still a surplus but it has been slowly utilized. Ultimately an increase in ATV/UTV registration fees may be needed to support the ongoing grant program and law enforcement/safety activities.
- This year's grant requests include \$3.1 million in maintenance and \$5.4 million in rehab/development. We won't know our starting balance til mid August, but our available funds LAST year for rehab/dev was \$3 mil.

8. Information and Action: Trail/grant issues

a. Action required on grant, storm damage and/or amendment requests

- None

b. Review ATV/UTV grant applications for completeness; request additional information if needed.

- Questions on individual projects recorded in separate document (spreadsheet of projects).

9. Council Member Matters

- Rob – Tri Co meets every month, open to the public. Most of the content at previous meetings was minor issues like corn planted in the ROW, a tree cut down in the ROW, etc.
- Jim – What rate would a powered hedge trimmer use? Answer: 914

10. Housekeeping Matters

- What is the trend on spending maintenance grants? Are they spending all of it, or returning funds? Jillian will look to provide numbers.

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Bobby, 2nd by Mike. Motion carries.
