

**SnowTRAC Board Meeting**  
**April 19, 2002**  
**Anchorage City Hall**  
**Draft**

Meeting commenced at 9:37am, by chair Marianne Beckham, quorum present

**Committee members present:**

Marianne Beckham, Chair - Anchorage  
Kenton Bloom - Homer  
Lee Johnson - TRAAK Board Liaison - Fairbanks  
Christine Noakes - Big Lake

Greg Barclay - Soldotna  
Bruce Friend - Anchorage  
Mark Wilke - Juneau

**Committee members absent:**

Craig Seibert - Trapper Creek  
Frank Woods - Dillingham

**Staff present:** Jim Renkert and Jennifer Cook

**Visitors:** Howard Davis (Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers), Joe Guanna, Paul Prusak (DOT Fairbanks) and Sara Doyle (Land Design North)

There were no proxies or amendments.

Motion passes for approval of minutes from January 25, 2002 meeting with two corrections.

**Agenda Additions/Revisions**

Mark Wilke wants to add resolution in support of House Bill 397(Licensing Bill). Now is number 11.5 on the agenda

No other changes to agenda. Joe Gauna may come in and give a presentation regarding Broad Pass. Will be under public comment section.

Motion passed to accept the revised agenda.

**SnowTRAC Committee Operating Procedures**

Jim Renkert discussed his additions:

1. Paragraph 2, Specific Objective and Purposes of SnowTRAC - add to last sentence "to help Alaska build and maintain a statewide snowmobile trails system, and to promote statewide snowmobile safety and education".
2. Paragraph 3, Membership - added to the first sentence "appointed by the Director, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Six of the nine members will be selected from names submitted to the director by the Alaska State Snowmobile Association (ASSA) and the Alaska Snowmobile Representative's Alliance (ASRA)".
3. Paragraph 22, Adoption and Amendments - added "Director, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the SnowTRAC Committee". Before it only read SnowTRAC Committee.

Lee Johnson questions the word committee in paragraph 20; the word committee is not understandable. Mark Wilke questions who can assign a proxy in paragraph 9, Proxies. Lee Johnson says there are two levels of alternate, one ongoing that would be able to vote and the other, who just shows up in replacement who can't vote. Jim Renkert will send the draft electronically. This will be on the next agenda to do a final adoption.

**SnowTRAC Committee Term Links**

Jim Renkert reported on when each member was appointed and when their term will expire. Jim stated that under the operating procedures, we want three terms to expire a year. Marianne Beckham asked the board if there is anyone who does not wish to be reappointed, none spoke up. Jim states that if you cannot fulfill your term and you resign that the term length stays, it goes with the term not the person. Marianne then asked if there was anyone being proposed that would not be able to serve for their term, none spoke up.

Motion by Greg Barclay: To approve term limits as the way they are written. Second Kenton Bloom. Everyone agreed. Motion carried.

Discussion on the maximum number of term lengths you can serve. If you don't have a term limit, it's harder to add one in later. Mark Wilke said, "You should never have a volunteer resign. "

Motion by Greg Barclay: Moved to limit terms on the board to three terms of three years apiece, total of nine consecutive years. Second Bruce Friend.

Discussion: Marianne Beckham changed the motion to serving on the SnowTRAC Committee be restricted to nine years. Marianne made an amendment that states three terms, three years each, one seat not to exceed eleven years. Marianne stated the motion made by Greg Barclay on term limit for SnowTRAC would be three consecutive terms of three years each in one seat subject to approval by the director of State Parks and the committee, second by Mark Wilke. Motion carried unanimously. Mark makes motion that this gets added to the operating procedures. Will be added under the membership paragraph.

**Election of Officers**

Discussion on which officers need to be elected. Chris Noakes nominated Marianne Beckham to be chair, Marianne accepted. Marianne nominated Mark Wilke to be vice chair. Mark accepts, then declines and states he would be a chairman for legislative issues. Mark nominated Greg Barclay as Vice Chair. The nominations on the table are Marianne Beckham as Chair, Greg Barclay as Vice Chair and establishing a legislative committee chairperson as Mark Wilke. No objections. Positions stand at one year.

