

**Washington State Parks
SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2021 Summer Meeting Wenatchee
July 30-31, 2021
Minutes**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bob Henrie (Chair, Area 2)
Norris Boyd (Vice- Chair, Area 3)
Tom Shields (Area 1)
Kurt Millard (Area 4)
Roger Brittain - (Area 5, Absent)
Steve Riggan (Area 6)
Frank Benish (Non-Motorized)
John O'Brien (Non-Motorized)
Cindy Hoover (Non-Motorized)
Larry Leach (DNR)
Tony Leonetti (WDFW)
Laura Osiadacz -Absent (Association of Counties, Absent)

Washington State Parks Staff:

Pamela McConkey (Manager, Winter Recreation Program)
Jason Goldstein (Winter Recreation Program)
AJ Parlan (Winter Recreation)
Corey Tolar (Winter Recreation)

Guests

Glenn Markovits
Tim Penelerick, Boulder Creek Grooming
Jim Burts, Apple Country
Nan Berger, USFS
Matt Mead, WSSA
Ron Lind, R&R
Todd Schmutz, USFS
Brian McNeal, USFS
Randy Skillman
Adam Osin
Kevin Davis, WSPRC
Matt Mead
Nick Whitman, Landtek
Jason Holmes, WSSA
Max Rochester
Janet Muller

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Friday July 30th Agenda

Item	Summary	Action
Call to Order	<p>Bob Henrie welcomed everyone to the meeting. He told the Committee that he was happy that they were able to meet in person and he thanked staff for putting the meeting together.</p> <p>Bob told the Committee that tonight will be short session but they do have things to go over.</p>	
Introductions	Committee members, staff, and audience members introduced themselves.	
Review of meeting plans	The Committee went over the agenda.	
Equipment Review	<p>Jason Goldstein prepared an equipment report that he presented to the Committee. He told the Committee that all state-owned groomers have been inspected. He said that they are putting together a list of repairs that need to be done before the beginning of the new season.</p> <p>He told the Committee that the Ferry County Groomer had a catastrophic failure during the season but there were no other major repairs needed for the other groomers.</p> <p>Jason explained that he had do an emergency agreement with a private company so that grooming would continue in Ferry County during the season. He said for the upcoming season, the County has agreed to allow a private groomer to work in the area and that is in the process of awarding the new contract.</p> <p>Jason told the Committee that the groomer would need to eventually get fixed. However the county has agreed to allow the program to go out to bid for a contract to groom the area.</p> <p>Jason told the Committee that equipment repair was over budget. He said that there were major repairs for the Pomeroy groomer due to a fire.</p> <p>Jason thanked Okanogan County for their help with retrieving the Ferry County Groomer and the Grooming Coordinator from Ferry County for helping find an emergency groomer in the area.</p> <p>Jason asked the Committee to keep repairs in mind when setting the new budget.</p> <p>Pamela told the Committee that State Parks actually purchased new groomers for the non-motorized program and that it will hopefully lead to a conversation where State Parks buys the motorized program a groomer.</p> <p>Jason added that the Cle Elum Ranger District would no longer be doing snow removal in their area. Jason also said that the Forest Service would stop grooming after this year and that the program will need to find a new groomer for the area.</p>	
GPS/Mapping	Jason displayed the live public grooming map to the	

