

**Washington State Parks
SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2022 Winter Meeting
February 5, 2022
Minutes**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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

Washington State Parks Staff:

Pamela McConkey (Manager, Winter Recreation Program)
Jason Goldstein (Winter Recreation Program)
AJ Parlan (Winter Recreation)
Travis Larson (Winter Recreation)

Guests

Glenn Markovitz	Mike Sternback, State Parks
Wayne Mohler	Todd Schmutz, FS
Ron Lind, R&R Grooming	Wayne McLaughlin
Randy Skillman, IMS	
John Ernster, State Parks	
Dan Johnson, Hi-Country SMC	
Matt Mead, WSSA	
William Burgess, PMS	
Bill Burgess, PMS	
Matt Kensrud, WSSA	
Jim Burts, Apple Country	
Russel Aldrich, State Parks	
Marylin Mylius, Lake Wenatchee Rec Club	
Jim Burts, Apple Country	
Mark Tharp, Yakima Grooming Council	
Jason Holmes, WSSA	
Tim Penelerick, Boulder Creek	
Kevin Amsden	
Andrew Kerlee, State Parks	
Adam Osin, MTGA	
Keith Ritland	
Don Hoch, State Parks	

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February 5th Agenda

Item	Summary	Action
Welcome, Introductions	Bob Henrie welcomed members of the Committee, Audience, and to the Zoom meeting and thanked Norris for hosting.	No action.
Review Agenda	Bob called for any modifications to the Agenda. There were no modifications to the agenda.	No Action.
Review and Approve Summer Meeting Minutes	The Committee reviewed the Summer Meeting Minutes that were emailed out to Committee Members prior to the meeting. Cindy moved to approve the Summer SMAC meeting minutes as written Tony seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.	Motion Passed.
Committee Member Area Reports	<p>Tom Shields – Area 1: Tom told the Committee that grooming began in December. He said there were a lot of wind blows and lots of trees down. He said that the trees have caused more work for the groomer and that their club had had to do more work parties but other than that everything is good.</p> <p>Bob Henrie – Area 2: Bob reported that his area is not have quite the same winter as everyone else but it's a normal winter. He said they have decent snow and that the area clubs have done some events. He also said that things are going well despite down trees</p> <p>Norris Boyd – Area 3: Norris said that his area is similar with lots of down trees. He said they've had cutting parties but there are still trails that are not able to be opened because of really big trees. He said snow is good and trails are in good shape. He said off trail was a little more difficult. He said that there were some issues with logging but those have been resolved.</p> <p>Norris gave way to the groomer from Mt. Spokane, Russel Aldrich. He talked about some issues with Inland Empire they are trying to resolve. They are talking to another private landowner to open a different trail. Hopefully this will be resolved this year and work out next year. He said there are some problems with their groomer, but they are working through it.</p> <p>Kurt Millard – Area 4: Kurt told the Committee that the area is off to a good start and began in December which is earlier than normal. He said that the groomer itself was vandalized. Kurt told the Committee that his area is also suffering from downed trees. He said the groomer is working to open up Wakepish Sno-Park.</p> <p>Roger Brittain - Area 5 – Roger told the Committee that his area is similar to other areas with lots of downed trees. He would like a little more snow on top of the ice. He said in the Yakima area they gave up some miles on the trail that were low so that side-by-sides could be on them and traded that for some miles that were higher up. He said that the trail leads to</p>	No Action.

	<p>a popular area, so the groomer is having a hard time keeping wheeled side-by-sides out. Mark Tharpe agreed with Roger and has heard of those problems. Mark said the WDFW has done a great job patrolling but they can't be everywhere.</p> <p>Steve Riggin- Area 6: Steve told the Committee that everything is going pretty good. Groomer has been doing well. Steve said he'd like to see more snow.</p> <p>Pamela added that there is an issued with the Pomeroy Cat.</p> <p>Cindy Hoover – Non-motorized: Cindy gave a brief report saying that she is in the Canadian Rockies and can't really report on her area. But the skiing there is fantastic and having a great winter.</p> <p>John O'Brien – Non-Motorized: John told the Committee that he's been going out Crystal Springs and said that things are busy but not as bad as last year.</p> <p>Larry Leach – DNR: Larry told the Committee that everything is going as expected with no concerns or highlights in the NE. He said that in his area they lost staff as the snow came in, so there a bit of scramble to plow out the Ahtanum. He said there was fire related closures. He said that parks were plowed out and people are using them even with closed signs. They are preparing some logging contracts.</p> <p>Tony Leonetti- WDFW: Tony said that they would like more signage. He was glad to hear that his WDFW is out. He said their machines are up and going. He said there were no issues on their end and would like more signs.</p> <p>Pamela asked John to talk about an article that featured Cindy. John told the Committee that Cindy is a Mountaineer and was featured in an article.</p> <p>Pamela asked Norris to talk about the closures in his area. Norris said that it was in Kings Lake, but other areas have been able to open so there are plenty of trails to use. Pamela asked Norris to mark up a map so that we could put the closure on the map. Norris said that the trail is bermed so no one could get there.</p> <p>Norris said that they are getting a lot of support from WDFW and thanked Tony for their work.</p> <p>Bob told the Committee that he went out the previous week and forgot to put his tabs on his snowmobile and his permit in his truck and thought he was going to get a ticket.</p>	
Groomer Reports	<p>William Burgess- Pacific Mtn Services: William told the Committee they've had a lot of success along with some struggles. He said they started in the middle of December with lots of powder with no base. He said that they had a lot of trees down. He said that in one night they cut down 100 trees. He said that was followed by 4 feet of snow. Then he said they got solid rain, so it turned everything into concrete. He said</p>	No Action.

