



Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2016-2017 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET **Snowmobile Operations and Maintenance** **\$225,000 in FY 2016 / \$225,000 in FY 2017** **[Natural Resources Fund]**

It Is Needed Because

This initiative will help sustain Minnesota's 22,000 miles of snowmobile trails that are an essential part of the state's quality of life, tourism, and economic development.

This initiative is connected to the DNR Conservation Agenda's outdoor recreation goal of meeting the needs of new and existing participants so all benefit from nature and the outdoors.

It also relates to the DNR Conservation Agenda goal of natural resources and outdoor recreation contributing to strong and sustainable job markets, economies and communities.

Without this appropriation increase, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will have to reduce services in trail grooming and maintenance; this will diminish trail quality and likely affect snowmobile tourism, including local winter businesses that rely on snowmobilers.

Major Program Elements

- Increase the DNR appropriation by \$225K each year to allow the DNR to complete trail management activities necessary to sustain high-quality snowmobile trails. This funding will be directed toward core DNR operations related to labor, fleet and grooming costs.
- Continue the partnership between the DNR and the Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association (MnUSA) to manage and maintain a high-quality snowmobile trail system in Minnesota. This proposal is an interim step to shore up basic snowmobile operations while we work together to address future funding needs.
- The DNR has continuously taken steps to become as efficient as possible with snowmobile operations, in response to a decade of essentially flat funding. We regularly implement staffing

efficiencies, employ strategies to reduce groomer fleet expenses, and develop new approaches to trail grooming and maintenance.

- Priorities are set in statute, program policy and through working cooperatively with MnUSA, local units of government and business.
- This initiative affects the statewide system of snowmobile trails, including state administered and grant-in-aid (GIA) trails.

Key Measures and Outcomes

- Maintain Minnesota's outstanding system of snowmobile trails so that they contribute to the state's cultural and economic vitality.
- Sustain work with the GIA snowmobile clubs and have the resources necessary to maintain and groom state trails to a safe and enjoyable standard.

Fiscal Impacts

This proposal increased funding from the Natural Resources snowmobile account by \$450,000 in FY2016/17. The FY15 budget for this activity is \$3,552,000. Increasing the appropriation by \$225,000 one-time for the FY16-17 biennium for state trail maintenance and grooming, as well as for costs related to administering the GIA program, represents about a 6% change per year to the budget.

The snowmobile account has recently experienced challenges due to a structural deficit and a low-snow winter in FY 2012. We are working with MnUSA to identify long-term funding needs and a means to increase revenue.

For Further Information, Please Contact:

Laura Preus, Policy, Programs and Planning Manager
Division of Parks and Trails

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155
651-259-5639

laura.preus@state.mn.us