

Meeting Minutes

Governor's Snowmobile Advisory Council
February 16, 2018 ~ Holiday Inn Hotel, Spearfish, SD

Call to Order

Chairman Russ Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Scott Erstad, Bruce Hintz, Dave Kennedy, Al Nagel, Russ Johnson, and Gary Ulmer.

Members Absent: Todd Wilkinson

Game, Fish and Parks Staff Present: Katie Ceroll, Matt Snyder, Shannon Percy, and Ryan Raynor.

Adoption of the Agenda

Erstad made a motion to add "Governor's Snowmobile Ride" to the bottom of the agenda. Nagel seconded to adopt the agenda as amended. **Motion Carried.**

Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Ulmer and was seconded by Kennedy to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2017, meeting. **Motion Carried.**

Legislative Update

Ceroll updated the council on Senate Bill 41 brought forth by the Department of Revenue. This bill's intention is to remove language which referred to licensing snowmobiles for two years. Five or six years ago boats and snowmobiles went from a two-year registration to a one-year registration to allow all these vehicles to be licensed with the new online program. This was simply a clean-up bill and has been moving through the legislative body with no resistance.

Black Hills Update

Percy gave a brief update on the snowmobile season stating while things started pretty slow in December and January the snow conditions have consistently improved in February. The trails for the holiday weekend are in great condition. Percy indicated the trail side businesses have been happy and it has been a few years since he's been able to say "no bare spots anywhere on the trail system." Nagel asked Percy how the equipment has been holding up. Percy stated the last differential went out a few weeks ago but that cat was under warranty and is up and running.

Percy continued his Black Hills update referring to a couple images in the council's packet in relation to the use of trail cameras. Percy stated a few issues popped up while going live with these camera images. Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) coordinated with BIT to resolve these issues as quickly as possible, even though it took a few weeks as servers crashing over this time period were frequent. Raynor stated one last concern still exists on a case by case basis, where a person may have to clear their web browsers internet caches and cookies for the images to update appropriately. Hintz asked how you resolve this problem state wide. Raynor stated while this issue was just resolved, we've decided to deal with it on a case by case basis. Raynor also stated they don't think many people are seeing this issue after asking various GFP employees to look at these images on different computers. The council asked that GFP put a press release out to further promote these cameras, to which GFP agreed. Percy stated GFP hopes to provide one if not two more cameras next year, and stated these cameras would have to be solar powered.

Fat Tire Bikes

Percy gave a brief update on the 1.5 mile shared trail with Fat Tire bikes located off the Big Hill parking lot. Percy stated staff from the Black Hills National Forest along with GFP put up multi-use trail signs to inform both user groups and no issues have arisen with this short section of trail.

SDSU Veteran's Affairs Snowmobile Ride

Connie Johnson, Director of the SDSU Veteran's Affairs Office, contacted GFP in December about playing a role during a 3-day retreat over the Martin Luther King Day weekend. Their intent is to bring around 24 people annually to this retreat and would like to go snowmobiling one of the days. The other two days they would be on Terri Peak and possibly the last day visiting some other destinations in the Black Hills. At that time GFP decided, without the council's approval, to allocate the funds necessary to rent 12 sleds. Due to the timing of the request and trying to rent sleds on short notice for the holiday weekend, the actual ride was not going to take place during their first ever winter retreat. Percy did bring the group of veteran's and current service men/women to Hardy Camp to show them the equipment and discuss the operations.

Game, Fish and Parks wanted to bring this event in front of the advisory council and state associations with the hopes of partnering the fundraising efforts through clubs in the state. Nagel asked if we would anticipate trying to rent more than 12 sleds if this event continued to grow. Raynor stated the event would always be capped at 12 and everyone agreed groups larger than this would be tough to manage with the majority of participants being inexperienced riders.

While many suggestions were provided and many opportunities were presented, all council members agreed this is an event they would like to see come to fruition. Game, Fish and Parks staff will work with the state association and various clubs across the state to help raise enough money to rent 12 sleds annually.

East River Update

Raynor stated this season has the least amount of grooming that's taken place east of the Missouri River since he's been involved with the snowmobile program. Beresford has put on about 35 hours on their privately owned groomer, Sioux Falls was able to groom a 40-mile loop on their trail system and conditions have since deteriorated.

FY '18 Budget Review:

Raynor shared a budget summary with the council which showed expenses through February 03, 2018. **Total expenditures** for the snowmobile program total **\$540,552** out of \$1,329,199 budget authority.

- Salaries and Benefits - \$170,496
- Travel - \$5,855
- Contractual Services – \$51,962
- Supplies and Materials – \$64,776
- Grants - \$47,811
- Capital Assets - \$199,652

Hiles asked if the travel budget allowed GFP to travel to this year's International Snowmobile Council (ISC) hosted in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Raynor stated it's always his intent to travel to the ISC, but many times out-of-country and out-of-state travel is halted depending on many factors within state government. Ceroll asked Raynor to provide the necessary information to start the approval process.

FY '18 Revenue Report:

Raynor gave a brief review of revenue received through January 31st, 2018:

- Gas Tax - \$399,245 (11,407 registered sleds for FY18 which runs July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018)
- License Fees - \$56,114
- 3% Excise Tax - \$74,091
- Interest - \$15,878
- Other - \$5,021
- **Total - \$550,349**

Safety Report

Raynor mentioned 13 accidents have been reported with no fatalities in the state. Raynor stated of the 13 accidents 8 were rental sleds.

No snowmobile accidents have been reported on the eastern side of the state.

Six men, women, and children had taken the safety course and have received their certificates.

Governor's Snowmobile Ride

Percy gave a brief description of the ride selected for tomorrow's event, which included leaving Hardy Camp, going through the back door, take 1 to 1S, hop on 12 to 12B, 12B will take us to the midway point and a stop at the warming shelter, head back North on 12B, to 12, to 11 and into Hardy Camp on trail 1. Ulmer asked who would be attending from the legislative body. Raynor stated five dignitaries plus guests are scheduled to attend, which is down from the previous year.

Nagel asked GFP if the council would have the authority to bring on a non-voting member, speaking on behalf of the Youth Empowered through Youth in Snowmobiling (YETIS). Two goals exist for this group, the first is to give the youth an in-depth understanding of how the total snowmobile program is organized, starting from the local clubs through the International. Secondly, YETIS is considered a leadership training program for young snowmobilers. As dedicated volunteers are getting older, our goal is to train the younger members to take over leadership roles to keep organizations strong and continue to be advocates for snowmobiling.

GFP staff will look into this opportunity and have an answer during the May meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 12th, 2018, at the Capitol in Pierre.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Erstad and was seconded by Hintz to adjourn at 7:09 p.m. **Motion Carried.**