

ORTAB Teleconference Meeting July 18, 2012

9:00 a.m. Quorum for meeting has been met. There are five board members in teleconference attendance.

In attendance:

ORTAB Advisory Board Members

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|-----------------|---------------|
| Jeff Budd | Diversified |
| Andy Morrison | Diversified |
| Ron Lurk | Motorized |
| Steve Taylor | Diversified |
| Kathryn Walters | Non-Motorized |

Parks Representatives

Ben Ellis
Darcy Harris
Steve Neel
Sally Davies

Mining, Land & Water Representative

Kyle Kidder

9:06 a.m. ORTAB Advisory Board and Parks representative roll-call.

9:10 a.m. Darcy Harris introduces herself to the ORTAB Advisory Board as the new Rec Trails Program manager.

9:11 a.m. Meeting start.

Neel: There is a need for a new advisory board chair person. Jeff Budd has been acting chair-person since it was vacated.

Budd: I will be happy to accept the chairmanship if elected.

Walters: I nominate Jeff Budd for chair-person.

Lurk: I second the nomination.

Harris: I call the vote for Jeff Budd as ORTAB Advisory Board Chair-person.

For: 5 Against: 0

Harris: Any nominations for co-chair?

No nominations. Issue is tabled until next ORTAB meeting when more of the Advisory Board member could attend. All teleconference attendees in agreement to table co-chair election.

Neel: We received many grant applications last fall. Our federal funding for FY'12 got pulled and the State owed 1.6 million dollars to the federal government because they miscalculated what the State's portion of trails money was supposed to be over the last few years. Because we had no funding for the first two quarters of FY'12, no grant applications were awarded. Since then we have been awarded FY'12 funding

of about \$655,000 once the state obligation limitation is considered. There were six grant projects that were awarded supplemental FY'11 funding before the State had to repay the 1.6 million dollars. These six grant projects were put on hold until we received FY'12 funding. These six grants will be funded first. After giving these grants their funds, there is approximately \$250,000 that still needs awarding.

Also, it looks like the FY'13 and FY'14 federal year has no new major programmatic changes to the program. We are going to be funded at the FY'09 funding year amount. We should receive approximately 1.5 million dollars.

- Ellis: I just want to express my appreciation to this Advisory Board in your patience and understanding as we work through all this financial chaos we have had to face for FY'12 funding. You are one of the important advisory boards for the state and you have strong advocates in D.C. that are fighting to keep the trails program from being dropped from the Highway Program bill.
- Taylor: Are we back to a two year funding program?
- Neel: Funding is at a stable level for the next two federal fiscal years.
- Harris: What I need from the Advisory Board today is how to divide the remaining approximate \$250,000. The State would like the Advisory Board's input and advice.
- Budd: I think some of the money should go to the trail construction groups if they have any big projects that need funds so that they can progress.
- Morrison: I know for a fact that SnowTRAC could use some of the funding.
- Lurk: Can we recommend giving money to SnowTRAC?
- Neel: Yes, we can give a portion or all of the funds to SnowTRAC.
- Morrison: With the trails developing statewide there is not enough money for trail markers and signs, or even trail grooming. SnowTRAC is looking for other ways to fund their program.
- Ellis: SnowTRAC is talking to their legislators and there are continued talks on raising the snowmobile registration fees. They are not getting a lot of support from the Bush areas. There are future meetings with legislators to discuss what to do or not to do with regarding trails. Legislators are aware that federal funding may disappear and are working toward getting alternative funding. The administration is very supportive of trails.
- Neel: SnowTRAC receives approximately \$220,000 a year in registration fees to be used for trail grooming, marking, signage, and safety/education. Last winter alone the Mat-Su area spent \$260,000 in trail grooming. Most of the SnowTRAC money goes to trail grooming because of low funding.
- Morrison: I am in favor of giving SnowTRAC some of ORTAB's \$250,000.
- Taylor: Are any rural areas served by the SnowTRAC grooming program?
- Neel: There are a few areas in Juneau and Fairbanks, but the majority of the grooming is done in the Railbelt areas.
- Morrison: I recommend that at least \$150,000 should be given to the SnowTRAC program.
- Walters: I think that giving some of the money to motorized is a good thing, but I would also like to see some money going to differed maintenance for trails. I don't think that there is enough time between now

and September to review proposals for trail construction like Jeff wanted. I would like to see the money shared throughout the state for trail maintenance.

Neel: Are we talking about giving the money to state-wide trail crews?

Walters: Yes.

Lurk: I agree with Kate on giving money to state-wide trail crews for maintenance that has been put off because of lack of funding. I support a split of money between the trail maintenance crews and the grooming pool.

Budd: Do you want an answer and a vote from us today?

Harris: I think that since we have a quorum, that we need to decide how to split the \$250,000 and vote.

Morrison: The SnowTRAC program would benefit mostly from the \$150,000. This is what I propose. The trails crews are pretty well funded.

Budd: I propose \$100,000 to SnowTRAC and the remainder to trail crew maintenance.

Taylor: I also propose that we contribute \$100,000 to SnowTRAC.

Lurk: I agree with the SnowTRAC proposal.

Neel: Let me clarify what Andy Morrison said regarding the trails crews being well funded. The state-wide trail crews are only funded through the FY'12 year. Nothing has been funded for the trail crews for next year so far.

Morrison: I propose \$100,000 to SnowTRAC for grooming/marketing/access and safety/education.

Budd: I second.

Neel: Motion to put \$100,000 to SnowTRAC grooming/marketing/access and safety/education.

Harris: All in favor?

For: 5 Against: 0

Budd: How many trail building groups are there? Do we have time to take proposals before the September deadline?

Ellis: We would have to send out a notice requesting proposals. It could be done but time really is of the essence. We could say that if not enough proposals are received or awarded that the remaining money is placed somewhere like deferred trail maintenance for later use.

Morrison: Are there any major projects that already have grants that could use this \$150,000 instead of dividing it into smaller grants? I know the campground at Bird Creek needs work.

Neel: That grant is not current at this time.

Budd: Can we give the \$150,000 all to one group?

Neel: If it is state-wide trail crews you can – each region will get a portion of that money.

Budd: I propose to allocate the \$150,000 go to Parks trail crews.

Walter: I second.

Neel: Discussion?

Lurk: I would like to amend Jeff Budd's proposal to say that if the state-wide trail crews can't use all of the funding, if they haven't enough projects for the funds, then any remaining funding go to SnowTRAC.

Budd: I concur with the amendment to my proposal.

Taylor: I second.

Neel: Motion to award Parks state-wide trail crews remaining balance of approximately \$150,000 of RTP funds. If state-wide trail crews do not have a need for the entire amount, then any remaining funds will be awarded to SnowTRAC program.

For: 5 Against: 0

Neel: The Parks Superintendents will need a few weeks to get their proposals together. We will let you know in a few days when their due date is.

Harris: What do we do about the grant applicants that didn't receive any FY'12 funding?

Budd: They need a definitive letter saying that there was no funding for FY'12 from the federal government.

Harris: I think the letter also needs to tell the applicants to re-apply for FY'13.

Neel: To keep everyone informed, our Alaska Trails Initiative (ATI) funding is coming to an end. There will be no new funding for this program from the federal government.

Also, it has been mentioned by several of the board members that we need to increase RTP grant limits from \$50,000 to \$100,000. This will limit the number of grants that you can award if this is something you want to do. We can discuss this at a later date.

Harris: If there is no more discussion, this meeting is adjourned @ 10:50 a.m., July 18, 2012.