Location: Rachel Carson State Office Building, Room 105, 400 Market St, Harrisburg, Pa 17101

Meeting start time: 10:00am

Committee Meeting Attendees:
Dr. Jack Clark, Chair, representing PA Off-Highway Vehicle Association
Liz Krug, PA State Snowmobile Association
Glen Knisely, PA State Snowmobile Association
Eric Bruggeman, PA Off-Highway Vehicle Association
Dick Martin, Keystone Trail Association
Rich Fink, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Jeff Schmidt, Sierra Club
Joe Graci, DCNR

Also Attending:
Jennie Shade
Vanyla Tierney
Jim Seyler
Jason Hall
Ryan Dysinger
Lori Elliott
Brian Grove
Eric Miller – via telephone
Harold Shaulis – via telephone
Brian Smith – via telephone
Sarah Clark – via telephone
J.R. Burke
Libby Ahlstrom

Meeting Guests:
Jim Rose
John Fox
Fred Brown
Chase Schaszberger
Kathleen (DCNR Intern)
Lauran Adair

Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m.

Introductions:
Mr. Clark initiated the Snowmobile/ATV Advisory Committee (SAAC) Meeting and noted official officers would need to be chosen since it was four years since the
Meeting convened. Committee members, attendees and guests of the meeting provided introductions. Several meeting attendees participated via a conference call.

Meeting Summary:

Mr. Clark summarized the agenda and noted the Secretary of DCNR, Ellen Ferretti would be introduced later in the meeting. Mr. Clark noted the committee wished to reconvene the SAAC meetings on a regular basis.

Jason Hall, DCNR – Bureau of Forestry Recreation Section Chief

Mr. Hall reported on the five, strategic ATV trail connections on State Forest Land. The first project was defined as the Bloody Skillet trail connector. The contract was awarded to Lycoming Supply for a cost of $583,042 and the project was completed in August 2011.

The second project Mr. Hall described as the quarter-mile connector within the Susquehannock State Forest that was approved in September 2008 and was completed. The connector trail provides access from the main trail system to local multi-use roads open to ATV travel.

The third project included a 1.5 mile addition to the Sideling Hill trails in the Buchanan Forest District. The project was completed with in-house labor for a total cost of $5,800.

The two remaining ATV projects not completed include a 20-mile enhancement to the Bald Eagle State Forest – Jack's Mountain Trail which is anticipated to be complete by summer of 2015. The fifth project includes the remediation of the Dixon Miller Trail in the Delaware Forest District which is about 75% complete.

Mr. Hall added the Bureau of Forestry is continuing to purchase a minimum of one and up to two snow groomers per year. In 2011 the Susquehannock and Tioga Forest Districts received groomers. In 2012 the Lackawanna State Forest District received a new groomer. The Forbes and Sproul Forest Districts were noted as receiving new groomers in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Mr. Hall added the Weiser State Forest was recently looking to purchase a new groomer. Lastly, Mr. Hall clarified 2-3 snow groomers would probably be available at the DGS auction website available for bidding to snowmobile clubs and the general public.

Mr. Schmidt questioned Mr. Hall on the costs for the five ATV trail projects in regard to where the funding came from and why the improvements were needed. Mr. Hall noted costs were only cited for the Bloody Skillet project and noted some PRT funding would be used for the Bald Eagle and Dixon Miller Trails. Mr. Hall highlighted the Dixon Miller Trails would require re-routing approximately 13 miles of ATV trails. Some existing trails would be closed to avoid impacts to nearby residences. The new trail construction will ultimately replace the closed trails.

Ms. Krug questioned DCNR how many miles and how often the snowmobile trails are groomed throughout the state? Ms. Krug also requested the cost of the snowmobile trail grooming? Mr. Hall responded an inventory of existing grooming would have to be completed by District and the cost of grooming isn’t available.

Training - Mr. Hall provided ATV safety statistics for training and crash statistics on behalf of Todd Miller. In 2013, one ATV safety training course for twelve new instructors was held. As of March 12, 2014 there were 84 DCNR trained ATV safety instructors and 103 active snowmobile safety instructors. There were 133 ATV safety
training courses for youth in 2013, totaling 354 students trained. Out of the 354 students 106 were between ages 8-9 and the remaining were 10-15.