**Staff reports**

Committee member packets were handed out that included an agenda for today's meeting, travel authorization claim form, request for reimbursement, Snowmobile Trails Advisory Committee Resolution 2002-02, Draft Operating Procedures, SnowTRAC membership list, Ethics Disclosure Form, Ethics Information for members of boards & commissions (AS 39.52), 2002 Snowmobile Trail Grant Instructions, Appendix A 2003 Standard Provisions, Policies & Procedures Supplemental Provisions draft, and DMV vehicles registered in 2001 by government boundary.

**2000 Snowmobile Grant Status:**

Alaska State Parks, Hatcher Pass Snowmobile Brochure - finally making progress.

Trail Mix & Juneau Snowmobile Club, Lawson Creek Bridge - need to get amendment done so they can move forward. Voted on it in January to improve change in project. Jim needs to write up policy.

Alaska State Parks, Kroto Creek Trailhead, Petersville Road - Jim was at the trailhead two weeks ago. It is nice to see the snowmobile registration fee signs in use.

Mountaineering Club of Alaska, Eklutna Cabin - Has all their stuff in, ready to close out.

EagleSong Lodge, Sleeping Lady Trail - has all their stuff in, looks like it is close to being closed out.

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ASSA Snowmobile Trail Inventory, statewide - still do not have ASSA person for the interior. Howard Davis says they will have a meeting on Monday night. Marianne shares the information on the person she is requesting. Matt Divenn lives in Fairbanks. He is a member of Fairbanks Snow Travelers and ASSA, works for Prince Cruise Lines, and has a degree in finance. He and his wife are active snowmobilers; wife is teacher at Fairbanks North Star School Borough. Marianne spoke with him and he is willing to serve if ASSA appoints him. Discussion opens up on having him as President of Snow Travelers and on ASSA, which will be a conflict. He would have to declare conflict of interest when it came to voting.

2001 Snowmobile Grant Status:

Fairbanks Snow Travelers/Northern Lights Snowmobile Club, FNSB Borough wide Safety & Education Program - Jim received videos yesterday and has not had a chance to review them yet.

White Mountain Volunteer Fire Department, Snowmobile Shelter Cabin Refurbishing, White Mountain - have requested reimbursement. Jim states that Parks is behind in processing the reimbursement. (Greg Barclay has a conflict with the reimbursement process, there are small organizations/non-profit groups out there and they can be in a financial bind, there needs to be a way to help the process. Greg states this is a yearly problem with the reimbursement process. Lee suggests that SnowTRAC needs to send a letter to Jim Stratton to develop a back up on the process of having payments done in a timely manner).

Copper Country Snowmobile Club, Trail Grooming and Signing, Gakona - Jim is not optimistic that this project will get done.

Big Lake Chamber of Commerce, Trail Grooming, Big Lake - extended a year.

Anchorage Snowmobile Club, Trail Grooming - Eklutna Lake doing very well.

Lake Louise Snowmobile Club, Trail Surveying - nothing to report.

2002 Snowmobile Grant Status:

Back Country Avalanche Awareness & Response Team, B.A.A.R.T., Mat-Su Borough - all done, have submitted progress report, being processed for reimbursement.

Fairbanks Police Department & Snow Travelers, Borough Wide Safety & Education Program - received an advance on their grant. Saved a life this winter!

Caribou Cabin Hoppers, Nodwell Groomer Purchase, Clam Gulch - got an advance, and purchased their groomer.

2001 City of Wasilla Grant Request. - got one-year extension till March 31, 2003. Discussion opens on the letter to get another extension. The board's feelings all around is that if they want another grant they need to re-apply. The board also wants to hear a formal action on what Jim Stratton has to say. Mark Wilke brought up discussion on whether or not the board sends out a letter on extensions and how long the grantees have to finish the project. This topic was talked about at a previous meeting. Lee Johnson suggested for future meetings, the past minutes and resolutions be brought to review if we have any questions. Jim state's that this topic needs to be put in the policies again. Need to have some type of language added to the grant documents about extensions just to clarify so they understand the reference frame, that the money could be used somewhere else.

Motion by Mark Wilke: Moved that SnowTRAC recommend DNR deny City of Wasilla request for second extension based on the length of the extension, seconded by Greg Barclay. Unanimously Agree motion passes.

