Meeting called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Introductions:
Mr. Clark initiated the Snowmobile/ATV Advisory Committee (SAAC) Meeting. Committee members, attendees and guests of the meeting provided introductions. Elizabeth Krug was the only meeting attendee that participated via conference call.

Meeting Summary:
Review of the March 12, 2014 SAAC Meeting Minutes was initiated by Mr. Clark. The meeting minutes were accepted as written. Additional handouts included:

- DCNR – ATV Trails on State Forest Lands;
• DCNR – Proposed ATV Trail Inventory & Gap Analysis Project Draft
  Scope of Work;
• ATV Strategic Connections;
• ATV & Snowmobile Safety;
• Snowmobile/ATV Spending Plans,
• Total Dealer and Registered ATVs/Snowmobiles
• Grants Summary

ATV GAP STUDY

Rebecca Oyler, DCNR – Director of Policy and Planning

Ms. Oyler introduced the ATV Gap Study and summarized she is developing a scope of work in order for DCNR to solicit a consultant. The Secretary of DCNR wants to ensure all stakeholders have a chance to comment on this scope of work. There are three primary objectives associated with the Gap Study that would ultimately lead to three specific outcomes as summarized below:

1) Create a statewide inventory of all public and private riding facilities. The end result should consist of a map that details all ATV riding opportunities, including state forest trails, federal trails, land owned by other state agencies, municipal roads currently open to ATVs, dual use roads, and privately owned riding areas open to the public.

2) Perform a Gap Analysis of ATV trails in the north central region of PA. The Gap Analysis should identify strategic connectors that would create longer destination riding experiences in the north central region. The analysis should include Gaps identified in the 2009 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

3) Analyze how to connect the Gaps. Proposed gaps should be both specific and feasible to make proposed connections. The gaps should be prioritized in order of feasibility, cost, and constraints. The selected gaps must be where landowners would be willing to provide access to ATVs. State park land and state forest roads would be excluded.

Ms. Oyler noted public participation would be required with state/regional ATV trail organizations, affected counties and municipalities, all DCNR committees, including the SAAC, the Conservation and Natural Recreation Advisory Committee, the Trail Committee and other sportsmen’s advisory committees. One public meeting, at minimum, would be required in the north central region and DCNR will determine if more than one meeting would be required. DCNR would also look to facilitate and coordinate a registered ATV center in the north central region. DCNR will be accepting comments through the end of 2014 and then will move towards procuring a consultant early next year.

Mr. Schmidt questioned how the Gap Analysis relates to the effort to identify ATV parks similar to Rock Run which is operated by a county authority and if these types of facilities would be included in the study. Ms. Oyler noted all of those private facilities would be included in the statewide inventory. The Gap Analysis may help encourage applicants to pursue the available grant funding once more private properties with feasible connections are identified. Ms. Oyler added that the consultants would be encouraged to recommend available private properties and clarified that counties with
public roads open to legal ATV use would be part of the inventory. Increasing tourism by developing destination riding is a big aspect to this study according to Ms. Oyler.

Mr. Bruggeman questioned why the proposed survey’s geographic boundary would be limited to the north central region when it is known the majority of users travel from outside the region to use the ATV trails? Mr. Bruggeman advised the random survey not be limited to only the north central region. Mr. Bruggeman clarified the project study area provided is very broad. It was suggested the contractor be advised of any known GAPs prior to the study in an attempt to narrow the area of study for what could be defined as specific and feasible. Mr. Bruggeman questioned if the Allegheny National Forest would be included with this study and Ms. Oyler confirmed it would. Mr. Bruggeman added that public involvement will be an important component of this study. Municipal and County involvement will be necessary to gain support and learn of any concerns from the local government.

Mr. Clark clarified the ATV community has been in support of additional riding opportunities that are appropriately planned and that would support additional legal riding. Currently, the demand for legal riding opportunities exceeds the supply provided. The Gap Study as proposed would be a sufficient start to the identification of additional opportunities in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Oyler requested any additional comments be forwarded to her within two weeks following the meeting. It is the intent of the Department to secure a contractor in early 2015 to move forward with the proposed Gap Study.

