



Snowmobile Recreation Council Groomers on Routes Ad Hoc Meeting Minutes

April 9th, 2021
Zoom Meeting

Council Members Present: Dale Mayo (Chair), Bob Lang (Vice Chair), Bev Dittmar, Mike Holden, Sue Smedegard, Andy Malecki, Gary Hilgendorf, Joel Enking, Don Mrotek, Sam Landes
DNR staff attendance: Jillian Steffes
Public attendance: Nathan Matters, Dave Newman, other members of the public

1. Call to order at 9:00 A.M.

2. Agenda Repair

- None

3. Discussion: Reimbursement of groomers traveling on road routes

Only time spent grooming funded trails is technically eligible for reimbursement. But in practice, it may have been common for groomers to make a note of how many hours they were out with the groomer, even if that time included some short segments of road route connecting pieces of the funded trail. That time may have simply been traveling on the route, or grooming the ditch.

Groomers that are accurately and honestly reporting time spent on road routes are losing out on reimbursement in comparison to clubs who claim they are on a funded trail when they are in fact on a road route. The GIS data *should* show when they are on a route, but some county data includes errors and incorrectly indicates groomers are on a “trail”. Council members propose the inconsistency by paying something for transportation of the groomers on those road routes that are integral to the funded trail.

Ad hoc committee recommends **groomer time gets paid as non-grooming transport time when the groomer is traveling on a route that is an integral part of a single funded trail, at a rate of 50% of the assigned groomer rate**. For example, if grooming Trail 8, the section of road has to be in between two portions of funded Trail 8. Segments of road at the end of a funded trail, leading to services or the groomer barn, etc would not be eligible.

Future Discussion Item: Would the 15 mph speed limit still be enforced?

Next Steps – Nathan at GTS and Jillian at DNR will investigate the logistics of this. It may involve Nathan, Jillian and county coordinators reviewing those segments of trail identified as route to determine which are “integral”, and coding those segments accordingly, so that the GPS unit will automatically and correctly add the data to SNARS. Implementation date will depend on how much time this review and coding would take. May not be available in time for 2021-22 season.

4. Discussion: Two Quotes for Bridge Projects

Council policy has been that applicants must obtain two quotes/estimates for bridge structures when applying for a grant, and the grant will be based on the lower of the two estimates. This works as a cost control measure, preventing any one contractor from inflating the project budget. The grant amount is posted and public record, so bidding may be less competitive if a higher grant than necessary is awarded. Recently, some applicants had indicated difficulties in obtaining two estimates, and it had been suggested that they could use a single estimate if they documented their efforts to obtain two.

In the discussion, ad hoc committee members felt the Council should continue to enforce the two quotes policy. If a grant request comes in with only one quote, the Council should defer it until a 2nd quote can be obtained.

Additionally, any New Miles requests should identify any new-bridge needs at the time of application. NR 50.09 (4) (g) states that a trail should be in the funded system for 10 years before it receives rehab funding. That should also apply to development of new bridges – if a bridge is needed where there hasn't been one before, that request should be included in the New Miles application, or else wait the 10 years.

5. Discussion: Equipment and Rates

FYI, DOT rates on many pieces of equipment went DOWN for 2021. This won't necessarily affect Snow/ATV equipment rates as the Council sets the rates for commonly used equipment. Ad hoc committee recommends the established rates remaining unchanged.

Request from club to consider a tracked UTV as class B rather than class C. Discussed. Committee agreed that rate of class C was most appropriate.

It has been brought to the attention of Council members that some groomer drags are not compliant with the definitions of the class they are claiming. Getting paid more than they are eligible for. This could result in a substantial monetary loss from the snowmobile maintenance program. Drags with wings may be a particular problem - wings either not in use, or not meeting the minimum dimensions.

When a non-compliant unit is found, that info should be shared with the county coordinator and DNR. The groomer rate moving forward can be corrected to avoid future overpayment.

Ad hoc committee discussed keeping an eye on groomer drags to verify dimensions, and also discussed potentially instating a moratorium on including the "wings" measurement from the drag measurements. Further discussion needed among full Council.

If a grooming unit has multiple drags that may change the rate, how is that handled in SNARS with the GPS unit? The groomer will have one assigned class/rate, but the club can go in and CHANGE the unit class (to reflect the correct drag, such as Big Red 1 and Big Red 2), can also adjust time (add comment) and trail name to fix blanks.

6. Adjourn