

Governor's Snowmobile Council
January 3, 2024

Present:

Pat Poulin, Chairman
Star Poulin, Governor Appointee
Michael Smith, Vermont DMV
Claire Polfus, Forest Parks & Recreation
Paul Doucette, Chief's Association & Southern VT Wilderness Search & Rescue
Gary Nolan, VAST L/E Committee Chair
Stan Choiniere, Governor Appointee
Mike Mutascio, Governor Appointee
Jacob Metayer, VT State Police
Marc Poulin, VT Sheriff Association & Washington County Sheriff
Jenna Reed, Fish & Wildlife

VAST Staff Present:

Cindy Locke, VAST Executive Director
Mandy Dwinell, Office & Programs Manager
Matt Tetreault, VAST Trails Administrator

The meeting was convened at 3:04PM via Zoom by Pat Poulin.

Approval of Minutes

Star Poulin moved to approve the December minutes as presented; Marc Poulin seconded. MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of SSTP Financial Report November, Matt

Star Poulin moved to approve the November SSTP Financial Reports as presented; Paul Doucette seconded. MOTION CARRIED.

Agency Reports

Vermont State Police (VSP), Jacob Metayer

Online: 305 participants, all have completed the course and passed.

In-Person: 28 participants, all have completed the course and passed. Awaiting some class rosters from December.

Safety Inspection held in Derby in December with an estimated 30 safety checks performed.

Sheriff's Association, Marc Poulin –VT Sheriff Association & Washington County Sheriff

Helped with an in-person Snowmobile Safety Course in Barre in December.

There are now 9 deputies for Washington County.

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

Meeting with the Executive Board for the Search & Rescue team where the bylaws were reviewed and changed.

Working on preplanning training in Southern Vermont, hopefully in the Woodford Snobusters area to help with crash and accident preparation and training.

Accepted to the NY State Parks training held February 5-9, 2024.

Department of Motor Vehicles, Michael Smith

Updates for December for the following years:

2023: 16,287

2022: 17,488

2021: 17,162

2020: 17,224

2019: 17,241

2018: 17,506

Forest, Parks & Recreation, Claire Polfus

Discussion on VOREC grants. More information to come for VOREC & RFT grant programs in mid-January. No grant programs are currently open.

VAST

TMA Sales

To date, TMAs processed are 15,698.

Estimated most of the connection to the number of TMAs to be snow-related. Most TMA holders were VT residents, once snow is received, VAST will run reports and connect with L/E for potential patrol areas.

Law Enforcement (LE) Committee, Gary

Nothing new to report.

VAST Safety Committee, Stan

Participated in a Zoom meeting last month with Safe Kids Vermont.

The Safety Committee is focusing on utilizing International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) safety videos with links shared on the VAST website.

Discussion on how 911 works on cellphones as a suggestion of a safety topic to include in the VAST eNews and Snowmobile Vermont magazine.

Fish & Wildlife, Jenna Reed

2 Wardens assigned

Job offers to 3 wardens, will be starting with Police Academy in February.

Wardens recently attended a virtual meeting RE: VAST tool for looking up TMAs for safety checks or in case of an accident.

In December, 1-2 wardens did a snow patrol in Northern VT.

SSTP Trail Report, Matt and Cindy

December Flooding

There was a decent amount of damage from the 12/17/23 flood throughout Vermont. Trails are continuing to be accessed. Some of the damage is combined with the July flooding.

Noticing some of the issues are caused by culverts being plugged.

Mad River and Braintree areas were hit hard with damage to 4-5 bridges.

Significant damage to the rail bed in the Groton State Forest.

Waterbury suspension bridge: Continuing to investigate potential options to remove debris and trees that have become snagged on the bridge.

Legislative Report

House Report, Matt Walker

Not Present.

Senate Report, Jane Kitchel

Not Present.

Appointee Reports

Northwest, Star

Unsure of current trail conditions resulting from the December flooding, clubs are still accessing.

Northeast, Mike

Lots of areas with soft ground resulting in some signs falling, clubs have been working on getting the signs back up.

Meeting at the Radar Base on Sunday to evaluate trails.

Central, Jeff

Not Present.

South, Stan

The area had close to 20" of snow from the 3 December storms, but all has melted.

A few areas with damage in Chester have been repaired.

Windsor County meeting 1/3/24.

A landowner is petitioning to close a Class 4 section of trail. Selectboard meeting 1/3/24 with about 20 people attending in support of keeping the section of trail open. Appreciation to VAST for submitting a letter to the Town Manager for support of the trail.

Stan to email Jenna with Fish & Wildlife updates on the trail and area.

Discussion on the upcoming Veterans ride, more information to come.

Next meeting is Wednesday, February 7, at 3pm via Zoom.

Motion to Adjourn:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Dwinell, VAST Office & Programs Manager