

Off-Highway Vehicle Ministerial Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 28 & 29, 2009
Holiday Inn Express

Attendees:

Laurie Cranton, Chair; Corey Robar; Lloyd Wallis; George Pugsley; Ken Reade, Jim Vance, Carmen D'Intino; Charles Atkinson; Raymond Plourde; Floyd Cock; Pat Hicks, Ex-officio; Hugh Gillis, Ex-officio; Peter Labor, Ex-officio; Derick Stoddard, Ex-officio; Rick Gilbert, Ex-officio; Laura Barkhouse and Kevin Benjamin, Secretariat

Regrets:

Paul D'Eon, Roger King and Judith Cabrita

Day 1 (April 28, 2009)

1. Welcome, Introductions, Updates (Laurie Cranton)

Laurie introduced Kevin Benjamin as the new Off-Highway Vehicle Consultant in the absence of Jennifer Annett as she continues her maternity leave. All members took the time to introduce themselves.

The Brochure for the upcoming OHV Conference to be held in Truro on May 29 & 30, 2009 was circulated. All members are encouraged to attend and get registration form in as soon as possible.

Laurie updated the Committee on the meeting he and Laura had with the Minister. A main topic of discussion was the re-appointment of Committee members to another two year term. All Committee members indicated their willingness to continue with the work of the committee and let their name stand for re-appointment. Discussion ensued in regards to the Committee vacancies that have been created with no representation from the Health and Municipal community. Also it was suggested the additional stakeholders be explored as possible representation on the MAC. Suggested were representation from the Active Transportation Community as well as Hunters, Trappers and Anglers. It was agreed that filling the Health and Municipal vacancies would be priority.

Action: Laurie will write a letter to the Minister requesting the re-appointment of committee members to another two year term.

Laurie shared correspondence from the Minister which approved the MAC to issue up to \$740,000 in funding requests from the Infra-Structure Fund. Funding requests will be reviewed as part of the Trails Sub-Committee report.

All Committee members were encouraged to review the Voluntary Planning document "Our Common Ground" as DNR continues to work toward their strategy form 2010.

Correspondence in regards to the Trans Canada Trail new core principles and vision statement were reviewed. Laurie shared a letter the MAC Received from Wayne Rock, President ATVANS in response to the TCT's position.

Laurie also reported on a meeting that was held recently in regards to OHV use on the Dave Barrett property in Beaverbank. It was reported that there is a lot of OHV use on his land. Asking for the groups to enforce the land and self police themselves and dedicated to work toward solutions to the problems of OHV use on private property.

2. Reports

DNR (Hugh Gillis): The Department is working on establishing an up to date statement on the Infra-Structure Fund which would also include prior commitments made last year. Report will be ready for next meeting.

Committee Logo (Lloyd Wallis): Lloyd circulated examples of new logo's to represent the MAC. The committee decided on the logo with the trees and trail, with an edit to reverse the trees. The logo will be produced in black.

Action: Lloyd will have logo created and have the invoice sent to Kevin.

Enforcement (Ken Reade): The issue of signs being stolen or vandalized continues to be a problem on some trails around the province. The Enforcement Officers are making an effort to tailor their schedules to the needs of the community. The Trail Warden program could also be of some assistance and be the eyes and ears.

DNR Enforcement (Derick Stoddard): Derick reported that the Department has a total of 65 Conservation Officers in the province, 11 of them are dedicated OHV Officers but the others are still involved with OHV issues. The way reporting is done it may be difficult to accurately account for the number of hours dedicated to OHV enforcement. The Enforcement unit is working but it still has a ways to go. Derick is still working on putting together a statistical report for the committee. The Department has just purchased 6 new units; the Officers are showing the colors and becoming more visible. It was recommended that enforcement on the natural eco-system be increased.

Action: Derick will continue to compile statistical data and report back to the committee.

Environment (Peter Labor): There is now a Ministerial order to enforce protected water areas within HRM. Ship Harbor / Long Lake final round of consultation is on going.

Trails Sub-Committee report will be presented tomorrow (April 29, 2009). There was no report from the Education Committee as Paul D'Eon was not present.

3. Buy Back Nova Scotia

There is a rally on Thursday April 30th in front of the House. There are over 60 organizations involved with this issue. Irving is willing to talk with Government. The parcel of land in question is approximately 170,000 acres.

4. Brushy Hill

DNR is coordinating a meeting tomorrow (April 29, 2009) to discuss the issue around the RoW the crown owns known as Brushy Hill Road. Private land owner has made a formal request to have the deed transferred from the province to them which seems to be crucial for a pending purchase and sale agreement for future development of the parcel of land owned by the private landowner. There are a number of issues that pertain to this block of land, the adjacent crown block, future trail development, OHV access and the Colin Stewart Forest Forum.

5. Strategic Plan Action Items (Jim Vance):

Jim to provide notes.