that there they've had a lot of users and they still have a lot of snow.

Mark Tharp- Yakima Grooming Council: Mark told the Committee that they got the same big dump that everyone else got. He said they weren't doing the Nile or Rattlesnake but other than that they are still grooming and should be able to get through the season.

Shannon Lawler- R&R Grooming: Shannon said they were grooming was going good. All areas are doing well. They are cutting out trees like everyone else. They are dealing with some logging issues in the Little Naches. He said they've run into some problems with wheeled vehicles but it's all typical stuff

Adam Osin-MTGA- He said they were having a normal season. He said they also have a lot of downed trees. He said they should be able to keep with the demand for the rest of the season.

Glen Markovitz- Greenwater- He said they were on a solid foundation of ice with some snow on top. He said the Ron cleared out some trees. Glen reported that he ran into some tracked side-by-sides, and they were properly licensed. Glen also said that he has been seeing WDFW out and they have been out patrolling. Glen thanked Jason for his work on the GPS map and complimented his work.

Glen said that the Committee may want to consider adding more money to snow removal over grooming for the coming season.

Todd Schmutz-USFS- Todd told the Committee that the snowmobiles that were ordered finally came in. Todd gave some LE statistics for his area. He said that they held a training to cover snowmobile use. He said with time he thinks they will be able to really provide a good service for the program.

Tim Penelerick- Boulder Creek- He said they started on December 15th and worked there way through the big snow after the county was able to open everything up.

Jason Holmes- Kittitas County Grooming Council- He said they are getting some warm weather coming up so it will be interested to see usage coming up. He complimented the LE in his area. He said there were over 400 written citations in his area for permit violations. Jason talked about the new contractor for snow removal, he said they have gone above and beyond and has made a real effort to plowing the roads.

Bob added that he is happy to hear that LE is doing compliance enforcement.

Andrew Kerlee- Central Cascades- Andrew told the Committee that he doesn't do a lot of motorized enforcement himself, but a lot of other rangers do enforcement. He said that they have

	<p>been trying to sell permits at Crystal Springs to people who don't have them. He said that they haven't had a lot of chances to get out on their snowmobiles but are hoping to be able to soon.</p> <p>John added that Lake Easton is doing a great job and that when you go to the park there is a big sign at the entrance to purchase permits and appreciated their presence there.</p> <p>Randy Skillman- IMS: Randy told the Committee that the snow came early but quickly left. He said they started grooming on December 16th. He again stated that Mt. Baker got 15 ft of snow in 10 days but now is getting a lot of rain.</p> <p>Jim Burts-Apple Country – Jim said that they were able to get two cats out for one day. He said the Fish and Wildlife installed new gates at their park that is not wide enough for one of their groomers to pass through, so they have been using their smaller groomer for that area. He said they would be grooming ice covered rocks with a little bit of snow, if they were grooming.</p> <p>Russ added that Mt. Spokane they have a new groomer operator. He said that the operator is also an arborist which has come in handy since they have also dealt with a lot of down trees.</p> <p>Tom Shields – Tom told the Committee that his groomer has only seen Law Enforcement once. He said he has had vehicles parked on his trails and they aren't removed for weeks. He said that Glacier Creek is washed out. Tom said that he also has not seen LE out.</p> <p>Tony said that he would talk to his guys and try to get more people out in the area. Tony also said that it is up to the landowner to get vehicles out.</p> <p>Ron Lind- R&R- Ron complimented WDFW for patrolling and writing tickets in his area. He said that grooming is going well, and they should be able to make it to March. He said they have also had trees down. He said they are dealing with some logging issues, but they are dealing with it. Ron complimented Mark Tharp for his work as a grooming coordinator.</p> <p>Jason asked about a boulder that was in the way in the Naches and Ron said that the Forest Service helped to get the boulder moved.</p>	
<p>Planning Committee Report</p>	<p>Norris told the Committee that the Planning Committee has not been able to meet.</p> <p>Norris told the Committee that he will try to organize something before the Summer Meeting</p>	<p>No action.</p>
<p>WSSA Update –</p>	<p>Wayne Mohler gave the Committee a WSSA Update. Wayne</p>	<p>No Action.</p>

