



Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 27th, 2025
Dale's Weston Lanes, Weston, Wisconsin
And via Zoom

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

DNR Staff: Jillian Steffes, Chris Halbur, Pat Anderson, Kurt Byfield, Jeremy Holtz, Jeff Pennucci

Public: Members of the Snowmobile Council (Holly Tomlanovich, Mike Holden, Don Mrotek), and members of the public

1. Call to order – 9:00 AM by Rob

2. Approval of previous meeting minutes

Motion to approve previous minutes by Dave, 2nd by Jim. MOTION PASSED

3. Agenda Repair

- Law Enforcement Report moved to the top of the agenda. Jacob Holsclaw presents his report, which is recorded under item #6 below in the minutes.

4. Chair & Vice Chair Report

- **Rob McConnell**
 - Ride Safe Foundation, WATVA, DNR and others have partnered to really push the safety education. Recent Ride Safe event in Ashland was attended by over 1,000 kids – focus on get trained, wear the safety gear. The pros wear that gear, you can too. Ride Safe events this year in WI, MN, IOWA, Missouri, Maine, Utah, etc. Focusing on all power-sports, not just ATVs.
 - Midwest Outdoor Heritage Expo at MacKenzie Center is another good event.
 - Some counties have been doing good outreach events as well in conjunction with EMTs and other emergency services events.
 - WATVA is trying to get the Ch 20 spending authority increased, but hasn't had a lot of support from legislators. But now that we have 3 consecutive years of being oversubscribed, hopefully we can get some traction.
- **Mike Biese**
 - Lead by example. The adults should model the best safe practices to the younger generation.

5. Public Comments

- Larry Zabelle from Three Lakes, WI
 - Long time ATV enthusiast, concerned about wear and heavy use/impact on trails from larger machines and increased use. Opening new trails should not negatively affect or displace other users.
- Dave Kafura (WCFA)
 - Trails need to be built in a way that allows for sustainable maintenance. Especially with the consistent increase in UTV sizes.
- Mike Holden (AWSC)
 - We're working on legislation to increase registration and trail pass fees to bring more funding into the program. Also, kudos on the Let's Ride Expo, great event.

6. DNR Report

- **Jillian Steffes (Grants)**

- HANDOUTS
 - ATV/UTV Registration Summary for Last 5 Years
 - Non-Resident Trail Pass Sales – 5 Year Summary
 - ATV/UTV Trail Aids Program Financial Statement
 - Available Funding for 2025-26
 - Spreadsheet of FY26 Grant Requests
- Attended International Association of Snowmobile Administrators (IASA), lead a discussion on ATV/UTV use of snowmobile trails. Many other states/provinces uncomfortable with shared trails, but in our experience in the northern counties, it's been quite successful. Beneficial to getting additional funding sources on the trail. A [study from 2006 from IASA shows that the impact to groomed surfaces](#) exists for review as well.

- **Jacob Holsclaw (Public Safety and Resource Protection)**

- In 2024, 13,483 students were certified in ATV/UTV safety. 199 in person classes were held, and we have approx. 300, certified instructors. Many thanks to those instructors for their efforts.
- More than half a million registered ATVs/UTVs. UTV growth exceeding ATV growth. In 2004/2005, total ATV registration was 200k a year, and UTVs weren't registerable.
- 28 ATV/UTV fatalities as of today.
 - 23 of those were UTVs, and 80% were not wearing a seatbelt
 - 85% were not wearing a helmet.
 - 69% of crashes on public roads (legal routes or otherwise).
 - Alcohol or drugs in over half the crashes
 - Most are in their 40s (legally not required to complete a class)
- Last year, 32 out of 40 of the operators of fatal crashes had not completed a safety class.
- 5 fatalities last winter were UTVs going through the ice. Pivoted safety messaging to focus on UTVs on ice. Many of those UTVs are comparable to a compact car in weight.
- "Think Smart Before You Start" all hands on deck safety campaign. Reach out to recreators to remind them about safety *before* there is an accident.
- Currently working to update NR 64 for ATV/UTV programs. Hasn't been updated in years, doesn't even mention UTVs.
- \$1.3 million available for Aids to Local Law Enforcement funding, around 40 sheriff's departments are applying for those funds. Current pro-rate around 85%.
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving has starting focusing safety messaging on boating and ATVing.
- DNR has sponsored a 15 second video at the Kwik Trip pumps on ATV/UTV safety.

7. ACTION ITEM: Review of and funding recommendations for grant applications

- See meeting attachments for detailed list of projects and motions.
- Many good projects that we didn't have funds for at this time.

8. ACTION ITEM: Review of and adoption of equipment rates

- Snowmobile Council suggested some changes to the equipment rates. Rob McConnell and Jim Wisneski were involved in the discussions on the changes.

Motion to adopt the rates as adopted by the Snowmobile Council for the 25-26 season by Dave, 2nd by Bobby. MOTION PASSED

9. Council members' matters

- Round table discussion about UTVs that are not registerable in Wisconsin. Dealers should either not be offering those machines for sale, or if they do, make sure the buyer knows they cannot be registered in Wisconsin. Some machines were registered when the owner or dealer falsified information on the registration form, but the VIN number includes a clue as to what make/model the machine is, and DNR is following up to find those and notify the owner that the registration is revoked.

10. Housekeeping matters

- DNR will be collecting a bridge inventory on the ATV/UTV trail system, so we know what's out there.
- Likely will have a meeting sometime in the winter.

11. Adjourn

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