





M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Terry Martino 
FROM: James Connolly & Robert Davies 
DATE: September 2, 2009
RE: Staff Guidance: Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance

Agency staff review of the "Proposed Final Jessup River Wild Forest Unit Management Plan/FEIS" for compliance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (Master Plan) resulted in agreement with DEC staff that there is need for the Agency Board to interpret key provisions of the Master Plan concerning snowmobile trails on State lands in the Park. Interpretation of the "no material increase" provision ("Basic Guideline #4" for Wild Forest areas) by the Agency Board occurred during its meeting of March, 2008. Other provisions of the Master Plan, including the meaning of the term "character of a foot trail" and provisions relating to the use of tracked groomers for maintenance, also need interpretation. Agency and Department staff agree that because the intent of these provisions are closely related, it is advisable for the Board to interpret them within the context of the attached, proposed **Guidance for Snowmobile Construction and Trail Maintenance on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack Park**. In broad outline, this guidance builds upon previous efforts, including the "Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park"¹, existing DEC Forest Preserve Snowmobile Trail Policy (ONR-2) and Interim Guidelines which had been proposed and temporarily adopted in 2001. The attached draft guidance provides significant additional detail on trail maintenance. The guidance was prepared through a joint effort between DEC and APA staff which included field investigation and discussion of trail construction and maintenance with representatives of the NYS Snowmobile Association.

¹ See *Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Impact Statement* of October, 2006.

Memorandum to T. Martino

Re: Draft Staff Guidance on Snowmobile Trail Maintenance

September 2, 2009

Page 2

The draft guidance provides specific direction which shapes the physical character of DEC snowmobile trails and guides DEC administrative use of maintenance equipment and vehicles on these trails into the future.

The approach taken by the proposed guidance is one that recognizes the following key concerns regarding Master Plan provisions for snowmobile activity on Forest Preserve trails:

- 1) Snowmobiling is an allowable recreational use in the Forest Preserve when occurring in compliance with APSLMP guidelines;
- 2) The siting, construction and maintenance of snowmobile trails and increased use of these trails have potential impacts which the State Land Master Plan seeks to minimize;
- 3) Use of tracked groomers has expanded over time. Use of certain grooming equipment has tended towards development of wider trails with a different character from those which are not groomed, groomed with smaller tracked groomers or groomed by a snowmobile with a drag;
- 4) An acceptable approach to allowing the furtherance of modern snowmobiling in the Forest Preserve is development of more detailed criteria related to the snowmobile trail management practices in order to minimize associated impacts and mitigate them.

Agency and Department staff believe the attached, proposed guidance reflects an acceptable approach and recommend the Agency endorse its provisions as conforming with the State Land Master Plan. Important aspects of the guidance include:

- Reconfiguration of the snowmobile trail system on Forest Preserve lands, and significant shifting of snowmobile use from the remote interior or Wild Forest areas to the periphery of Wild Forest areas.²
- Establish "community connector" or Class II snowmobile trails, to be located in the periphery of Wild Forest areas, with slightly wider than present standards (9ft

² **Remote interior** of Wild Forest areas is defined as more than two miles from non-snowmobile, public motor-vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies, including where rights for motorized access to private in-holdings exist. **Periphery** of Wild Forest areas is defined as the area within two miles of non-snowmobile public motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies, including where rights for motorized access to private in-holdings exist.

Memorandum to T. Martino

Re: Draft Staff Guidance on Snowmobile Trail Maintenance

September 2, 2009

Page 3

maximum width; 12 ft width on curves and steep slopes over 15% grade);