**ATV TRAIL UPDATES**

**Todd Miller, DCNR – Bureau of Forestry ATV/Snowmobile Safety Trainer**

Mr. Miller indicated the Whiskey Springs trail in Clinton County is still closed down due to an Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) project that is current under construction within the Whiskey Springs trail system. The trail has been closed during the 2013 and 2014 riding seasons due to heavy truck traffic that is utilizing state forest roads with one direction of travel during times of operation. The 12 million dollar project is 66% complete. Mr. Clark added, a recent meeting with the Sproul District Forester indicated the AMD project should be complete during the summer of 2015 and the trails should re-open by August 2015. Mr. Clark added the town of Renovo has experienced economic impacts due to the trail closure.

Mr. Miller discussed the status of the Jacks Mountain Trail in Bald Eagle State Forest. Current improvements are 75% complete or 16 of the 20 miles have been constructed. Upon approval of a 12-month grant extension, the project should be complete by the end of 2015.

The Dixon Miller trail is 100% complete according to Mr. Miller, where a 13-mile upgrade was completed and was scheduled to open December 14, 2014. Utilization of a $100,000 C2P2 grant was used along with a $31,000 match. Mr. Miller provided photos of the trail improvements that increased the trail sustainability, while minimizing environmental impacts. Mr. Hall noted the improvements were completed in-house by District staff. District funds were used in addition to the $131,000 to complete this assignment and the staff deserves credit for their dedication on this assignment.

**SAFETY STATISTICS**

Mr. Miller indicated as of November 17, 2014 there were 262 ATV accidents with 232 known injuries that included 29 fatalities. Snowmobile accidents totaled 15 during this time period with 12 injuries and 2 fatalities. Mr. Miller notes the source of this information came from PennDOT’s crash reports, newspapers, and State Police reports.
In 2014, there were no new ATV safety training courses provided to train new
instructors due to minimal interest from only two or three interested participants.
However, the Department did hold one internal training course in August of 2014 for
existing trainers. Currently, there are 81 youth ATV instructors and 79 snowmobile
safety instructors according to Mr. Miller. In 2013, there were 94 youth ATV safety
classes that were presented to 262 students. Demographics of these students consisted
of 51 8-9 year olds, and 211 students were 10-15 years old. Also in 2013, there were 9
youth snowmobile safety classes presented to 121 students, all of which were 10-15
years old. Mr. Knisely questioned if Mr. Miller had any statistics on the adult training
courses. Mr. Hall clarified the majority of the adult training courses are completed on-
line. Mr. Hall would look into getting the quarterly report statistics.

Mr. Clark indicated the ATV community is concerned how the use of the
restricted receipts fund is applied for safety training. Currently, the course is mandated
for youth to be trained if they want to ride on state trails under the age of 16. The course
does not provide training for adults. Mr. Clark was not requesting the training be
mandated for adults, but rather the hands-on training is very beneficial as it pertains to
safe, responsible recreation. Mr. Clark wishes the legislators would be more aware of
the growing need for hands-on ATV training for adults.

Mr. Schmidt questioned the 29 fatalities in 2014 and wished to compare them to
previous years, as well as other states. Mr. Miller indicated he would obtain the
additional statistics. Mr. Clark added that unless the source of the statistics is validated
the information can’t be deemed accurate. Mr. Hall added that the variety of sources is
cross referenced to validate the specific accident. Although the law requires all
accidents be reported, most people do not according to Mr. Hall. The research
completed often results in the identification of alcohol/drug use during an accident and
whether or not a helmet was worn. The research does not reveal if the victims received
ATV or snowmobile safety training.

Mr. Hall provided a new publication from DCNR, “ATV Trails on State Forest
Lands”. The document provides color mapping of the state forest trails and provides an
overview of ATV laws.

Snowmobile/ATV Fund Budget
Brian Grove – DCNR – Deputy Secretary for Administration
Pam Pasi – DCNR – Director of Administrative Services

Ms. Pasi and Mr. Grove provided a PowerPoint presentation of the
snowmobile/ATV spending plan from fiscal year 2011/2012, up through fiscal year
2014/2015. Ms. Pasi noted the funds in reference are non-lasting funds, meaning any
unused funds not spent in a given fiscal year are then reevaluated for a project in the
next fiscal year. The figures provided indicate DCNR receives approximately $3.2
million in revenue and $1 million in liquid fuels tax for a combined total of $4.3 million.
However, because the snowmobile/ATV projects are multi-year, the fiscal budget is
reevaluated at the beginning of the year, thus resulting in a combined $6-$7 million
budget for projects.

Ms. Pasi summarized the growth in ATV dealerships, along with the total sale of
ATV and snowmobiles from 2010 to 2014 year to date (ytd). ATV total units sold in 2014
ytd totaled 606,241 units, while snowmobile sales only totaled 103,778 units. The total
dealers increased from 1,695 dealers in 2010 to 1,976 dealers as of 2014 ytd.

