



# CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAIL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## MAINTENANCE AND GROOMING GRANTS

### Summary of Program Changes for FY2016

#### GOALS AND VALUES

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- Simplify the GIA Program by improving efficiency through streamlining the reimbursement process and reducing grant paperwork
- Encourage strong partnerships between DNR, local government sponsors, and ski clubs
- Build upon the successes of Minnesota's 700 mile Grant-in-Aid (GIA) ski trail system
- Achieve a prudent balance between ski trail fixed and variable costs while also considering the variability of ski pass revenue from season to season

#### REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS CHANGES

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##### **Performance Benchmark: 40% of grant funding will be reimbursed to set up the ski trail at the beginning of the season**

The grant sponsor and club will certify that the trail has been set up (i.e. trail is brushed, trail surface is in good condition, bridges in good repair, signs installed, gates open, and any additional work completed) and is ready to be open on December 1<sup>st</sup>, pending snow. When this benchmark is certified, DNR would reimburse 40% of the annual grant to the sponsor. This performance benchmark will cover all non-grooming costs associated with the trail system, including equipment costs, insurance, trailheads, bathrooms, parking lot plowing, and other fixed costs. The sponsors and clubs would still need to maintain records of their trail set up costs, but these would not need to be turned into the DNR annually.

##### **Hourly grooming reimbursement for the remaining 60% of grant funds**

The remaining 60% of each grant would be reimbursed based on the number of hours of grooming and an hourly grooming rate. Reimbursements would be calculated with this formula and with the following rates:

$$[\text{Hours Groomed}] \times [\text{Hourly Rate}] = [\$ \text{Reimbursed}]$$

1. \$35/hour: Snowmobile with grooming attachments
2. \$55/hour: Midsized tracked vehicle (similar to Class 2 ATV) with grooming attachments
3. \$110/hour: Large tracked grooming equipment with attachments (similar to a Piston Bully), or other large trail groomer, similar to those used on most snowmobile trails

The former 65/90% matching reimbursement rates would no longer apply. The new hourly rates already account for the matching funds. The intent of the GIA Program is to aid with the costs of maintaining and grooming a trail system. Local funds and ski club volunteers are instrumental in a successful trail. Reimbursement requests may be submitted at any time during the ski season, but all reimbursements must be submitted by no later than May 30<sup>th</sup> for the previous season's grooming.

## **GRANT AGREEMENTS AND FUNDING**

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### **Grant agreements/contracts would be annual, expiring by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year**

Since summer/fall trail maintenance and set up is covered under the performance benchmark, the timing of this work can be determined by each sponsor/club and will no longer depend on contract start dates. In short, the performance benchmark allows for local flexibility in deciding when to do work to set up the trail prior to the beginning of the season.

### **Fully funded annual grants mean no more carry-forward reductions**

These changes would eliminate carry-forward from year-to-year, as annual grant amounts would be fully funded and any unreimbursed grant funds at the end of the year would revert back to the ski pass account.

### **These program changes would not impact historical annual grant funding amounts**

These changes are only impacting the reimbursement process, and there will be no impact on GIA grant award amounts. In addition, there would be no supplemental funding, as annual grant amounts are based on historical GIA funding for seasons with average snowfall. Stability in funding will enable sponsors and clubs to budget the costs of their trail system over the long-term.

## **ANNUAL TIMELINE**

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- *May 30<sup>th</sup>* – Application and Final Reimbursement Requests Due
- *July to October* – Grant Agreements Executed
- *Late Summer/Fall* – Trail maintenance and set up completed
- *December 1<sup>st</sup>* – Trails open, pending snow
- *December 15<sup>th</sup>* – Maintenance Performance Benchmark due for 40% of grant (may be turned in earlier if trail is set up)
- *December through March* – Grooming of trails
- *April 1<sup>st</sup>* – Trails close
- *May 30<sup>th</sup>* – Application and Final Reimbursement Requests Due

## **PROGRAM CHANGES EFFECTIVE IN FY2016 (2015/2016 SKI SEASON)**

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The DNR will implement these program changes beginning in May of 2015, with the submission of applications for the FY2016 grant period. All program documents and the manual are available on the Ski GIA webpage at

[http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/gia\\_crosscountry.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/gia_crosscountry.html)

## **CONTACT**

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For questions the program, contact your local Parks and Trails Area Supervisor:

[http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/recreation/ohv/area\\_sups.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/recreation/ohv/area_sups.pdf)