Mr. Clark added one training related topic that the SAAC has been requesting is more training for adults. Mr. Hall clarified the DCNR ATV youth training program prohibits the instructors from providing training to anyone over age 16. Recently, an on-line, ATV safety training program was developed by Kalkomey. Adults can complete the on-line training for free, but a fee is charged of $29.95 if the individual chooses to take the test and receive a certificate. The fee is charged solely for website administration costs as Mr. Hall confirmed DCNR doesn’t receive any payment for this Kalkomey adult ATV training. Mr. Martin questioned the legality of DCNR only training youth riders. Mr. Clark clarified it is an interpretation of the law which actually mandates ATV safety training for youth. Mr. Hall added that the ATV Safety Institute (ASI) provided hands on training for adults at a cost higher than the Kalkomey training.

Mr. Bruggeman noted the PAOHV secured DCNR grant funds to purchase an ATV simulator that will provide hands-on training. The ATV simulator will be show cased at local events around the state to educate both youth as well as adults on ATV safety. This ATV simulator is the only training device available in this region. Ms. Krug distributed an article from the Rec Rider magazine that illustrated pictures of the ATV simulator at the Franklin, PA Trails Summit in September 2013.

Ms. Krug requested DCNR reference the PSSA in the youth snowmobile safety booklet. Mr. Hall clarified it wouldn’t be fair to cite only the PSSA as other clubs provided information for the booklet. Mr. Hall would follow-up with Ms. Krug to identify the other clubs in reference.

Mr. Knisely questioned statistics on the adult safety training course? Mr. Hall stated 24 snowmobile safety classes were held in 2013 for a total of 157 students, from ages 10-15. Snowmobile crashes in the winter of 2012/2013 totaled 13, including 1 fatality. ATV crashes in 2013 totaled 310, which 270 included injuries and 27 deaths resulted out of the 310 reported crashes.

Secretary Ferretti – Mr. Clark introduced the DCNR Secretary, Ellen Ferretti. The committee and the attendees provided introductions. Ms. Ferretti indicated she was looking forward to receiving input from the group and that her staff would be available to answer any questions.

Legislative Issues – Mr. Graci provided an update of current legislation related to snowmobile and ATV issues. Four current bills that relate to limited liability for landowners who allow recreational use or training are House Bills 267, 544, 2022 and Senate Bill 494. DCNR is supportive of all four of these Bills. House Bill 1392 provides enforcement authority for DCNR rangers off of DCNR property. DCNR doesn’t support House Bill 1392. House Bill 1913 requires DCNR to give priority to maintaining joint-leased roads, bridges and snowmobile trails leaving a lane of unplowed snow 5-feet wide. DCNR is opposed to House Bill 1913 for safety reasons. House Bill 2047 amends Title 75 to separate ATV and snowmobile funds with the concept the incoming funds be spent separately. DCNR is opposed to House Bill 2047 due to additional accounting and administrative costs. Mr. Graci added that DCNR does not receive liquid fuels funds specific for separate ATV and snowmobile use. DCNR has not taken a position on House Bill 1027, which would amend Title 75 to define golf carts as recreational vehicles. Mr. Graci clarified Act 85, the Capital Budget Bill, passed. There were $250,000 in funds for the Dixon Miller Tract for the above mentioned trail rehabilitation. Act 89 passed providing DCNR with 7 million in Dirt/Gravel Road funds, where previously they only received 1 million.
Mr. Shaulis from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau enrolled his farm in the Game Commission cooperative program which they patrol his land. ATV use persists and Mr. Shaulis questioned why DCNR doesn’t support House Bill 1392 to have DCNR patrol off DCNR land. Mr. Graci clarified DCNR can pursue off DCNR land if the illegal violation occurred on state land. Mr. Miller from the Game Commission questioned if adequate support was provided and Mr. Shaulis noted considerable efforts were made to patrol the property.