- Establish "secondary" or Class I snowmobile trails which would provide recreational opportunities other than connecting communities. The Class 1 trails would be maintained at a maximum 8ft cleared trail width at all locations;
- Allow grooming of "community connector" trails with small tracked groomers;
- Allow grooming of "secondary" trails by snowmobiles with drags only;
- Implement guidance for initial trail siting and layout, including specifications for the physical alteration of the trail area during construction and provide guidance for trail maintenance to ensure both "community connector" and "secondary" snowmobile trails will retain essential characteristics of foot trails;
- Locate "community connector" trails as close as possible to existing non-snowmobile motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies and no further than one mile from these unless terrain, environmental factors or the need to connect existing trail segments requires trail siting further into the interior of a Wild Forest unit;
- Locate new or re-routed secondary trails within periphery of Wild Forest areas and only sited beyond one mile from non-snowmobile motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies when the recreational value of the newly sited or rerouted trail segment is high and when impacts to sensitive interior areas are minimal as described and assessed in a Unit Management plan.
- Ensure snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff.
- Permission to carry out work on a trail pursuant to an Adopt a Natural Resource Agreement (AANR) or Temporary Revocable Permit (TRP) will be based on this guidance and as specifically detailed in an approved Work Plan.

At the end of the public comment period and determination by the Agency Board regarding consistency with the State Land Master Plan, we recommend the final guidelines should be attached as an appendix to the APA/DEC "Memorandum of Understanding on Implementation of the State Land Master Plan".

Management Guidance:
Snowmobile Trail Siting, Construction and Maintenance

I. Adirondack Park Snowmobile Trail System

The *Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement, October 2006*, establishes that the Adirondack Park snowmobile trail system will be redesigned to create trail connections between communities and to minimize adverse environmental and other impacts. This will involve trade-offs affecting trails on both public (largely Forest Preserve) lands and, increasingly, on private lands. It will result in a reconfiguration of the existing system on the Forest Preserve, including, through the UMP process, the designation of a new class of snowmobile trails to establish and improve community connections. This will be balanced with the redesignation or abandonment of some snowmobile trails – either within the interior of Wild Forest areas or adjacent to private inholdings – for the purpose of non-motorized use. It will also result in the establishment of new routes on private lands through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers.

Establishment of Community Connections

The establishment of community connection trails will provide routes traveling north to south and east to west that will link many communities together. The actual “on-the-ground” routes that establish the connections through Forest Preserve will be determined through the UMP process. Many of the connections already exist and the focus will be on improving them through trail maintenance work and reroutes that will allow for a reduction of the current mileage of interior trails in favor of these trails on the periphery of State lands.

Reconfiguration of the Snowmobile Trail System

Development of a community connection trail system will feature the designation of Class II, “Community Connector Trails” on the Forest Preserve and a significant shifting of snowmobile use from the **remote interior** of Wild Forest areas¹ to the **periphery** of Wild Forest areas² where these trails will intentionally be located as close to such motor-vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies as practicable. It will also feature the redesignation of the remaining Forest Preserve snowmobile trails in the current system (those not on roads) as either Class I “Secondary Snowmobile Trails” or as non-snowmobile trails (such as foot trails or horse trails) for non-motorized recreational uses only. (Some snowmobile trails may be abandoned as trails altogether.) The less developed and less maintained character of Class I snowmobile trails, along with a restriction of grooming by tracked groomers to the more developed Class II trails, only will help concentrate the majority of snowmobile use in the periphery of Forest Preserve lands. Consequently, the more remote interior areas of certain larger Wild Forest classified areas will have less motorized traffic, lower exhaust emission levels, lower noise levels, decreased impacts on wildlife and reduced user conflicts between users participating in motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation. The snowmobile trails that receive the new Class I designation or are redesignated for non-snowmobile use will be allowed to revegetate to narrower widths that will restore a more consistently closed canopy, thereby improving the aesthetic experience of trail users and enhancing ecological integrity.

Redesignation or Abandonment of Trails

The redesignation or abandonment of some snowmobile trails for non-motorized uses will occur consequent to management actions called for in adopted UMPs or UMP amendments and will be guided by the following, primary goal: *To provide a net benefit to the Forest Preserve through reconfiguring the trail system and revising trail management practices*³. Eliminating some designated snowmobile trails from the current system is central to an achievement of the balance sought – providing for key improvements in snowmobile riding in the Park through actions that, on the whole, result in a net benefit to the Forest Preserve.

¹ **Remote interior** of Wild Forest areas is defined as more than two miles from non-snowmobile, public motor-vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies, including where rights for motorized access to private in-holdings exist.

