

**Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association  
General Membership Annual Meeting  
October 22, 2016  
Superior Shores Resort, Two Harbors, MN**

The Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association held its Annual General Membership meeting Saturday, October 22, 2016, at Superior Shores Resort, Two Harbors. The meeting was called to order by President Mark Kavanaugh at 9:00 a.m. Present were Executive Board members: President Mark Kavanaugh; Vice President Rod Seibel; Treasurer Rick Johnson; Secretary Marc Dahlquist; and Director-At-Large Terry Hutchinson.

**Introduction of Executive Board and Guests** – The Executive Board members introduced themselves. Also present were MnUSA Lobbyists Doug Franzen and Christian Franzen, and DNR representatives Laura Preus, Andrew Korsberg and Bruce Lawrence.

**Approval of Agenda** – Motion made by Larry Shepherd, seconded by Janet Widness, to approve the agenda as written. Motion passed.

**Secretary's Report** – Motion by Mark LaBaw, seconded by Jim Folz to approve the secretary's report as written. Motion passed.

**Financial Report** – Treasurer Rick Johnson reported on the financial status of MnUSA.

**Officer's Reports:**

**President:** Since campout, Mark Kavanaugh attended the Region 8 outing and Region 3 meeting, participated in two executive board meetings, worked the MnUSA booth at Hay Days and participated in the Midwest Chapter, American Council of Snowmobile Associations, meeting by conference call. Recently he and other representatives of MnUSA attended a meeting with Rodmen Smith, Director, DNR Enforcement; a meeting with DNR licensing and the MSAC meeting.

**Vice President:** Rod Seibel attended the executive board meetings and MSAC meeting.

**Director at Large:** Terry Hutchinson also participated in the Midwest Chapter, American Council of Snowmobile Associations meeting. He continues to work with the DNR on filling in the missing link trails on the quadrant maps and also has assisted clubs with trail issues.

**DNR Reports:**

**Enforcement:** Bruce Lawrence gave an update on safety training. Last season 3336 individuals completed the online program including youth and adults. DNR Enforcement has hired Lisa Dugan as Marketing Coordinator; Mike Lee, RTO for NE and Greg Olikowski, RTO for West. There are 9 new CO's in training to fill vacant posts. DNR is considering combining the snowmobile and OHV Rules & Regulations into 1 publication similar to what New Hampshire has done. Enforcement is adopting a 0 tolerance policy with regard to expired registration with the default to issue tickets - no warnings. This policy will be shared with local law enforcement.

**Trails & Parks:** Laura Preus shared that Joe Russell, DNR Area Supervisor, and Kevin Johnson, Assistant Area Supervisor from the Two Harbors office were attending Fall Workshop. Laura distributed the letter from Erika Rivers, P&T Director, to Trail Administrators and GIA sponsors regarding the status of the snowmobile dedicated account and a registration fee increase option they are looking at. Any increase will need to pass legislation and likely will be in the Governor's Budget. Also, with the three year registration cycle, next year will have a low number of renewals which will result in lower income. Questions and comments were deferred to the roundtable discussion following the meeting.

**American Council of Snowmobile Associations Update:** Mark Kavanaugh reported on legislation that has passed the US House and will soon be heard in the Senate. The bill requires that the USFS work with volunteers to do trail work in the forests to assist with the backlog of maintenance. Another item of legislation will require State input in monument designation done by the President under authority of the Antiquities Act.

ACSA has been awarded an agreement with Federal Highway Administration to continue with its development of a snowmobile safety and access resources information center and best practices library along with other tasks that are safety and access oriented. Much of the information developed can be found at [www.snowmobileinfo.org](http://www.snowmobileinfo.org).

**Business Coordinator's Report:** See attached.

**Legislative Report:** Christian Franzen provided the legislative report. There are many seats up in the legislature and it is difficult to prepare for next session going into an election. The top issue is the shortage of funding for roads and bridges and a possible gas tax increase. Members are encouraged to continue to be involved in campaigns and get to know their legislators, especially newly elected ones.

**Minnesota Snowmobile Education & Advancement Fund (MSEAF) -** MSEAF President Larry Shepherd thanked the snowmobilers and clubs for their donations to the Veterans Appreciation Ride which will be held January 14<sup>th</sup> in Hutchinson with Bemidji as an alternate. Various signs can be ordered with forms available from the MnUSA office.

**Committee Reports:**

**Legislative/DNR/Trails –** Terry Hutchinson gave a recap of the meeting with DNR enforcement and MSAC. Much of the discussion with enforcement dealt with MnUSA's concern that registration is not being enforced. Col. Smith indicated that he would be working with his officers and the sheriffs' association on this issue. There would also be an outreach program in partnership with MnUSA to promote the importance of registration and other safety issues.

Licensing representatives attended the MSAC meeting and answered many questions concerning the process, deputy registrar's duties and ELS purchases. Presently the system would not allow registrations through ELS due to cost and privacy roadblocks.

