

Governor's Snowmobile Council

September 4, 2024

Present:

Pat Poulin, Chairman
Jenna Reed, Fish & Wildlife
Jacob Metayer, VSP
Claire Polfus, Forest Parks & Recreation
Mike Mutascio, Governor Appointee
Stan Choiniere, Governor Appointee
Gary Nolan, VAST L/E Committee Chair
Marc Poulin, Vermont Sheriff's Assoc.
Jim Hill, Governor Appointee

VAST Staff Present:

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

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

Approval of Minutes

Jim Hill moved to approve the June minutes as presented; Marc Poulin seconded. MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of SSTP Financial Report of July, Matt

This will be in next month's meeting.

SSTP Trail Report, Matt

New Projects are still coming in. There are seventy-five of them so far plus what came in during the regular cycle. The total is two hundred or more projects. The counties that got hit the hardest with flood damage are:
Caledonia

Essex

Orleans

Washington

Trails will be fixed where it makes sense to fix so that there are continuous trails where there can be.

Agency Reports

Vermont State Police (VSP), Jacob Metayer

Sleds are being prepped for winter. The Safety Committee is working on changes and updates for the safety course online and in-person. Jacob is receiving feedback and reviewing.

Fish & Wildlife, Jenna Reed

There are three new trainees in training month 3 of 8. Fish & Wildlife will be hiring one more.

Discussion on letter of thanks to Jane Kitchel.

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

Nothing to report.

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

Not Present.

Department of Motor Vehicles, Michael Smith

- 2024 Vermont Snowmobile Regulations Discussion

Regulations are being reviewed and updates will be submitted soon.

Discussion on exhaust noise.

Forest, Parks & Recreation, Claire Polfus

FPR does not currently have the funding to help. FPR is working on a small Flood grant. RTP grants be in October.

VAST

Update, Cindy

Flood damage update.

Cindy and Matt attended a meeting with the Governors Cabinet in Burke. FPR also attended. It was discussed that there is no money for flood relief right now. There is a possibility FEMA can help with some flood relief, on state, federal or municipal lands.

Discussion on possible property tax increases of 14% next year. Cindy will have questions prepared soon for people to ask of legislation.

Discussion on how important outdoor recreation is and that VT is the second tourism dollars per capita, Hawaii is the first.

Law Enforcement (LE) Committee, Gary

in 2023 there were 1082 hours on trails. In 2024 the number was 618.

VAST Safety Committee, Stan

Met this month. The initiative was to deal with the safety course online. The committee members were asked to give input on what they would like to see changed. Jacob Matayer with the Vermont State Police was sent three pages worth of comments that they would like changed or updated for the Vermont section of the course. Stan stated that Jacob was going to initiate the changes. One issue is that the course states it is a requirement for the course to be 6 hours long, the course online takes about 2.5 hours. That conflict will be dealt with.

The app "What 3 Words" was discussed as well. An article in the magazine and eNews regarding the app will be done so the members can be educated.

FY25 SSTP Budget Review/Approval will be done in next month's meeting.

House Report, Matt Walker

Not present.

Senate Report, Jane Kitchel

Not present.

Appointee Reports

Northwest, Jim

Nothing to report.

Northeast, Mike

There is a meeting Thursday with stakeholders of Kingdom Heritage Lands.
There was a trail closure in Island Pond.
Discussion on Airbnb rentals.

Central, Jeff

Not Present.

South, Stan

Nothing to report.
Discussion on providing information when a 3-day pass is purchased.
Discussion on VAST not having any crossings over bodies of water.

Next meeting is Wednesday, October 2, 2024, at 3pm via Zoom.

Motion to Adjourn:

Mike Mutascio moved to close the meeting at 4:03 pm; Cindy Locke seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Bedard
VAST Office & Programs Assistant