	<p>Committee. He reminded them that the map was available on the State Parks website this last season. Jason explained how the map works and how often the map updates. Jason said that the program is constantly working on the map to make it better and that the map will continue to be available for the new season.</p> <p>Jason told the Committee that he has been giving maps QR codes so that when a QR Code is scanned it goes to a particular map. He said that if a sno-park has a strong cell signal he could post the QR code so that the map becomes available on their phone.</p> <p>Jason told the Committee that the GPS data could also be used for data analysis and that the program would start looking at that information.</p> <p>Norris talked about the importance the data being collected and how RCO and other agencies could also use it. Jason talked about the making the maps available directly to users charging for it or giving it free with snowmobile registrations.</p> <p>Jason directed the Committee to look in their notebooks at the grooming summary for each area and the breakdown that Wayne Mohler produced which shows average costs and average speed of all groomers. Norris asked if the funds spent for public grooming included maintenance costs. Jason explained they did not. Norris would like to examine total cost including repairs. He said that information would allow for a better cost analysis and give the Committee a better understanding of overall cost.</p> <p>This led to a discussion about public vs. private grooming. Bob said that if not for the county groomer, some areas would not have any groomer. Norris clarified that he was not making a judgement on public vs. private but only saying that including the maintenance costs for public grooming would allow for better comparison.</p>	
Advisory Committee Reports	<p>Area 1: Tom Shields- Tom told the Committee everything is going well. He told the Committee that there will be some unknowns for the upcoming season. He said that he is not sure how side-by-sides will effect the area. Tom also said that some Yurts are being moved into the area that may effect parking. He also said that their road are getting bad and need maintenance.</p> <p>Area 2: Bob Henrie- Bob told the Committee that they had a normal winter and had a pretty good snow pack. He said that everyone he talked to said that usage was up. He said that it was the first time he had seen parks completely full even on some weekdays. Bob said they had some equipment issues but nothing major.</p> <p>Area 3: Norris Boyd- Norris said the year started off slow but picked up in January. He said there were no major problems. He said everyone works well together and that problems get solved quickly. He said that areas that had burned out in the summer opened up nice areas for the Winter. He told the Committee that Hanks Butte Sno-Park will move closer to</p>	

	<p>Spokane and should attract more users.</p> <p>Area 4: Kurt Millard- Kurt said the season started off slow with the higher elevations getting more snow than the lower. He told the Committee that when the snow finally did come in there was some parking issues. He said all in all it was a good season.</p> <p>Area 5: Roger Brittain - Absent</p> <p>Area 6: Steve Rigg- Steve said that it was a good snow year and that everything went well and there were no major problems that he was aware of.</p> <p>Non-moto: John O'Brien- John told the Committee that he rode out of different parks in his area. He said that grooming was good. He said that the parks that he visited were full.</p> <p>Non-moto: Frank Benish – Frank said that it was a rough year. He said that he was worked with the Forest Service to get a pilot program running for fat-biking at Geophysical but it didn't go through due to a lack of snow. Pamela asked if they would be able to try again this year and Frank said they would try again.</p> <p>Non-moto: Cindy Hoover - absent</p> <p>WDFW : Tony Leonetti- Tony talked to the Committee about enforcement. Tony told the Committee about some search and rescues that were done during the season.</p> <p>DNR: Larry Leach- Larry said that they were trying open new areas for Winter Recreation. He said they were also trying to acquire other areas for recreation.</p>	
<p>Operating Procedure 85-04</p>	<p>Pamela told the Committee the changes to the Operating Procedure was minor. She said the change in the procedure would allow electronic submission of funding applications. She explained that changing the procedure would be easier than trying to change the WAC.</p> <p>Norris motioned to accept the changes to Operating Procedure 05-04 as written, Tony Leonetti seconded and the motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Bob recessed the meeting until the next day.</p>	

