



Cross-Country Ski Grant-in-Aid Program

Program Manual

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Introduction

Definitions

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE - Person responsible for the administration of the contract for either the Sponsor or the Department of Natural Resources.

PERFORMANCE BENCHMARK – The significant event or series of events that have been accomplished and been certified by the Sponsor so that the Sponsor can request payment.

GROOMING – Providing a good smooth trail, either tracked for classical skiing or smooth for skating, in order to provide a suitable trail for cross-country skiing.

LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT (LUG) - The political subdivision that has agreed to work with the club in the development and maintenance of a trail. This can be a county or local municipality.

RESOLUTION - Official record of the LUG where they agree to sponsor a cross-country ski or trail club and/or trail, certify that the performance benchmark has been met, and administer the grant from the DNR.

CLUB -A formal organization that has contracted with a LUG to maintain and operate a local cross-country ski trail.

SPONSOR - The local unit of government (LUG) that has agreed to work with the club.

SUFFICIENT RECORDS: Records that are necessary to verify that the club and sponsor have completed certain benchmarks. These will include at a minimum:

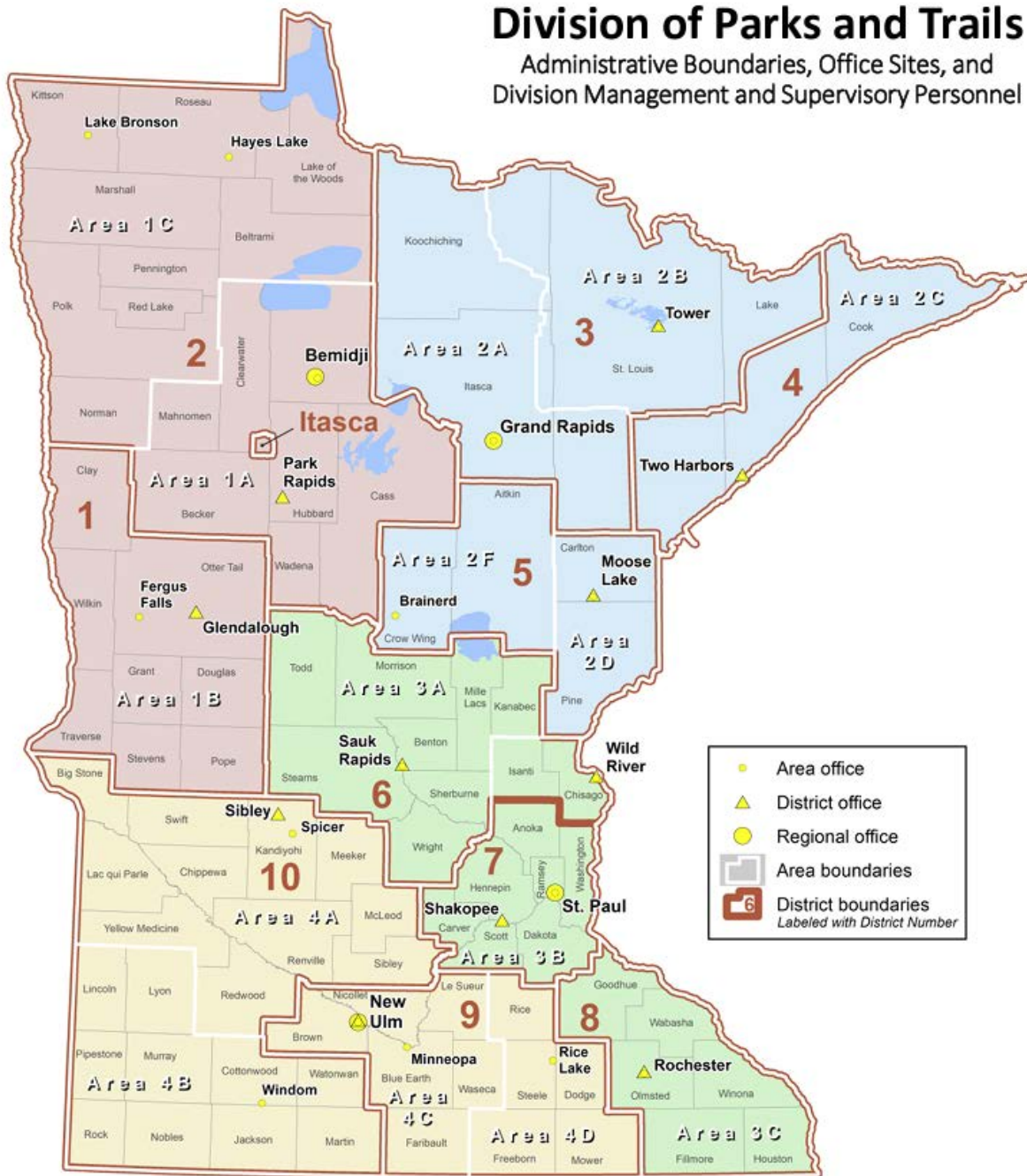
- Invoices of repairs/significant expenditures;
- Liability insurance evidence (as required);
- Maintenance Log of hours and work spent on the various trail activities. This log should include date, number of people working on the trail, number of hours, equipment used, type of work done, and section of trail worked on; (an example is included in the Program Forms Section) signed by a club representative;
- Groomer logs listing the date, miles groomed, total grooming hours, project number, trail name and segment, trail administrator verification; and,

- OR -

- IRS Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax) and all backup schedules and documentation;
- Groomer logs listing the date, miles groomed, total grooming hours, project number, trail name and segment, trail administrator verification; and

Division of Parks and Trails

Administrative Boundaries, Office Sites, and
Division Management and Supervisory Personnel



Program Summary

In 1973 the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was delegated the responsibility by the Minnesota Legislature to administer a cost-sharing program for the development and maintenance of snowmobile and cross-country ski trails. The goal of this program was the creation and maintenance of local trails, at the initiative of local trail organizations and local units of government. The state's intent was to offer financial assistance so that locally controlled trails could exist where none had before. This program was named the "Minnesota Trails Assistance Program," and has become popularly known as grants-in-aid or GIA.

The cross-country ski GIA program provides limited funding to trails owned and operated by both private trail organizations and local units of government. Since the funding base for the ski program is limited, grants are allocated with the intent to assist as many trails as possible. This is intended to keep the maximum possible number of ski trails operational statewide. These GIA trails provide cross-country skiing opportunities to local communities and those visiting them.

The DNR has been delegated the responsibility of administering the funds appropriated by the legislature for the GIA program. The DNR sets program policy and guidelines, budgets for program funding, and provides for auditing of grants. The DNR's Parks and Trails Area Supervisors are responsible for reviewing and processing necessary program forms, providing technical assistance when requested, monitoring trails for actual performance of reimbursed activities, and conducting informational meetings with local organizations as well as being the main contact for local organizations.

