

VAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

January 26, 2009

DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES, OFFICERS & STAFF PRESENT: Conrad Stewart-Addison; John Perkins-Bennington; Ken Gammell-Caledonia; Jeff Fay-Chittenden; Ray Dubriel-Essex; John Ross-Franklin; Bill Oakes-Grand Isle; Brian Currier-Lamoille; Larry Trottier-Orange; Brian Cook (*absent*)-Orleans; Merritt Budd-Rutland; John Lynds-Washington; Tom Baltrus-Windham; Bruce Murray-Windsor; Pat Poulin - President; Jim Hill-Vice-President; Mark Ellingwood-Treasurer; Bonnie Holbrook-Recording Secretary; Bryant Watson-Executive Director, Alexis Nowalk-SSTP Trails Administrator; Kent Gardner-VAST News Manager

GUESTS: Star Poulin, Mitzi Oakes, Jim Holbrook, Ed Hebebrand, Francis Pillsbury, Joe Cicia, Josh Nelson, Matt Goodyear, Mike O'Hara, Sue Trottier, Stacy Lynds, Mark Reeves, Sandy Woodbeck, Howard Smith

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by President Pat Poulin.

AGENDA: *Bruce Murray moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.*

9c Policy Update

9d Snowmobile Registration

11a Executive Session – Bridgewater is not present but we will still need an Executive Session.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: *John Perkins moved and Bruce Murray seconded to approve the minutes of December 15, 2008 Board of Directors meeting as corrected. Motion carried unanimously.*

TREASURER'S REPORT: *Larry Trottier moved and Conrad Stewart seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.* We are still running at a negative cash flow. We will be having a Fiscal Committee Meeting before the next Director's Meeting. Ann Shangraw questioned several expenditures. John Perkins questioned the Dealer TMAs which is the cost of a regular TMA that is issued to Snowmobiler Dealers to go with their Dealer Plate. Club dues are charged but not county dues. If a Dealer is renting snowmobiles then they can not use the "Dealer" TMAs because they fall under the Commercial TMAs and should be charged accordingly.

CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: *Jim Hill moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried.* Bryant Watson has provided several additional handouts to the Packet. This also includes information from Primmer, Piper, Eggelston & Cramer that DMV wants to increase the snowmobile registration. There was a lot of legislation information. We've received almost 20,000 TMAs that have come in so far. Tom Baltrus questioned the Early Bird TMA deadlines and also volunteered to be on the TMA committee. John Perkins had questions regarding the Early Bird TMA sales. The Early Bird TMAs made and exceeded the projected budget for some of the categories.

Alexis Nowalk reported that the #1 Grooming payments have gone out. The amount of the grooming payments reported are not for all contracts due to several not sending in all of their grooming logs and some that have not met their startup payment. If a club is nearing their grooming cap (based on the 5-year average) because of snow amounts, they need to contact Alexis.

Mark Ellingwood has heard that some insurance companies in Maine are canceling homeowner insurance that have snowmobile trails cross their land. If we have a landowner that has that problem, we can get them a copy of our trails liability insurance.

Bonnie Holbrook asked if the Brighton Snowmobile Club has made a payment yet. They have been billed. Bryant will follow up with the Board on the status of payment

COUNTY REPORTS:

Champlain Valley; Addison County reported their trails are pretty well open. The snow is pretty thin in the lower areas though. **Chittenden County** is thin on snow. Everyone has been out and groomed at least early on in the season. On Saturday, Chittenden County Sheriff's Department made a criminal arrest for Reckless Operation of a Snowmobile. They also had a 15-year kid that received 5 citations for violations. Deputy Bob Stebbins also made a plea at their county meeting for more law enforcement funding.