July 31st Agenda

Call to Order	Bob Henrie Called the meeting to order	
Quick Zoom Etiquette	Bob told the reminded the Committee and both the live and virtual audience that they would need to speak up and let staff know if there was an audio problem.	
Introductions	The Committee, Staff, and audience introduced themselves.	
Review/Approve Winter Meeting Minutes	The Committee reviewed the Winter Meeting and Minutes. Frank moved to accept the minutes as presented, Tony seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.	
Snowmobile Sno-Park Permit Sales	Travis Larson told the Committee that permit sales were up from 400 permits sold the year before to 728 sold last season.	
Financial Review of 2020/2021 Season	<p>Corey Tolar went over the previous year's budget with the Committee. He told the Committee for the coming years there was a 17% increase in registered snowmobiles from the previous year.</p> <p>Corey went through each priority highlighting line items that were increased or decreased as needed throughout the season.</p> <p>Corey noted savings in priority 1 for travel were used to cover repairs that were over budget.</p> <p>Corey then moved into priority 2 Equipment Repair. Corey explained that savings in the travel budget in priority 1 covered some the overage in priority 2. Corey told the Committee that equipment repair still overspent by almost \$18,000.</p> <p>Corey then went over priority 3 beginning with the private contracts and went over the line items. He then moved onto the public contracts and also went over the line items. He said there was a little left over money in the grooming budget. John O'Brien asked for clarification on % that were in budget, Corey explained that those were dual-use parks so costs were split between the programs.</p> <p>Corey displayed Priority 4 to the Committee and briefly talked about equipment replacement.</p> <p>Corey then moved onto Priority 5 and 6. Corey showed the Committee projects that were approved and funded. He told he Committee there was a leftover balance.</p> <p>Bob thanked Corey for the presentation of the budget.</p>	

<p>Priority 5 and 6 presentations</p>	<p>Mt. Adams Curly Creek (\$7000) – Jason told the Committee that this was for snow removal between accessing the sno-parks in the area. Jason said it was a main connection route used by both motorized and non-motorized users. Jason said if this road was not plowed then it would take an extra 3 hours. Jason said the WRAC was also funding it partially. Bob pointed out this is a 3rd year request and if funded would become part of the budget.</p> <p>Mt. Baker/Canyon Creek Increased Grooming (\$15,000) – Randy Skillman reminded the Committee that this was applied for but not funded the previous year. He told the Committee that the area is popular and needs increased grooming. Pamela pointed that both the Skagit and Whatcom clubs use the area.</p> <p>WDFW Region 4 E&E (\$5000) – Paul Mossman told the Committee that these funds would be used for advanced patrol of the Blue Mountains. He told the Committee that they had previously applied for the funding but were put on hold. Paul told the Committee they were not as diligent keeping stats on their patrols because they were not funded but ensure the Committee they were out in conjunction with the Forest Service. He told the Committee they get quite a few out of state visitors and when the patrols were funded it allowed them to really ramp up patrols and provided value for users and State Parks.</p> <p>Chinook Pass – Clover Springs 1600 Rd Grooming (\$2600) – Ron Lind told the Committee that this was a 3rd Year request. He told the Committee that the area gets a lot of usage and when he doesn't groom the area he gets a lot of complaints. Ron told the Committee that a lot of families use the area and they have gotten WSSA Grants for a warming shelter.</p> <p>Okanogan County Hauling Truck (\$50,000) – Adam Osin told the Committee that the Okanogan Truck is old and needs a lot of repairs. He also explained to the Committee the new groomer that was purchased is too heavy for the old truck. If funded Okanogan will purchase a pickup truck and trailer. Adam told the Committee that the County applied for a grant from the WRAC to pay for half of the truck but did not get it, so he was unsure how the County would pay for it.</p> <p>The Committee discussed funding and the purchase of a pickup and trailer. Contractors in the audience did not think it was a good idea to purchase pickup truck and trailer. They expressed concerns for the safety and ability of a pickup to</p>	
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pull a trailer with a groomer on it. The contractors said that a hauling truck may be a better option.

Methow Valley Increased Grooming (\$20,320) – Adam stayed on and talked about MTGA application for increased grooming in the Methow Valley. Adam explained to regain the lost 10% from the previous year along with adding additional grooming to HWY 20 to the new Silver Star Sno-Park. He said that it would allow an HWY 20 to be groomed once a week. He told the Committee that the new Sno-park was filled all season and that he got a lot of calls for increased grooming. Pamela pointed out that MTGA got an RTP Grant which would also help fund grooming.

