



March Newsletter

2017



Next Club Meeting:

* **Wednesday March 8, 2017 @ 7:00 pm**

**Location: Wild Rose Ranch-
E12311 County Road W, Baraboo**

Upcoming meeting dates and locations:

 **Wednesday April 5, 2017 @ 7pm Location: Baraboo Burger Company**

 **Wednesday May 3, 2017 @ 7pm Location: TBD**

Dear members,

Please feel free to bring any food/snacks or beverages that you would like for yourself or to share with everyone! Food and beverage is not available to purchase at the Wild Rose Ranch.

Coming Events:

Annual Smooth Trail Sauk County Cash Raffle

Saturday, March 11, 2017 at the Voyager Inn in Reedsburg starting at 6pm.

The next County meeting is March 9th at Jay's Power Center in Reedsburg. They are still looking for raffle items if anyone has anything they would like to donate. Please bring any item(s) you can to our meeting Wed.

➤ 2017 AWSC Convention- March 24-26 at Potawatomi Hotel & Casino- Milwaukee

*Early Bird Registration ends March 14, 2017

****Please bring all money from the sale of your County Cash Raffle Tickets so they can be turned in on Thursday at the County Meeting.**

****We will be making a decision on the Vintage Raffle Sled at our meeting as to how to proceed in selling the sled that will most benefit the club in raising funds. Please bring any ideas you may have to the meeting on Wednesday.**

For those of you who have not read the article on the Blue Mound State Park, I have included it here for your reading pleasure! Thank you to all who submitted responses in support of snowmobiling to help make this happen.

DNR board allows snowmobilers in Blue Mound State Park

Jan. 27, 2016

State managers of Blue Mound State Park, a popular cross-country skiing and snowshoeing destination in Dane and Iowa counties, will add snowmobiling for the first time in more than 20 years at the park. *Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources*

By [Lee Bergquist](#) of the Journal Sentinel

State managers of [Blue Mound State Park](#), a popular cross-country skiing and snowshoeing destination that borders Dane and Iowa counties, will add snowmobiling for the first time in more than 20 years at the park.

The changes were opposed by silent sports enthusiasts, but supporters of snowmobiling won out in a battle between the two often conflicting groups of winter sports participants.

The state Natural Resources Board voted 7-0 Wednesday to approve changes in the park's master plan during its monthly meeting in Madison.

The park, 25 miles west of Madison, is the highest point in southern Wisconsin.

Staff of the Department of Natural Resources recommended construction of a 1.4-mile trail within the park and selected a site that would mostly parallel town roads.

DNR staff told members of the board that construction of the snowmobile trail was the agency's attempt to strike a middle ground between the two sets of users.

The agency has long been forced to address disagreements over trail use, with issues often breaking down between mechanized users — operators of snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles — and those who use the trails for walking, hiking and skiing.

In this case, the issue arose when snowmobile supporters asked to re-establish a trail that was last used in the 1980s. That action required staff from the DNR to ask the board, whose members are appointed by the governor, to amend the master plan of the 1,150-acre park.

An initial option would have gone through more property, including a popular section of the park for skiers known as Pleasure Valley, a deeply wooded gorge with a small stream.

Wednesday's option stays out of the valley, where a snowmobile trail ran in the 1980s, but eventually went out of use.

Opponents criticized the compromise, noting that the [trail](#) will put cross-country skiers and others into direct contact with snowmobile users where the trails will intersect. Karl Heil, former manager of the park and now retired, said that supporters of silent sports contribute about \$90,000 to the operation of the park every year. Heil is co-founder of the [Horribly Hilly Hundreds](#), a popular annual bike ride.

Heil said he believed that the sightlines where snowmobiles will cross and the 35 mph speed limit for cars on the county roads would create unsafe situations.

"The cost-benefit ratio of this trail is too high," Heil said.

Board members tried to address the issue by suggesting that the snowmobile speed be limited to 35 mph. But DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp urged the board to let staff of the agency set the speed limit when the agency begins designing the trail. Board members agreed.

William Van Haren of the Friends of Blue Mound State Park said that his organization's members were overwhelmingly opposed to the trail. Van Haren said the park is a special place that attracts many users of non-mechanized sports.

"It's our mini-mountain range," Van Haren said.

But supporters of the trail said it would provide snowmobile users important east-west access in the region and a connection point to the Military Ridge State Trail, which runs along the southern border of the park.

Sam Landes, representing the Dane County Council of Snowmobile Clubs, called the DNR's proposal "reasonable and fair," and said the trail will help provide snowmobile access in an area where Madison's urban sprawl could limit trail access in the future.

Landes said the addition of the trail gives snowmobilers access they lost in the 1980s.

Landes said there are about 300 miles of snowmobile trails in Dane County.

The DNR held two public hearings on the changes and received more than 800 written comments. The comments were evenly split — 39% favor the snowmobile trails and 39% opposed, with the rest either undecided or not clear in their position.

The changes that were approved also called for 2.2 miles in new single track mountain bike trails to accommodate growing demand.

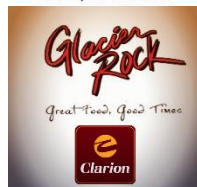
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