**b) Travel reimbursement**

Please sign TA's and submit them to Jim Renkert, and mail in original receipts with request for reimbursement form. Mark Wilke and Lee Johnson need to send back reimbursement along with receipts.

**c) 2001 Snowmobile Registration**

Reviewed Vehicles registered in 2001 by Government Boundary and broken down by community. Jim reported that there were 38,000 registered snowmobiles last year, which is up from 33,000 the year before. Mark made a comment that the first year the City and Borough of Juneau had 16 registered snowmobiles and now has 80. No other comments on state snow reports.

**d) IASA Western Chapter Meeting**

Jim Renkert attended the Western Chapter Meeting of the International Association Snowmobile Administrators (IASA) in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. He said it was a good conference, did a 160-mile ride in Yellowstone. There were about thirty IASA representatives from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and California. Wyoming maintains 2,000 miles of snowmobile trails. Topics discussed at the conference were winter use management issues, wildlife and visitor issues, snowmobile law enforcement, avalanche forecasting, and grooming. One ride was on a multi-use trail with dogmushers. Next year the conference will be held in Oregon. Jim proposes that SnowTRAC host the 2005 conference in Wasilla. Lee Johnson states that ASSA is looking for a candidate to send down to Vancouver, Canada for the Snowmobile Congress Conference in June.

**e) Trail Easement Project**

Jim Renkert gave report on being able to make progress on a few trails. Kevin Keeler did what we hope is the final GPS on the Clam Gulch and Centennial Lake Trail. Need to get those done and then recorded. Lee Johnson asked to clarify why they have GPS issues. Jim states they went out and performed a GPS on several trails and did not follow the state minimum mapping requirements. Jim reports on the Iron Dog Trail stating DNR is going to pay for it. Used part of the grant for the Trail Easement Project, and part was being used for a survey. Got the money approved, and hired a surveyor. Went out with the GPS and found where the monument should go. That was done the first week of April. Iron Dog had to do a reroute around Knikatu Village Corporation Land. Jim stated that there is also a trail easement project fact sheet almost completed: New title is Alaska Heritage Trails Program.

Jim made the board aware of a Recreational Trail Grant that was awarded this year called Lower Susitna Drainage Association. They got a grant for grooming from Dshka Landing up to Skwentna. The Skwentna Community Council and the Skwentna Non-Profit Association have been contacting Kim Kruse, Marine Recreation & Trails Section Chief, with letters and phone calls the last two weeks. People are having problems with grooming out to the area. They didn't feel they were included in the approval process. One of their complaints is that the benefits are to private lodges. The trail takes off at Dshka Landing. It also brings a bunch of people to their community on the weekends. The community feels a bit overwhelmed. Chris Noakes states Dshka Landing is not privately owned.

**f) Safety and Education Position**

Jim Stratton wanted to make a full time position if the governor's bill had passed but it is not going anywhere. Wants to create a part time position, Stratton will pay salary, provide office, computer and wants to use \$10,000 in unused grant funds safety and education material for this position. He would like endorsement and support from the SnowTRAC Board. There was a discussion on what the funding is actually for. Mark Wilke feels the funding is a public safety issue not a DNR issue. The money for a statewide snowmobile safety program should really come out of the public safety budget, not out of the grant budget. Mark states that three snowmobilers died last weekend in the state of Alaska. The boards feelings on this issue is that they don't want to see grant money being used for the safety and education program. But would like to see a part time position that would handle all of the SnowTRAC grants and begin to facilitate a safety and education program. Lee Johnson brought up that this should be a grant proposal.

Bruce Friend stated this should be presented as a grant application in some way, but would like to see things clearly delineated as materials supplies and not personnel. The infrastructure to bring some of these safety programs together would have a conflict with personnel.

Motion by Mark Wilke: To support a half-time snowmobile coordinator position in state parks to handle all of the SnowTRAC grants. Begin to facilitate a statewide safety and education program, funding of \$10,000 out of unused grant funds for materials to start up a safety and education program. State Parks is strongly encouraged to seek other funding through the budgetary process for subsequent years. Second by Kenton Bloom, no further discussion. Motion passes without objection.

