

Snowmobile Trail Improvement GIA Program

Summary of New Program Changes for FY22

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Grant-in-Aid improvement process, the DNR has worked with MnUSA to identify changes to the Snowmobile Trail Improvement Program (formerly referred to as a Capital Improvement program). The snowmobiling community has requested that the DNR be more expedient in releasing funds for improvements and also to adjust the funding amounts and the process to meet the changing needs of the Minnesota's snowmobile trail riding community.

Other than date changes, there are very few changes to the program for FY22.

CHANGES TO THE MANUAL

The *Trail Improvement Grants Manual* (May 2021) has the following changes:

- An updated Sample Contract has been inserted at page 24. The contract has changes to the following sections: Term of Grant Contract (Effective date/incur expenses language); new sections on COVID and Force majeure; clarifying language change to DNR portion of signature page;
- Clarified language on elements of a sponsor resolution, page 42;
- Addition of link to electronic version of DNR's *Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines* resource;
- Addition of Appendix D, a map and tables as a tool to identify and contact your DNR Parks and Trails Area Supervisor.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS (this section is unchanged from FY21)

Based on conversations with MnUSA, the types of eligible trail improvement projects will be scored in priority order as follows:

1. Major Rehabilitation;
2. Bridges;
3. Major Reroutes;
4. Acquisition (land acquisitions for the trail route); and
5. New development and additions to the GIA Program (lowest priority for funding in FY22).

To reflect this, project scoring will be based on the project type (all points assigned if deemed to best fit the assigned project type) and other criteria (points assigned will range based on how well it meets criteria). Other criteria will include: the quality of the site and project, the need or urgency of the project this year, a cost-benefit analysis, connectivity to other trail systems, the amount of environmental impacts or anticipated permitting required, and how ready the project is to begin and meet project timelines. Below is the scoring matrix under consideration for all projects scored in fiscal year 2022 (FY22). Total project costs must be at least \$10,000 and projects must be matched at 25% of the total project costs (for example a \$10,000 project would be funded \$7,500 and require a \$2,500 match). Matching funds must be secured before applying for consideration.

CONTACT

For questions about the program, contact your local Parks and Trails area supervisor:
Please see Appendix D of the Grant Manual to identify your Area/Area Supervisor.

Project Quality Priorities (all points assigned if deemed to best fit the assigned project type)

Major Rehabilitation POINTS	Bridge POINTS	Major Reroute POINTS	Acquisition POINTS	New Development POINTS	
50	40	30	20	0	Project Type Points

Project Quality Priorities (points assigned will range based on how well it meets criteria)

10	10	10	10	10	Site and Project Quality
8	8	8	8	8	Need/urgency
8	8	8	8	8	Cost vs. Benefit of Project
8	8	8	8	8	Project Readiness and Timeline
6	6	6	6	6	Level of Environmental Impacts/Permitting
5	5	5	5	5	Club Membership and Community
5	5	5	5	5	Club Goals

Total Points

100	90	80	70	50	TOTAL POINTS
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TIMELINE

- 1. Communications (August-September 2021):** DNR staff met with MnUSA and MSAC to discuss the application process and funding priorities.
- 2. Start Process (September):** PAT area supervisors and staff are updated on the snowmobile Trail Improvement GIA request for proposals solicitation.
- 3. Applications Sent (September):** PAT area supervisors and staff are sent the finalized snowmobile Trail Improvement GIA request for proposals solicitation information and application form for discussion with clubs.
- 4. Application Submission Open (October 1):** PAT area supervisors send the application and documents to the clubs and documents are posted on DNR’s snowmobile Grant-in-Aid webpage.
- 5. Applications Due (November 1):** Trail Improvement GIA applications are delivered to the area offices or submitted electronically or via mail to St. Paul Central office.
- 6. Applications are scored (early November):** Applications are scored by central office and regional DNR staff based on set criteria developed in coordination with MnUSA.
- 7. Award letters are sent to grant recipients (mid-November):** Award letters will be sent to recipient clubs as well as PAT area supervisors. The letter will include the award amount and details regarding the scope of the project funded. Work can begin on the date award letters are sent out and reimbursements will be submitted once work is complete.
- 8. Fully Signed Contract Returned to Sponsors and Clubs (beginning in November, once all documentation in place):** PAT area staff email out the fully signed contract to GIA sponsors and clubs and the regional business office.