

# **Governor's Snowmobile Advisory Council Minutes**

November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, at the Day's Inn, Brookings, South Dakota

## **Call to Order:**

Chairman Russ Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

## **Roll Call:**

Members Present: Bruce Hintz, Russell Johnson, Dave Kennedy, Al Nagel, Gary Ulmer, and Todd Wilkinson. Members Absent: Scott Erstad. Game, Fish and Parks staff present: Katie Ceroll, Bob Schneider, Al Nedved, Matt Snyder, Shannon Percy, and Ryan Raynor.

## **Adoption of the Agenda:**

A motion was made by Nagel and seconded by Hintz to adopt the agenda as amended. **Motion Carried.**

## **Approval of the Minutes:**

A motion was made by Wilkinson and seconded by Hintz to approve the minutes of the August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, minutes. **Motion Carried.**

## **2017-2018 Snowmobile Trails Map:**

While no significant changes were made to the map besides pictures, Percy reminded the council of the reroutes that took place in the fall and the reroutes were minimal and small in trail length. Percy indicated the reroute on trail #7 by Tomahawk Country Club was not approved. Percy told the council he has to work with DOT to figure out where exactly where the trail section will go. DOT is working on the damage in the right of way.

Percy mentioned that vendors were down from last year, one being Big Bear who had around eight sleds in the Lead area.

Wilkinson asked if any trails were affected by rare species as Washington was currently reviewing legislation which impacted protected wildlife, plants, and animals. Percy stated while he has seen a few restrictions here and there, nothing that impacts the trail system negatively. Typically he see's restrictions in the springtime if at all.

## **Black Hills Update:**

- **Fat Tire Bikes**

Percy reminded the council that fat tire bikes are not allowed on the snowmobile trails because they are a wheeled vehicle and the U. S. Forest Service (FS) has an order in place during the winter time which restricts wheeled vehicles from the snowmobile trails. One option would be to change this order to allow fat tire bikes on the trails. The second option would be to designate separate routes for the fat tire bike community and let them groom the same trails. Based on a meeting from earlier in the year, Percy stated many routes were found and being reviewed which would keep Fat Tire Bikes off the designated trails in most cases. One route that could possibly be shared is a section of trail off the Big Hill parking lot. The trail would extend about two miles from the parking lot and then turn north, while snowmobilers turn south. The FS would sign this multi-use trail accordingly and they are grooming the Big Hill Ski Area for fat tire bike trails as well. Percy stated parking could be an issue but overall he was very pleased with discussions about Fat Tire Bikes.

- **Groomer School**

Groomer School held annually at Hardy Camp and Trailhead Lodge will be on November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>. Percy invited all of the East River Clubs that are interested to attend and to let Ryan know if they are attending.

Percy reminded the council that the new staff from Track Inc. would also be there.

- **DOT Camera Update**

Pictures were provided to the council which showed a progress of the camera installation over the weeks prior to the meeting. Percy stated the intent next week is to come back the following week to actually install the tower, now that the footing was poured. Other locations are still being reviewed but the camera that will go up by Big Hill parking lot will have to be a solar powered camera since no electricity exists in the area. Game, Fish and Parks will also be able to utilize current images that DOT has from Savouy and Hardy Camp for the trails conditions page.

Wilkinson asked what is being done with the data collected. Raynor indicated the data from the camera and sensor collecting weather related data may be used by other agencies such as DOT or Public Safety. Raynor stated any camera put up by GFP will more than likely have some of the data being shared to other agencies.

### **East River Update:**

- **County Signing In the Right of Way** – Raynor showed a colored map which reflected what counties and the year those counties will be scheduled to get new county and township road signs installed. Some of the counties already done have seen signs installed in weird locations including signs right in the middle of the trail corridor. Raynor stated the DOT grant coordinator considered the snowmobile trails when the grant was written and when placing these signs. However, these signs are installed by contractors and some areas could see a negative impact to snowmobile trails.

Duane Sutton mentioned that various agencies have complained about the signing in Brown County. Discussions with the Brown County Superintendent have been positive and indicated that if the contractors do not go back out to correct these concerns, staff from the county would do so. Some counties do not have a designated team to address signing issues so different counties may see different results.

Wilkinson commented about the safety of snowmobilers and legality of clubs signing around these specific scenarios that exist. Raynor stated signing standards changed a few years ago, to allow single blazers to mark the corridor, with a slow sign ahead of that blazer. The single blazer would be placed beside the sign in the middle of the trail and it is up to the snowmobiler on which side to go around. Raynor stated some instances might require the trail to go completely around the sign onto the shoulder of the road depending on the situation, but clubs should take each instance and sign accordingly.

After further discussion, Raynor stated he will work with the clubs and the county highway departments to see if poorly signed counties are willing to go out and move signs which negatively impact the trail

system. Raynor will ask them to keep this mind when signing the trail system in the future.

- **East River Trail Signing Status** – Raynor wanted to remind the council that evaluations will be handled differently this year and in the future. Local park managers were doing trail inspections and due to their lack of involvement in the snowmobile program, asking them to perform such an important task was not fair to them or safe for the program from a liability standpoint. Now, the trails coordinator and a few park rangers will perform all trail inspections similar to the Black Hills program.
- **Sno-Cat Acquisition and Transfer** – Raynor indicated the groomer from Watertown would be surplused this season. Wilkinson asked if the funds made from this sale of the groomer were put back into the Snowmobile Trails Fund and Raynor confirmed that they were. Johnson reminded Raynor of the drag in Beresford which may require a surplus, unless other drags were in worse shape.

Ulmer asked if the projected budget could be repeated as some members in the audience were not at the last meeting. Raynor reviewed the three-year revenue and project expense update that was presented at the August meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup> of the Governor's Ride at 6 p.m. located at the Holiday Inn in Spearfish.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Kennedy and was seconded by Ulmer to adjourn at 10:49 a.m. **Motion Carried.**