#### **Public Comment Period**

Joe Guanna makes a presentation, recommending that the legislature propose an opening of Broad Pass back to the original drainage on the west side. He gave an update on the Denali Park closure and will hopefully come up with a resolution. The original park is closed in the wilderness zone. Stated they filed a lawsuit and won, the same day Parks Service issued a second closure in the wilderness zone to all snowmobiles. Filed second lawsuit last spring. It was dropped with the agreement that a resolution would be found through congress. Delegation had committed to proposing legislation in congress to exempt the wilderness zone in Denial Park from the 1964-wilderness act on the east side of the range, only from the highway to the ridge line of Alaska range. This would exempt that portion from the 1964-wilderness act so that snowmobiling could be allowed in that area. The board approved that SnowTRAC would pass a resolution. Joe will draft up a resolution, then SnowTRAC will take a look at it. Marianne suggests that our legislative chair, Mark Wilke, work with Joe Guanna in drafting a letter with final approval by the SnowTRAC Board before it gets sent.

#### **Snowmobile Trails Advisory Committee Resolution 2002-02 - In Support of Funding a Snowmobile Safety and Education Training Position**

Mark Wilke motions to accept the resolution 2002-02 as amended, second by Greg Barclay. Motion passed without objection. Changes are that title becomes "Snowmobile Trails Advisory Committee Resolution 2002-02 - In Support of Funding a Snowmobile Safety and Education Program Position."

Lee Johnson would like to add to the 12th Whereas, after the word impact, add "Southcentral Alaska of 56.2 million; and public parks". Also on the last paragraph in the resolution, take out "by hiring a snowmobile coordinator" and replace it with "position".

This resolution will be distributed to the entire Legislature, Governor Tony Knowles, Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer, Commissioner Department of Natural Resources, Pat Pourchot, Director of Alaska State Parks, Jim Stratton and Commissioner of Public Safety, Glenn G. Godfrey. The SnowTRAC member's names will appear at the bottom, showing their support.

#### **ATV & Snowmobile Summit & Workshop**

Jim Renkert states that Greg Barclay, Howard Davis and Bruce Friend were at the workshop and, Craig Siebert was there for a portion of it. Greg Barclay gave a brief verbal report on the workshop, stated it was a good get together, well meaning, and in the end there was agreement on working towards a statewide non-profit trail group. Bruce gave his main focus, stating that everyone could agree that there needed to be a body formed as a non-profit organization that could help coordinate all the efforts of trail acquisition and trail conflicts that would bring the user groups together. There was also focus on getting a group together to push a non-profit for education, enforcement and for social issues. One noticeable feature about the workshop was that not all groups were represented adequately. Kevin Hite represented the motorized group as a whole. Bruce Friend had volunteered to represent the industry but had no other support. There were no other manufactures that came. The fuel industry i.e., Tesoro or Mapco were not there supporting motorized use of highway. Bruce would like to see SnowTRAC, ASRA, and other stakeholders step forward with volunteers that want to be part of these committees. The entire workshop was positive and well rounded.

**House Bill 397 - Sponsored by Representative Vic Kohring**

This bill is in reference to drivers licenses required to operate snowmachines and other motorized vehicles off road. There was a public hearing held for the house and the house passed the bill. There was also a public hearing from the Senate side. Marianne Beckham stated she had testified on behalf of SnowTRAC at the request of Representative Kohring's office on what the SnowTRAC Board had thought of this bill. Mark Wilke attended the house version. Mark also noted that Jim Stratton, Director of Alaska State Parks was there and testified in favor of the bill. Lee Johnson stated at the Senate of Transportation Committee meeting it did not pass. They need more time to review and they will contact SnowTRAC with specific questions or action they would like SnowTRAC for. Mark Wilke feels strongly that SnowTRAC should take some form of action on support of overturning House Bill 397. Marianne is going to draft a resolution and cover letter in support of House Bill 397 to be sent to Governor Tony Knowles, Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer, and the Alaska State Legislature that explains the intent to cover issues regarding snowmobile regulations. Will email this letter to the board, and pass it by Jim Stratton. No objection to the action.

**Winter Transportation Study (WTS) by Paul Prusak, DOT Fairbanks Statutes & Regulations Discussion & Sarah Doyle-Wilson, Land Design North**

Paul Prusak passed out a draft WTS DOT & PF Chapter 3: Alaska Snowmobiling Time to Update Our Laws and Regulations, and Snowmobile Laws In Northern Jurisdictions Appendix F and Appendix G Looking at Other Jurisdictions' Laws.