Ms. Krug questioned House Bill 2047 and how it would alter municipalities, non-profit and for-profit entities applying for grants. Ms. Tierney clarified any legal entity can apply for ATV funds or grants, but a single individual cannot apply or at least not anymore. Mr. Fink questioned if a trail group that prohibits motorized use can use ATV/Snowmobile Funding. Ms. Tierney acknowledged they could. Mr. Graci added the snowmobile/ATV fund audit could be provided to the committee. Mr. Clark summarized the division of funds is an issue the ATV community has been looking at for due to a perceived lack of funding on ATV trails.

Nominations – Mr. Clark was appointed to Chair the committee, Ms. Krug for Vice Chair and Mr. Bruggeman as the Secretary. There were no oppositions to the selections.

User Group Concerns – Ms. Krug noted sticker placement on the snowmobile’s windshield is an issue and requested sticker placement be moved to the tunnel which would still be a visible location. Mr. Hall noted the proposed sticker location on the tunnel has the potential to not be seen and cause rangers to have more interaction policing snowmobiles. Mr. Clark clarified a change in legislation would be required.

Ms. Krug requested an increase in snowmobile registration fees to help support more trail grooming and suggested clubs be reimbursed by the miles of trails groomed through the mini-grants.

Mr. Bruggeman expressed a concern with DCNR’s position to limit the number of organized motorized events on State Forest land. In addition, Mr. Bruggeman summarized concerns of the March 2013 – Motorized Event Guidelines as it pertained to minimized use of motorized recreation and bond requirements by the applicant. Mr. Hall noted there are five competitive motorized events grandfathered in Districts 1 and 3. DCNR will no longer permit new competitive motorized events that stemmed back to a policy in mid-2000s.

Mr. Hall summarized the Motorized Event Guidelines were in response to a State Forest review audit that found DCNR to be deficient with environmental review for trail use. Trail use was defined as motorized trails or non-motorized trails that have temporary use by motorized events. The State Forest Environmental Review (SFER) process would be required along with a Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Inventory (PNDI) review. The environmental review would be required once unless new trails were added, then another review would be required. The PNDI is good for three years. Sponsors of the motorized events are encouraged to identify three routes with the idea there would be three years between each route utilized. If the PNDI review identified a sensitive area an updated PNDI would be necessary. Mr. Hall provided an example where the Dirty Dabbers use existing non-motorized trails that were previously permitted for use during an organized event. Now, a SFER would be required for continued use of the non-motorized trails during such an organized event.

Mr. Martin questioned DCNR if the Motorized Event Guidelines were developed as a result of a specific event. Mr. Hall specified it was a result of the 2012 audit. The special activities agreement was revised to require sponsors to remediate a trail
following a special event within four days in sensitive areas. Previously, 30 days were allowed, but Mr. Hall assured the requirements were environmental law according to the PA DEP. DCNR Districts are required to inform the sponsor of the sensitive area locations before the event.

Mr. Clark questioned if the bond requirement has changed for special activities? Mr. Hall confirmed a 5,000 dollar performance bond is required to be requested by the District for special events.

Mr. Bruggeman questioned if the sponsor of a special event is required to complete the SFER or the District? Mr. Hall confirmed the Districts can assist, but the responsibility is to be placed on the sponsor.

Mr. Schmidt questioned if the SFER is not approved then the event would not be allowed? Mr. Hall responded that is the intent.

Mr. Clark summarized PAOHV is still interested in DCNR looking into expanding the state trail system’s ATV trails to help support tourism. Mr. Clark noted significant tourism on ATV recreational trail riding is spent out of Pennsylvania in states like Virginia, West Virginia and New York. PAOHV wishes DCNR would follow the model of the Allegheny National Forest to set aside an adequate area for motorized recreation which better enables for the legal use of this activity. PAOHV looks forward to working with DCNR to identify more legal riding areas on state forest land. Mr. Clark summarized with over 240,000 registered ATVs in PA the 240 miles of trails doesn’t meet the needs of the users.

Mr. Schmidt questioned if the Allegheny National Forest received a reduction in illegal trail activity due to the adequate mileage of trails supplied? Mr. Seyler noted that was correct and the National Forest received an approximate 50% reduction in illegal riding since 2010. Mr. Seyler noted increased patrolling has occurred since 2010.

