

Snowmachine Trail Development and Program Grants**FY2002 Request:****\$200,000****Reference No:****33690****AP/AL:** Appropriation**Project Type:** Health and Safety**Category:** Transportation**Location:** Statewide**Contact:** Jim Stratton**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)**Contact Phone:** (907)269-8700**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2001 - 06/30/2006**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

Snowmobiling is one of Alaska's fastest growing outdoor recreation activities. Funds are needed to develop and maintain trails and trailheads to provide for safe riding opportunities and to educate riders about safety concerns. Funds for this program are provided by snowmobile registration fees paid by Alaskans. They are funding this program themselves and support a registration fee for these purposes. Funds are distributed in the form of matching grants for trail and trailhead development and maintenance, safety education, and trail identification. Grants are to organizations, businesses, agencies, governments, and individuals.

Funding:	<u>FY2002</u>	<u>FY2003</u>	<u>FY2004</u>	<u>FY2005</u>	<u>FY2006</u>	<u>FY2007</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gen Fund	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,350,000
Total:	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,350,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

SLA00/CH135 \$188,800

SLA99/CH2 \$120,000

Project Description/Justification:

These are funds PAID BY SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATIONS through the passage of the point-of-sale snowmobile registration bill (SLA98/CH134). Parks has provided these grants for two years. This request is for the program's third year. Grant decisions are made with the consultation of a Snowmobile Trails Advisory Committee (SnoTRAC), a citizen committee appointed by the Park Director, to assist in determining which grants to fund.

We support the Point-of-Sale registration legislation and our subsequent appointment of SnoTRAC to assist in developing and implementing the grant program. We feel that riding snowmobiles on groomed trails REDUCES the conflict snowmobiles cause when riding ungroomed areas in the backcountry. We cannot regulate where snowmobiles can go on general state land, but we can strongly encourage where they go (and thus avoid key wildlife areas and conflicts with private property owners and other recreators) by supporting a groomed trail system. In addition, an educated rider is less likely to need rescuing, thus saving the state search and rescue costs.

Specific Spending Detail:

One hundred percent of the requested funds will be spent as follows: 69% for direct grants to develop and maintain snowmobile trails; 17% for safety and education programs; and 14% for grant administration and support of the statewide Snowmobile Trails Advisory Committee.

Project Benefits:

Snowmobile users benefit from the registration fees they pay on their snowmobiles by having marked and maintained snowmobile trails. This provides safety benefits to riders. Alaskans die in snowmobile accidents at twice the rate in any other state. This is in part due to the lack of signed and maintained trails. It also has the potential of reducing search and rescue costs by reducing the chances of snowmobilers getting lost. Trespass is also reduced if snowmobilers have marked and maintained trails to stay on. Because this is a matching grant program, grantees provide cash, labor and equipment to match at least 25 percent of state provided grant funds, effectively stretching state funds. Anchorage Economic Development Corporation estimates that snowmobile sales and activity in Alaska results in approximately \$54 million in annual private sector expenditures.

Projected Revenue to the State:

Direct revenue to the state in the form of snowmobile registration receipts is enhanced by improved and safer riding opportunities and facilities.

Project Support:

Alaska State Snowmobile Association; Alaska Snowmobile Representatives Alliance; Anchorage Economic Development Corporation; Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau; Alaska Travel Industry Alliance; local snowmobile organizations and dealers; Division of Motor Vehicles.

Project Opposition: None**Does this project leverage other funding for the state?**

Yes. Grantees are required to provide a minimum of 25% match.

Project History:

FY99 - \$120.0 in CIP. FY00 - \$188.0 in CIP. FY 99 grants were awarded in February, 2000. FY00 grants were awarded in July, 2000.

Alternative Approaches/Financing Considered:

The federal Recreational Trails Program provides limited funding but does not earmark any funds specifically for snowmobile trails. Limited funds are available through the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities for trail staking in the Bush which benefits rural Alaska only. Snowmobile clubs have limited resources in some communities, but a few have the resources to do more than minimal winter trail grooming and limited signing and maintenance. Agencies such as Alaska State Parks and some federal agencies provide some snowmobile trail maintenance within state parks or other designated public recreation areas, but funds are lacking for trail maintenance outside these units.

Annual Operating and Maintenance Costs:

Cost of maintaining projects developed with these funds lies with the grantee.