Central Vermont; Orange County has a new phrase. Although Caledonia County totes the "Best Trails", Orange County has "Wicked Good Trails"! We have a trail reopened that has been closed making a great loop. This past weekend Larry received a few calls from employees at the Three Station Inn who had guests staying with them that wanted to find out where they could download their snowmobiles and ride from. Three Stallion Inn had closed the snowmobile trail through their land. **Washington County** reported they have the "best wicked groomed trails". They have some trail closure stuff going on. They are still landlocked on the northern end of the county coming into Stowe. Next weekend is the Military VIP ride. They've had a few accidents. They also had two snowmobilers that got lost riding and somehow made it down to the State House. Johnny said "Come riding, they have some of the wicked nicer groomed trails!"

Northeast Kingdom; Caledonia County is doing great. They have several club functions going on. The ice they got really helped to firm up the base. **Essex County** thinks they've solved their sign problems. They are not seeing as many riders this year as in the past. They have received a call from the National Geographic asking them if they would allow them to post the county's website on theirs. They've been

getting 2-3 inches almost every night. Apparently a two year old youngster was badly hurt when the dad was working on the snowmobile in his garage. **Orleans County** was absent.

Northwest Vermont; Franklin County reported all's well. They have no problems. **Grand Isle County** is looking good and they have been out grooming. The new trail connectors to eliminate crossing the golf course have been completed. They have a good base. Joe Cicia did see some riders outriding without TMAs and registrations and probably no insurance. He has tried to get the Sheriff's Department to help with patrolling with no luck. They do have a Game Warden that is willing to patrol that area. **Lamoille County** has plenty of snow and they are open. The number of riders appears to be down. They have a poker ride coming up this weekend and a memorial ride for Josh Perry who was killed last year. About 10 years ago the Johnson Fire Department purchased a snowmobile for a rescue sled and now they would like to give the 1997 Skidoo Skandic Wide Track away.

Southeast Vermont; Windham County reported that they are riding. They have some trails closed in the Jacksonville area due to damage from the Ice Storm along with problems in other areas of the county. They were hoping to get some FEMA money to help with the cleanup from the ice damage but were told that FEMA does not have money for damage to private land. Any clubs that had expenses for ice damage cleanup need to send their costs into Alexis Nowalk so she can find out how much damage we have from the ice storms. **Windsor County** has plenty of good snow. After all the problems in Bridgewater, Tom Smallwood went to the Selectboard in Bridgewater and received permission for the Border to Border Ride to go through the trail that goes from Bridgewater to Barnard that is closed. This section will ONLY be open for that day only.

Southwest Vermont; Bennington County has a lot of riders. The snow conditions are fairly good. They appear to have a lot more riders this year. Many riders that John Perkins has spoken to stated that they are not traveling as far north. The Southern Task Force has been working more with the County. They are going to be setting up a lot more check points on corners. They are putting spraying an orange line in the middle of the trail going around corners and if the rider crosses the line, they are pulling them over. They are trying to slow riders down and keep them on the right side of the trail. **Rutland County** thanked VAST for the donation to the Therapy Pool. Bird's Eye Snow Traveler Snowmobile Club is creating a club web page. The Safety Weekend went well. Merritt Budd recommended that we have a sign for the events telling what they are for. He also suggested that we have a continuous running snowmobile safety video. The Corridor Trail 4 in West Rutland has been repaired plus a go around has been made in case of flooding again. Overall the whole county is fairly decent.

MILITARY RIDE KENYON'S FIELD, WAITSFIELD: We are having a Military Appreciation Day January 31st. It's free for all military and their families. It's going to begin at 10 am and will go until about 2ish. There will be demo sleds from the factories and small 120cc sleds to ride on site. There will also be a 30 mile loop ride. Weather permitting, there will be Black Hawk. It will probably take a couple of hours to do the loop if we have a large group. They will need to have their own sled. The demo sleds will be set up in a test area in the field. All are welcomed. If you are not military, you will need to pay for your own food. JD with Froggy Radio will be there broadcasting the event.

UPDATE ON SNOW VALLEY TRAIL: Nothing new has been heard. Everyone is waiting for the developer to reschedule the meeting.

BORDER TO BORDER RIDE: There was a commercial seen on TV last night promoting the ride. The trail issue in Windsor County has been resolved and the ride will be allowed through Windsor County this year after all.

