

Sawyer County Snowmobile Alliance, Inc.

This information update is prepared for the
Sawyer County Forestry Committee

October 7, 2010

Presented by Bill Noonan

Sawyer County Snowmobile and ATV Alliance
Referred herein as SCSAA, or the
“Alliance”

The following information is provided to promote a better understanding of The Alliance, it’s responsibilities, and it’s activities within Sawyer County.

The Alliance is a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation made up of 7 Snowmobile and 6 ATV clubs located throughout Sawyer County, WI. Our primary purpose is to develop and maintain safe trails in the County.

- Clubs who are members of the Alliance are also non-profit organizations.
- Clubs and the Alliance are all volunteer organizations.
- Club members include business owners, families, and individuals. Some are employed, some are retired persons, and several are non-residents.
- Clubs are first responders to inspect and repair trails after storms.
- The Alliance maintains a call-list for trail closure notifications both within the County and with connecting counties.
- Clubs conduct State DNR rider safety training for both snow and ATV riders.
- The Alliance is the largest organization of this type in Wisconsin, and perhaps in the Country. We believe that we are the largest owner of trail maintenance equipment in the world. Our equipment purchase value is \$1,487,622. This includes 15 tractors and tracked machines; 3 work type snowmobiles, 18 snow trail grooming drags; 3 brushing machines; 1 skid steer, and 2 tow-behind trail graders. Member Clubs use and maintain this equipment.
- Non-funded trails are developed, maintained, and paid for by the Alliance or by Clubs.
- The Alliance has an annual expense budget of approximately \$200K. Money is used to buy fuel, trail signs and posts, dirt, equipment, equipment maintenance and to pay for small administrative costs.
- The Alliance has annual and/or seasonal trail maintenance contracts with
 - Sawyer County, which includes part of the Chequamegon trails.
 - Washburn County (Birchwood area)
 - Tussock State Trail
 - Flambeau State Forest
- The Alliance is a stand-alone entity and does not cost the County any money with one exception. The County reimburses the Alliance up to \$5,000 per year for trail coordination activities of our two part-time Trail Coordinators.

Trail Coordinator

This person coordinates the Alliance trail activities. Activities include meeting with several government agencies as well as private groups to promote trails development, inspect trails, resolve conflicts, and reach compromises. This includes meetings with private landowners, the County Forestry, DNR, State Forest, National Forest Service, cities and townships, DOT, County Highway Department, the LCO, the Tussock Trail, the Birkie, CAMBA, and surrounding counties. This person also represents Sawyer County snowmobile clubs at the

Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC).

Assistant Trail Coordinator

This primary responsibility is to help the County process funding documents. After equipment and labor time reports are received for County trails and for the Tussock State Trail, they are converted into the proper format and submitted to each agency. After approving them they are sent to the DNR for payment. Washburn County, and Flambeau State Forest reports follow a different route.

- The Alliance promotes the sports. Although the primary function of the Alliance is to maintain trails we have been doing promotions that reach beyond the County. Money is earned by sponsoring snow and ATV events that bring visitors to the County.
 1. The Hayward 300 (Amsoil International Series of Champions [ISOC]) snow-cross event is one of only 8 locations across the U.S. and Canada.
 2. The Rut Hugger ATV event draws participants from surrounding states. It's in an infancy stage of development.
 3. The Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs will meet here January 7, 8, 9, of 2011. Approximately 150 members are expected to attend. Many will bring their snowmobiles and ride the trails.
 4. A television documentary about Sawyer County trails was filmed in February 2010. It is a documentary about the snowmobile trails, the Clubs, the supporting businesses, and the Alliance. Filming was done during Birkie week so some publicity included the Birkie events as well. The documentary(s) will air beginning November 2010 on two sports channels that are broadcast in the U.S. and Canada.

How Clubs earn money.

- Clubs earn money by conducting fund-raisers, assessing member dues, and selling map ad space to trail sponsors.
- Clubs use money to make civic donations, provide school scholarships, and to purchase maintenance equipment such as chain saws, dump trailers or dump trucks used for trail maintenance. Most build equipment storage sheds and some have clubhouses.

How the Alliance earns money.

The principal source of Alliance revenue comes from State snowmobile and ATV registrations. The Alliance maintains approximately 600 miles of funded snowmobile trails and approximately 85 miles of funded ATV trails. After submitting the required forms, the Alliance is reimbursed for use of equipment and volunteer labor. Funding is based on per mile of trail. Current funding is \$250 per mile for snow, \$450 per mile for summer ATV, and \$100 for winter ATV. A funding increased to \$600 per mile for ATV trails becomes effective July 2011.

One side note: There are other funds that are spent in the County that do not flow through the Alliance. The County, USFS, and State agencies can apply for project specific grants and receive thousands of dollars of each year. Money is spent on trail related projects like building trail bridges, boardwalks, installing culverts, rehabilitating trails, building new trails, and developing campgrounds and off-loading parking areas located along trails. Funded grants completed in 2009 were \$317,310. Funded grants that are scheduled for completion in 2010 are \$544,926. Grants approved for 2011 amount to \$507,400. None of this money comes from Sawyer County funds.

- Money is earned by assessing Club dues.
- Money is earned by selling County trail map ads to sponsors. Each year the Alliance prints and purchases at least 30,000 County trail maps. These are distributed throughout the County and are sold for map donations. Maps are also provided free to counties that surround Sawyer County as well as to local Chambers of Commerce for their mailings and promotions. Maps end up in many States and Provinces.

The Alliance does not do the following.

- Provide law enforcement.
- Buy trail easements.

How can Sawyer County support the Alliance?

Recognize, promote, support and encourage trail development.

- The County has great trails and most go through beautiful forests. Many other counties need to rely on ditches and township roads for trails.
- Returning visitors come from MN, IA, IL, MI, ND, SD and Wisconsin year after year to use our snow trails between the Christmas holiday and April.
- Support DNR registration fee increases. Money goes to the trails.
- Attend monthly Alliance meetings or local Club meetings to gain a better understanding of what we do as well as our problems.
- Consider new ideas to grow tourism and support our business members.
 1. Consider installing welcome signs at highway entry points that tell a recreation story.
 2. Consider seasonal advertising in magazines and newspapers that reach beyond the County.
 3. Consider hiring a person to work with all government agencies in the County for the benefit of the trails.
 4. Purchase critical easements. Many trails in the State are being lost when a new landowner takes over a property that has a trail on it.

Summary

The Alliance is a unique organization of volunteers who maintain and promote the snow and ATV trails in Sawyer County. We earn our own money and spend much of it in the County. Our efforts benefit the businesses and residents of Sawyer County.

If you have questions or ideas, please contact the Alliance Officers or Trail Coordinators listed below.

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