

Infrastructure Committee of the Snowmobile Recreation Council

May 18, 2006

Gathering Waters Conference Room
DNR South Central Regional Office
3911 Fish Hatchery Road
Fitchburg, WI

Present: Andy Malecki, chair, Larry Erickson, Donna White, Bev Dittmar, Sam Landes, Mike Cerny

Others: Larry Freidig, Sanjay Olson, Keith Warnke, DNR; Bill Pfaff, Tom Chwala, Morris Nelson, Orv Langohr, AWSC

Meeting called to order at 8:30 AM

Motion by Bev Dittmar, second by Sam Landes to accept minutes of the previous meeting. Motion Carried

Bridge Specifications–Sanjay Olson

Sanjay gave committee members a brief history of the Department's engineering involvement in the snowmobile program.. He noted that with a decreasing number of staff and increasing workload of projects that they have shifted to oversight of construction rather than design.

Andy Malecki indicated that the previous committee discussion which Sanjay was unable to attend led to the consensus that bridge design load should be increased to accommodate the increasing weight of grooming devices. Andy reported that in his contacts with bridge manufacturers, increases in design load could be achieved at a relatively small increase in cost. Sanjay indicated that the Bureau of Parks and Recreation have been considering increasing the design load for bridges on state trails to 14,000 pounds because of the variety of large equipment necessary to maintain the trails

In response to Bev Dittmar's desire for a list of competitive bridge design firms, Sanjay noted that many bridge engineering firms focus on highway bridges rather than on pedestrian bridges with the potential result of over design for snowmobile use. Sanjay indicated that the Department's current bridge specifications factor in snow load and point load. He described a very rough way to estimate the necessary design load by taking 80% of the targeted load, e.g. a design load of 20,000 pounds for a 26,000 pound vehicle

Larry Freidig reminded committee members of the need to address the long standing philosophy of the council that the snowmobile program cannot address the individual choices that are made in purchasing grooming equipment.

Sanjay indicated that in looking at the design load, it is prudent to factor in the lifespan of the bridge so that down the line, the bridge can still safely support future types of equipment that may be heavier. It was Sanjay's recommendation that 20,000 would be

appropriate for snowmobile bridges considering the current weight of different types of grooming equipment currently being used and the life span of the structure.

The related item of abutment design was addressed next. Larry Freidig indicated that at the last revision of the bridge guidelines, the offer of the Department to review, not require, abutment design was incorporated. Sanjay pointed out that ch. 30 review for permits does not enter into abutment design; rather the review focuses on bridge anchoring. He indicated that for permanent (as contrasted to removable) bridge structures abutment and pile structures need to be designed. In answer to a question from Bev, Sanjay indicated that he could produce some general guidance on abutment design based on generalized soils of Wisconsin.

Larry Freidig shared with committee members the need to recognize several facets of engineering that the council might see in a bridge application—bridge design, abutment design and construction supervision. He noted that construction supervision, if noted separately in a project description, seems to come in for criticism in a bridge application.

In answer to questions on how a county should approach selecting a bridge engineering firm, Sanjay indicated he could provide a program statement that would provide what an owner would look at for interview purposes.

Motion by Larry Erickson, second by Same Landes to recommend to the council that the Department undertake a rule change increasing the design load of a snowmobile bridge from 12,000 to 24,000 pounds. Motion Carried

Andy Malecki emphasized that should a rule change come to pass, that it would only look forward and not impact bridges design under the 12,000 pound specification.

Sanjay suggested that the posting of the design load of bridges would be a good practice.

Discussion then changed focus to the width of bridges. At issue was whether to change both the maximum and minimum width or to simply increase the maximum width. Larry Freidig indicated that the rules have slightly different minimums based on whether the bridge was on a railroad grade (10') or on trails in general (8').

Motion by Andy Malecki, second by Bev Dittmar to recommend to the council that the Department undertake a rule change to increase the maximum bridge width to 14' [Note; NR 50 contains no reference to maximum width—12' has been an accepted council policy). Motion Carried

Committee input on ranking criteria

Larry Freidig distributed for committee members a composite list of ranking criteria suggestions from several committee members. Andy Malecki added to the list as well as Bev Dittmar. As part of the discussion, Larry Freidig indicated that if the committee is serious about ranking bridge projects for selection that they would have to distinguish criteria on whether the project was a bridge rehabilitation project or a new bridge. Larry indicated that he would distribute a copy of the bridge supplemental form that is currently utilized in soliciting information. Larry asked that committee members review the format and provide comments on factors that feel would be practical and useful in making

decisions. Larry indicated that he will continue to compile the various suggested criteria for use as a guide for questioning project sponsors.

Update on the deer season–Keith Warnke

Keith Warnke indicated that the 2006 deer season framework has been set and that a December 7-10 statewide season will be in effect for a one year trail. Keith indicated that the Department has been instructed to return with a report on the effectiveness of the season framework on deer harvest and the impact to snowmobiling. The question Keith raised was how the Department would assess trail impacts. He indicated that in order to continue a December hunt and the extension of the bow season into January 2007, the Department will have to initiate a rule procedure in October of 2006 and follow the process through public hearings. He emphasized that the Department is obligated to report on trail impacts with accuracy and not generalities.

Keith offered that a collection of property owners names and phone numbers who closed their property to snowmobile activity as a result of the deer hunting activity would be straightforward. A vigorous discussion on the need or desirability for contact with the private landowner ensued.

Morris Nelson for the Association indicated the Association will strongly oppose giving names of property owners and would only provide locations. He indicated that it is up to the snowmobile community to demonstrate the severity of the closures and that the Association is working on the reporting issue.

Andy Malecki expressed his feelings that documentation that he provided at the Green Bay hearing was not taken into consideration in the eventual decision-making.

Vigorous discussion on the history and testimony related to the December hunt and the extension of the bow season to allow bow hunting over the New Year's evening continued. No motions or recommendations were forthcoming.

Highway 64 update

Andy indicated that the final estimate of the balance of the bridge project has decreased from \$150,000 to \$148,000 and that DOT will pick up the cost of the approaches and bridge design (340').

State equipment review for 2006-07

There was a brief discussion on the comparison of the previous year rates with the rates or averages formulated from the 2006 DOT equipment schedule for the short form portion of the labor and equipment schedule. The potential for adding various brush mowers was raised but was dismissed because of the wide variety of brushing attachments.

Motion by Bev Dittmar, second by Donna White to recommend to the council the equipment rates in brief as presented for 2006. Motion Carried

Larry indicated that he would incorporate these rates in the master schedule prior to the next meeting.

Member items

Larry Erickson made several comments on proposed changes to the reporting forms for grooming and non-grooming maintenance. This elicited a brief discussion on the use of

clock time versus meter time for groomers. Larry Freidig indicated that the intent from his prospective was to give clubs an alternative in cases where no meters were present. Committee members felt strong that meter time should be mandatory and the only figure that is used for reimbursement reporting.

Larry Freidig indicated that he next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday July 10 at the Portage County Annex.

Andy indicated that Sanjay will attempt to attend this meeting as a follow-up to answer any questions that might arise from the Council as a whole.

Motion by Larry Erickson, second by Sam Landes to adjourn at 12:05 PM. Motion Carried