



Snowmobile Advisory Council Law Enforcement Committee Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2026

Arbor Vitae Town Hall, 10675 Big Arbor Vitae Dr, Arbor Vitae WI and via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Sam Landes - Chair, Mike Holden, Bob Lang, Don Mrotek, Sue Smedegard, Holly Tomlanovich, Erica Volker

Other Council Members Present: Lynsey Burzinski, Ann Degenhardt, Joel Enking, Abby Haas, Gary Hilgendorf, Tanner Hiller, Tara Krall, Andy Malecki

DNR/Tourism staff attendance: Jacob Holsclaw, Jillian Steffes, Drew Nussbaum (Tourism), Pat Anderson, Kurt Byfield, Chris Halbur, Jeremy Holtz, Annie Loechler, Jeff Pennucci

Public attendance: Lori Heideman, Dave Newman and other members of the public

1. Call to order following Infrastructure

2. Acceptance of minutes of previous meeting

- Deferred till next meeting.

3. Agenda Repair - None

4. Committee Chair Comments

- **Sam Landes** - Dave, Lori, Sam attended the ACSA meeting and ride in Watersmeet last week. Discussion about fines and their affect. Fines aren't high enough. How are fines changed? They are in statute - Jake will look into the process and get back to us.

5. DNR Reports and Updates – Jacob Holsclaw, LE OHV Administrator

- Wardens and other law enforcement have been working much more this year
- Last weekend and this coming weekend – “Sled Safe” efforts
 - We will conduct a survey of all participants to see numbers of contacts, arrests for intoxicated operation etc.
- This year we have seen 8 snowmobile fatalities – 10 for the season
 - Alcohol and speed appear to be factors in most of the crashes – pending
 - Average age this season – 50 / only 1 female
- **Much effort has been spent on snowmobile and ice safety messages this year**
 - No deaths from going through the ice – possible fatal near Madison with ATV and ice fisherman – undetermined at this point.
 - Woman’s learn to snowmobile event. RW Robin Miller

#10	12/13/2025	Winnebago / Clayton	Public Trail	33 / F	Collision with a fixed Object	No	Yes	Pending
Synopsis		Operator/victim failed to negotiate a turn and struck a fence.						
#11	12/22/2025	Iron / Oma	Public Trail	58 / M	Collision with a fixed Object	No	Yes	Pending
Synopsis		Operator / victim failed to negotiate a curve and struck a tree.						

**2026 Snowmobile Fatal Crash Summary
As of January 30th, 2026**

#	Date	County/C-V-T	Location	Age / Gender	Accident Type	Safety Certified?	Helmet Used?	Alcohol Involved/BAC
#1	1/10/2026	Sawyer / Spider Lake	Public Trail	29 / M	Collision With Fixed Object	Yes (IL)	Yes	Yes / Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator was traveling on groomed trail and struck a power pole off the trail.								
#2	1/13/2026	Oconto / Spruce	Private Land	15 / M	Rollover	Pending	No	Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator rolled the snowmobile near a field / ditch line on private land.								
#3	1/16/2026	Iron / Oma	Public Trail	52 / M	Collision with Person	Pending	Yes	Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator was operating middle snowmobile in group of three. Victim was struck by rear snowmobile in group.								
#4	1/17/2026	Oneida / Minocqua	Public Road	76 / M	Collision with Vehicle	Pending	Yes	Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator was attempting to cross a state highway and struck by a vehicle. Crash occurred on 1-03-26 and victim died from injuries on 1-17-26.								
#5	1/23/2026	Sawyer / Hunter	Frozen Waterway	50 / M	Collision With Fixed Object	Yes (MN)	Yes	Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator was last in a group of five snowmobiles. Victim failed to negotiate a slight curve on marked trail on the Chippewa Flowage, striking several trees.								
#6	1/27/2026	Iron / Sherman	Frozen Waterway	61 / M	Collision with Fixed Object	Pending	Yes	Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator was traveling in a group of snowmobiles and hit a ice heave.								
#7	1/29/2026	Douglas / Godon	Public Trail	68 / M	Ejected	No	Yes	Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator was ejected from snowmobile on public trail.								
#8	02/03/2026	Jackson /Garfield	Private Land	62 / M	Ejected	No	No	Pending
<i>Synopsis</i> Victim / operator was ejected from snowmobile after jumping the road ditch.								

- Some department updates include:
 - Issued 12 new snowmobiles to wardens around the state this FY.
 - Continue to upgrade and reduce the age of our fleet
 - This week in Boulder Junction conducting snowmobile EVOC training with 12 new wardens
- On the legislative side we are waiting on a vote next week reference and ATV omnibus bill:
 - Included in this bill was adding snowmobiles as “authorized emergency vehicles” for law enforcement, fire etc.

6. Strengthening Trespassing fines and updating laws

- The current fine of \$230 is not a deterrent. Need to revisit this at the next meeting.

7. Updating Trail Signing Handbook

- Deferred to next meeting

8. Public Comment

- None

9. Committee member reports, comments and items

- Noise concerns – after market manufacturers have a switch to turn it down for LE...this is not an out, they can be ticketed for modified exhaust as long as it’s not louder than original. LE looks for switch/lever.

10. Items for next meeting

- Trespassing fines
- Signing Handbook

11. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Don, 2nd by Erica. MOTION PASSED