² **Periphery** of Wild Forest areas is defined as the area within two miles of non-snowmobile public motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies, including where rights for motorized access to private in-holdings exist.

³ For a discussion of the “net benefit” concept, see page 187 of the *Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement*, October 2006.

9-2-09

In deciding which trails to close to snowmobiling, the goal will be to select trails that: penetrate the more remote areas of large Wild Forest parcels; traverse an existing undeveloped forest corridor connecting two or more remote areas in Wild Forest; are located near Wilderness area boundaries; are redundant to other trails and perhaps part of an unnecessarily dense local trail network; and are no longer used or receive only minimal public use. Additional goals that will help guide management decision making in this respect will be:

- *To create safe snowmobiling conditions.*
- *To curtail illegal motorized access to public and private lands.*
- *To reduce potential conflicts with adjacent property owners.*
- *To reduce snowmobile trail maintenance costs.*

9-2-09

II. Standards and Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Construction and Maintenance on the Forest Preserve

The following standards will apply to designating snowmobile trails on Adirondack Forest Preserve lands and carrying out construction and maintenance activities on them.

Snowmobile Trail Classification

The snowmobile trail classification system for designated snowmobile trails in the Adirondack Forest Preserve features three classes of trails⁴ and is as follows (presented in order of least developed to most developed):

Class I Trails: **Secondary Snowmobile Trails**

Spur trails (leading to population areas and services such as repair shops, service stations, restaurants and lodging), short loop trails and recreational trails (longer trails that lead to recreational areas and sites not part of any designated, primary travel routes that connect communities.)

Class II Trails: **Community Connector Trails**

Trails that connect communities and serve as the primary travel route(s) for snowmobiles within a unit. These trails exist on the periphery of Wild Forest or other Forest Preserve areas (as close as possible to motorized travel corridors, given terrain and environmental constraints) and are not duplicated or paralleled by other trails; some can be spur trails that link a community to a longer trail connecting two or more other communities.

Class III Trails: **Snowmobile Trails on Forest Preserve Roads**

⁴ The classification scheme outlined in the *Snowmobile Plan for the Adirondack Park/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement, October 2006* differed from this. Class I trails were presented as snowmobile trails on Forest Preserve roads, Class II trails as secondary trails and Class III trails as community connector trails. The order has been changed to present them as a progression in terms of their development.

9-2-09

Snowmobile routes on roads seasonally open to automobile traffic (including roads in campgrounds) that are designated for snowmobile travel in the winter. These can be segments of community connector trail systems.

Snowmobile Trail Siting – New and Rerouted Trails

1. New and rerouted snowmobile trails will generally be sited in the periphery of State land areas of the Adirondack Park and near existing non-snowmobile public motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies to minimize impacts within the interiors of such areas. Specific trail siting criteria for new and rerouted Class I and Class II trails are set forth in the paragraphs below.
2. New and rerouted Class II, “Community Connector Trails” in Wild Forest classified lands will be sited as close as possible to non-snowmobile public motor-vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies. No new or rerouted trail segments will be sited further than one mile from these unless terrain or environmental constraints dictate otherwise, or, such siting of a new or rerouted trail segment within the periphery is necessary to connect important, existing trail segments that together will form the same “Community Connector Trail.”
3. New and rerouted Class I “Secondary Snowmobile Trails” in Wild Forest classified lands that function as spur trails or short loop trails leading to or from Class II “Community Connector Trails” will also be sited as close as possible to non-snowmobile public motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies; no new or rerouted spur trails or short loop trails will be sited further than one mile from these, without exception.
4. New or rerouted Class I “Secondary Snowmobile Trails” in Wild Forest classified lands that serve as recreational trails may be sited beyond one mile (but within the periphery) from these public motor vehicle routes and motorized waterbodies when the recreational value of the newly sited or rerouted trail segment is high and potential impacts to sensitive interior areas are minimal as described and assessed in a UMP.
5. In cases where closure or abandonment of a relevant motor vehicle route results in an existing snowmobile trail location being inconsistent with these guidelines, such trail will, if practicable, be relocated to comply with these guidelines.

