

**Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association
General Membership Meeting
Saturday, April 28, 2018
Arrowwood Lodge at Brainerd Lakes, Brainerd, MN**

The Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association held its Quarterly General Membership meeting Saturday, April 28, 2018 at Arrowwood Lodge Brainerd, Minnesota, in connection with the annual Spring Meetings.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Seibel at 10.02AM. Present were Executive Board members: President Rod Seibel, Vice President Greg Sorensen, Secretary Rick Johnson, Treasurer Scott Wakefield, and Director-at-Large Mark Kavanaugh.

Welcome: By President Seibel

Introduction of Executive Board and Guests- The Executive Board members introduced themselves. Also present were MnUSA Lobbyists Doug Franzen; Laura Preus and Andrew Korsberg from DNR Parks & Trails Central Office; and Bruce Lawrence from DNR Enforcement.

Approval of Agenda – Motion by Janet Widness, seconded by Craig Swanberg to approve the agenda with the addition of the snowmobile ride simulator. **Motion carried.**

Secretary's Report -- Motion by Mark LaBaw, seconded by Randy Laberge to waive the reading of the minutes and approve the secretary's report as written. **Motion carried.**

Officers' Reports:

Vice President's Report: Greg Sorenson thanked everyone for attending this meeting.

Director At Large Report: Mark Kavanaugh reported on the Washington DC Fly-In/American Council of Snowmobile Association (ACSA) meetings. Some of the Minnesota contingent (Mark, Nancy & Jerry Hanson) missed part of the first day's meetings due to weather delays with the blizzard conditions. Scott Wakefield represented MnUSA at the ACSA meetings. ACSA is working to clarify its purpose, what they want to accomplish in the future and how to do so.

Speakers at the Monday educational session were from the Department of Transportation, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Chief of the US Forest Service, trails enthusiast organizations, Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture as well as a US Representative from Wyoming and the attorney for the manufacturers' association. There appears to be a major, positive shift in attitude toward access to public lands, including for motorized recreation. Talking points with the Minnesota delegates included the following:

- There is a major push to increase funding to FRTP. Currently, motorized recreation gas tax contributes about \$270M to fund but receives only \$84M in return.
- Release of the wilderness study areas that are not deemed appropriate for wilderness. Access to these millions of acres has been limited for many years.
- Fewer restrictions for trails on Federal Wildlife Management Areas
- Restrict trail easement fees being charged on mining lands.

- Thank legislators for increasing the fire fighting money for USFS, freeing up their budgeted funds for designated purposes including road and trail maintenance.

President: Rod Seibel has been attending club and region meetings and encourages clubs or regions to contact him if they would like a representative from the Executive Board attend their meeting.

Business Coordinator's Report: Nancy Hanson - See attached.

Legislative/Trails Report: Doug Franzen gave an update on MnUSA's legislation. There are three weeks left in the session and the legislature has about 90% of its work to do. It comes down to three bills – the tax bill which will put Minnesota in sync with the federal tax changes and if not passed we will pay a lot more in taxes; the bonding bill; and the supplemental appropriations. The sales tax exemption on trail building/maintenance is in the House tax bill. The supplemental appropriations bill will combine all bills with fiscal impact. Rep. Fabian wants a memorandum of understanding for the 60/40, giving some flexibility to make sure it works.

There have been good hearings on the colors on the registration sticker decals. DNR's proposal was to increase the sticker size with a big number. Enforcement says system is being changed using bar codes. Upon recommendation by MSAC, the Executive Board's decision was to not spend the money for a temporary fix with changes within two years.

Tracked ATVs on GIA trails legislation is dead.

The safety training bill has been heard in both the House and Senate to allow clubs to purchase the online training at a discount and pass the discount on to the students.

With regard to the changes in the DUI laws, Doug has worked with legislators from the area where the child was killed to make some slight changes in the laws, simply no free pass the 1st time, and 0 tolerance if under the legal age. The Senate bill includes motorboats but the House bill does not. MnUSA took leadership and was well received.

Studs on natural surface trails appears to be a county issue and will not be legislated at the state level.

Funding for the Vermilion River bridge will be in the bonding bill, and, although snowmobiles may be able to use the bridge, snowmobile funds will not be used for the bond match or maintenance.

The Legislative Committee had good discussion on prioritizing existing club trails for possible future funding. MnUSA will work with ATVAM where there is ATV damage to snowmobile GIA trails where ATV's are riding legally. Information on problem areas should be provided to the Trails Committee.