Program Changes Beginning in FY2016

In FY2016, the DNR implemented a new reimbursement process for the Cross-Country Ski GIA Program. This new process is intended to:

- 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

The reimbursement process now includes a performance benchmark, where 40% of grant funding will be reimbursed to set up the ski trail at the beginning of the season. The local unit of government and club will certify that the trail has been set up, and when this benchmark is certified, the 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 will still need to maintain records of their trail set up costs, but these will not need to be turned into the DNR annually.

The remaining 60% of grant funding will be reimbursed for grooming based on the number of hours of grooming and an hourly grooming rate. Reimbursements would be calculated with the formula [Hours Groomed] X [Hourly Rate] = [\$ Reimbursed]. Hourly rates are identified in the program manual.

The historical 65/90% matching reimbursement rates no longer apply and the new hourly rates include estimated matching funds needed to keep the trail system operational. The intent of the GIA Program is to aid with the costs of maintaining and grooming a trail system, not to fully fund all costs of the trail. 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 30th for the previous season's grooming.

Grant agreements/contracts would be annual, expiring by June 30th 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.

Responsibilities and Roles

Local Clubs:

- Secure a local unit of government to serve as the sponsor (county or municipality).
- Enter into an agreement with the sponsor to physically perform the work necessary in maintaining the local trail system.
- Complete tasks in a timely manner and submit documentation and program forms to the sponsor as required for them to certify completion of significant benchmarks.
- Maintain sufficient records as defined under the Definition of Terms within this instruction Manual to satisfy the auditing needs of the trail sponsor and DNR.
- Adhere to the trail user maps and public information, trail design and construction, trail grooming, and trail signing guidelines contained in this instruction manual.
- The Department of Natural Resources very strongly recommends that clubs partially shield their volunteers from the consequences of injury by securing appropriate insurance coverage. Obtain

sufficient insurance if necessary and required by the sponsor to protect the interests of the club as well as the local unit of government sponsor.

- Obtain sufficient permission from each landowner on which the trail is located. For public land, contact the public agency that administers the land in order to get a permit for the section of trail on the public property.
- Secure the proper federal tax status. As of the 2000-2001 season it has been required that all clubs that receive these grant-in-aid funds be registered with the State as a nonprofit corporation. This is to encourage good management practices, formalize property liquidation procedures in the event a club decides to close, and take advantage of the tax benefits afforded nonprofit corporations.

Local Unit of Government/Sponsor:

- Pass a resolution to serve as the sponsor and submit that to the DNR along with the application form.
- Submit the resolution and the application form to the DNR in a timely manner.
- Be responsible for certifying to the DNR completion of the performance benchmark necessary to verify that the trail is set up for the season and to initiate payment.
- Submit requests for reimbursement to the DNR for completed grooming work.
- Work with DNR to verify that the local club is adhering to the various guidelines contained in this instruction manual.
- The DNR strongly urges the sponsors to similarly enter into contracts with their ski clubs. These contracts will provide your unit of government with safeguards in the event that monies will have to be reclaimed by the State.
- Work with DNR to verify that the local club is adhering to the various guidelines contained in this instruction manual.
- Assure that the trails are ready and open for use, including verifying that the Club has obtained permission to occupy the property where the trail is located.

State/Department of Natural Resources

- Initiate application process and respond to submitted applications.
- Provide the Maintenance Agreement for the sponsoring local unit of government.
- Disburse funds for the performance benchmark to set up the trail upon receipt of appropriate certification from the sponsor. In addition, respond to requests for grooming reimbursement submitted by the local unit of government's fiscal agent and disburse funds accordingly.
- Include the trail in a statewide map of cross-country ski trail opportunities.
- Conduct random program reviews to evaluate performance in coordination with sponsors and clubs
- Conduct fiscal reviews in coordination with Sponsor and Club in order to evaluate appropriate accounting procedures
- Make payments to the School Trust Fund for Grant-in-Aid trails on School Trust Fund Land.
- Provide signs for Grant-in-Aid trails, pending availability.

Maintenance and Grooming Grant Management

Process and Timeline

Grant funds are disbursed through two separate methods, a performance benchmark and hourly grooming rates. The performance benchmark distributes 40% of the grant funds to cover the costs of setting up the trail and any other costs associated with the trail, except grooming. Grooming is reimbursed at an hourly rate, depending on the grooming equipment used. Below is the annual timeline for the GIA Program.

May 30th – Applications are Due

The local unit of government sponsor, often in partnership with a local ski club, must submit the annual application to the DNR by May 30th in order to be part of the GIA Program in the following season.

Summer/Fall – Grant Agreement between DNR and Sponsor Fully Signed/Executed

The DNR initiates a grant agreement between the local unit of government sponsor and the DNR. This contract needs to be fully signed by both the Sponsor and the DNR. The DNR is the final signature. The date of the final signature is the contract execution date, and grant fund disbursements may begin only after the fully signed contract execution date.

Summer/Fall – Ski Trail is Maintained and Set Up for Winter

The timing of summer and fall trail maintenance and set up work is determined by each sponsor and club. 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.

December 1st – Ski Trails Open, Pending Snow

Cross-Country Ski GIA Trails officially open statewide on December 1st. If a ski trail happens to have snow prior to this date, the trail may be groomed, but grooming reimbursement is only eligible during the ski season of December 1st through April 1st.

December 15th – Trail Maintenance Performance Benchmark Due

The Trail Maintenance Performance Benchmark is due no later than December 15th. The benchmark may be submitted prior to December 15th, but may not be submitted before the contract between the sponsor and DNR is fully signed.

December 1st through April 1st – Trails are Groomed, Pending Snow

The trail should be adequately groomed and maintained during the ski season of December 1st through April 1st, pending snow.

April 1st – Ski Trails Close

Cross-Country Ski GIA Trails officially close statewide on April 1st. If a ski trail happens to have snow after this date, the trail may continue to be groomed, but grooming reimbursement is only eligible during the ski season of December 1st through April 1st.

May 30th – Final Reimbursement Requests and Next Year's Applications are Due

All reimbursement requests must be submitted prior to May 30th. Reimbursement requests for grooming may be submitted at any time during the season. The annual application to the DNR must be submitted by May 30th in order to be part of the GIA Program in the following season.

Trail Maintenance Performance Benchmark

The trail maintenance performance benchmark covers all of the costs associated with setting up the ski trail at the beginning of the season, including all non-grooming costs associated with the trail system, equipment costs, insurance, trailheads, bathrooms, parking lot plowing, and any other fixed costs.