Mr. Grove summarized the three funding source categories. The first funding
source is the snowmobile/ATV fund that consists of the registration fees. The second
funding source is a combination of federal rail-to-trails grants, FRTP funds are lumped
into the Keystone fund and lastly the state fund is the third category of funding.
A ten year review of project funding revealed $5,120,296 dollars spent on ATV projects from the PRT-Keystone Funds. A total of $3,004,704 was used on snowmobile projects from the PRT-Keystone Funds and $456,800 dollars was spent on dual use trails. Separately, the 10-year summary of the snowmobile/ATV fund spending identified a total of $7,152,521 spent on ATV projects and $727,700 spent on snowmobile projects.

Mr. Grove added recent spending for ATV projects has been for some state forest trail improvements, but a greater percentage was for trail facilities on private lands. The summary of funds used for snowmobile trails was primarily for maintenance of existing snowmobile trails.

Coordination with the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation confirmed the Environmental Stewardship Fund would be eligible for funding such projects. The Department has used this specific fund previously, according to Mr. Grove, but due to the minimal amount of ATV/Snowmobile applicants that apply on a yearly basis, there are not always projects that qualify for these funds. Mr. Bruggeman questioned if the 50% match required could be reduced for applicants when pursuing acquisition grants? Mr. Grove indicated legislation would be required to change the cash match percentage, but didn’t believe the snow/ATV fund had a specific match. Mr. Clark confirmed the snow/ATV fund does have a specific match, and the 50% match was previously determined to be a policy issue, not a legislative issue. Ms. Krug noted some grants are only a 20% match and explained how difficult the current grant system is. Ms. Krug suggested DCNR should develop a committee of stakeholders to streamline the grant process and make it more user friendly.

The group came to a general agreement that the summary of funds as presented does not account for all of the District Bureau of Forestry staff labor hours and volunteer hours from member clubs.

House Bill 2047, Restricted Receipt Account was discussed at the request of Ms. Krug. Ms. Pasi is opposed to separating the Snowmobile/ATV funds because it will increase administrative costs and the physical time needed for reporting. The current accounting system is not setup to micromanage. Mr. Grove added the separation of these funds would be precedent-setting by the fact there are few other funding sources where the specific funds are dedicated to one individual resource to manage. Mr. Grove indicated this management approach would be impractical. The Department needs flexibility to manage its vast resources.

Ms. Clark, legislative representative, provided a summary of House Bill 2047 and noted the bill did get submitted to the House Committee, but was unaware of the intentions of the bill’s sponsor.

Mr. Burke, representing Polaris Industries, indicated the distinct difference between the number of ATV vs. snowmobile accidents as presented should warrant some consideration of funds separation. With 701,000 registered ATVs in the state and only 262 individuals were trained for the year as of November 2014, there seems to be an opportunity for improved training given the numbers presented. A significant number of incidents are precipitated from warned against or illegal behavior. Providing more education for training youths and adults is very important. Maintaining the current funding, as well as looking to increase funding for safety, should be a priority.

Mr. Clark added one of the biggest challenges is finding an approved place to provide the training. It has been challenging finding state forest land that can be used on a year round basis and training cannot be completed in state parks. Mr. Clark noted most of the training occurs on private property owned by the dealers. Getting more youth trained has to be a priority moving forward. Mr. Clark commented on PAOHV’s effort to utilize the ATV Simulator that serves as a static training platform for youth.
Proposed Snowmobile Registration Increase

Ms. Krug suggested the snowmobile registration fees by the Department be increased to support maintenance activities on public lands. The additional funds would support maintenance activities, such as grooming, that are completed by snowmobile clubs. Mr. Grove indicated this is a legislative issue, not an issue the Department can address with policy.

Mr. Hall summarized the history of House Bill 2047 which if the ATV and Snowmobile funds were separated, the one original intent would be for PSSA to control the Snowmobile funds. Ms. Krug clarified that snowmobile clubs take care of half of the snowmobile trails in Pennsylvania, including trail maintenance in the summer and night work grooming the trails. The clubs would rather receive the funding assistance directly rather than apply for a C2P2 grant. Pennsylvania is one of a few states that do not have a statewide snowmobile program. Mr. Knisely added that increased operations and maintenance costs are limiting how much work the member clubs can complete on a yearly basis. For example, snowmobile trail signage needs updated. Potter and Tioga counties are the only two counties that received updated signage. There are 15 counties remaining that need the signage updated. Signage has been completed within the Allegheny National Forest Trail System according to Mr. Knisely.