Mr. Clark added the P AOHV group hosted DCNR at the Allegheny National Forest to spur a discussion on the success of their trail system. Specific trail discussions were centered around trail construction, maintenance and bridge construction.

Mr. Smith provided support for the expansion of ATV trails, but believed House Bill 2047 strictly prohibits use of funds from the restricted account for the construction of trails on stand land. Mr. Clark clarified this Bill restricts outside groups from securing funds to grade trails on state land. It doesn’t prohibit the state from maintaining trails if they choose to do so.

Ms. Krug questioned if DCNR was simply reluctant to create more trails or if ATV groups simply need to become better organized to coordinate with DCNR? Mr. Clark noted PAOHV has met with DCNR over several administrations and has experienced reluctance to build new ATV trails. PAOHV is looking at connections similar to the above mentioned Potter County connection where an existing ATV trailhead at Potato City now has a connection to municipal multi-use roads thereby significantly expanding available ATV mileage at that trail system. PAOHV is interested in working with DCNR to look at strategic connections to restaurants and gas stations to make a positive impact to local economies. PAOHV has completed economic impact studies and provided that information to DCNR previously.

Mr. Schmidt stated the Sierra Club is concerned with the lack of SAAC meetings, due to the absence of any meetings in the last four years. It was confirmed legislative requirements under Statute 168 require one meeting annually. The Sierra Club is concerned DCNR hasn’t been providing updates or meetings per the statutory requirements. Mr. Schmidt stated the SAAC representatives didn’t receive the Forest Certification Report audit. Mr. Martin added the SAAC committee just disappeared for four years and no reports were issued by DCNR.
Mr. Fink added County Commissioners hear concerns from residents due to unlawful riding. The County Commissioners are interested in opening more riding areas to address the lack of ATV trails. The County Commissioners want more ATV trails as well to support local tourism instead of seeing destination riding take place out of Pennsylvania. Mr. Clark noted Rock Run’s riding area is an example of a county operated riding facility.

Snowmobile/ATV Fund Budget – Mr. Grove, Deputy Secretary for Administration summarized DCNR’s budget. The proposed 2014/2015 budget is 326 million dollars compared to the 2013/2014 budget of 327 million dollars. Strategic infrastructure investment through an initiative called, “Enhance Penns Woods” is anticipated to spend 211 million dollars on state park and forest infrastructure. Approximately 6 to 7 million will be spent on snowmobile and ATV related needs, including connecting ATV trails.

Mr. Grove summarized the update completed to the snowmobile/ATV registration program. The use of the 1997 access database was updated to a modern and serviceable software program in July 2013. The change created a backlog in registration of about 10,000 to process, but DCNR anticipates it will be caught up by June 30, 2014.

Mr. Bruggeman questioned if the new registration system is administered by PennDOT or still by DCNR. Mr. Grove clarified PennDOT processes the renewal registrations through an automated process as a ‘contractor’, but DCNR still manages the entirety of the registration system. DCNR staff still directly handles new registrations and title administration.

Mr. Schmidt questioned if the proposed ATV fund budget would be used only for new trails on state forest land? Mr. Grove stated the funds could be used to enhance or maintain existing trails or could be used off of state land through the grant program.

ATV registrations for active units total 160,419 and limited use registration is 98,424 units for a total of 258,843 registered ATVs as of March 11, 2014. Snowmobile registrations total 35,652 for active registrations and 2,539 for limited snowmobile registrations totaling 38,201. Mr. Clark added he believes these numbers to be underestimated due to non-registered vehicles.

Ms. Krug questioned if a breakdown of fund sources and totals available? Mr. Grove noted the snowmobile/ATV fund is largely funding by registration fees, but other funding sources can be and are used for snowmobile and ATV projects at times. For the next SAAC meeting Mr. Grove offered to provide a budget overview. Mr. Fink requested a summary of budget items be provided in a PowerPoint presentation for visual illustration.

Polaris Industries – Mr. Burke from Polaris Industries summarized the history of Polaris which started in 1954 and has grown to a diverse off-road vehicle business that now includes electric vehicles, Victory and Indian motorcycles. Mr. Burke along with Ms. Ahlstrom indicated there interest in the SAAC meeting was to discuss some policy items as it relates to the potential expansion of ATV trails and market trends, including the significant growth in the side-by-side RTV/UTV market as documented in the combined 3.6 million dollars of economic activity in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Clark clarified DCNR classifies ATVs as Class I and II ATVs. Some of the state ATV trails do not allow Class II ATVs/side-by-sides due to width and weight of the machines.