9-2-09

6. New or rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited, when possible, along existing routes or previously existing old routes such as foot trails, woods roads, utility rights of way and abandoned railroad beds in lieu of constructing entirely new trails.
7. New or rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid locations that present safety hazards such as the edges of ravines or ledges, major highway crossings and crossings of frozen surfaces of water bodies such as rivers, lakes and ponds. If suitable alternative routes are designated or developed, trails that lead riders to unsafe locations will be closed to snowmobile use in favor of the alternative routes in order to lower risks and eliminate unnecessary snowmobile trail mileage.
8. New or rerouted snowmobile trails will be sited with an objective to avoid areas considered environmentally sensitive, such as: wetlands; endangered plant or animal populations that might be harmed by the trails and/or their use; remote areas as defined by these guidelines and forested corridors connecting such remote areas and deer wintering areas and other significant habitats so that the values of these areas are not diminished.
9. New or rerouted snowmobile trails will not be established without an evaluation of potential significant impacts on adjacent private holdings.
10. New or rerouted snowmobile trails, including spur trails, will not lead to private lands where public snowmobile access is not permitted.
11. New or rerouted snowmobile trails, through the acquisition of easements or other access rights from willing sellers, will be sited on private lands rather than State lands wherever possible to minimize impacts on the Forest Preserve.

9-2-09

Snowmobile Route Design, Construction and Maintenance Standards for Class I and II Trails

Snowmobile route design, construction and non-ordinary maintenance activities⁵ will be carried out pursuant to Snowmobile Trail Work Plans developed by DEC staff in consultation with APA staff. The following standards will be followed and reflected in the development of these Work Plans for Class I and Class II snowmobile trails in order to preserve their trail-like character while ensuring they are appropriately safe to ride. When undertaking any of the types of work described below with motorized landscaping equipment (almost exclusively on Class II trails), only careful use of appropriate landscaping equipment will be approved, as determined by a “minimum requirement” decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan. Use of bulldozers and creation of “dugways” will not be approved. Operators of landscaping equipment will conduct their work with appropriate Department oversight in optimal environmental conditions that will not contribute to any potential degradation of the wild forest setting.

Alignment and Grade:

1. Trail alignment should not feature blind curves. Abrupt changes in either horizontal or vertical direction should be designed to ensure:
 - a. Sight distance will be 50 feet or more wherever possible.
 - b. Curves will have a radius of at least 25 feet.
2. To the greatest extent possible, trail alignment should not feature long straight sections. Trails should follow the natural contours of the terrain as much as possible and should be laid out to minimize - while balancing – all necessary tree cutting, rock removal and terrain alteration.
3. The maximum grade of trails should not exceed 20% unless deemed necessary to minimize environmental impacts associated with trail construction.
4. Trails should not normally be laid out on existing cross slopes greater than 12%.

⁵ Ordinary maintenance activities are defined in the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation Concerning Implementation of the State Land Master Plan for the Adirondack Park

9-2-09

5. Trails should be laid out to avoid rocky areas and drainage features such as wetlands and streams to the greatest possible extent.
6. In locations where serious environmental or safety conditions exist along a trail, the trail should be rerouted rather than rehabilitated at that location.

Trail Width:

1. **Class I Trails** may be maintained to an 8-foot maximum cleared trail width.
2. **Class II Trails** may be maintained to a 9-foot maximum cleared trail width except on sharp curves (inside turning radius of 25-35 feet) and steep running slopes (over 15%) where they may be maintained to a 12-foot maximum cleared trail width.

Class I and II trails wider than their classification allows will be actively restored to these limits.