Methow Valley Warming Huts (\$1886) – Craig Stahl gave a presentation to the Committee showing the benefits of funding the warming huts. He told the Committee they have a lot of different users. He told the Committee that the funding would pay for six warming huts.

WDFW Region 4 E&E (\$5000) – John Ludwig told the Committee that the funding would go towards increased patrols in the area. John said there was increased usage in the area. He told the Committee they sent more officers to training. John said that he saw full sno-parks for the first time.

Blewett/Clear Lake/Lily Lake Connection TG (\$5100)- Bob Seelye told Committee that the application would fund an environment study, a gate and grooming the connector from the Blewett riding area to the Wenatchee riding area. He explained that the trail connector was previously groomed and still shows up on some maps but has not been groomed for 10 years. He said the benefits were that it would connect the two areas and open up parking by allowing people to park in one area and ride to the other. John asked what the timing was and Bob said that he did not think that the study would not be done this year but would like the funding in place.

Snoqualmie RD Two Snowobiles (\$26,000) – Todd Schmutz made a presentation to the Committee. He talk about the different parks in the Snoqualmie RD. He also talked about the Snoqualmie RD efforts to patrol the area. To close his presentation he talked about the types of snowmobiles they were planning on purchasing.

Ron brought up some problems with closed gates, trail issues and patrols in the area. He thought that without resolving the trail and gate issues the snowmobiles would not be of good use. Glenn

	<p>Markovitz felt that the gate issue would need to be resolved but increased patrols are important. Brian McNeal responded that the Forest Service is looking at the gate and that he is working with the specialist to update the use.</p>	
<p>Break</p>		
<p>Continued P5 and P6 presentations</p>	<p>Norris took over as Chair since Bob needed to leave.</p> <p>New Hanks Butte Sno-Park (\$5,000) – Paul Elgrin talked to the Committee about proposed sno-park. He told the Committee that all the infrastructure was there and the funding would go to upgrade the existing area and make Hanks Butte an official sno-park. He said this would allow for signage and sanitation. He said that this was an established parking area with the Forest Service with a CXT. He told the Committee that it was the only park in Pend Orielle County with access to the Mill Creek trail system. He said that making it in official sno-park would put the park on maps and let people know it was available and bring people to the area.</p> <p>Nan Berger gave some background on the parking area. She said it was established in 2008 through and RCO Grant. She said that the Committee would not need to consider the cost of pumping the CXT because the Forest Service already does it. She also said that signage is needed and that outreach would need to happen to ensure that snowmobiles are registered.</p> <p>Ahtanum Increased Grooming (\$11,335) – Ron spoke to the Committee about the need for increased grooming in the Ahtanum. He said there was a lot of use. He said the grooming cannot hold up with the amount of people using it. He said they currently groom 2 times a week and the increased funding will allow them to do a third day.</p> <p>Naches Ranger District Truck Mounted V Blade (\$15,000) – Amanda Carey told the Committee that the new plow blade would replace a two broken plows. The new blade would allow them to keep up the snow removal needed in the parks. She said the plow would allow them to plow the whole park in one trip.</p> <p>Pamela told the Committee that the same application was made for from the WRAC but after discussion the WRAC only funded \$7500. Amanda told the Committee that they are no longer requesting \$15,000 and would only need \$7,500.</p>	