Paul said there are two recommendations DOT is making. Based on what he has heard from other states, Alaska is way behind. Every other winter state has a good snowmobile program, with some point of contact at the state level that looks after all the issues and works with the different groups, volunteers, and agencies. Alaska doesn't, that's first recommendation. The second recommendation is making sense of the laws and regulations. We need to come up with laws that outline the rules of the road. Chris Noakes would like to see an avalanche forecast center, we're the only snow state that doesn't have one. We're the second highest in deaths and first highest per-capita. Lee Johnson made a formatting comment on Appendix G, where in the first paragraph last sentence states "specific Alaskan areas of concerns." Number one is speed limits; it gives an illusion that the number one area of concern in Alaska is speed limit. Makes it more difficult for SnowTRAC Board when dealing with regulations when speed limits appear to be number one issue. Something needs to be done to put them in order or list alphabetically, because that is a contentious issue. Kenton Bloom is interested in youth and safety, trying to get a feel on how strongly Paul's department feels about youth and safety. Paul stated that the youth and education is a good law to take on and believes that it promotes responsibility. Mark Wilke referred to Appendix F- Looking at Other Jurisdictions' Laws, noticed that many states offer or require youth to take a certification course. Mark inquired about how the funding works for those courses. Is there federal or state dollars for this? Some states have registration fees or trail fees, which generates income. Greg Barclay stated that we need input from the Bush on their viewpoints. Everything that has been stated is our viewpoint, but everything we have been talking about may have a completely different viewpoint from the Bush. Don't want to do anything that would disrupt their way of life. The focus of the study was on the continuous highway system and didn't really look at the Bush's needs. Sara Doyle asks the SnowTRAC Board if it would be ok to put SnowTRAC names and contact information in the appendices showing that they support this. The Board agreed on just names or just SnowTRAC Board.

**Grant Application Discussion, Changes & 2002 Schedule**

Schedule for the grant applications to be available is May 1, 2002. The application period is May through June 2002. Applications must be postmarked no later than midnight June 30, 2002. In August SnowTRAC will review and rank applications, September grant awards announced, and in November funds are available.

2002 Snowmobile Trail Grant Instructions. In summary the changes are:

1. Item number three, Selection Process and Criteria; Jim Renkert would like to move the score up to sixty points. Discussion, boards' opinion is that they generally agree.
  2. Item number four, Source of Grant Funds: added, "subject to appropriation" before approximately, in the first sentence. Also under that paragraph, the last two sentences are new. Board agrees on change.
  3. Item number seven Public Access Requirement, is changed to "Proof of Public Access Requirement". Also in the first paragraph, now states and will be bolded **Note: legal access must be in place in order for a grant to be eligible for trail work. Grant applications must also include documentation proving legal access.** Board agrees on change.
  4. Item number eight, Other Requirements; bullet six, after the word "letters," insert, "and documentation," also add after first sentence, "letters and documentation must be current or dated within the last year." Board agrees on changes.
  5. Item number thirteen, Advanced Payments; now states "after the grant award winners have been announced and, upon written request and demonstration of need, Grantees may receive up to 75% of the approved grant amount in advance". Board agrees.
- Lee Johnson brought up purchasing equipment. Jim Renkert will find a place to add it in the 2002 Snowmobile Grant Applicant Instructions. Equipment purchases are limited to agencies and non-profit groups. Need to provide documentation to prove you are a non-profit organization. Board agrees. Howard Davis would like clarification on the definition of a receipt. This needs to be in the agreement to get reimbursement. Jim Renkert will make a definition.

#### **SnowTRAC Policies & Procedures, Supplemental DRAFT changes in approved Grants, Mid -Year & Emergency funding.**

SnowTRAC Grant Policies & Procedures, discussion held on adding amendments.

Motion by Kenton Bloom: To approve the amended SnowTRAC Grant Policies and Procedures Supplemental Provisions in the "Changes in Approved Grants and Mid-Year and Emergency Funding," second by Greg Barclay, no further discussion. Unanimously agree motion passes.