Mr. Burke added the federal government is working to develop rules for how ATV/RTV/UTVs are designed. The proposed rules changes would affect 14
manufactures, including Polaris. Mr. Burke indicated the proposed changes are causing conflicts with state statutes, referring to the design of the vehicles. Polaris Industries is working to match consumer demand with the proposed federal government’s design changes. Mr. Burke discussed tire technology regarding a special tire designed specifically for work applications where a statute requires this tire can’t be used for recreational use. Mr. Burke noted Polaris supports the total weight of Class II ATVs be increased from 1,000 pounds to 1,200 pounds. Mr. Clark added that with the increased size of ATVs results in increased tire size actually improves the weight dispersion on the trail. All of these factors regarding ATV design are being reviewed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission according to Mr. Burke.

Mr. Bruggeman commented despite the consumer driven demand for 1,000 pound ATVs or side-by-sides with 1,000cc engines the new trend is indirectly increasing trail width greater than 50 inches. As a result Mr. Bruggeman expressed a safety concern for increased speeds on existing trails by ATVs less than 50 inches in width. Mr. Burke noted that Class I, 50 inch width ATV trails should try to maintained where possible. Trail design in western states that afford more open spaces are seeing wider trails develop, they are more straight and seem to work well for the wider side-by-side vehicles.

Ms. Tierney questioned where the 3.6 million dollar figure was referenced for off-road economic impact in PA. Mr. Burke noted this was from the Outdoor Industry Association for the year 2012.

Mr. Bruggeman requested the Polaris grant program for trail support be discussed. Mr. Burke indicated Polaris has a grant program where they work with trail groups and management agencies to increase trail infrastructure. In 2013 Polaris awarded 100,000 nationally to support trails. Mr. Burke provided an example of a trail project near Philadelphia with the One Tick Wheelers. Polaris grant funding was provided to support their trail system construction.

Mr. Schmidt questioned Mr. Burke on the proposal he was working on in the Capital during his visit. Mr. Burke stated the objective was to support the 200 pound increase of registered ATVs from 1000 to 1200 pounds. The second goal was to support the striking inflatable tire. The increased weight classification was intended to apply to all registered vehicles, not solely units used just for recreation.

**Training age cutoff** – Mr. Martin suggested the Committee consider eliminating the cutoff age by excluding adults or persons older than 16 years of age from taking the DCNR ATV training course with the certified instructors. Ms. Krug questioned if this applied to both ATVs and snowmobiles? Mr. Clark clarified the request to DCNR would be to eliminate the arbitrary cutoff date for both ATV and snowmobile training. The Committee voted in favor and there was no opposition.

**Public audience comment** – An individual questioned who has the authority in DCNR to obtain a snow groomer for the Rothrock Forest District? Mr. Hall noted it is up to the discretion of the forest district manager. Typically, Rothrock doesn’t receive much snow. Mr. Knisely added DCNR forest districts should be able to coordinate and share snow groomers if need be. Perhaps districts in need of a groomer could transport one as needed. Mr. Knisely indicated he would contact Mr. Hall to discuss.

A second question from the public requested why a 2.7 mile section of public multi-use municipal road between Lyman Lake and Davis City couldn’t remain unplowed for a connective snowmobile trail? The park has the area and nearby parking lot plowed for fishing access. Coordination was completed with the Lyman Run park office and the local municipality. A solution could not be found. The public attendee was looking for
answers from the SAAC members or DCNR. Mr. Clark responded the attendee should continue to coordinate the park office and the municipality. DCNR stated earlier they won’t maintain multi-use roads out of their jurisdiction for snowmobile access.

**Next Meeting** – It was agreed the next SAAC meeting would be scheduled about six months after the March 2014 meeting. Mr. Seyler indicated the ANF couldn’t attend during September or October of 2014. Alternate locations other than Harrisburg may be considered.

Meeting adjourned at 12:54pm.