<p>Legislation- Rendezvous 2022/2023</p>	<p>welcomed Rob to the Committee and said that his company is an associate member to WSSA. Wayne told the Committee that WSSA is celebrating their 50th year. Wayne said that membership is up from the previous year and hope that it's a trend.</p> <p>Wayne told the Committee that Kay Lloyd passed away and reminded the Committee of her contributions to state and national snowmobiling programs.</p> <p>Wayne said that due to diminished revenue due to a lack of expo from two years ago, WSSA will not have a legislative liaison and WSSA will only track and monitor legislation on not move on anything else. He said WSSA will encourage members to stay in touch with their legislators.</p> <p>Wayne told the Committee that 2022 Rendezvous was cancelled because of the covid surge. He said there will be a zoom meeting that will recognize their award winners and new board.</p> <p>Wayne told the Committee that there is a possibility of holding their Rendezvous at the same venue next year.</p> <p>Matt Mead reminded people to vote in the WSSA elections.</p> <p>Wayne gave a quick recap on raises in cost for registration and fuel tax. Wayne said that it usually begins with a survey. Wayne said that despite what marketing agencies say the state has lost about 12,000 snowmobile users.</p> <p>He said that there are a lot of challenges coming up.</p>	
<p>Logging and Equipment Issues</p>	<p>Jason gave a brief overview on the grooming map. He said that the program has been fine tuning it and saying that at 7 or 8am the map should be updated from all the grooming the night before.</p> <p>Jason said the program is testing new GPS equipment and three different locations and see how it goes. John asked what is different. Jason explained that the new units are smaller and are battery powered rather than hard wired or solar powered. Jason explained that the solar powered units go into a sleep mode and are harder to get reactivated. Jason also hoped to get a shorter messaging interval.</p> <p>Jason told the Committee that the maps have been updated for Mt. Adams.</p> <p>Jason said that a company has asked to make a presentation in the summer for a map app.</p> <p>Jason told the Committee of different area that have been closed.</p> <p>Jason told the Committee that the program wrote 6 grants and received 6 grants and they are looking good to bill those areas.</p>	

	<p>Jason and Tony recapped the training class the NWAC, and State Parks partnered in. Tony said that the participants from WDFW found the training useful and that he expects the training to be full again next year.</p>	
<p>Snowmobile Registration Numbers</p>	<p>AJ gave the Committee an update on Registration Numbers. He said that the state is down almost a little over 1200 sleds from last year but is optimistic that registration will not hit the pre-covid lows.</p> <p>Bob added that a lot of people who snow checked sleds did not receive their sleds yet so February might be better than normal.</p> <p>Committee and audience discussed out-of-state snowmobilers. Wayne and Matt talked about WSSA's role in clarifying requirements. Norris said that it might just be a local problem since Idaho snowmobilers can sled into Washington and use trails without registering or buying a permit.</p>	<p>No Action.</p>
<p>Break</p>		
<p>Shared Sno-parks cost & New Sno-Parks</p>		
<p>Public Comments</p>	<p>Bob asked program staff about payment for groomers. Jason explained that there was a delay in paying one groomer. Jason explained that the program has 30 days to make payment but normally it is well before. Jason went through the process of getting paid. Jason said that electronic transfer is faster than getting a check written. Bill Burgess said that he has not gotten paid yet for one part of his contract. Jason said that he would look into it. Ron told the Committee that he has not had a problem with getting paid.</p> <p>Glen talked to the Committee about Law Enforcement in his area. He talked about the Forest Service going out and making contacts. Glen said that LE does create a deterrent for people to comply with the law.</p> <p>Wayne asked about WDFW's 10-year Recreation Plan. Tony said that he wasn't sure if it was a 10-year plan or 25-year plan. He said that at his level he is not involved but his Commission may be considering it and encouraged the group to comment. Wayne was concerned there may be a shift from area being "open unless posted closed" to "closed unless posted open".</p>	
<p>Lunch</p>		<p>No Action.</p>
<p>Winter Recreation Program/Info/Q&A</p>	<p>Mike Sternbeck introduced himself as the Assistant Director of Operations. He said that Pamela would be retiring in March. He told the Committee that the position announcement would be going out soon. Mike said that the position would be reporting to Mike's Deputy, but his Deputy would be leaving.</p> <p>Mike asked that if anyone has any suggestions or anything they would like to see with the program to work with Bob. He said that the program would be getting only their 3rd Manager</p>	