Staying politically active with pro snowmobiling being our common theme is very important In this election year. Political contributions up to \$100/couple and \$50/individual are refunded by the state.

Minnesota Snowmobile Education & Advancement Fund (MSEAF): Terry Hutchinson.

MSEAF is a 501 (c) (3) providing financial support of MnUSA and snowmobiling presently with safety highway billboards; club safe and sober signs; blue information signs; Rider Assist Directory and the annual Veterans Appreciation Ride. The 2018 ride was originally scheduled for Paynesville but was moved to

Silver Bay due to lack of snow in the Paynesville area. They will try for Paynesville again in 2019. Thanks to all in the Silver Bay area who helped make this ride a success on short notice. MSEAF can accept gambling funds, memorials, etc., to help fund its programs.

Committee Reports:

Fund Raising-Raffle: Mark Steinmueller congratulated the clubs selling the most calendars – Prior Lake Sno-Trails (413); Warren Sno-Cat Riders (218); Lords of London and New Munich Sno-Gilders (200) and presented the committee's finance report, recommended donations and budget. A **Motion** was made by Larry Shepherd, second by Janet Widness to approve the following donations:

American Council of Snowmobile Associations	\$5000
Scholarships	\$3000
Clean Snowmobile Challenge	\$2000
Minnesota Snowmobile Education & Advancement Fund	\$32,000
Coalition of Recreational Trail Users	\$500
Conservationists with Common Sense	\$500

and a budget of \$25,000 for the 2019 calendar. **Motion carried.**

Site Selection: Bids are being accepted for the 2020 Rendezvous. Contact the MnUSA office for a bid package.

Old Business:

- Summer Event: July 15, 2018 at Little Falls VFW, Breakfast at 8:00 AM, Meetings begin at 10:00 AM, Region 3 host.
- Fall Convention and Workshop: October 26-28, 2018, Hampton Inn, Bemidji. Region 1 host.
- 2019 Winter Rendezvous: February 7-10, 2019 at Cragun's Resort, hosted by Crow Wing County Snowmobile Trails Association and the local clubs.

New Business:

Dick Kuttner reported that the snowmobile ride simulator has been significantly improved with the addition of the Arctic Cat 200 snowmobile. The DNR wants clubs to run it but has issues with scheduling and with changing the snowmobile for ATV, etc, and there are insurance issues. The DNR policies cover any damage to the machine and liability for the operators at a DNR event; but no liability coverage when the simulator is at a club event. V & V Insurance which covers many clubs will not provide this coverage but others quoted \$250-\$500/day. Scott Wakefield reported that other states are discontinuing use of this valuable tool for liability reasons. Research is being done to find a national policy.

DNR Reports:

Enforcement: Bruce Lawrence explained the snowmobile safety enforcement grants that are given to the sheriffs. How the money was spent is supposed to be published on the county websites. By Federal law the DNR cannot put scanned paper on its website due to accessibility issues but sheriff logs can be requested from DNR.

One of the companies providing the online safety education was bought out last fall and the family and group discounts were eliminated. With personnel changes at the new company group pricing for 10 or more codes is again available. Prior purchased codes are still good.

There are 20 people coming on board for enforcement academies. The academies have 14 weeks of training and DNR will have an additional academy next year. Presently there are 30 vacant positions.

Bruce also provided the following statistics:

- Last season there were six fatalities, five of them alcohol related.
- Youth safety training numbers are down slightly from last season – 3736 to 2971.
- Six fatalities this past season, five involved alcohol.
- 212 citations were given for operation without registration of 268 contacts
- Even though stickers are current, compliance is poor on the display of numbers. Many warnings were written - failure to display 593 contacts-164 citations; 87 contacts for failure to transfer within 15 days; 103 contacts for no safety training; 102 contacts for speed; 16 state trail sticker violations. These numbers only include DNR CO's, not other law enforcement agencies.

Parks and Trails: Laura Preus and Andrew Korsberg. There will be no changes to the 2018-2019 grant program.

DNR trails representatives have been meeting with Andrew to develop their ideas and possible changes to provide the best quality and long-term sustainable trail system possible. Andrew presented a PowerPoint with statistics, recent history of funding for the snowmobile program and ideas for discussion on possible changes that could be made to the program that he compiled through these discussions. The presentation summarized how the performance based program is currently structured and some challenges. It provided several options intended as conversation starters for means to improve the program sustainability, providing pros and cons of each of these options. Copies of this PowerPoint were available at the meeting and are available upon request.