6. Trans Canada Trail, Response to Vision Statement

The recently released new vision statement of the Trans Canada Trail was reviewed. The new vision enforces the use of preferred activities on the Trans Canada Trail which basically eliminates the use of ATV's and Off Road Motorcycles on the Trans Canada Trail. The OHV Infra-Structure Fund has in the past and is currently considering to provide funds to groups who are constructing trail that is part of the Trans Canada Trail Route in Nova Scotia. Laurie shared the letter the MAC received from ATVANS in response to the vision. If the MAC is to respond, the response will need to be clarified through the Minister's Office.

Action: Laurie and Laura will draft a response on behalf of the MAC.

7. Shared Trails Issue:

Laurie brought up the issue of SANS and ATVANS sharing their trails. For sometime there has been an issue with ATV's using SANS trails in the winter months, especially the groomed trails. The ATV's will rut the trail surface if the conditions are not right making it more difficult to snowmobile on. Laurie suggested bringing in a Mediator to help the two groups resolve this issue and work out an agreement that works for both organizations. By consensus the Committee approved up to \$2,000.00 could be spent to hire a Mediator to move this process along.

Action: Laurie to contact Jim Neil to see if he is interested in working with these two organizations and work out possible solutions.

8. Other Business:

Raymond brought to the Committees attention the OHV section of the DNR website. The site is in need of updates and edits. Raymond would like to see an Environmental section added.

Action: Kevin to work with Raymond and Webmaster to make the appropriate updates and edits to the website.

Meeting Adjourned 4:20pm

Day 2 (April 29, 2009)

Attendees:

Laurie Cranton, Chair; Corey Robar; Lloyd Wallis; George Pugsley; Ken Reade, Jim Vance, Carmen D'Intino; Raymond Plourde; Floyd Cock; Pat Hicks, Ex-officio; Laura Barkhouse and Kevin Benjamin, Secretariat; Stan Slack, Co-Chair Trails Sub-Committee

Regrets:

Paul D'Eon and Judith Cabrita

Meeting called to order at 9:00 am

9. Trails Sub-Committee Report:

MAC Trails Subcommittee Meeting

DNR Boardroom, Truro

April 7 2009, 1pm

Present; Stan, Sandy, Floyd and Corey (taking notes)

Stan presented agenda

Review of project checklist, some additional changes where noted, Stan to go over changes with Vanda.

The goal of the checklist is to assist in keeping, clear and consistent review reports when groups request their final 20%.

Discussion around unused allotted funding. What if a project costs less than projected?

Example; Estimated cost of project \$10,000 ([OHV Fund granted 50%], \$4000 + \$1000 holdback = \$5000)
Final cost of project \$7,650 (50% = \$3825)
Supporting invoices total \$3500
We would not issue the final 20% and would request the remaining \$325 back, if the supporting invoices totaled within \$200 of monies issued there would be no request for refund.

MAC Recommendation; When supporting invoices total within (or above) \$200 of monies granted the remaining shall be left with the clubs / groups. When supporting invoices do not total within (or above) of monies granted a request for refund from the club / group will happen.

Funding deadline was discussed. It was noted and agreed by all in attendance that moving the deadline to November would allow the groups / clubs the ability to better comprise their construction plans as well as allowing a better time frame for the groups / clubs to actually have money in their hands when the construction season starts. More discussion around this issue needs to happen.

Also discussed was period for getting groups their final 20% when requested, need to set a deadline for delivery of reviews and requests for final 20%.

57 project applications have been received; application packages should be out to committee members by first of next week (April 13). It was noted that there are also two outstanding multi year funded projects.

Applications review date set for April 20 2009, Airport Hotel, 9am – 5pm (or whenever....)

MAC Recommendation; Municipalities that permit OHV use on their trails should be eligible to make application and receive funding from the OHV Infrastructure Fund.

Discussion around doing a landowner remediation pilot project that would target a landowner who is having problems / concerns about ohv use on their property. It was noted that this could help move the unaffiliated rider into joining an organization.

Discussions around what constitutes “permission”. Many clubs / groups are stilling having difficulty getting landowners to sign land use permission forms. SANS and ATVANS both currently accept two persons witnessing a landowner giving verbal permission and fill out land use formally accordingly (noting verbal permission given, witnessed by two members who sign the form). Our committee feels this is acceptable to constitute permission.

Talks around trail construction, types of equipment used and expertise available to actually build trails rather than roads. Thoughts on possible workshops to educate

contractors on building of trails and possible recognition of “trained, certified or recognized” builders. More info available @ trails.org or americantrails.org.

Next regular meeting May 12 2009, 1pm, Sandy to confirm location.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm

10. Trails Sub-Committee Trail Project Recommendations

The MAC was presented with the Trails Sub-Committee recommendations for project funding. The Minister has already approved the MAC to issue \$740,000.00 in funding. There is an over budget amount which will need to be approved by the Minister before the projects can be 100% approved. A full report on the projects will follow. **(Do I attach the recommendations?)**

11. Other Business:

There was discussion on creating trail maps which would include all trails used by all organizations. Laurie suggested the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to bring all the information together. There is a need for a plan.

Action: Laurie to create an Ad hoc Trails Mapping Committee.

12. Previous Meeting Minutes:

By consensus the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as amended.

Meeting Adjourned 11:45 pm