Tree Cutting:

DEC policy requires that cutting trees should be minimized, but where cutting is required, trees must be identified, tallied and included in a Work Plan in accordance with **DEC Program Policy LF-91-2 Cutting and Removal of Trees in the Forest Preserve.**

1. Cutting of overstory trees should be avoided in order to maintain a closed canopy wherever possible. Large and old growth trees should be protected.
2. Cutting trees to expand a trail from its current width or otherwise improve a trail will be carried out pursuant to a Work Plan.
3. All snowmobile trails, regardless of class, may be kept clear to a height of twelve (12) feet, as measured from ground level, where the cutting of trees or other woody growth of over three (3) inches Dbh is not necessary. Branches protruding into the cleared area may be pruned.
4. No trees, except trees that due to structural problems or fallen/tipped conditions present an immediate hazard to the safe use of the trail by snowmobilers, will be cut outside the cleared trail width.

9-2-09

5. Trees should be felled away from the trail to minimize the amount of material that needs to be moved. If the tree trunks are not to be used to help delineate the trail, felled trees should be delimbed and cut into short enough lengths to lie flat on the ground. Once delimbed and cut up, the short lengths should be dispersed and not left in piles next to the trail.
6. When trees are cut within the cleared trail width, they will be cut flush with the ground, and the preference will be to leave the root masses in place. On Class II trails, if it is important to remove a root mass because it presents an obstacle in the trail surface, the preference will be to grind the stump and roots. If grinding is not feasible, the root mass may be dug up, rolled or placed (so intervening vegetation and organic matter is not removed) off the trail into the woods and set down so as to have the lowest profile possible. Grinding will not occur on Class I trails.
7. No brushing will occur outside the cleared trail width of any snowmobile trails.

Trail Surface:

1. Grading:
 - a. Trail surfaces of Class I trails should generally feature the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. While limited leveling and grading may be undertaken, this work will be done using hand tools almost exclusively. In rare circumstances, appropriate landscaping equipment may be used as specified in a Work Plan.

Trail surfaces of Class II trails should generally feature the existing contours of the natural forest floor and not be graded flat. Limited leveling and grading may be undertaken using appropriate landscaping equipment as specified in a Work Plan.

2. Rock Removal:

9-2-09

- a. Removal of boulders and rocks from snowmobile trail surfaces will be minimized to the greatest extent possible for the class of each trail and will be described in a Work Plan. Methods of removal will be specified. No boulders or rocks will be removed outside the cleared trail width. On Class I trails, rock removal will occur using hand tools only, except in rare circumstances in new trail construction and trail reconstruction/restoration; it will be restricted primarily to uncommon, major obstacles that present safety hazards to snowmobile riders and which cannot be avoided by appropriate trail layout or rerouting. On Class II trails, rock removal may occur using landscaping equipment and may include removal of rocks that could demonstratively present safety hazards to snowmobile riders or damage grooming equipment.
- b. Boulders and rocks removed from trails will preferably be buried underground in the trails to minimize disturbance. Earth moved to dig the holes into which the boulders or rocks are to be placed will be used to fill the holes that result from the rock removal. When removed boulders and rocks are not buried, but are instead set to the side of the trail, they will be dispersed with care and not left in windrows or piles next to the trail.
- c. Alternatives to rock removal should be considered to minimize the need for disturbance of the ground, to reduce the likelihood of creating drainage problems and to reduce the potential need for fill. Such alternatives may include covering or minor relocation of the trail where a boulder or rock may be too large or the number too great to deal with by any other method. Explosives will not be used to fracture boulders or rocks except in rare circumstances with prior approval from APA, while mechanical means or bentonite may be.
- d. Removal of boulders and rocks from the surrounding natural, wild forest setting for use in snowmobile trail construction and maintenance work will be minimized and may occur only on a limited, carefully selective basis for small-scale projects. On Class II trails, where large-scale trail construction projects using stone material may be approved, importation of native stone from appropriate, specified sources may occur.

3. Side Slope Management:

9-2-09

- a. On Class I trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes will be accomplished using hand tools exclusively, primarily by means of cuts and fills rather than full bench cuts. The need to cut and fill will be minimized through proper trail layout. The maximum amount of cut, fill, or cut and fill combined, measured vertically, will be 20% of the tread width. Cuts and fills will be balanced as much as possible to minimize the amount of cut or fill at any location. Side slopes of newly constructed trails and reroutes will be dressed and tapered within the cleared trail width; side slopes of some existing, degraded trails may be dressed and tapered outside the cleared trail width if this is determined the best way to address the degradation and restore environmentally sound, safe conditions.

