

Snowmobile Trail Improvement GIA FY23 Program

Grant Request for Proposal – April-May round

Grant Overview

As part of the Grant-in-Aid improvement process, the DNR has worked with the Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association (MnUSA) to identify changes to the Snowmobile Trail Improvement Program (formerly referred to as the 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.

Funding Availability

In fiscal year 2023 (FY23), funds have been set aside for special supplemental funding for major repairs and improvements on GIA snowmobile trails. Similar to previous capital improvement grants:

- Grants will be competitively awarded based on trail priorities and scoring guidelines;
- Grant requests may be up to, but not more than, \$300,000 and must meet the \$10,000 project minimum cost requirement (the minimum grant request is \$7,500); and,
- Matching fund requirement of 25% of the total project costs must be met in advance of applying for consideration.

A committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge will review applications and allocate funding through a competitive process. DNR expects to grant awards in June-July 2023. If selected, you will receive an award letter and work can begin on the date award letters are sent. Reimbursements for eligible costs may be submitted once work is complete.

Minimum Requirements:

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements in order to be fully considered for this grant opportunity. Applicants must submit projects with total project costs of 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). To be considered, matching funds must be secured before applying. Every applicant must meet these requirements in order to be considered.

Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant making. The [Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. The FY23 Snowmobile Trail Improvement grants seek to identify disparities between snowmobile clubs and the communities they serve.

This grant will serve snowmobile clubs and sponsors eligible for Grant-in-Aid Grooming and Maintenance grants that require trail improvements.

Grant outcomes will include:

- Providing funding up to \$300,000 in FY2023 to snowmobile clubs and/or their sponsors for trail improvements and identify metrics to understand the fiscal and/or logistical constraints of applicants to seek funding from this grant, including meeting the required financial match requirements.
- The grant will measure performance in serving under-served populations through questions in the application.

Eligibility

Snowmobile clubs and sponsors eligible for Grant-in-Aid Grooming and Maintenance grants are eligible for Snowmobile Trail Improvement grants. Applicants must complete the grant application and electronically submit by May 31 (or sent by mail if postmarked by May 25), 2023.

Competitive Priorities

Based on input from MnUSA and statewide snowmobile stakeholders, 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 FY23).

Collaboration

Multi-organization collaboration is welcomed but is not required.

Selection Criteria and Weight

Each application will be reviewed and scored on a 100-point scale.

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 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 FY23. A standardized scoring system will be used to describe how the applicant will be rated on each criteria, and used by reviewers to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the criteria.

The scoring factors and weight that applications will be judged are based on the:

- The Trail Improvement grant is codified in law under Minn. Stat. § 84.83.
- Additional information regarding the grant requirements and purpose can be found in the Minnesota Snowmobile Trails Assistance Program – Trail Improvement Manual.

A standardized scoring system will be used to describe how the applicant will be rated on each criteria, and used by reviewers to determine the extent to which the applicant meets the criteria.

The Snowmobile Trail Improvement Grant-in-Aid Programs has the following weighted criteria in measureable outcomes and in reaching diverse populations:

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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Questions:

For questions about potential trail improvement grants, including specific projects and eligibility, local clubs and sponsors are encouraged to contact their local DNR parks and trails area supervisor (see the current trail improvement manual for a map with area supervisor contact information). For statewide or general questions, you may contact Wade Miller at 651-259-5643 or wade.miller@state.mn.us.

Please submit questions no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on May 25, 2023.

Application Content

You must submit the following in order for the application to be considered complete:

- Completed Trail Improvement Project Application
- Project Location Map, including existing trail in the system, miles of new construction, miles to be added to the system, and any Trail Facilities and/or Bridges
- Sponsor Resolution (Annual resolution from Snowmobile Maintenance and Grooming GIA grant is acceptable, if applicable)
- Sponsor's most recent fiscal audit (either from State Auditor or external agency)
- Documentation of required permits and approvals (if applicable)

Please do not submit any other materials (binders, photos, etc.). Unrequested materials will not be reviewed.

Application Submission:

All applications must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on May 31, 2023. If applications are mailed, they must be postmarked by May 25, 2023. Late applications will not be considered. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP.

Electronic submissions must be in a ".pdf" format. Applications submitted in an unusable format will NOT be considered for funding. Complete Trail Improvement grant applications must be submitted in person to your **Area Parks and Trails office**, or by email using a ".pdf" format by May 31, 2023. See Appendix D of Manual to identify your Area Office.

If sent by mail, applications must be postmarked by May 25, 2023 for consideration. Send applications to:

Wade Miller
State Trail and Snowmobile Program Consultant
MNDNR- Parks and Trails
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 551055

Review Process and Timeline

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. *The award decisions of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources are final and not subject to appeal.*

RFP posted on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources web site	April 1, 2023
Paper mailed applications postmarked by	May 9, 2023
Emailed applications due no later than 4:30 pm central time	May 31, 2023
Committee begins review of applications	June, 2023

Conflicts of Interest

We will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department due to competing duties or loyalties
- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Public Data

Per [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#)

- Names and addresses of grant applicants will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. [§13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. [§ 13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

Grant Provisions

Trail Improvement is codified in law under Minn. Stat. [§ 84.83](#). Additional information regarding the grant requirements and purpose can be found in the Minnesota Snowmobile Trails Assistance Program – Trail Improvement Manual.

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising;
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services;
- Lobbyists, political contributions;
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds;
- Parking or traffic violations; and,
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses (Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state).

Accountability and Reporting

The Reimbursement Form found in the Minnesota Snowmobile Trails Assistance Program - Trail Improvement Manual is to be submitted to your Parks and Trails Area Supervisor from the Sponsor. The Area Supervisor will review and then approve the payment/invoices based on allowable costs and

charges referenced above. Parks and Trails Area/Region offices process and approve all payments and charges defined as eligible by the manual.

Grant Payments

Per [State Policy on Grant Payments](#), reimbursement is the preferred method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The State shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date, and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has given the grantee a written extension.

Grant Monitoring

[Minn. Stat. §16B.97](#) and [Policy on Grant Monitoring](#) require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants of \$50,000 and higher;
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants of \$250,000 and higher; and,
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

Grantee Bidding Requirements:

Grantees that are municipalities must follow:

- The contracting and bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law as defined in [Minn. Stat. §471.345](#); and,
- The requirements of prevailing wage for grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, per [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#) These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN:

<http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/debarreport.asp>

Audits

Per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98](#) Subdivision 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination requirements for all Grantees:

- A. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified

([Minn. Stat. §363A.02](#)). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

- B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship (Minnesota Rules, part [5000.3500](#)).
- C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Voter Registration Requirement:

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Stat. §201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

For more information about this RFP, contact:

Wade Miller
State Trail and Snowmobile Program Consultant
MNDNR- Parks and Trails
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 551055
Email: wade.miller@state.mn.us