Governor's Snowmobile Council
October 7, 2026

Present:
Cindy Locke (Chair)
Patty Companik – VAST President
Stan Choiniere - Governor Appointee
Dustin Circe – Fish & Wildlife
Gary Nolan – VAST L/E Committee
Mike Mutascio – Governor Appointee
Matt Tetrealt – VAST Trails Administrator
Claire Polfus – Forest Parks & Recreation
Paul Doucette – Chief's Assoc. & Southern Vermont Wilderness Search & Rescue
Jim Hill – Governor Appointee
Greg Rouleau – Central VT Rep (Pending)
Glenn Toole – VAST Safety Ambassador, Guest

VAST Staff Present:
Tina Bedard, Office Manager
Mandy Dwinell, Programs & Trails Manager

The meeting was convened at 3:01 PM via Zoom by Cindy Locke.

Approval of Minutes
Stan Choiniere moved to approve the September minutes; Jim Hill seconded. ***MOTION CARRIED.***

SSTP Financial Report
Paul Doucette moved to approve the SSTP Financial report; Gary Nolan seconded.

Agency Reports

Vermont State Police (VSP), Jacob Metayer
Computer updates at the barracks are delaying precise educations numbers.
Upcoming snowmobile safety courses are scheduled across the state.
Snowmobile safety instructor training is scheduled for November 11, in the evening at the Central office to verify new course leaders.
18 new troopers completed training and joined the snowmobile enforcement team. That gives coverage of approximately two 2-3 qualified patrol officers per barrack across VT.

Fish & Wildlife
There are 4 new game wardens with two recruits finishing the academy training in December. They will begin field patrols in the Barre and New Haven areas.
Two wardens completed a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators "Train the Trainer" program focused on standardized seated field sobriety testing. There is a possibility that this testing can be used in snowmobiling patrols as well.

Sheriff's Association Marc Poulin – VT Sheriff Association & Washington County Sheriff
Not present.

Police Chiefs & Southern VT Wilderness Search & Rescue, Paul Doucette
The SVWS&R team that was representing Dover, Wilmington, Winhall, Bennington, and Fish and Wildlife convened its planning meeting in September.
Paul was re-elected as program director for the upcoming year.

Department of Motor Vehicles, Shannon Fassett
Cindy reported:
9/30 2026 8216 registered and a revenue of $211,344.
9/30 2025 7,118 registered and a revenue of $1184,554. That is a gain of 1,098 registrations.

Forest, Parks & Recreation, Claire Polfus
3 Primary outdoor recreation programs have been opened for applications. The RTP, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the VOREC Community Grant program. Informational webinars and open office hours are being hosted for available. Processing times might take longer as there are staffing changes.

Legislative Report

House Report - Jim Casey
Not present.

Senate Report – Pat Brennan
Not present.

Legislative representation were absent due to campaign travel ahead of the general elections.
Non-partisan community advocacy organization Rural Vermont Rising organized a rally on the State House lawn focusing on rural Vermont community concerns and opposition to Act 181. VAST approved inclusion of its logo on event promotional literature; council members and regional club members were encouraged to attend the gathering wearing VAST-branded apparel to represent organized recreation interests.

General VAST Updates
VAST is moving from its map gears mobile mapping application to a new platform engineered by Trail Intel, targeting system-wide deployment between late October and mid-November. The map gears mobile app must be uninstalled manually by end users prior to downloading the new app.
The new software has different tiered service levels. A free entry-level base map, a mid-tier map option, and an enhanced navigation subscription offering turn-by-turn routing and expanded trail databases.
TMA Early-Bird sales started October 1. Tradeshows were happening around the same time

that VAST volunteers and staff attended.

Law Enforcement – Gary Nolan
Gary Nolan summarized the fall joint law enforcement coordination assembly, highlighting the passage of revised statutory fine schedules eliminating fine waivers and establishing higher penalties for unregistered sleds, operating without a valid TMA, and lack of liability insurance. Morrisville and Hardwick chiefs plan to implement reciprocal nighttime patrols extending along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) connecting Hardwick, Danville, and local destinations such as Parker Pie. Agency officers plan to conduct winter field training workshops around December 1st, utilizing VAST safety ambassadors for patrol logistics support.

VAST Safety Committee, Stan
The committee is preparing its mobile "Adventure Readiness" display for regional dealer open houses. Multiple dealer events are concentrated or on identical weekends.

SSTP Trail Report, Matt
Trail preparation has been happening. Local clubs are coordinating trail maintenance, seasonal signing, reroutes, and bridge redecking around active fall big-game hunting seasons to keep positive relationships with landowners.

Northwest, Jim
Clubs are doing bridge replacement projects, grading, and corridor clearing.

Northeast, Mike
Trail maintenance is on schedule. A planned seasonal trail closure happened in southern Caledonia County near Moore Dam along the New Hampshire border, caused by an Eversource power transmission line corridor rebuild.

Central,
The regional board authorized planning for a new snowmobile connector trail traversing Groton State Forest around the rear slopes of Spruce Mountain. The proposed alignment spans the jurisdictional boundary of FPR District 4 and District 5. FPR representative Claire directed the project coordinators (including Paul Sisto) to file a formal state land pre-proposal application online, coordinating initial corridor walks with Acting Stewardship Forester and Recreation Specialist Luke O'Brien (District 5) and Stewardship Forester Dan Singleton (District 4).

South, Stan
The Ludlow Sidehill Cronchers successfully defended a trail right-of-way along a road shoulder during a contested Ludlow selectboard hearing.
A landowner whose residence sits 20 feet from the road centerline, which is in violation of the town's 75 foot setback ordinance. The landowner petitioned the board to terminate snowmobile access along the public right-of-way, alleging nuisance concerns.
More than 60 advocates and local club members showed up to support.

The meeting concluded at 4:01 PM.

Next Meeting: The next Governor's Snowmobile Council scheduled meeting will be on November 4, at 3:00 pm via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tina Bedard
VAST Office Manager