In order to receive the disbursement of the grant associated with this benchmark, the local unit of government sponsor and club must certify the following:

- Trail is ready to be open and groomed on December 1st, pending snow
- Trail is satisfactorily brush
- Bridges are in good repair
- Signs are installed
- Gates are capable of being open (snow permitting)
- The sponsor ensures that interest in the lands to operate the entire trail have been obtained through fee ownership, easement, lease, permit, permission, or other conveyance
- Parking lots are plowed, or ready to be plowed, pending snow
- Any other additional work to set up the trail is completed

Benchmark Form is due by December 15th

When the Trail Maintenance Performance Benchmark form is certified by the sponsor and club and submitted to the DNR, up to 40% of the annual grant will be disbursed to the sponsor. The benchmark is due no later than December 15th. The benchmark may be submitted prior to December 15th, but may not be submitted before the contract between the sponsor and DNR is fully signed. The benchmark form is available on the Cross-Country Ski Trail GIA Program web page on the DNR website.

Required Documentation Associated with Benchmark

The sponsors and clubs still need to maintain records of their trail set up costs, but these would do not need to be turned into the DNR. These records include all invoices of expenditures associated with the trail, maintenance logs, and other documents associated with the financial records of the trail.

Trail Grooming Reimbursement

Trail grooming is reimbursed on an hourly rate, established below. Up to 60% of grant funds are set aside for trail grooming. Reimbursements are calculated with the following formula:

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

Below are the hourly grooming rates.

\$45/hour: Snowmobile or tracked ATV with grooming attachments (Tracked ATV is less than or equal to 80 horsepower). All snowmobiles are included under this rate, no matter the size.

\$65/hour: Midsized tracked vehicle with grooming attachments (Tracked vehicle range of >80 to 150 horsepower)

\$110/hour: Large tracked grooming equipment with attachments (Tracked vehicle greater than 150 horsepower)

These hourly rates include the operator, equipment, fuel, and all other costs associated with grooming. Historically, the GIA Program reimbursed at a matching 65% or 90%, however this is no longer the case. The established hourly grooming rates include estimated matching funds needed to keep the trail system operational. The intent of the GIA Program is to aid with the costs of maintaining and grooming a trail system, and limited funding means that the program is not able to fully fund the costs of a ski trail. Local funds and ski club volunteers are instrumental in a successful trail.

Reimbursements

To request reimbursement, the request for reimbursement form and the grooming operator's log must be properly filled out and submitted to the DNR. Reimbursement requests may be submitted at any time during the ski season, but all reimbursements must be submitted by May 30th for the previous season's grooming.

Trail grooming reimbursement is only eligible during the ski season of December 1st through April 1st. If there happens to be snow before or after the GIA trail season, the ski trail may be groomed, but those grooming costs are not eligible for reimbursement.

Accounting and Audit

The Sponsor shall maintain books, records, documents, and other evidence relevant to this grant and in such detail that will accurately document all project costs for which payment has been received. The Sponsor shall use generally accepted accounting principles and these records shall be retained for six years after this grant terminates. The State, its representative or the legislative auditor shall have the right to examine this evidence and the Sponsor shall make them available at the office at all reasonable times during the record retention period. Records shall be sufficient, as defined in the Manual to reflect significant costs incurred and volunteer donation of time, equipment, and/or materials in performance of this grant.

Program Monitoring and Fiscal Reviews

Program Monitoring

The DNR will conduct regular program monitoring of Cross-Country Ski GIA Trails to ensure that the local unit of government sponsor and clubs are performing within the context of the program. The monitoring includes:

- Routine trail monitoring of grooming and maintenance activities
- Review of ongoing trail issues and any environmental concerns
- Complaint management and follow up

Fiscal Reviews

The DNR will conduct reviews of how Sponsors and the related clubs are performing within the context of the program. The intent is to evaluate how effectively the funds are being distributed by DNR and utilized by the Sponsors and the related clubs. The reviews will include:

- Contract administration
- Record keeping
- Expenditures

Penalties

If a sponsor and/or club are not performing within the context of the GIA Program, the DNR may reduce or withhold grant funding, delay in payment until the issue is resolved, or remove the sponsor and/or club from the GIA Program. The sponsor and club are required to comply with all program requirements established within this program manual, contract agreements, as well as all governing statutes, laws, and rules.

Required Documentation Summary

The following is a required list of documents that the sponsors and clubs need to maintain in accordance with program requirements. Only those documents marked with (*) are required to be turned in to the DNR, but the rest must be kept on file.

Landowner Permission Documentation

All trails must have permission to be located on public or private property. It is the responsibility of the club or sponsor to keep these records.

Proof of Club Non-Profit Status

It is required that all ski clubs that receive GIA funds must be registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State as a nonprofit corporation.

Invoices of Expenditures Associated with the Trail Maintenance Benchmark

Make sure to keep all invoices and proof of payment for expenses related to maintaining the GIA trail. These serve as expense documentation of meeting benchmark requirements.

Maintenance Logs

It is required that trail work hours be documented (this does not include grooming). The log should include date, number of people working on the trail, number of hours, equipment used, type of work done, and section of trail worked on.

Grooming Logs*

It is required that all grooming trips on GIA trails be documented. These logs should include name of groomer, date, miles groomed, total grooming hours, trail name, and segment. [A grooming log form](#) can be found on the Cross-Country Ski Trail GIA Program web page. Grooming logs must be submitted to the DNR with grooming requests for reimbursement.

Liability Insurance Certificate

It is strongly encouraged that clubs partially shield their volunteers from the consequences of injury by securing appropriate insurance coverage. The DNR does not require this, but a sponsor may.

Contract between the Sponsor and Club

It is strongly encouraged that the sponsors enter into contracts with their ski clubs. These contracts help define roles and provide additional safeguards.

Application with Required Attachments and Benchmark Forms*

It is strongly encouraged that both the sponsors and associated clubs maintain a copy of the annual program application with attachments and benchmark reimbursement forms for reference and annual documentation.

Validation of GIA Ski Trail Alignment*

Verify the alignment of trails is accurate and report any changes to the DNR Area Office. A map of the ski trail system is a required attachment to the annual application.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following are a list of resources to assist in the documentation requirements and general maintenance and grooming of cross-country ski trails.

Cross-Country Ski Trail GIA Program Web Page

http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/gia_crosscountry.html

The Cross-Country Ski Trail GIA web page has all program forms as well as additional program information.

Minnesota Secretary of State www.sos.state.mn.us

Use the Secretary of State's website to find information on how to register as a non-profit corporation. All GIA clubs are required to be registered as a non-profit with the State of Minnesota. The Minnesota Secretary of State's (SOS) office administers non-profit corporation registration and questions about this process should be directed to the SOS.

Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA) <http://mnnordicski.org/>

MNSA is a source for skiing information as well as trail and club support in Minnesota.

Trail Guidelines Books www.minnesotasbookstore.com

Click on "Natural Resources" then "Trail Planning Guide" to purchase. This technical manual covers all you need to know about designing and building trails. This manual assists with providing best practices and techniques with special attention given to developing trails that are physically, ecologically and economically sustainable. This manual is published by the MN DNR and can be purchased for \$19.95 through the Minnesota Bookstore.

Capital Improvement Grants and New GIA Trails

Eligibility Guidelines

Capital Improvement Projects and Adding New GIA Trails

The DNR annually determines if capital improvement projects will be funded or if new trail systems will be added to the GIA Program. Solicitations for capital improvement projects or adding trail systems into the GIA Program will be posted on the Cross-Country Ski GIA webpage on the DNR website. Only funded Cross-Country Ski Grant-in-Aid trail systems are eligible for capital improvement funding. Projects that are eligible for capital improvement funding must be above and beyond the responsibilities of the existing maintenance and grooming grant. Below is a list of eligible capital improvement projects:

Trail Relocation Projects

- Trail relocations includes rerouting an existing trail to preserve trail continuity and/or improve the quality of the trail.
- Trail relocations may be a result of the following:
 - Landowner permission changes
 - Development issues on the trails existing corridor area
 - Safety concerns

Major Rehabilitation Projects

- Emergency Rehabilitation: rehabilitation needs resulting from unforeseen events that disrupt the route of an existing trail. Emergency grants are generally a result of the following events:
 - Storms
 - Washouts
 - Blow downs
 - Unexpected effects on an existing trail
- Major Rehabilitation: major rehabilitation projects are generally a result of the need to do the following:
 - Improve trail safety
 - Widen trails
 - Improve trail surface
 - Improve trailhead facilities and/or warming shelters/houses

Bridge Projects

- New placement of a bridge on an existing trail that currently has no existing bridge.
- Replacement of a bridge because of deficiencies.

Acquisition Projects

- Acquisition projects are proposals to acquire existing trail routes.

- Acquisition projects may also include proposals to acquire new trails and/or facilities.

New Development and Additions to the GIA System

- New development projects include projects to add new or existing trails or facilities to the GIA system, including alignments. Examples of new developments or additions include:
 - Adding a new trail system or new miles into the GIA System. This includes developing and then adding new miles.
 - Building a new trail head facility or warming shelter.
 - Adding miles of trail to improve the size of the existing trail system.

Environmental Review Considerations

Many new development projects and some trail relocation initiatives may require some level of environmental review. Sponsors and related clubs should work with Parks and Trails Area Supervisors on determining which requirements they will need to address as they move forward with their projects. The appendix to this manual includes the rules adopted by the Environmental Quality Board relating to recreational trail development. These rules outline the requirements and exemptions relating to whether or not an environmental review may or may not be needed. Also attached in the Appendix is the process and general timeline in which the DNR conducts these environmental reviews.

Project Priorities

Project Selection Priorities

The DNR annually determines if capital improvement, new development, or additions to the GIA system will be funded. Solicitations for capital improvement projects or adding trail systems into the GIA Program will be posted on the Cross-Country Ski GIA webpage on the DNR website. The following order of priorities is used in determining funding of capital improvement and other projects.

- 1. Trail Relocation Projects**
- 2. Major Rehabilitation Projects**
- 3. Bridge Projects**
- 4. Acquisition Projects**
- 5. New Development and Additions to the GIA System**
 - a. To ensure a fair statewide distribution of grants, regional factors will be considered in funding new development. These factors include existing use per mile of trail, existing trail mileage, ability to hold snow, and tourism considerations.
 - b. The DNR annually determines if new development or additions to the GIA System will be funded. The eligibility of additions to the GIA System will be officially communicated on the Cross-Country Ski Grant-in-Aid webpage on the DNR website.**

Selection Process

Project Applications are submitted to Parks and Trails Area Supervisors. The following outlines the process for selecting and approving capital improvement grants-in-aid as well as additions to the GIA System.

1. Parks and Trails Area/Region staff identify regional priority projects. Those that meet the above priorities and also meet regional priorities are recommended for funding to the DNR Central Office.
2. The DNR Central Office review Parks and Trails Area/Region recommendations and then in consultation with the Minnesota Nordic Ski Association create a statewide priority ranking of projects. The DNR will then approve or deny the requests for project funding based on the above priorities, statewide distribution, and available funding.

Allowable Costs and Charges

For Capital Improvement projects, requests are made for reimbursement of allowable charges on the Request for Reimbursement Form. The expenses for which reimbursement is made are found in the Allowable Charges document, posted on the Cross-Country Ski Trail Grant-in-Aid Program website if there are active projects.

Allowable Charges

All the charges listed below must be directly related to the acquisition, development, maintenance, and grooming of your trail system. No other charges will be accepted without prior approval from your Parks and Trails Area Supervisor. All costs are 65% reimbursable)

Administration Charges (65% Reimbursable)

(No More Than 15 Percent Of Total Grant)

1. **Mileage and Labor:** These charges may be reimbursed for preparing the paperwork and forms for the program, bookkeeping, paying invoices, attending necessary county or municipality board or DNR meetings, and obtaining bids for equipment rentals.
2. **Stamps:** The cost of mailing necessary DNR forms, billings, bid requests, or maps. It is suggested that a list of mailings and materials mailed be kept on file.
3. **Telephone Calls:** Long distance calls directly related to trail administration to vendors, the sponsoring agency, landowners, and the DNR will be accepted. It is suggested that a list of calls be kept on file.
4. **Office Supplies:** The purchase of materials needed to fulfill the programs administration such as writing, typing, and copying materials are acceptable. Office space rental is not an acceptable charge.
5. **Maps Used to Administer Grants:** The cost of county maps that are to be submitted to the DNR as required by the program are reimbursable.
6. **Meeting:** The DNR allows charges for essential personnel to attend meetings directly related to the program. The general rule will be not more than four (4) people for a trail committee meeting and not

more than two (2) people for a governmental meeting. Club meetings are not acceptable as chargeable meetings. Rental of meeting rooms is not an acceptable charge.

7. **Computer Time:** The cost of using computers shall be reimbursed as part of the administrative portion of the grant. The origin of cost, such as number of hours, or equipment rental, or materials should be described on the worksheet. The Allowable Cost for figuring reimbursement shall be \$15.00 per hour (65% reimbursable). This rate includes person hours using the computer and is not in addition to the \$25.00 per hour volunteer rate for trail work.

Land Acquisition Charges (65% reimbursable)

1. **Mileage and Labor:** These charges are acceptable for alignment work, checking ownership records, and landowner contacts.
2. **Maps:** The cost of securing maps necessary for aligning trail routes is reimbursable. County highway maps and topographic maps are acceptable -- aerial photography maps should receive DNR approval since costs can be extremely high.
3. **Permits and Easements:** The program has done extremely well to date with landowner cooperation and low permit or easement costs. Costs incurred are reimbursable.

Development And Maintenance Charges (65% reimbursable)

1. **Mileage and Labor:** These charges are reimbursable for construction and maintenance of the trail system. A work log form must be filled out for reimbursement identifying hours and dates work was performed.
2. **Equipment Rentals:**
 - a. Heavy equipment work is reimbursable as needed for construction. The operator or vendor of the heavy equipment must be identified and an invoice submitted to the DNR for payment.
 - b. Bids -- When equipment cannot be rented at the allowable costs, bids must be let to secure the necessary equipment. Three (3) hourly bids must be secured from vendors in your area. If three (3) bids cannot be secured, list the vendors contacted, date contacted, and vendor's response. When the bids have been secured, the Area TAW Supervisor must be contacted and approve the bids. After approval, the equipment can be leased or rented. The bids are then submitted with the Request for Reimbursement.
 - c. Hand power equipment rental is reimbursable. The operator or owner of the equipment must be identified on the worksheet for payment.

NOTE: Before any equipment rental or work is done make sure the rental costs must be within the allowable limits. If these limits cannot be met, bid procedures must be strictly adhered to or the billing will not be processed.

3. **Material:** Charges may be submitted for materials used directly on the trail system. Materials may include, but are not limited to lumber, paint, signs, gates, posts, fencing, culverts, fill, grass seed, bolts or

other hardware, etc. If you have a question on any materials, it is best to contact your Area TAW Supervisor.

4. **Snow Plowing:** Reimbursement for plowing parking lots will be acceptable when the parking lot is used solely for trail user parking. Parking areas at business establishments do not qualify for grant assistance. The maximum allotment per parking area per year will be \$300.
5. **Radios and Cellular Telephones:** The cost of renting, leasing, installing, and using radios and cellular telephones in groomers and groomer support vehicles and for use during trail maintenance shall be 65% reimbursable, if approved on a case-by-case basis by the Area TAW Supervisor. They shall be approved only in cases where the safety of groomer operators is improved, or where the efficiency of grooming long distance and difficult trail systems will be substantially increased. Full documentation of bids and lease rates shall be provided to the Area TAW Supervisor.
6. **Maps Printed for Distribution to the Public:** Costs for maps that are printed for trail users identifying the trail route, etc., costs are reimbursable. The State will pay 65% of the actual printing cost if the map is made available to the public free of charge.

NOTE: *THESE MAPS WILL IDENTIFY THAT THE TRAIL SYSTEM IS A GIA TRAIL AND FUNDED BY THE DNR AND THAT DNR DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY OF THE ADVERTISERS ON THE MAP.*

Capital Improvement Reimbursement Procedure

A correctly filled out Request for Reimbursement Form must be submitted to the Parks and Trails Area Supervisor from the Sponsor in order to receive reimbursement. The Area Supervisor will review and then approve the payment/invoices based on allowable costs and charges. Parks and Trails Area/Region offices process and approve all payments and charges defined as eligible. Only costs accrued after a fully executed agreement between the State of Minnesota and the local unit of government sponsor is in place are eligible for reimbursement.

Requests for reimbursement for summer and fall construction or maintenance are due no later than December 31. All requests for reimbursement must be received by the DNR no later than May 30 for that year's work.

For purposes of accurately documenting reimbursable activities, the following information shall be included on all work logs:

- The make and model of all heavy equipment used.
 - The type of work done.
 - The location.
 - Any donated labor, equipment time/miles, supplies, or materials shall be noted as a donation.
- Additional lines of the work log may be used for each entry. Invoices for purchased or donated services such as equipment rental, supplies and materials submitted with *Request for Reimbursement Forms* shall include the following information:
- Name of individual or company.

- Date the work was done or materials delivered.
- Type of equipment and number of hours/miles, or type of supplies and materials purchased.
- Original signature of vendor.

Accounting and Audit

The Sponsor shall maintain books, records, documents, and other evidence relevant to this grant and in such detail that will accurately document all project costs for which payment has been received. The Sponsor shall use generally accepted accounting principles and these records shall be retained for six years after this grant terminates. The State, its representative or the legislative auditor shall have the right to examine this evidence and the Sponsor shall make them available at the office at all reasonable times during the record retention period. Records shall be sufficient, as defined in the Manual to reflect significant costs incurred and volunteer donation of time, equipment, and/or materials in performance of this grant.

Program Forms and Guidance

Program Forms

The following forms have been included to identify the basic paperwork necessary for the Grant-in-Aid Program. These forms are found on the DNR's Cross-Country Ski Trail Grant-in-Aid Program web page at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/gia_crosscountry.html.

- **Maintenance and Grooming Application:** This form is the formal application from the Sponsor to the State of Minnesota for the annual maintenance and grooming grant.
- **Trail Maintenance Performance Benchmark:** This form is submitted to the DNR by the sponsor and certifies that the trail is set up and ready for the cross-country ski trail season.
- **Trail Grooming Reimbursement Form:** This form is to be used to request reimbursement for grooming.
- **Ski Grooming Log:** This form is used to document grooming work on the trail.
- **Trail Sign Order Form:** This form is designed to assist trail organizations in requesting signs from the DNR.
- **Capital Improvement Request for Reimbursement:** This form is to be used to request reimbursement for capital improvement projects.

Other Relevant Documents and Guidance

The following items are other documents and guidance relevant to successful grant-in-aid program administration, and are explained in more detail on the following pages.

- **Sample Sponsor and State/DNR Agreement:** This form is the legal document between the State and sponsor. This document sets aside funding and identified conditions agreed to by both parties. Only after notification in writing by the DNR can the Sponsor be guaranteed of grant-in-aid funding.
- **Sample Landowner Permission Form:** This form is designed to help clubs obtain private landowner permission for trails.
- **Sample County/Club Contract:** This form is designated to help establish contracts between sponsors and clubs.
- **Elements of a Sponsor Resolution:** This is an explanation of the information that should be contained in the sponsor resolution.

Sample Landowner Permission Form

LANDOWNER PERMISSION

THIS PERMIT is granted on _____, by _____ the Landowner(s) to _____ the Sponsor to establish and/or maintain the _____ Trail.

That _____, the (record owners, contract for deed purchasers, lessees), grants this permit over and upon the following described premises situated in the County of _____, State of Minnesota, to with: (complete land description)

SUBJECT TO:

1. This permit shall be continuous and will terminate upon sale of the land, or upon notification in writing to the Sponsor six (6) months prior to termination by the Landowner(s).
2. The right-of-way shall be open to the general public for cross-country ski use.
3. The Sponsor shall at all times have the right to enter upon said right-of-way for any purpose necessary to the performance of lawful powers and duties.
4. The Landowner(s) shall have the right to close said right-of-way during any emergency, with the approval of the Sponsor.
5. The permit is for a _____ foot width over the route to be used.

DATE: _____ LANDOWNER SIGNATURE: _____

CLUB REPRESENTATIVE: _____

ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER: _____

NOTE: All Trail Permits are to be made out to the **Sponsor** not the club. Permits can be made out to club only if the Sponsor has specifically given written permission and authority to the club, and the club has been incorporated.

Sample SPONSOR/ CLUB CONTRACT

This agreement made this ____ day of _____, 20____, between _____ hereinafter referred to as the local unit of government and _____ hereinafter referred to as the club.

WITNESSED:

Whereas the local unit of government desires to establish a public trail in furtherance of its public recreation program, and

Whereas the club agrees to help and assist the local unit of government to acquire, construct and maintain said trail, and is registered as a nonprofit corporation, and

Whereas the State of Minnesota offers financial and technical assistance to the local unit of government for the construction of an approve trail, and whereas the trail in connection with this agreement shall hereinafter be called _____,

NOW THEREFORE IT IS AGREED BETWEEN THE PARTIES THERETO:

The local unit of government shall apply to the State of Minnesota - Department of Natural Resources - for financial and technical assistance in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations governing said assistance.

If said assistance is granted, the local unit of government shall contract with the club for the acquisition of the necessary interests in land and the subsequent construction and maintenance of the trail.

The contract shall specifically provide that any "work" in connection with the trail shall be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement between the state and the local unit of government and such terms and conditions be incorporated in said contract by reference.

Further the contract shall provide that the club will certify to the local unit of government upon completion of significant benchmarks of "work" on the trail. The local unit of government agrees to pay the club the appropriate percentage of the total grant amount for their "work" completed by the club on their portion of the trail system as agreed to/with the other clubs in the trail system; the club will "absorb" the remainder. In the event that a performance penalty is assessed on the sponsor, by the state, such penalty will be passed through to the appropriate club and be their obligation until satisfied.

The contract shall specifically provide that the club will be operating as an independent contractor and that the local unit of government and the State of Minnesota shall not be responsible for workman's compensation of other employee benefits.

Notwithstanding the financial assistance provided in the state contract, the local unit of government shall not be liable for such costs as are incurred by the club because state funds are depleted.

Board Chairman/Mayor _____ Auditor/Clerk _____

Club President _____ Club Secretary _____

Elements of a Sponsor Resolution

A sponsor/local unit of government resolution should include the following information:

- A statement that the local unit of government will act as legal sponsor for an application for the DNR Cross-Country Ski Trails Assistance Program
- A statement that the local unit of government may enter into agreement with the State of Minnesota for the specific grant program mentioned above
- A statement that the local unit of government will comply with all applicable laws and regulations as stated in the agreement
- A statement recognizing an individual (in many cases a local government auditor) who will act as a fiscal agent on behalf of the local unit of government
- Date the resolution is adopted

If the local unit of government wishes to pass a resolution that is effective beyond one year, the resolution must include a clause clearly outlining these details. If the sponsor does not do this, a new resolution will be needed annually with spring applications

Appendix A: Elements of a Successful Trail

Trail User Maps and Public Information Suggestions

Accurate maps of the trail system should be prepared for free distribution to users. They should be available at the trailhead, DNR offices, and other locations convenient to the public and should include the following data:

1. Trail Name or Names.
2. Trail Location -- Give direction how to get to the trail system parking lot from the nearest town and major highway. A small state map showing the general location in the state could also be useful
3. Trail Length -- Show the number of miles/km for each segment or loop.
4. Trail Use -- Identify loops or segments designated for ski use, as well as trails closed to snowmobiling if the potential for conflict with other users exist.
5. Trail Connections -- Identify other trails the trail connects to such as: State Parks and State Forests; State Trails; or other Grants-In-Aid Trails.
6. Trail Information -- Give name, address, and phone number of an individual who may be contacted for information (contact the local chamber of commerce to identify them as the local contact). The phone number of the local conservation officer may also be helpful.
7. Bridges -- Show all bridge crossings.
8. Roads -- Identify maintained state forest roads and portions used as trails; also identify roads not maintained, but suitable for skiing.
9. Mark on map and/or list locations where the following services would be available:

Gas	Repair services
Food	Medical facilities
Lodging	Law enforcement officers
Nearest DNR Office	911 or Zenith
	Other helpful information
10. Identify all roads on map, and have corresponding signs posted on trails to help trail users know where they are at all times.
11. Basic Safety Tips -- Speed limit, driving on lakes/thin ice, frostbite, trail signs, etc. Statements concerning speed and alcohol should be included on the map.
12. It is helpful to put a date somewhere (bottom right-hand corner for consistency) on the map so the most current maps are in circulation.

County highway maps available through the State Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) serve as ideal base maps for showing trail alignments. These base maps are available for most counties from the Parks and Trails Division. Check with the Area Parks and Trails Supervisor for your county.

Trail Design and Construction Suggestions

1. Ski Trails
 - a. One-Way--Intensive Use: eight (8) feet to twelve (12) feet; one or two tracks set.
 - b. Moderate Use: six (6) to ten (10) feet; one or two tracks set.
 - c. Low Use: six (6) feet; one or no tracks set.
 - d. Two Way: Ten (10) feet to twelve (12) feet.
 - e. Downhill sections should widen at the bottom as the degree of slope increases. Uphill slopes where herringbone or side step is necessary should be eight (8) feet to ten (10) feet.
2. Horizontal Clearance--two (2) feet either side of trail treadway.
3. Vertical Clearance--ten (10) feet above expected snow depth. Allowance of snow build-up on limbs should also be taken into consideration
4. Turning Radius--at least fifty (50) foot minimum, 100 feet preferred.
 - a. Curves should be avoided on downhill slopes and at the bottom of hills.
 - b. If a curve is necessary, provide a runout and/or widen the trail or increase turn radius.
 - c. As degree of slope increases, lengthen runout, if needed, width of trail and/or turn radius should also increase.
5. Sight distance from trails should be at least of fifty (50) feet for ski trails. Greater sight distance should be allowed where conditions warrant. Snowbanks at road crossings should be cut back to provide adequate visibility in both directions on both sides. Snowbanks should be kept low at trail crossing points to permit easy exit from and entrance back onto the trail. Warning signs should be installed on trails at both trail and road crossings at sufficient distance to properly warn users.
6. Trails should cross contours at right angles where possible. Routing trails along side slopes should be avoided. Approaches to slopes should be straight and at least as long as the slope.
7. Cross-country ski trails shall not be routed over lakes, streams, or other bodies of water. When stream crossings are necessary, bridges at least six (6) feet wide should be provided (also, keep in mind the groomer width). Bridge designs need to have approval of the Area Parks and Trails Supervisor. Railings are required. Permits to work in public waters may be required for bridges. Permit applications are available from the DNR's Division of Waters.
8. Trails need to be routed away from game preserves, deer yarding areas, wilderness areas, experimental stations, nurseries, airports, scientific and natural areas, and other areas of anticipated conflict. All trail proposals should follow normal environmental review procedures by appropriate units of government. Permits shall be obtained where necessary and required by law.
9. A sign developed by the State which designates the trail as a GIA trail should be placed at parking lots, starting points, and at other areas of high visibility on the trail.
10. If possible, the trail should be located in such a manner as to avoid potentially hazardous areas such as cliff edges, rock falls, steep hills, congested areas, sharp ditches, and sharp curves.

Trail Grooming Tips

One of the most important winter trail functions is grooming. Providing a good, smooth trail will depend on ground surfaces which are free of stumps, rocks, roots, or other debris. Because the snow surface will reflect the ground surface conditions, a well groomed, smooth trail depends upon several things: 1) a relatively smooth and even ground surface, 2) a good snow base, and 3) good grooming. Snow compaction compresses loose, fluffy snow so that a firm base is provided. Snow grooming is the process of loosening or breaking up heavily compacted or icy snow and placing the snow back down in an equally compacted, smooth condition.

Under optimum conditions, grooming should begin when snow depth has reached approximately twelve (12) inches. Begin by compacting the snow with a large roller or drag with a packer pan. If this option is not available, packing can be accomplished with just the groomer, using the tracks to compact the loose, fluffy snow. If the snow is too deep, a snowmobile could be used. A very important point is that the snow base should be built from the bottom, up. Snow compacting should be considered after any substantial snowfall. The following are items that you may want to consider:

1. Groom shortly after a snowfall.
2. Grooming, when possible, should be done when traffic is light, such as at night or on weekdays.
3. Ideal grooming temperatures usually lie between minus five degrees Fahrenheit (-5F) and fifteen degrees Fahrenheit (15F).
4. The kind of snow is a major factor in determining at what temperature the trail should be groomed. Dry snow usually grooms best during the day when the temperatures are warmer. Wet snow grooms best at night when temperatures are usually cooler.
5. Cut all moguls off at or near the bottom of the dips and place the snow into a uniform layer. Try not to cut moguls halfway down or an uneven base density will result, and the moguls will reappear.
6. In limited snow conditions, try to set the drag so that snow can be pulled from the edges toward the center of the trail.
7. A good general rule for grooming speed is four (4) to ten (10) miles per hour. It should be noted that each groomer/drag combination is different, but grooming too slow or too fast will result in poor trail conditions (washboarding, uneven snow compaction, etc.)

Signing Suggestions

In general, signing on trails should be designed to provide direction, information, and safety for trail users. Major signing areas are at the trailhead, trail junctions, and in areas where safety of the user is involved. Trailhead and trail junction signs will provide maps showing route designation, distance, traffic flow direction, and location of support facilities. Safety signs will caution users of steep slopes, bridges, or highway crossings, and other hazardous trail conditions.

Signs on all trails should be kept at a minimum and be well placed.

Signs placed out on the trail should include reassuring blazers, caution signs, do not enter signs, stop signs, etc.

Placement of most signs should be on the right-hand side of the trail just off the main treadway but within clearing limits. Signs should be attached to posts placed two (2) to three (3) feet off the treadway and three (3) to four (4) feet above expected snow depth. Attach them securely with lag screws or carriage bolts. Wood or metal posts may be used depending on location and availability.

The directional sign used on the trail should be trail junction blazers, directional blazers and reassuring blazers. Signs should be placed in open areas or in other areas where a trail user might become confused. *If uncertain about the effectiveness of signing, invite a non-local trail user to identify where deficiencies may exist.*

Suggested Signing Program:

- **Trailhead**
 - The following signs should be located near the parking lot at the start of the trail.
 - Major Information Board
 - Map of trails
 - Registration
 - Distance of various routes
 - Interpretive information
 - Rules and regulations Trail conditions
 - Trail uses permitted and prohibited
 - Emergency telephone numbers
 - Address of person in charge of trail operation and maintenance (unit manager)
 - Where to go and who to see in case of emergency
 - You Are Here -- Should be located at the trailhead and at intersections with other trails.
 - if necessary, direction of trail (one-way, two-way)
 - trail distances (miles or kilometers)
 - location of facilities
 - you are here location marker
- **Information**
 - Use Designation -- Should be located at all intersections where incompatible users may enter the trail.
 - Interpretive -- Located at points of interest along trail. Consult regional naturalist for recommendations concerning interpretive signs.
 - General Information -- Located and designed to provide information to trail users to assist or improve their ability to safely and enjoyably use the trail.

- **Traffic Signs**

Type of Sign	Number	Location
STOP	NRM 8.4.1.	every traveled public road or railroad crossing
STOP AHEAD	NRM 8.4.2.	Should appear 300 feet before traveled public road or railroad crossing.
DO NOT ENTER	NRM 8.4.4A	Ski or other trail intersections, one-way trails, prohibited areas.
YIELD	NRM 8.4.3	Intersections with other trails in open areas. May also be used at private trail crossing found on railroad grades
CAUTION	NRM 8.4.5	should be placed prior to all potentially hazardous areas such as cliff edges, rock falls, steep hills, congested areas, bridges, sharp ditches, sharp curves
REASSURING BLAZER	NRM 8.4.7A	Where needed to reassure trail user is on the right trail, more in open areas, less in thick woods. May also be needed at unused road or trail intersections
DIRECTIONAL AND TRAIL JUNCTIONS	NRM 8.4.8C	Based on trail junction. Directional arrows should be placed prior to sharp curves and turns, distance will depend on anticipated speed of user. On snowmobile trails, these signs should appear at least 50 feet prior to the turn, curve, or junction
NO SNOWMOBILING	NRM 8.5.14B	Where needed to restrict snowmobile use
NO MOTORIZED VEHICLES	NRM 8.4.14	Where necessary to prohibit use, by motorized vehicles except snowmobiles.

A. Temporary and Special Signs and Decals

Type of Sign	Number	Location
TRAIL CLOSED	NRM 8.4.4D	At points where users could enter the trail
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE	No number available	Trailhead and facilities
GRANT-IN-AID	NRM 8.5.7	At intersections of DNR and GIA trails, also at GIA trail heads
MILEAGE MARKERS (optional)	No number available	at intervals of miles and/or kilometers. Mileage markers can be very helpful to the trail user and manager. They let trail users know the distance they have traveled or must travel to return to the trailhead. They can help the manager easily identify maintenance problem areas and can also be useful to help locate injured or stranded trail users
CAUTION TRUCK HAULING	NRM 8.4.9	Placed to provide warnings where logging or other trucks cross or share trail Treadway
STAY ON TRAIL	NRM 8.2.20	Placed in areas where trespass from trail or environmental impacts are of concern
SKI PASS REQUIRED	NRM 8.5.24	Place at all entry points to ski trails supported by state funds

Appendix B: Trail Design & Development Guidelines

Cross-Country Ski trail design and development guidelines can be found in [Section 7, "Winter-Use Trails,"](#) of the Trail Planning, Design, and Development Guidelines document.

