

Minutes of Meeting
Parks & Waterways – Snowgroomer Department
June 22, 2022
11:00 a.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were Parks & Waterways (P&W)/Noxious Weeds/Snowgroomers Director Nick Snyder, BOCC Communications Coordinator Jonathan Gillham and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

Year-End Report Presentation (Discussion)

Parks & Waterways (P&W)/Noxious Weeds/Snowgroomers Director Nick Snyder stated he did not plan to present the full year end report for Snowgroomers, just touch on some of the highlights. He said they groomed a total of 80 routes this season, or about 3,011.7 miles. He provided details regarding the increases in fuel and fuel additives costs and said projections showed they would need about \$40,000 in FY23 for these items. He remarked that the State of Idaho had increased the price for snowmobile registration July 1, 2021 from which his department would receive a portion, so that would help with some of the costs.

Mr. Snyder said they had a total of 6,255 in personnel hours, which did not include himself or his Administrative Assistant Ranell Schwartz. He reviewed the revenue received from local sticker sales, which had increased to 1,666 sold for the 2021-2022 season. He explained that, of the local revenue collected, 55% went to OPS for his department and 45% went to KCSO for their back-country services.

Letter to Forest Service – Hayden Creek Barricades (Action)

Mr. Snyder directed the Commissioners' attention to item five on the agenda next. He provided a map showing where he was suggesting barricades be placed for the upcoming season. He explained the recommendations that he and KCSO were making to the Forest Service which would allow the public better access to lower parts of the trails when there was no snow. He asked the Commissioners to direct him to write a draft letter for their approval.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan moved that the Board direct Mr. Snyder to write the letter to the Forest Service and send it to the Commissioners for signatures. Commissioner Bill Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Aye

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

Groomer Sticker Fee Increase (Action)

Mr. Snyder moved back to item two on the agenda. He said that the Snowgroomer Advisory Board had approved an increase for sticker fees in their April meeting from \$15 to \$25. He noted that he would like to discuss plowing conditions on Fernan Hill before asking the Board to decide about this.

Fernan Road Plowing (Action)

Mr. Snyder showed the Commissioners some video footage of plowing this route, which was very impressive and looked quite hazardous. He stated that this section was their greatest challenge. He explained how his department notified the public when the area had been plowed and sanded, so everyone would know when it was safe to use the road. He said each plow day represented 20 miles, 10 to 12 staff hours, and a cost of about \$150 in diesel fuel. He noted that his figures did not include staff time for related loader repairs and maintenance. He stated that from December 13, 2021 through February 23, 2022 there were 21 plowing days, 420 road miles plowed, more than 210 staff hours and about \$3,150 in diesel fuel.

Department Loader Replacement (Action)

Mr. Snyder described the condition of their 1992 Loader and why they needed to replace it. Some things wrong with it could no longer be repaired because they could not get parts for it anymore. He said that the Advisory Board had made and passed three motions regarding the overall situation:

- To continue plowing Fernan Hill and have the County discuss a “pay to play” fee with the Forest Service.
- To find a new loader and replace the current one through finding a grant or other funding.
- To replace the old loader.

Mr. Snyder stated that it was clear that the Advisory Board understood the challenges of the situation. He remarked that they were not a road department and not equipped to operate as one. He added that it was also clear that the Advisory Board did not want to end access to Fernan Hill and that they were looking for options.

Mr. Snyder said the first option was to buy a new loader to maintain Fernan Hill in accordance with the needs of public safety. He pointed out that a new loader would cost about \$450,000 and the program did not have that much money. He added that they

would not be able to cover the cost of a new loader with grants, either. He said he could raise enough with grants to buy another used loader, but they would be faced with the same problems of repair and maintenance in the future.

Mr. Snyder said the second option was not to replace the loader and no longer service Fernan Hill, which would not be a popular decision. He provided maps illustrating the impact removing Fernan Hill would have on access and parking.

Mr. Snyder concluded that the money for a new loader would have to come from the General Fund. In response to a question from Commissioner Duncan, he confirmed that the road belonged to the Forest Service, not a Highway District.

Commissioner Duncan said that, considering the current demands on the budget for wages and the building project, she could not see going to the General Fund as an option right now. She stated that, if the Forest Service wanted to provide the equipment and have the County provide the manpower, they could discuss it, but she did not see this as likely.

Chairman Fillios and Commissioner Brooks voiced agreement, with regret.

Commissioner Duncan moved that the Board discontinue the plowing of Fernan Hill Road, until circumstances change. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye
Commissioner Duncan: Aye
Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

Mr. Snyder asked to return to item two, the Groomer Sticker Fee increase. He said that, if they were not going to continue to plow Fernan Hill Road, he would not recommend the fee increase at this time. He said he felt the increase in revenue from the state registration fee would cover their needs for the coming year. He noted that they would probably need to increase their own fees in the future, but stated he did not think it was necessary right now, especially if they eliminated the Fernan Hill Road.

Grooming Route Modification (Action)

Mr. Snyder returned to the map that illustrated their grooming routes. He explained that they did operate over the border into other counties at some points. He called attention to Bunco Bypass, which was a parking lot for Kootenai County snowmobilers, but was right against the Bonner County line. He said Bonner County did not cover that area but said that there were public safety concerns, since there were about 75 year-round residents in the area. He stated that, if KCSO were called to the area and the route was not cleared, the only other way in would be by boat, so he felt they should continue to include this one.

Mr. Snyder traced out the routes Kootenai County covered and how they linked to other paths. He stated that it cost \$5,000 to \$6,000 each year to open the Bishop Saddle Trail;

it took four days, including about 250 personnel hours, 250 total miles and about \$2,000 in fuel. He recommended that the route be deleted at the County line going forward. He said that they could reconsider if Shoshone County offered a partnership of some type, but for now it was his recommendation to remove that route.

Commissioner Duncan moved that the Board reduce grooming Route 5 on the Shoshone side. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Aye

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

D. Public Comment: This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing. There were no public comments.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

BOCC SIGNATURE

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk