



Snowmobile Advisory Council Law Enforcement Committee Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2025

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, Tara Krall, Andy Malecki, Dale Mayo, Sue Smedegard

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

Motion to approve previous committee meeting minutes by Holly and 2nd by Mike. MOTION

3. Agenda Repair - None

4. Committee Chair Comments

- **Sam Landes** - We'll discuss trespassing on item 6 below. Jake will report on fatalities. More in Michigan this year.

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

- DNR Wardens and rec deputies have been patrolling in the limited counties that are open.
- This year we planned two consecutive weekends of “Sled Safe”. This past weekend over February 1st and this coming weekend 7th, 8th, and 9th. Hope is to catch more snow conditions. Maximizing enforcement over these weekends if possible.
- Partnering again with MADD to message riding sober on a snowmobile. This was a group effort with several surrounding states including Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois. Second season of doing this.
- Department has made a big effort for ice safety and attempted to include snowmobile and ATV safety on ice whenever possible. Even with the colder temps, there have been several fatalities from breaking through ice or driving into open water. Highest I can remember in the same season. 1 snowmobile and 4 UTVs. Factors are still under investigation as blood results can take several weeks.
- Renewing our efforts for snowmobile and ATV sound enforcement training with wardens and sheriff's departments.

Snowmobile

#	Date	County/C-V-T	Location	Age / Gender / Residency	Accident Type	WI Safety Certified?	Helmet Used?	Alcohol Involved/BAC
#1	1/18/2025	Ashland / Ashland	Frozen Waterbody	20 / M	Drove into Open Water	Pending	Pending	Pending
		<i>Synopsis</i> Operator/victim was traveling on Lake Superior and entered open water approximately 100 yards off the break wall.						
#2	1/22/2025	Iron / Mercer	Public Road	83 / M	Collision with a Fixed Object	Pending	Pending	Pending
		<i>Synopsis</i> Operator/victim was traveling on a roadway adjacent to the snowmobile trail at a high rate of speed and struck a snow berm at the end of the road.						
#3	1/25/2025	Vilas / Plum Lake	Frozen Waterbody (marked corridor)	58 / F	Collision with a Fixed Object	Pending	Pending	Yes / Pending
		<i>Synopsis</i> Operator/victim was in a group of four snowmobiles traveling across Star Lake at a high rate of speed. The operator passed several other sleds in the group to take the lead. Operator/victim was then observed to miss the boat landing exit and crashed into a tree on shore.						
#4	2/1/2025	Forest / Nashville	Frozen Waterbody	25 / M	Collision with a Fixed Object	Pending	Pending	Yes / Pending
		<i>Synopsis</i> Operator/victim was traveling on Crane Lake and struck small trees and the shoreline embankment.						

UTV

#	Date	Location	Incident Type	Vehicle	Speed	Outcome	Status	Status	Status
#1	1/6/2025	Marquette / Westfield	Frozen Waterbody	UTV	82 / M	Broke Through Ice	Pending	Pending	Pending
Synopsis		Single operator/victim left the shore of Lawrence Lake on a UTV to ice fish and broke through the ice.							
#2	1/12/2025	Oconto / Lena	Route	UTV	49 / M	UTV Rolled Over	Pending	No / No	Pending
Synopsis		Operator/victim was traveling on a route and lost control on the snow-covered road. The machine subsequently rolled over and the operator/victim was ejected.							
#3	1/25/2025	Waukesha / Pewaukee	Frozen Waterbody	UTV	61 / M	Broke Through Ice	Pending	Pending	Pending
Synopsis		Initial reports indicate an UTV with a single operator/victim broke through the ice. Shortly after, a dive team located the missing person, who was transported to the hospital and pronounced deceased.							
#4	1/30/2025	Kenosha / Twin Lakes	Frozen Waterbody	UTV	70 / M	Broke Through Ice	Pending	Pending	Pending
Synopsis		Three occupants were traveling in an UTV on Lake Elizabeth while ice fishing. The UTV drove into open water, which was believed to be pooled water on top of ice. The operator/victim was recovered on 1/31/2025.							
#5	2/1/2025	Fond du Lac / Lake Winnebago	Frozen Waterbody	UTV	68 / M	Broke Through Ice	Pending	Pending	Pending
Synopsis		An UTV was operating on the frozen waters of Lake Winnebago as it approached a crack in the ice with open water. The UTV failed to stop and entered the water. The passenger/victim was recovered from the water unresponsive and was later pronounced deceased.							
#6	2/4/2025	Door / Gardner	Route	UTV	67 / M	UTV Rolled Over / Ejected	Pending	No / No	Pending
Synopsis		Operator/victim was traveling on a snow packed route when the machine left the roadway, slid sideways into the ditch, and rolled on its side.							

6. Snowmobile LE Issues on the Legislative Front

(1) Strengthening Trespassing fines and updating laws

- Getting the landowner out of the fray
 - Language in the land use contract can address this.
- Updates on audio monitoring
 - On private land, it's fine with (written) owner permission. Uncertain about public land, Jake will do additional research.
- Current fine is \$232.50, what should it be?
 - DOT law has treble (triple) damage fines for damage to roads. WATVA is looking at treble (triple) damage fines as well for damage to trail.
 - Local ordinance ticket can include a higher fine.

(2) Substance of periodical Safety Course Test

- Updates to courses often focus on hunter ed related content. Kimberly in Dane Co area is doing a good job of including snowmobile updates. Jake will see if she can write up a summary to share with others. Snowmobilers invited to share updates with the course leader, as they may be more up to date.

(3) Yellow Arrow sign size

- Mike is concerned that the current 12" x 6" arrow is too small, not visible enough. A warning sign about upcoming turn should also be used. If arrow size is changed, it also needs to be updated in NR 50 and the signage handbook.

Motion to recommend changing the yellow arrow from 12" x 6" to 18" x 9" by Mike and 2nd by Don. **MOTION FAILED**

- May need to review signage handbook. Is it OK to use a chevron here? Is that clear in the handbook? Also need to make use of 'turn ahead'.

7. Public Comment

- None

8. Committee member reports, comments and items

- None

9. Items for next meeting

- Trespassing info will be sent out to committee members and chair/vice chair
- Committee members should review the signing handbook and see if updates are needed.

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Holly, 2nd by Abby. MOTION PASSED