	<p>Methow Valley RD E&E (\$7,175) – Rosemary Seyfried gave a brief presentation to the Committee. She talked about use in Methow Valley and the need for enforcement.</p> <p>NWAC New Forecaster (\$10,000) – Dennis D’Amico gave a presentation to the Committee that a gave brief overview of the Northwest Avalanche Center. He said that the new forecaster would be based out of Cle Elum and give them more coverage.</p>	
Retirement/Congratulations	<p>There was a brief presentation and congratulations to Pamela McConkey, recognizing her years as the Winter Recreation Program Manager and her pending retirement.</p>	
Lunch	<p>Norris adjourned the meeting for lunch and the Committee scored the new funding applications.</p>	
Budget Review	<p>Corey displayed to the audience and Committee the proposed budget for the 21-22 Season.</p> <p>Corey reminded that the fund balance on the budget shown may still change.</p> <p>Corey went through Priority 1 and 2. He said that there was an increase in budget due to mandated salary increases and buy-out of leave for the retiring manager. He also talked about an increase in travel because the new manager may want to travel around and see sno-parks in the system. Corey told the Committee that there was also an increase in office equipment so that the program could buy a new plotter. Pamela said that the WRAC would pay for half of it.</p> <p>Corey also told the Committee that NWAC funding was moved to E&E.</p> <p>For priority 2, Corey told the Committee that the proposed budget increases the equipment repair budget to \$100,000. He said that last season the program overspent so an increase is needed.</p> <p>For Priority 3, Corey told the Committee that staff has prepared budget scenarios for the Committee to consider.</p> <p>The budget scenarios included across the board increases at various levels and included funding all or some of the new applications.</p> <p>With that information, Corey displayed the results of the scoring for new applications.</p> <p>The Committee looked at scenarios that would increase funding for grooming and looked at specific new funding applications.</p>	

The Committee discussed the various scenarios.

The Committee discussed the cost between public and private contractors. There was discussion on purchasing a new groomer. Norris said that he was not in favor of acquiring more equipment (groomers) until it could be confirmed that public grooming contractors were cheaper. There was some talk about the difficulty of finding private contractors in areas.

Tom told the Committee that he don't think it was good idea to purchase new snowmobiles for any program. He said that buying one snowmobile leads to buying another and another.

After further discussion, **Tom moved to accept scenario B** as modified, which included a 14% increase in Trail Grooming, 10% increase in Snow Removal and Sanitation and a 6% increase in Education and Enforcement. Scenario B would also fund \$75,163 in new funding applications (all but the bottom 4 scores) and leave \$250,000 in emergency reserve and **Frank seconded**.

Norris called for discussion. There was a brief discussion on enforcement. Glenn Markovitz asked the Committee to reconsider funding the snowmobiles for the Snoqualmie RD. He said that it was important for the enforcement of Greenwater. Tony said that it was important for an agency to have their own equipment. Tony asked if there was any way that Snoqualmie RD could match. He asked if the Committee buys one can Snoqualmie RD could buy the other.

Tony motioned to amend the existing motion and add the \$26,000 to purchase 2 snowmobiles for the Snoqualmie RD. **Tom did not accept the amendment. Norris called for a vote and the motion did not pass with Frank, Kurt, Tom, and Steve voting for the motion and the rest voting against it.**

Tony motioned to accept Scenario B but include \$26,000 for the Snoqualmie RD snowmobiles and Frank seconded. Tony asked again if the Snoqualmie RD could buy one. **Tony amended his motion to only fund \$14,000 for the purchase of one snowmobile contingent on the Snoqualmie RD purchasing the other. Frank agreed to the amendment.**

Norris called for a vote and the motion passed with Tony, Cindy, Kurt, Steve, Frank and Larry voting for the motion, John and Tom opposing the motion and Norris abstaining.

Public Comment	<p>Norris opened the meeting for Public Comment.</p> <p>Jason Holmes told the Committee that there is new and increased users that will effect the groomers. He also said that the Committee should start considering new ways to get funding and start looking at the bigger picture. He requested the Committee create a master plan.</p> <p>John asked how we determine usage in shared sno-parks. Pamela said that users can submit a sno-park evaluation form that asks about usage and the program relies on Committee Member to report what they see.</p> <p>Norris told the Committee and the audience to be more vocal and let people know that they are users.</p>	
Date, time and location for winter meeting	The Committee discussed the Winter Meeting. Frank moved to have the meeting in Leavenworth on February 4 and 5 th and Tony seconded and motion passed unanimously.	
Adjourn	Norris adjourned the meeting.	

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