



Memo on Snowmobile GIA Funding and Best Practices

Date: December 8, 2023

To: All GIA Club Administrators and GIA Sponsors

From: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Trails and
Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association

FY24 Funding Summary

A good snow year last season helped contribute to the state's snowmobile account. As a result, the originally planned one-time funding increase is able to be extended another year into FY24. There were also \$750,000 awarded in Trail Improvement Grants to make significant investments to trail connectivity with bridges and major reroutes to GIA trails.

In order to best allocate this funding to the GIA Program, the DNR has gathered input from the Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association (MnUSA) and the Minnesota Snowmobile Advisory Committee (MSAC). We have heard that there is both a need for funding for maintenance and grooming as well as for a backlog of larger projects, such as bridges and major repairs on snowmobile trails. In 2023 there were 1.1 million dollars in trail improvement requests.

As a result of the additional funds in the account:

- **Approximately \$7.7 million will go to support maintenance and grooming grants statewide; and,**
- **\$750,000 was set aside for major trail project improvements on GIA snowmobile trails, in Trail Improvement Grants.**

The \$750,000 set aside funding for capital/trail improvement grants means FY24 total maintenance and grooming benchmark contracts will be 2.9% less than FY23 amounts. Maintenance and grooming funding in FY24 is still about 6.8% more than the established base mileage rate. This funding distribution was a positive way to provide for maintenance and grooming, while also taking care of critical trail improvement needs that will benefit the overall snowmobile trail system.

Information on how to apply for the supplemental trail improvement grants is available on the DNR's snowmobile Grant-in-Aid webpage. A spring Trail Improvement Grant round is expected in April for FY25.

We also want to advise clubs and sponsors that longer-term funding in the years following FY24 remains uncertain, and may be significantly lower, and they should manage and plan their finances accordingly. Even though the increase in funding has been extended the past 3 years, it is unknown whether the snowmobile account can sustain this level of funding in the long-term. We want to make sure clubs and sponsors are extra prudent with their spending.

For questions or comments regarding club and trail management, always feel free to contact your local DNR Parks and Trails Area Supervisor or your MnUSA Regional Director network. They are a valuable resource that can help make your club and trails the best they can be. The snowmobile GIA Program webpage below also has more information on the program and funding, including a best practices letter from MnUSA and DNR in 2016.

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/gia_snowmobile.html