

**Snowmobile Trail Development Program and Grants**

**FY2014 Request: \$250,000**

**Reference No: 33690**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Parks / Recreation

**Category:** Natural Resources

**Location:** Statewide

**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)

**Impact House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)

**Contact:** Jean Davis

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2013 - 06/30/2016

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**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

Snowmobiling is one of Alaska’s fastest growing outdoor activities and a very important transportation resource for rural communities. There is a growing demand to develop and maintain trails and trailheads to provide for safe riding opportunities and transportation routes, and to educate riders about safe riding practices. The end result is a variety of safe, accessible, well maintained snowmobile trails. Funds for this program are provided by snowmobile registration fees paid by Alaskans. Funds are distributed in the form of matching grants for trail development and maintenance, trail marking and signing, safety education, and to establish legal trail easements.

<b>Funding:</b>	<b>FY2014</b>	<b>FY2015</b>	<b>FY2016</b>	<b>FY2017</b>	<b>FY2018</b>	<b>FY2019</b>	<b>Total</b>
Gen Fund		\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$1,500,000
VehRcpts	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,250,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$1,300,000</b>	<b>\$3,750,000</b>

<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
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Prior Funding History / Additional Information:**

- Sec1 Ch17 SLA2012 P125 L29 SB 160 \$250,000
- Sec1 Ch5 SLA2011 P93 L18 SB 46 \$250,000
- Sec7 Ch43 SLA2010 P31 L29 SB 230 \$250,000
- Sec1 Ch15 SLA2009 P18 L10 SB 75 \$250,000
- Sec13 Ch29 SLA2008 P72 L31 SB 221 \$250,000

**Project Description/Justification:**

These are funds paid by snowmobile registrations for snowmobile trail and trailhead development, grooming, and safety education programs. Grant decisions are made with the consultation of a Snowmobile Trails Advisory Committee (SnowTRAC), a citizen committee representing all regions of the state.

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 of 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. Trespassing is also reduced if snowmobilers have marked and maintained trails. 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.

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE OR PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED?**

This program was established in 2005 to address the need for funding relating to snowmobile trails.

**WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED?**

These funds are used for snowmobile trail marking and signing, safety and education programs, establishing legal trail easements, building shelter cabins, and trail grooming.

**WHAT RESULTS WILL BE ACHIEVED AND/OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED?**

The safety of the snowmobiling community, including those users in Western and rural Alaska where snowmobile transportation is essential for travel and hunting, will be greatly increased through effectively marked routes and trails, and educational programs and outreach.

**WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED NOW – WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF REMAINING STATUS QUO?**

Fees will continue to be collected but will not be allocated to the maintenance of the snowmobile trails.

**WHAT ALTERNATIVES WERE CONSIDERED TO SOLVE THE ISSUE OR PROBLEM, AND WHY WERE THEY NOT SELECTED?**

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP), administered through the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), has allowed some funding from their program to be used for grooming for the past four years. Unfortunately grooming does not meet the intent of the RTP and every year it is uncertain if they will accept the funding request. FHWA has brought it to the attention of the Park's Director's office that because the RTP money is intended as start-up money for new projects and not on-going maintenance for projects with no definite scope or start and completion dates, that the money for grooming is not a guaranteed source.

**WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITH PRIOR YEAR FUNDING?**

In 2007, 5 grants were awarded, in 2008, 7 grants were awarded, in 2009, 7 grants were awarded, in 2010, 5 grants were awarded, in 2011, 7 grants were awarded, in 2012, 5 grants were awarded. All funds were used to support the snowmobile program, statewide.

2007: Lake Louise Snowmobile Club, Northwest Arctic Borough, Curry Ridge Riders, Iron Dog, North American Outdoor Institute (NAOI)

2008: Iron Dog grooming, Iron Dog Safety Expo, Juneau Snowmobile Club, NAOI, Mat-Su Borough, Northern Grooming, Mat-Su Grooming

2009: Montana Creek Musers, Iron Dog, NAOI, Willow Winter Trails, Trail Signage for State, Northern Grooming, Mat-Su Grooming

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2010: Iron Dog, NAOI, Mat-Su Trails, Northern Grooming, Mat-Su Grooming

2011: Mid Valley Trail Maintenance, NAOI, Grooming Pool Snowmobile, Southfork Groomers, Northern Grooming, Mat-Su Grooming, Lake Louise Snowmachine Club

2012: Mat-Su Borough, NAOI, Iron Dog, Northern Grooming, Mat-Su Grooming

**SPECIFIC SPENDING DETAIL:**

<u>LINE ITEM</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Personal Services	\$ 0	
Travel	\$ 0	
Services	\$ 0	
Commodities	\$ 0	
Capital Outlay	\$ 0	
Grants	\$ 250,000	Grants for trail development, grooming, and safety education
<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 250,000</b>	

**Project Support:**

The Snowmobile Trails Grant Program has the support of various snowmobiling organizations, safety and education groups, and the Iron Dog, Inc.