**Membership/Booth** – Jerry Hanson reported on a meeting with Arctic Cat to discuss how the company can support youth safety training program. The I500 race will again require MnUSA membership for each of its racers. There is a need for MnUSA to be involved in events and activities to promote MnUSA. Clubs can contact the MnUSA office for materials. Complete reports for all committees can be found in the Fall Workshop Annual Report Book.

**Old Business:**

- **Winter Rendezvous** February 9-12, 2017 will be held in Grand Rapids at Timber Lake Lodge. Thirteen clubs will be hosts at Rendezvous.
- **Spring Meeting** will be held at Arrowwood Lodge at Brainerd Lakes, Baxter.
- **Summer Campout** July 7-9, 2017 will be hosted by Region 2.

**Election of Officers:**

Terry Hutchinson explained the nomination process. Nominations made at campout were Mark Kavanaugh, President; Rod Seibel, Vice President; Rick Johnson, Treasurer; Marc Dahlquist, Secretary. Nominations were opened for President. Motion made by Craig Swanberg to close nominations and cast a white ballot for Mark Kavanaugh for President, seconded by Jerry Hanson. Motion passed.

Nominations were opened for Vice President. Motion made by Jim Folz to close nominations and cast a white ballot for Rod Seibel for Vice President. Seconded by Mark Anderson. Motion passed.

Nominations were opened for Treasurer. Motion made by Jerry Hanson to close nominations and cast a white ballot for Rick Johnson for Treasurer. Seconded by Larry Shepherd. Motion passed.

Nominations were opened for Secretary. Motion made by Randy Baudler to close nominations and cast a white ballot for Marc Dahlquist for Secretary. Seconded by Ted Breeggemann. Motion passed.

Mark LaBaw motioned to destroy the absentee ballots. Jim Folz. Motion passed.

**New Business:**

**Fall Convention & Workshop – October 27-29, 2017:** Region 9 will host the 2017 Fall Workshop at Thumper Pond Resort in Ottertail.

**International Snowmobile Safety Week – January 21-29, 2017** – Clubs are encouraged to promote and a Governor’s proclamation will be requested.

**Take a Friend Snowmobiling Campaign – January 1-March 31, 2017.** Take your non-snowmobiling friends, elected officials, etc., snowmobiling and share the fun!

**Region Reports & Membership Activities:**

**Region 3** – Tom Jann reported that Izatys is interested in hosting Rendezvous 2018 and the region is working with local clubs to find a MnUSA club to take the lead.

**Minnesota River Valley Trail:** A master plan for economic development and trails is being developed jointly by Redwood and Renville Counties for the Minnesota River Valley. Dick Kuttner and Jerry Hanson each attended a planning meeting on the project. At one meeting participants were negative and the other positive for trails. This is an opportunity to participate and possibly expand motorized trails in the area. Information on the plan can be found at <http://www.mnrivervalleymasterplan.org/>

**Adjournment –**

Motion made by Mark LaBaw, seconded by Roger Letcher, to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marc Dahlquist, Secretary

Business Coordinator Report  
October, 2016

In August, right after the primary elections, we sent out a survey on snowmobile issues to all Minnesota House and Senate candidates. We are pleased that 120 candidates took the time to respond. The results are found on MnUSA's website. Please refer to them when talking with your candidates/legislators.

For Hay Days, SnoBarons asked if we would invite DNR to participate in MnUSA's booth at Hay Days. We appreciate our DNR partners Laura Preus and Assistant Commissioner Sara Strommen for taking the time to join us in the MnUSA booth and visit with attendees.

Also in September, I attended the Midwest Chapter ISC meeting and ISHOF induction ceremony representing MnUSA. It's always valuable time spent sharing ideas and programs with the leadership of other Midwest states. Minnesota was well recognized with the induction of Jack Hausner of Mahanomen and Walt Pederson, an individual who was on the Plaisted expedition to the North Pole into the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame.

For many years MnUSA has supported the Clean Snowmobile Challenge, an international competition held by Michigan Tech to challenge college and university students to re-engineer an existing snowmobile to reduce emissions and noise. These snowmobiles compete in a variety of events. This year we have received a request from St. Cloud to support their team in the competition.

Snowmobile Friendly Communities – MnUSA received two applications from cities to be designated as being snowmobile friendly. The applications are being reviewed to see if they meet the qualifications and will be announced in December.

For those of you that work on large event rides, the USFS has recently announced plans to streamline their permit system to encourage more Americans to explore the public lands.

#### Coalition Reports -

Minnesota Recreational Trail Users Association (MRTUA): This year 28 Federal Recreational Trail Program grant applications were awarded and funding has been secured. Letters have been sent out to those who will be receiving grants but the contracts haven't been sent out. If you will be receiving funding for a piece of equipment, there is a hold up with the Buy American waiver.

The MRTUA board went over the application for next year's grants and the applications will remain very similar with the same priorities for funding. This is an excellent source of funds for your future capital improvement projects. The match for trail projects is 25% from the club and 75% from the federal grant funds. For groomers/equipment the match is 25% if the grant request is less than \$75,000 and 50% for grant requests for equipment over \$75,000 with a maximum equipment grant of \$75,000. Applications for the next round of grants will be due February 28, 2017. The applications should be on the DNR website in early December.