- b. On Class II trails, elimination or reduction of side slopes will be accomplished primarily by means of full bench cuts for which appropriate landscaping equipment may be used. The need for bench cuts will be minimized through proper trail layout. The tapering of side slopes will be allowed outside the cleared trail width. The areas dressed and tapered will be re-vegetated to restore stability and natural site conditions after the full bench cut is created.

Drainage:

1. Adequate drainage will be provided within the cleared trail width to prevent trail erosion and washout and to maintain a safe trail. All snowmobile trails will be constructed so as not to intercept groundwater; natural drainage patterns will be maintained. In areas where the natural drainage patterns may be affected, bridges will be the preferred method for crossing wet areas as authorized in a Work Plan. Bridges will be constructed pursuant to approved snowmobile trail bridge designs.

2. Water bars and broad-based dips may extend beyond the cleared trail width to the extent necessary to effectively remove water from the trail surface, provided that no trees are cut outside the cleared trail width. Culverts will not be installed as drainage devices. Any existing culverts will be removed unless the culverts are very large and their removal is essentially not possible.

Wetlands:

1. Wetlands should be avoided to the greatest extent possible.

9-2-09

2. When wetlands crossings or trail locations adjacent to wetlands are proposed, the trail will be designed to minimize potential adverse impacts.
3. Any activity in a wetland or that may impact a wetland shall be undertaken with prior consultation with the APA and with recognition of Army Corps of Engineer's permit requirements.

Motor Vehicle Use Guidelines

1. Administrative personnel, equipment and materials will be brought to the site by the least intrusive means possible, as determined by a "minimum requirement" decision making approach set forth in the Snowmobile Trail Work Plan and as identified in priority order below:
 - a. By non-motorized means or, during periods of sufficient snow and ice cover, by snowmobile.
 - b. By aircraft.
 - c. By appropriate motor vehicles other than snowmobiles. Such motor vehicle use will only be approved when alternative means of transportation (non-motorized, snowmobiles, aircraft) are demonstrated to be inadequate. The motor vehicles used will be those which are suitable for the particular activities but have the least potential adverse impact on the environment. Even when such motor vehicle use has been approved, administrative personnel will utilize motor vehicles only to the minimum extent necessary.
2. Proposed motor vehicle or aircraft use will also be described in a Conceptual Use Plan, per CP- 17, "Record Keeping and Reporting of Administrative Use of Motor Vehicles and Aircraft in the Forest Preserve" or any successor policy.
3. Any motor vehicle used will display an official "DEC Administrative Use" sign, unless otherwise prominently identified as a DEC vehicle.
4. All motorized uses will be supervised by an individual who has attended and completed DEC training concerning guidelines and policies for snowmobile trail construction and maintenance.

APA/DEC Interagency Staff Deliberative Document - DRAFT

9-2-09

5. A detailed Work Plan, approved by DEC Lands & Forests staff must be prepared for all work to be done on snowmobile trails except for the Initial Annual Maintenance Trips described below and immediate removal of fallen or tipped trees that present safety hazards as described above, under "Tree Cutting."
6. A Trail Log must be prepared to record all work that is done on snowmobile trails.
7. Work requiring use of aircraft or motor vehicles other than snowmobiles should be done, whenever possible, during the months of August, September, and October.

Work Trips:

There are four classes of work trips using motor vehicles that are allowed on Forest Preserve snowmobile trails.

1. **Inspection/Reconnaissance Trips.** Periodic trips of this sort on snowmobile trails are necessary to determine work that may be needed to maintain the trail according to standards, to correct dangerous conditions, and to identify areas suffering environmental degradation. No motor vehicles except snowmobiles during periods of sufficient snow cover may be used unless such a trip is undertaken in conjunction with an Initial Annual Maintenance Trip.
 - a. Inspection/Reconnaissance Trips may take place concurrently with Initial Annual Maintenance Trips as described below.
 - b. No work except wintertime safety hazard cutting of the type allowed for, above, may be conducted during these trips unless specifically authorized by an AANR, TRP, or Work Plan approved by DEC Lands & Forests staff.
 - c. A Trail Log will be developed detailing the location and type of work needed.
2. **Initial Annual Maintenance Trips.** These trips will be authorized under an AANR, TRP or Work Plan and are undertaken solely for the purpose of removing fallen branches and trees that obstruct the trail and maintaining drainage features.
 - a. A detailed Work Plan is not required prior to these work trips.

