

Massachusetts Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council Meeting #48
Tuesday, March 7, 2023
Venue: Zoom virtual meeting

In Attendance: (* Indicates OHVAC member or sitting in for a member)

Scott Morrill (EoEEA / MA OHV Coordinator)

*Thomas Galvin - MA Law Enforcement representative

*Raffi Peterson - NETRA representative

*Randy Toth – SAM representative

Jeff Miller - SAM

*Lt. John Girvalakis – MEP ATV and Boating Safety

*Michael White – Mohawk 4x4 / OHV user representative

Shelly Kaleita – Beacon Hill Consulting

Jon Oulette – Southcoast Motorangers

*Max Rosbold-Gabbard – DPH Massachusetts

Colin Novick – not for profit representative

^Chuck Kulda – Power sports dealer representative

Meeting #48 was chaired by Scott Morrill from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). The meeting was held online via Zoom from 10 AM to 2 PM. There were 13 attendees; 8 official committee members.

Scott Morrill of EoEEA discussed the closing of RTP grant submissions and how multiple clubs had been involved in this year's grant submissions. Mr. Morrill stated that registration numbers may have dipped due to the lack of snow and snowmobiling opportunities this year. Mr. Morrill also discussed possible legislation regarding the allowance of OHV use as a recognized recreational opportunity in MGL Chapter 61B. Mr. Morrill also noted that within a month the DCR OHV crew would be back on for the season and that he hopes that they will be able to coordinate with local clubs to get the parks up and running quickly. Mr. Morrill also mentioned that he has had discussions with SAM leadership about a program he would like to begin called the Trail Repair and Preservation Plan. The TRAPP plan would work with all clubs in identifying critical trail connections and which ones are susceptible to loss. In identifying these trails it is Mr. Morrill's hope that actions may be taken to assure future use and trail connections are not lost and that the snowmobile trail system isn't being surprised by unexpected threats to their trail system.

Randy Toth provided a Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts update. Mr. Toth stated that though there was not a lot of snow, higher elevation clubs were still grooming and some, though little, riding was occurring. Mr. Toth also mentioned that SAM passes had dropped considerably and at the time of this meeting were at almost zero. Though overall SAM passes sold were down, online sales were up, indicating that the online sales of passes was successful. Mr. Toth also noted that the online trail map is still up

and operational at a cost of \$4.99. Though SAM has had success with the online map, magazine and sales, the online groomer tracking system is still not functioning properly and still requires work. SAM is also concerned about new signs being posted in the Mt Grelock area stating that there are signs closing off snowmobile use. The signs read “no snowmobiling, not enough snow”. SAM states that it is their opinion that there are a few spots on the mountain that appear to have no snow due to the topography and those areas should not be the locations judged for sufficient snow cover. No one from DCR was present for the meeting to respond and clarify how snow cover is actually judged and what requirements must be met for the trails to be open for said use. Mr. Toth also stated that there are deviations from what some DCR parks and locations say is allowable cover and what others say is not. Mr. Toth also noted that there are some major trail connections being in danger of loss if not addressed soon. Mr. Toth also stated that though there were a few clubs that pursued RTP grants this year, many smaller clubs had given up on the process due to the requirements of the “Buy America” program and increasing complexity of the grant submission process. Mr. Toth also expressed SAM’s interest in knowing the status of certain requests related to the Bolton Flats area, Greenwater Pond reroute, and the Quabbin trail request.

Raffi Peterson, the NETRA representative, provided the following update. NETRA will have a full schedule this year having already provided its first successful event of the year in Connecticut. NETRA also is enthusiastic in continuing its partnership with the state in safety outreach and working with MA Environmental Police in encouraging youth to attend the state’s mandatory youth riding program. Mr. Peterson stated that the four active clubs in MA hope to continue their work and volunteerism with DCR.

MA Environmental Police Update provided by Lt. Girvalakis reported new registration numbers;

09/01/22 – 11/30/22

ORV New – 785 / Renewed – 1,032

Snowmobile New – 205 / Renewed – 636

12/01/22 – 03/01/23

ORV New – 659 / Renewed – 1,526

Snowmobile New – 667 / Renewed 2,130

Annual #'s from registrations:

2021: ORV – 14,148 : Snowmobile – 7,806

2022: ORV 14,115 : Snowmobile – 8,072

OHV accident report #'s from 12/01/22 – 03/01/23

9 Total

4 ATV, 2 side x side, 2 dirt bike, 1 snowmobile.

Of these, 1 was workplace related, 1 was an OUI, 2 were on public ways, 1 was serious in nature.

Age of operators: 4 under 18, 5 adults.

Open forum discussion

Max Rasbold-Gabbard, rep for Dept of Public Health, how do we disseminate safety information? Conversation regarding this with committee members noted informal networks such as fellow riders and clubs, materials provided by the state to dealerships to hand out during purchases of OHV's, supplying tool kits to stakeholders and partners. Mr. Morrill suggested that tool kits could involve safety brochures, state OHV regulations for age, equipment and training, and other helpful information such as accident numbers and new safety product information. Also suggested was a box a registrant would need to check acknowledging they understood the safety regulations of Massachusetts when registering their OHV. Chuck Kulda inquired about a discussion involving OHV titling in an effort to reduce theft and aid in policing the theft of OHV's.