Minnesota Motorized Trail Coalition (MMTC): Continues to meet quarterly in the metro area on a week night. Most topics relate to OHV projects but it still is important to be a part of the discussion. If you are interested in attending, please contact me.

Coalition of Recreational Trail Users (CRTU): Continues to move forward with the summer navigational map for the Superior National Forest. When that is complete, a winter map will be done.

# MnUSA Round Table Discussion with DNR at Fall Workshop

10/22/2016

## Parks & Trails – Laura Preus and Andrew Korsberg

### Enforcement – Bruce Lawrence

Q. Cost of Operating trails/Groomer fees

A. GIA & DNR program – DNR fixed costs in low snow year. Non spent funds back to snowmobile fund

Q. Enforcement is needed! Sales tax from snowmobile sales. Gas tax % raised due to more fuel efficient automobiles?

Raise license fees & trail pass (Needs Change).

Q. Implementation of single season registration/trail pass at higher rate (owners that get new sleds every year)

A. Cross Country skiers have a tiered pass – apply to snowmobiles?

Q. Cut-off on older snowmobiles – lower fee for 20 years old or older?

Q. 95-98 snowmobiles should not be classified vintage registrations, due to a high % still used regularly on trails

Q. Definition of a Vintage Snowmobile (should not be regularly used for trail riding)

A. 80K registration renewals sent out per year. 85% renew, missing out on 15% (how much attrition)?

\*\*Special Note – Some sleds are sold for salvage and never renewed...need better tracking of salvaged machines

Q. How much of an increase do we need for stable funding? \$10 per year to remove deficit for 2018?

A. Review by DNR? \$10 per year to make up for projected deficit of \$2M for 2018?

Q. Pick-up year skippers – back date registrations? Reduction of New snowmobiles sold = lower funding!

Q. Administration charges to address year skippers?

Q. Trail Pass Fees – what should they be? Maybe \$50 for Out State riders to fall in line with WI & MI?

Q. MN has strong gas tax support

Q. WI club members get discounts of trail pass. Maybe pass should be more expensive for MN non-members?

\*\*Deputy Registrars fees are currently \$3.50 for registrations

Q. Sources of funding are decreasing – more options needed...Enforcement?

A. Bonding and Legacy grants?

Q. Sheriffs Deputy's need training on Enforcement with **0 tolerance!**

Q. Non-valid registration fees – what are the violation fees?

A. Violation fees go to General Fund – Approx. \$100 for failure to display – depends on county



# Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road • St. Paul, MN • 55155-4039

**MNDNR**

October 17, 2016

Dear Trail Administrators and GIA Sponsors,

The snowmobile trail system statewide has played an important recreational, economic, and cultural role in Minnesota since its early inception in the 1970s. The majority of trails are managed by snowmobile club members with countless hours of volunteering. The Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Program has provided important funding for those costs associated with managing the over 21,000 mile system, including grooming, fuel, brushing, signing, landowner permission, and easements for trail routes.

As you are aware, over the last few years there have been reductions to GIA funding due to insufficient funds available from the dedicated snowmobile account. This account receives revenues primarily from the gas tax, snowmobile registrations, and trail permits. While revenue from the gas tax is relatively stable from year to year, the number of snowmobile registrations has varied and over the last decade where the total number of registrations went from a high of 277,000 snowmobiles in 2006 to 196,000 in 2016. This decline in the total number of registered snowmobiles, as well as the weather variability in the snowmobile season (think snow!), has created an ongoing funding challenge to support our large GIA trail system.

This funding challenge can be overcome by increasing revenue or reducing spending. One option is to raise the snowmobile registration fees to help restore funding. Another option is to permanently reduce funding to the GIA Program, perhaps even by reducing the size of the trail system. Both of these options have impacts to snowmobiling. Raising the registration fee increases the cost of snowmobiling, but reducing GIA funding may impact grooming or reduce the number of trails open for riding.

The state needs to consider all options, but at this time we are looking into the impact of an increase to registration fees. We recognize there are concerns among snowmobilers about raising fee levels, but there are several positive points to consider.

- We want to avoid further funding reductions to the GIA Program.
- Current fee levels, including registration and the trail pass, haven't increased in more than 10 years, and with rising costs it is prudent to increase the fees to stay in line with inflation.



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- Current Minnesota registration fees are lower than other states. For example, Minnesota's registration comes to \$25/year, while Wisconsin's is \$40/year and Michigan's is \$55/year.

Since the price of fees are established in Minnesota statutes, any change would need to go through the legislative process. We wanted to make you aware of this fee increase option as we consider how to manage the snowmobile account and the GIA Program over the long-term.

Thank you for all of the work you put into the snowmobile trail system in Minnesota. Thanks to your dedication, it is one of the best in the nation!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erika Rivers".

Erika Rivers  
Director, Division of Parks and Trails