REPORT ON ACSA LAND USE SUMMIT: Ann Shangraw attended the Land Summit. She gave a brief synopsis on the summit. There were speakers on Saturday. If anyone would like more detailed information from the Land Use Summit, they can contact her.

2009 ANNUAL MEETING: Johnny Lynds reported the Annual meeting is set to be in Barre. They will be using the Auditorium and the Ice Rink. The day will begin early in the morning with workshops, pre-meeting, and then a luncheon with all the annual awards presented during the luncheon. After lunch we will have the Annual Meeting. The ice rink is where the groomers and vendors are going to be. Vendors will have product to purchase. They are going to have kid events. There will be other fun things going on during the day. More information will follow in future meetings.

POLICY UPDATE: Under the current policy for equipment grant-in-aid and construction grant deadlines are June 30th. Alexis asked if we could change the deadline for the equipment grant-in-aid to June 1, 2009. **Ann Shangraw moved and Jeff Fay seconded that we honor Alexis' request to temporarily change the equipment grant-in-aid deadline to June 1st, 2009 for this year. Motion carried unanimously.**

SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION: Primmer, Piper, Eggelston & Cramer (our legislative lobbyists) informed us that DMV wants to increase the snowmobile registration. The House Transportation Committee was discussing why the registration fees have not increased in about ten years. The House Transportation Committee wanted to know how much it costs DMV to process the fees. It's in Ways and Means Committee right now and will probably come back with the request for \$5 increase to cover the costs for DMV to process snowmobile registration fees. There has been discussion at the Governor's Snowmobile Council regarding law enforcement funding. The agencies have asked for dedicated funding. This could be a way to help fund law enforcement. We could ask for a \$5 increase to use for allocated toward law enforcement. We could then reallocate the current budgeted amount. If we were to ask for the additional \$5 for law enforcement, that would mean a \$10 increase to the registration. Jeff Fay suggested that if we do that, then we look at allocating \$10 from the surcharge and then eliminate the \$20 surcharge, thus reducing the TMA. We do need to remember that the cost of snowmobiling in Vermont is pricing some of our members out of snowmobiling here, especially in these economic times. **Ann Shangraw moved and Bruce Murray second that we**

communicate with our lobbyist and decide to the best interest of the Association whether to add the additional \$5 earmarked for law enforcement and report back to us next month on the action taken. Permission to move forward as necessary was included in the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

LVRT UPDATE: We had the three public meetings and they were all well attended. There were a couple of complaints for short notice. We are waiting to hear about the Jurisdictional Opinion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: The **Landowner Appreciation Committee** sent out a postcard questionnaire to each club and they are receiving the questionnaires back from clubs. The Directors are asked to remind all clubs to submit them. The **Safety Committee** had successful displays at University Mall and the mall in Rutland for the International Snowmobile Safety Week. Both Malls want us back this year. Curt Marcheaux was the liaison for the Rutland display and he did a great job and kept the Rutland County Director informed constantly. The Safety Committee will review the new snowmobile safety course test and class booklet. There are some questions that have several answers that were very possible. The **Trails Committee** had a grooming subcommittee meeting last week. They are going to have another survey go out next week to all grooming contractors. They are doing a financial analysis on the costs for grooming. They will be using this info for recommendations to the Board for grooming costs. The full committee will be meeting in February.

The next Director's Meeting is February 23rd, 2009 at 6:00 PM with refreshments provided by Windham County.

John Perkins moved and Jeff Fay seconded that we go into Executive Session at 8:54 PM to discuss legal issues to include the alternate directors, staff for both issues and include Mike O'Hara, Ed Hebebrand and Francis Pillsbury during one the issues. Motion carried unanimously.

Jim Hill moved and Jeff Fay seconded to come out of Executive Session at 9:13 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Conrad Stewart moved and John Perkins seconded to adjourn at 9:14 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,
Bonnie Holbrook
VAST Recording Secretary