	<p>ever, so it is an important time in the program.</p>	
<p>Snow Removal Amendments</p>	<p>Jason updated the Committee on repairs for the Ferry County Groomer. Jason said that budget for repairs was \$100,000 and that so far, the program is ok.</p> <p>Jason went through the snow removal amendments so far in the season. Jason said that through December the program has already spent the \$30,000 allotment. Jason had the Committee look at the allotments for snow removal.</p> <p>Jason also showed the breakdown of costs in shared moto/non-moto parks.</p> <p>Jason showed the snow removal amendments that he had done so far. The Committee asked to look at the Equipment Repairs so far for this year. The Committee discussed the snow removal budget. John asked if we could start taking money out of other budgets to put in emergency reserve for snow removal. Pamela reminded the Committee that any money moved into the snow removal emergency reserve that is not used can be moved back.</p> <p>Norris motioned to increase the snow removal emergency reserve to \$75,000. Roger seconded.</p> <p>Jason clarified that this money will only effect motorized parks and that dual use parks will be split between both programs.</p> <p>Tom asked when most money was spent. Jason answered that we can get hit late in the winter. Tom asked why the program is more than doubling the budget for snow removal.</p> <p>Motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p>No Action.</p>
<p>Regarding P3, P5, and P6</p>	<p>Pamela and John talked about the Funding applications that the Committee reviews in the Summer. John said that he feels that the Committee doesn't look at the Priority 3 applications enough. He asked how the Priority 3 applications get reviewed.</p> <p>Pamela explained that she reads them all and if there are any problems; she will contact the sponsor. She said that the Committee doesn't spend a lot of time reviewing them because if there are any changes then there should be a Priority 5 or 6 Application for it. Pamela said the program tries to get applications to the Committee as fast as possible.</p> <p>The Committee talked about the difficulty in filling out the applications and those applications are not necessarily accurate for the coming season due to closures.</p> <p>Roger reminded everyone that in previous years all applications were scrutinized but that the Committee moved away from it. Wayne suggested there be more connection to</p>	<p>No action</p>

	<p>what is funded and what is actually groomed. He said between cuts and increases miles have not been updated.</p> <p>Jason said there should be a mechanism that allows budgets to be adjusted for where areas are surging or declining.</p> <p>Glen suggested that Committee members get more involved throughout their areas and with their constituents. Glen also would like to see more raw data for grooming so better decisions can be made for increases and reductions.</p>	
Highlight NW Glacier Cruisers	<p>Tom made a presentation to the Committee on his Club's activities.</p> <p>Tom showed pictures from their work parties and fund raisers. He showed Avalanche Training that the club did in conjunction with NWAC. Tom showed the Committee their warming hut.</p> <p>Tom spent time explaining a road in his area that may closed for both motorized and non-motorized use.</p>	No action.
Highlight Non-moto and Dogs	<p>John made a presentation to the Committee about winter activities. He showed his dog sled team and explained Ski-Joring. John said that dogs can injure themselves on deep snow, so packed snow is important to the sport. John said that for the most part dogs cannot be run on groomed ski trails and that they run out of shared trails. So, trails out of Crystal Springs were identified for Dog Sled use and there are 10-12 miles that are groomed for them.</p> <p>He said that are not as many dog sled teams now as there has been in the past. John talked about safety on the trails between motorized users and dogsleds.</p> <p>John also talked about his ham radio use. He explained SOTA (Summits on the Air) which is making contacts from various peaks and mountain tops. John said that this can be accomplished by hiking, snowshoeing, or snowmobiling. John showed examples of him getting towed to different areas by snowmobilers.</p>	
Elections/Terms	<p>AJ ran the election for the committee:</p> <p>AJ told the Committee that both Norris and Bob would still be available for the Summer Meeting, and both Committed to staying on the Committee for an additional year.</p> <p>Roger motioned to keep Bob and Norris as the Chair and Vice- Chair of the Committee and Tony seconded.</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p>	<p>Bob Henrie was remained Chair.</p> <p>Norris Boyd remain Vice-Chair</p>
Next Meeting, Date, Time and Location	<p>After discussion, Norris moved to have the Summer Meeting on Aug 5th and 6th in Wenatchee.</p>	No Action.

	The motion passed unanimously.	AJ will get accommodations and meeting space in Wenatchee for the Summer Meeting.
Special Thanks	Bob recognized, Pamela McConkey, for all her work in the program and wished her well on her retirement.	
Adjourn	Tom motioned to adjourn the meeting, Cindy Seconded. The motion passed unanimously.	No Action.

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