9-2-09

- b. Motor vehicle use is limited to either: (a) three trips and no more than 30 miles per Forest Preserve unit/year or; (b) 50% of the trail mileage of the unit per year; or, (c) one trip per trail per year. Trips will be planned so that motor vehicles used run over the same section of trail only once, to minimize the visual and soil impacts from tire treads.
- c. Trips will only be conducted in the months of August, September, and October.
- d. Annual snowmobile trail routine maintenance work plans must identify the specific trail segments where the Initial Annual Maintenance Trip(s) will occur.
- e. All activities undertaken during Initial Annual Maintenance Trips will be recorded in Trail Logs.

3. **Maintenance, Rehabilitation and Construction Trips.** These trips include all other work trips on snowmobile trails.

- a. All work done on snowmobile trails should be accomplished by the least intrusive method possible, as identified in priority order above.
- b. All work done on snowmobile trails, except for "Inspection/Reconnaissance Trips" and "Initial Annual Maintenance Trips" described above will require an approved, detailed work plan.

4. **Grooming and Associated Winter Maintenance Trips.** Grooming will be tailored to the Class of the snowmobile trail; it must not alter a trail's width or physical character and will not be used to gather snow from outside the allowable cleared width of the trail. Grooming equipment will be operated only by administrative personnel including DEC staff or volunteers under an agreement with the DEC (AANR or TRP) and covered by workers compensation. The type of equipment allowed will be as follows:

Class I Trails: Snowmobile with a drag, as the 8-foot cleared width and layout of the trail will allow and as approved in an AANR, TRP or Work Plan.

Class II Trails: Snowmobile with a drag, or, grooming equipment with maximum tractor and drag width sufficiently less than the 9-foot to 12-foot cleared width of the trail to allow for grooming that will not cause tree damage. Type and dimensions of grooming equipment to be identified and approved in an AANR, TRP or Work Plan.

9-2-09

Class III Trails: Any grooming equipment, as approved in an AANR, TRP or Work Plan.

Associated Winter Maintenance Trips occur when snow and ice cover is sufficient to protect the trail. They will normally be performed by use of snowmobiles but may also involve use of tracked groomers or other motor vehicles, where appropriate, as approved in an AANR, TRP or Work Plan. These trips may include any of the following activities:

- a. Removing fallen or tipped trees that present immediate safety hazards as described above, under "Tree Cutting."
- b. Placing trail signs or markers.
- c. Pruning vegetation.
- d. Taking building materials, supplies and tools to a construction site for immediate work or for staging them for an upcoming construction season;
- e. In rare instances, installing temporary trail safety or natural resource protection features or structures.
- f. Removing materials from the Forest Preserve that were staged during previous work projects.

Oversight of Motor Vehicle Use:

1. The Regional Natural Resource Supervisor, or his/her designee, will be notified no less than 48 hours prior to initiation of motor vehicle use. It will be determined whether or not trail conditions are suitable for such work and vehicle use.
2. The Regional Natural Resource Supervisor, or his/her designee, will be responsible for ensuring Department staff periodically monitor and inspect all construction and maintenance work to ensure compliance with approved Work Plans.
 - a. Department staff shall inspect the snowmobile trail work at times which are intended to coincide with the use of equipment that has the greatest potential to cause environmental damage.
 - b. All construction activities involving landscaping equipment will be directly supervised by DEC staff.

9-2-09

- c. Within seven days of completion of authorized construction and maintenance activities, the Regional Natural Resource Supervisor will verify the work was satisfactorily completed according to Standards and Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Construction and Maintenance and, if applicable, that any permit conditions were met.