Appendix C: Links to Minnesota Statutes

Minnesota Statutes related to the cross-country ski grant-in-aid program can be found using the following links or by visiting www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/85

[**85.40 DEFINITIONS.**](#)

[**85.41 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI PASSES.**](#)

[**85.42 USER FEE; VALIDITY.**](#)

[**85.43 DISPOSITION OF RECEIPTS; PURPOSE.**](#)

[**85.44 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAIL GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM.**](#)

[**85.45 PENALTIES.**](#)

Appendix D: MN EQB Rules Relating to Trails

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Adopted Permanent Rules Relating to Mandatory EAW Categories and Exemptions

[NOTE: The final adopted rule was published in the Minnesota State Register (29 SR 571 & 30 SR 319) and took effect Oct. 1, 2005]

4410.4300 Mandatory EAW categories

Subp. 37. **Recreational trails.** If a project listed in items A to F will be built on state-owned land or funded, in whole or part, by grant-in-aid funds administered by the DNR, the DNR is the RGU. For other projects, if a governmental unit is sponsoring the project, in whole or in part, that governmental unit is the RGU. If the project is not sponsored by a unit of government, the RGU is the local governmental unit. For purposes of this subpart, "existing trail" means an established corridor in current legal use.

- A. Constructing a trail at least 10 miles long on forested or other naturally-vegetated land for a recreational use other than snowmobiling or cross-country skiing, unless exempted by part 4410.4600, subpart 14, Item D, or constructing a trail at least 20 miles long on forested or other naturally-vegetated land exclusively for snowmobiling or cross-country skiing.
- B. Designating at least 25 miles of an existing trail for a new motorized recreational use other than snowmobiling.

In applying items A and B, if a proposed trail will contain segments of newly constructed trail and segments that will follow an existing trail but be designated for a new motorized use, an EAW must be prepared if the sum of the quotients obtained by dividing the length of the new construction by 10 miles and the length of the existing but newly designated trail by 25 miles, equals or exceeds one.

- C. Paving 10 or more miles of an existing unpaved trail, unless exempted by part 4410.4600, subpart 27, item B or F. Paving an unpaved trail means to create a hard surface on the trail with a material impervious to water.
- D. Constructing an off-highway vehicle recreation area of 80 or more acres, or expanding an off-highway vehicle recreation area by 80 or more acres, on agricultural land or forested or other naturally-vegetated land.
- E. Constructing an off-highway vehicle recreation area of 640 or more acres, or expanding an off-highway vehicle recreation area by 640 or more acres, if the land on which the construction or expansion is carried out is not agricultural, is not forested or otherwise naturally-vegetated, or has been significantly disturbed by past human activities such as mineral mining.
- F. Some recreation areas for off-highway vehicles may be constructed partially on agricultural naturally-vegetated land and partially on land that is not agricultural, is not forested or otherwise naturally-vegetated, or has been significantly disturbed by past human activities. In that case, an EAW must be prepared if the sum of the quotients obtained by dividing the number of acres of

agricultural or naturally-vegetated land by 80 and the number of acres of land that is not agricultural, is not forested or otherwise naturally vegetated, or has been significantly disturbed by past human activities by 640, equals or exceeds one.

4410.4600 EXEMPTIONS

Subp. 27. **Recreational trails.** The projects listed in items A to F are exempt. For purposes of this subpart, “existing trail” means an established corridor in current legal use.

- A. Rerouting less than 1 continuous mile of a recreational trail if the reroute is necessary to avoid sensitive areas or to alleviate safety concerns. Multiple reroutes on the same trail must be treated as independent projects, except that where the cumulative length of currently proposed reroutes exceeds one mile on any five-mile segment of trail, as measured along the rerouted trail, those reroutes are not exempt.
- B. Reconstructing, rehabilitating, or maintaining an existing trail involving no changes in designated use.
- C. Constructing less than one continuous mile of trail for use by snowmobiles or cross-country skiers.
- D. Constructing a trail for winter-only use across agricultural land or across frozen water.
- E. Designating an existing trail for use by snowmobiles or cross-country skiers.
- F. Constructing or rehabilitating a non-motorized trail within the Twin Cities Metropolitan Regional Park System.

(This Page for Reference Only)

‘EXISTING TRAIL’ - DEFINITION

For purposes of Subpart 37, “existing trail” means an established corridor in current legal use (MR 4410.4300, Subp. 37. Recreational trails). This definition does not apply to designated State Forest Roads which are, by definition, open to vehicular use.

As regards forest classification, motor vehicles (including OHV’s, but not snowmobiles) may be operated on forest roads that are not posted closed in forests classified **managed** and **limited**, but not in a forest classified as **closed** (MR 6100.1950 Motor Vehicles and Snowmobiles, Forest Lands). An ATV may be ridden on a township road or city street unless prohibited by resolution or ordinance, or in the ditch or the outside bank or slope of a trunk, county state-aid, or county highway (MS 84.928 Operation requirements; local regulation.).

4410.4300 MANDATORY EAW CATEGORIES.

Subpart 1. Threshold test. An EAW must be prepared for projects that meet or exceed the threshold of any of subparts 2 to 37, unless the project meets or exceeds any thresholds of part 4410.4400, in which case an EIS must be prepared. If the proposed project is an expansion or additional stage of an existing project, the cumulative total of the proposed project and any existing stages or components of the existing project must be included when determining if a threshold is met or exceeded if construction was begun within three

years before the date of application for a permit or approval from a governmental unit for the expansion or additional stage but after April 21, 1997, except that any existing stage or component that was reviewed under a previously completed EAW or EIS need not be included.

Multiple projects and multiple stages of a single project that are connected actions or phased actions must be considered in total when comparing the project or projects to the thresholds of this part and part 4410.4400.

4410.4600, EXEMPTION CATEGORIES.

Subp 2. Standard Exemptions The following projects are standard exemptions: (any project)

- A. projects for which no governmental decisions are required;
- B. projects for which all governmental decisions have been made. However, this exemption does not in any way alter the prohibitions on final governmental decisions to approve a project under part 4410.3100;
- C. projects for which, and so long as, a governmental unit has denied a required governmental approval;
- D. projects for which a substantial portion of the project has been completed and an EIS would not influence remaining implementation or construction; and
- E. projects for which environmental review has already been initiated under the prior rules or for which environmental review is being conducted pursuant to part 4410.3600 or 4410.3700.

Subp. 14. Highway Projects. The following projects are exempt: (trail-related excerpt)

- A. Roadway landscaping, construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities within existing right-of-way are exempt.

Subp. 22. Land Use. The following projects are exempt: (any project)

- A. Individual land use variances, including minor lot line adjustments and side yard and setback variances not resulting in the creation of a new subdivided parcel of land or any change in land use character or density, are exempt.
- B. Minor temporary uses of land having negligible or no permanent effect on the environment are exempt.
- C. Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs, excluding the use of pesticides, is exempt.

[For full text see MN Rules Chapter 4410.0200 – 4410.7500, Rules governing the Minnesota Environmental Review Program]