Effective Use of Groomers

Mr. Knisely summarized the benefits of snow grooming the snowmobile trails at night. Currently, every snow-belt state completes grooming at night. This effectively allows for increased safety, better maintained trails, and reduced operating costs. Essentially, grooming at night allows the trails to setup and freeze before being disturbed by the individual snowmobile users. Almost every snowmobile club in Pennsylvania grooms at night and Mr. Knisely suggests it would be beneficial if DCNR would do the same. Mr. Clark noted when this issue was discussed at a previous SAAC meeting, the issue of overtime pay and coordinating with the Union was discussed.

Multi-use Trails in the PA Wilds

Ms. Krug requested more coordination be undertaken by DCNR for the proposed use of year round multi-use trails. Mr. Hall insisted there is currently no new proposed year round, multi-use trails slated to open for motorized vehicles. Analysis of the proposal Gap Study would be required to render any further decisions.

Statewide Program Trails Manager and Signage Discussion

Mr. Knisely noted there seems to be a distinct need for a Statewide Program Trails Manager/Trail Boss for snowmobiles and ATVs. Based on experience just trying to get updated signage posted in the different State Parks and State Forests, each District and Park wants to do things differently. Mr. Clark added the 2004 Trail Design Manuel for motorized trails addressed signage and provided specific standards. Mr. Clark suggested that perhaps the Manual needs revisited to include specific snowmobile signage standards. Mr. Bruggeman questioned the Department how often inspections of the signage are completed? Mr. Hall noted yearly inspections are completed by the District maintenance staff. It isn’t uncommon for vandalism of the signs to occur and some signs are stolen. Mr. Knisely noted that has not been his experience, but rather getting the Districts to understand proper sign placement at intersections.

Economics and Tourism

Mr. Krug noted the PSSA recently completed an economic impact study and found the snowmobile industry generates 233 million dollars in Pennsylvania. Mr. Bruggeman noted a recent economic impact study by the Motorcycle Industry Council
(MIC) indicates the ATV industry is a 2.2 billion dollar industry in Pennsylvania. Mr. Fulton spoke on behalf of Ms. Devlin and noted on-going map and signage improvements along the trails are necessary within the Pennsylvania Wilds Region.

**Mr. Schmidt** expressed concern on behalf of the passive recreation users, such as individuals from the Sierra Club and the Keystone Trails Association are concerned with natural gas development within the PA Wilds Region. Recently, DCNR noted that approximately 10,000 acres of land that was considered semi-permanent was re-classified as semi-developed categories of state forest land. The Sierra Club is promoting the Appalachian Trail concept to further preserve passive recreation use and minimize encounters with the developing activities throughout the Commonwealth.

**Public audience comments** – Mr. Langley suggested the committee maintain a list of action items to track on-going items and suggested that be added to the agenda. Mr. Lepley commented on the safety training discussion. Mr. Lepley suggested DCNR should inventory the current youth ATV instructors and document where they are available to provide safety training. Once identified, DCNR should reach out to those dealerships and the instructors who would like to advance ATV training. Mr. Lepley added the PAOHV Association has been working diligently with the ATV simulator. The simulator is a static training unit that allows youth to learn proper riding techniques along with proper safety gear all before getting on a moving ATV.

**Next Meeting** – It was agreed the next SAAC meeting would be scheduled about six months after the November 2014 meeting. Once meeting agenda items are identified, Mr. Clark will contact the committee with available dates in May 2015.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10pm.

**ACTION ITEMS**

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<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL/ENTITY RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Oyler</td>
<td>Hire a contractor to complete the ATV Gap Study in early 2015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sprout Forest District</td>
<td>Complete AMD project and re-open Whiskey Springs Trail by August 2015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bald Eagle Forest District</td>
<td>Complete Jack's Mountain Trail improvements by the end of 2015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Hall</td>
<td>Obtain quarterly report statistics on the adult ATV training courses completed on-line.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Todd Miller</td>
<td>Obtain ATV/Snowmobile incident statistics from years prior to 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCNR/PSSA</td>
<td>Complete snowmobile signage within 15 remaining counties</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCNR</td>
<td>Update inventory of youth ATV training instructors' contact information and the available training locations. Continue to investigate adult hands-on ATV training course. Identify public land applicable to year round ATV safety training.</td>
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