#### **Proposed New Logo - Chris Noakes**

Two logos designed by Chris were presented. The board voted on the blue lettering with the spelling being SnowTRAC. The logo has mountains in the background with one snowmachine in front of the mountains with blue coloring. The board all agreed, passes with subject to approval by Stratton.

#### **Trail Grooming Cost Standards Information - Greg Barclay, Kenton Bloom, Craig Seibert**

Greg Barclay showed a PowerPoint presentation from Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers on trail grooming costs. The common goal is to preserve trails for future generations. Their fundraising proceeds are used to purchase and maintain equipment, develop safe trails and provide public access. The two machines they use to groom are a Pisten Bully 200 and Nodwell 110. Caribou Hills Cabin Hoppers have 132.5 miles of multi-use trails they groom. The presentation showed figures from two different time periods, using costs on the two machines from a grant report. The first time period was from February 14, 2001 through December 31, 2001 and the second period was January 1, 2002, to date. When reaching a price using a \$25 per hour for groomer's, operators, maintenance/repair and parts and repairs, the total cost of the first time period would cost a total of \$27,304.00. That breaks down to 830 miles groomed which equals \$32.90 per mile and 226 hours grooming, which equal \$120.80 per hour. With the same price of \$25 per hour the second year's total would be \$21,791.00. This year had a lot less parts and repairs than the first year. The second year broke down to 1368 miles groomed, which equals \$15.93 per mile, and 330 hours grooming would equal \$66.03 per hour. When adding all hours February 14, 2001 to date, 2198 miles groomed, would equal \$22.33 per hour and 550 hours grooming would equal \$89.24 per mile. So the question is, should you use a snowmobile to groom? Their opinion is that a snowmobile with a groom would not be able to keep up repairing the trail after use. At least two snowmachines and grooms would be needed to cover the miles per week. After one year of use the snowmachine would probably be ready to live in a scrap yard. So the answer is, no you should not use a snowmachine to groom.

Kenton Bloom spoke on snowmachine grooming. He looked at the depreciation of a snowmachine, labor, gas, oil and repairs. Came up with \$10 an hour for labor and \$20 total for renting one machine. This cost is averaging 1000 miles per year per machine. Will be using two machines at the same time. When grooming deep snow you will use rollers and for hard snow, use drags. The snowmachine will be used for grooming an average of 50 miles that includes snowmachine, multi-use and skiing trails. The groomed area is from 8 to 10 feet wide. Will be rotating out a machine every three years. Grooming every week.

Jim Renkert gave Craig Seibert's report on trail grooming costs. Craig has three categories. Large snowmachine with drag would cost \$25 an hour. Small snowcat \$50 an hour and large snowcat with tiller and blade, 12-18 feet wide, would cost \$100 an hour. Craig didn't specify if the cost was for operating, machine or both.

Board came up with having the grantee provide the equipment, number of hours and miles, operator, fuel and maintenance and also grooming frequency. The grantee will provide a grooming table with cost per hour and cost per mile.

**Date & Agenda for next meeting**

August 23, 2002, is subject to change, from 8:30am until done. Marianne brought up the idea of having a two-day meeting if need be. Location of the August meeting will be held on the third floor of City Hall, room 310. August agenda will be to review and rank the grant applications and final adoption of the SnowTRAC Committee Operating Procedures.

**Committee Member Comments**

Mark Wilke commented on programs that fund snowmachines, the programs do work. The most popular trail right now is Dan Molling Trail. Still riding on the trail because we were able to do improvements to the trail.

Bruce Friend asks about the state laws, what is the program there, how do we work on rules and regulations? Jim Renkert said you have the draft of Alaska DOT & PF, WTS, the final will be out and you should all get copies of that. Marianne stated that Paul said you might want to split up and take certain specific topics and discuss it amongst each subcommittee. Timeline for this, written up for the legislature by November, finalized by December and handed in by January.

Chris Noakes stated that we had the first ever snowmachine only, three-day class on avalanche, held in Petersville.

Marianne Beckham said they had a very successful Tesoro Arctic Man SnowGo Classic at Paxson. Was happy to report no avalanche deaths and the race only had one injury.

Marianne Beckham motioned to adjourn at 3:30. Seconded Kenton Bloom.