MnUSA representatives will be reviewing the suggestions in depth and discussing other options early this summer.

Adjournment: Motion by Mark LaBaw, second by Woody Widness to adjourn. **Motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Johnson, Secretary

Business Coordinator Report
April 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to again attend the American Council of Snowmobile Association's annual Fly-In in Washington DC. Due to our April blizzard and the airport being closed, I arrived a day late but in time for our education sessions on Monday. With the present administration, our speakers this year reflected a different attitude toward some programs and recreational access on federal lands.

One of the speakers this year from the Department of Interior expressed interest in helping snowmobilers with problems we have with our trail system when land becomes under the ownership of US Fish & Wildlife Service. MnUSA presently knows of three clubs where trails may be closed or reroutes not available due to USF&WS policy. MnUSA will be communicating the specifics of these situations both to the gentlemen from DOI and our federal legislators soon. If you have a trail situation with USF&WS, please let Terry Hutchinson know.

A new initiative of the Bureau of Economic Analysis is an outdoor recreation study to determine its economic benefit. For the first time, BEA has statistics showing how outdoor recreation ripples through the US economy. A final report will be out this fall but preliminary numbers show motorized recreation, excluding motorcycles and RV's, in 2016 generated \$18,092,000 in economic activity and that outdoor recreation as a whole accounts for \$374 billion of US GDP in 2016 or 2% of the economy.

Each year in DC we talk to our legislators about the importance of the Federal Recreational Trails Program (FRTP) to our state. This year a bill will be introduced by Sen. Klobuchar to increase funding to FRTP by returning all the fuel tax dollars paid by off-road motorized recreation vehicles to be set aside for the FRTP. Presently the program receives \$84 million out of \$270 million received. We were told that the Senator would be announcing the bill on June 2 which is National Trails Day. A portion of the funds are paid to the state based on off-road vehicle registrations and a provision of the bill will require a new study to determine these numbers. Snowmobile registration numbers will be important in this funding determination. If your club would like to sign on to support the increase, please contact the MnUSA office.

If your club was awarded a grant under FRTP for the purchase of a groomer, a "Buy American" waiver was recently approved for the 2016 grants. At this time it is not anticipated that waivers will continued to be approved as has been the process. If you are purchasing a groomer, drag, bridge, etc., containing iron or steel and wish to apply for an RTP grant, you should be sure to get a letter of compliance from the manufacturer. Please contact me with questions.

The Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association (MRTUA) has submitted its recommendations to the DNR for this year's round of RTP grants. If you submitted a grant, we are now in the waiting period for a couple of months before you will receive notice. Presently Minnesota receives approximately \$2 million each year for the grants with 30% going to

motorized projects, 30% to non-motorized projects and 40% to projects that benefit both motorized and non-motorized users. If you have projects that could fit in the joint category, please consider applying for a grant in the next round which will be due February 28, 2019.

Thank you to DNR Enforcement for the invitation to present information about MnUSA and what is important to snowmobiling in Minnesota at the academy for new conservation officers. This is a great opportunity to connect with the new enforcement officers and promote the partnerships we have.

The MN Constitutional Amendment that increased sales tax to be used for clean water, habitat for wildlife, parks & trails and the arts (known as the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment) has now been existence for 10 years. The Parks & Trails Fund receives 14.25 % of the funds. The Parks & Trails Advisory Committee, DNR, Met Council and Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission are holding celebration / open houses across the state to promote projects funded through legacy and receive direction for the next 15 years of funding. Many of you participated in the public participation that was used to develop the Parks & Trails Legacy Plan and these events are an opportunity to again provide input on how funds have been spent and what you would like to see in the future. The remaining events are May 11, Bloomington; May 19, Rochester; June 2, Itasca State Park; June 16, Fergus Falls; and June 27, Duluth. Event information is posted on MnUSA's website and can be found on the Legacy website at <https://www.legacy.mn.gov/ptlac>

Thank you to the clubs that have updated their information on MnUSA's new website. We'll be working on the site over the summer. Usernames and passwords have been changed from the old site so please contact the MnUSA office to receive your new login information if you haven't already done so.

The various forms and information specifically for clubs can now be found on the MnUSA website at www.mnsnowmobiler.org/clubs/information Please bookmark it as a favorite as it won't come up in a search.

Thanks for all you do to support the trails and snowmobiling! It is a pleasure to work with you. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the MnUSA office.

Nancy Hanson, Business Coordinator
763-577-0185 / 866-811-7669