

Governor's Snowmobile Council
February 1, 2023

Present:

Pat Poulin, Chairman
Star Poulin, Governor Appointee
Gary Nolan, VAST LE Committee Chair
Jacob Metayer, VT Dept of Public Safety
Paul Doucette, Police Chiefs & Southern VT Wilderness Search & Rescue
Jenna Reed, Fish & Wildlife
Shannon Fassett, Vermont DMV
Michael Smith, Vermont DMV Coordinator
Claire Polfus, Forest, Parks & Recreation

VAST Staff Present:

Cindy Locke, Executive Director
Ken Brown, Trails Manager/LVRT
Mandy Dwinell, Office & Programs Manager

Guests:

Stan Choiniere, Safety Committee
Mike Mutascio, Northeast

The meeting was convened at 3:02PM via Zoom by Pat Poulin.

Approval of Minutes

Star Poulin moved to approve the January minutes as presented; Gary Nolan seconded.
MOTION CARRIED.

December SSTP Financial Report, Matt Tetreault

Report included in the email to the Governor's Council.

Approval of SSTP Report

Cindy Locke moved to approve the December SSTP Report as presented; Star Poulin seconded. MOTION CARRIED

Agency Reports

Vermont State Police, Jacob Metayer

Snowmobile Safety Courses:

In-person: December 59 students & January 26 students, Seasonal Total of 76 as of 2/1/23
online: December 235 students & January 175 students, Seasonal Total of 581 as of 2/1/23

6 patrols last weekend. 48.5 hours, 285 combines miles, 36 hours on the trail, 65 inspections, 28 check points, 0 tickets, 1 warning. Patrols primarily in Caledonia, Orleans, Essex, Washington and a few hours in Windsor (poor riding conditions).

Fish & Wildlife, Jenna Reed

Several wardens out on the trailers. Estimate by Game Warden to date close to 15 tickets estimate, 20 warnings, 200 contacts.

Sheriff's Association, Mark Anderson – President of VT Sheriff Association & Windham County Sheriff

N/A

Police Chiefs & Southern VT Wilderness Search & Rescue, Paul Doucette

We're finally able to get patrols out last weekend in Dover and Wilmington. Final numbers from the weekend are pending.

Lots of areas of rough riding with open water areas. Over the weekend helped some people who were stuck and counseling riders on adhering their state and VAST decals onto their sled correctly. 6 riders didn't have their TMA stickers on their sleds and had 10 day temporary registration

Department of Motor Vehicles, Mike Smith

DMV report: 18,938 registered sleds as of 2/1/2023.

2022: 20,378

2021: 18,881

Forest, Parks & Recreation, Claire Polfus

Grants through FRP should be going through soon and is currently processing in the business office.

VAST

State Funded Equipment Grant Program, Cindy Locke

No changes, hoping to hear more within the next few weeks.

VAST TMA Sales, Cindy Locke

20,074 TMAs sold to date, 63 of the TMAs were 3-day trail passes.

373 TMAs for Ride for \$25

Received multiple calls from landowners regarding not respectful riding and off trail riding resulting in some trail closures.

Law Enforcement Committee, Gary Nolan

A reminder that Law Enforcement has a login to the back end of our database if LE would like to look at riders in our database.

There have been some reports, of around 10 snowmobiles that had their TMA stickers stolen off their sleds.

Discussion regarding clarification on fines for not having a TMA or state registration. There has been discussion from riders stating it was less expensive to pay the fine vs registering and purchasing a TMA.

Paul_Doucette mentioned there is an annual meeting of the Judiciary Dept regarding potential adjustments for fines. Paul will reconnect with the Governor's Council when notification of the meeting. He advised the Governor's Council to gather information and feedback regarding the request for fine increase.

Jenna shared fines for not having a fishing license in VT \$162 non-resident, \$122 resident, which is triple cost of purchasing the license. Discussion on a potential similar format for fine with riding without a TMA.

Paul shared a different format of riding without a TMA vs driving a vehicle – which would result in the vehicle being towed. Riders are asked to return to their trailer and park their sled.

Gary attended a safety meeting instructed by Jenna at the Hardwick Police Dept, and appeared to be received well by the department. They have since submitted their grant for 80% towards equipment costs.

VAST Safety Committee, Stan

Attended the Yankee Sportsman Show in lieu of the poor weather canceling the Military & First Responder event. Stan attended the show on Saturday, where the show was very well attended and connected with riders, landowners and potential riders. The booth was shared with the Veteran's Place with a raffle with proceeds donated to the Veteran's Place. Having a snowmobile at the booth was well received by the attendees.

Gary is taking a man and his grandson out on their first time rider in Vermont for about a 30-50 miles ride as a Safety Ambassador.

SSTP Trail Report, Matt Tetreault

Pat shared groomers are trying to do their best on keeping trails in good condition.

Closure in Franklin County with the Northeast Riders due to off trail riding.

Lots of open water, encouraging clubs to keep adding updates to the map with conditions and closures.

LVRT in Franklin County the state has decided to raise the railbed in the flood planes, potentially one section at a time. The work on the trail started last Thursday.

Legislative Report

House Report, Brian Smith

N/A

Senate Report, Jane

N/A

Cindy is representing VT Trails & Greenways Council tomorrow at 10:45am at the legislator.

Annual funding for Southern VT Wilderness Search and Rescue, Paul Doucette
Predicting will be tough this year to ask for more money, due to weather conditions from this season. Paul anticipates having money left from this season for next year, and is going to focus on other areas.

Cindy, Matt and Ken are meeting with AOT regarding equipment funding on Monday, Feb. 20th

Insurance Card Requirement/DMV Bill?, Jane
N/A

Appointee Reports

Northwest, Star

Clubs are out, most are grooming. Water bars, muds, beavers and flooding in some areas. Trail are in their early season conditions.

Northeast, Mike

Lots of events coming up in the area.

Class 4 did well, interconnected trails are variable conditions

Timberforest area limited access and reminder to riders to respect the logging in the area

Central, Jeff

N/A

South, Dick Jewett

This would've been Dick's last meeting. Working on having Stan approved for representation for the south.

Stan shared the groomers are out there, and conditions are variable with open water.

Reported a snowmobile caught on fire in the Chester area, sled was a total loss.

No major trails closures.

Next meeting is Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 3pm via Zoom.

Motion to Adjourn:

Star Poulin moved to close the meeting at 3:47pm; Michael Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Dwinell

VAST Office & Programs Manager