

NYS Snowmobile Trails Grant-in-Aid Program

Phase I

Trail System Prior Approval Application Packet

Application Deadline: June 30, 2012



Snowmobile Unit
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Albany, NY 12238



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

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Snowmobile Trail System Prior Approval Process 2012 – 2013 Season

Introduction

Please read this application package carefully as there have been clarifications and requirement changes incorporated in order to improve the accuracy and accountability of Trail System modifications. It is anticipated that the changes will shorten the review process, thus improving the time frame available for accomplishing the final trail approvals and construction. The modification of the existing trail system is taking a two-tier approach for obtaining prior approvals.

The first tier is the completion of this application in order to obtain either a “conceptual” trail approval or a rejection of the request. Applications must be received by OPRHP **no later than June 30, 2012**.

Trail “conceptual” approvals will also be sent before the release of the Phase II application for funding. A “conceptual approval” allows the applicant to progress toward obtaining ALL necessary documentation required by the State of New York Snowmobile Trail Plan, federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. Examples of the required documentation necessary for final trail approval are: completion of the SEQRA process, attaining private landowner permission for new and rerouted trails, securing DOT, DEC and other State agency permissions, permits, or written documentation for trail placement, a three year narrative plan for developing, improving and maintaining the trail. Detailed instructions, guidelines and forms will be made available in the Phase II application for funding.

The second tier is the review of required documentation for trail acceptability submitted with the Phase II application for funds. The Phase II Application must be received by OPRHP by September 1, 2012. Final determination of new trail acceptance or denial will be made after the applications are reviewed. Any trail that has received “conceptual approval,” but failed to provide sufficient documentation will receive an explanation of why the trail was rejected.

Only those trails that have been derived from GPS data or have a written exemption from the NYS OPRHP Snowmobile Unit or submitted and approved through this current Phase I will be considered for funding under Phase II.

General Information: What requires Approval?

Approval from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Snowmobile Unit (OPRHP) is necessary for any Local Sponsors requesting funding for:

- new trails (which includes trail reroutes),
- previously funded trails to be “upgraded” (reclassified or re-designated from secondary to corridor/corridor to secondary),
- any trails where the Trail Maintenance Entity (TME) wishes to correct possible mileage discrepancies with OPRHP’s official GIS mileage or to update the trail’s actual location with GPS data,
- any trails in which the maintenance is being taken over by another TME.
- Any previously funded trails that have not been updated with GPS data.

These requests must be submitted prior to submitting the Phase II Application for funding.

When requesting new trail approvals, the applicant should consider whether the trail qualifies as either a corridor or secondary trail. If a proposed trail continues into the next town or county, then the adjoining Local Sponsor needs to show how the trail will continue to its natural termination by either intersecting another funded trail or ending at a snowmobiler's service such as: food, gas, repair, lodging, and so forth, or explain long-term efforts to extend the trail. Generally, trail(s) that end at a town or county line or end because the trail goes into the next TME private trail system will not receive consideration for funding. It is the responsibility of the trail sponsor to demonstrate and explain how any proposed trail will serve to improve or enhance the existing statewide funded trail system.

Local Sponsors can apply for funding for designated trails **ONLY within its political borders.**

- A county can apply for funding **only** for those designated trails that are within the borders of the county.
- A town or village can apply for funding **only** for designated trails within the town or village's borders.

Trail Classification

Corridor Trail—a corridor trail is a “through trail” connecting to other trails in a manner similar to the interstate highway system. This main trail will connect villages, towns, cities, counties and/or state parks, and should pass near service stations, repair shops, restaurants and motels. Overhead clearance should be maintained at a minimum of 12 feet and sustained grades and slopes at a maximum of 25%. The corridor trails are classified according to width.

Corridor Trail Classifications

Corridor Class A—have trail treads at least 12 feet wide, are wider in curves and must be capable of handling groomer power units and drags that are at least 8 feet wide. They are cleared to an effective height of at least 12 feet. All culverts and bridges must be sufficiently wide enough to accommodate grooming equipment 8 feet wide. Bridges costing \$5,000 or more must be built according to approved engineering designs. The travelled portion of Class A trails can be much wider than 12 feet and must be capable of handling two-lane traffic. Where possible, add an additional 2 feet of width in order to improve safety in high use areas.

Corridor Class B—trails have trail treads at least 8 feet wide, are wider in curves and must be capable of handling groomer power units and drags that are at least 4 to 8 feet wide. They are cleared to an effective height of at least 12 feet. Bridges costing \$5,000 or more must be built according to approved engineering designs. Class B trails can be wider than 8 feet. Where possible, add an additional 2 feet of width in order to improve safety in high use areas.

Secondary Trail—a secondary trail is usually designated to lead to a corridor trail at some point. This type may be one or more trails branching off from the main trail, originating from a local trailhead, or providing access to necessary facilities not accessible directly from the corridor trail. Overhead clearance and maximum grade should be the same as the corridor trail. Secondary trails are classified according to width.

Secondary Trail Classifications

Secondary Class A—have trail treads at least 12 feet wide, are wider in curves and must be capable of handling groomer power units and drags that are at least 8 feet wide. They are cleared to an effective height of at least 12 feet. All culverts and bridges must be sufficiently wide enough to accommodate grooming equipment 8 feet wide. Bridges costing \$5,000 or more must be built according to approved engineering designs. The travelled portion of Class A trails can be much wider than 12 feet and must be capable of handling two-lane traffic. Where possible, add an additional 2 feet of width in order to improve safety in high use areas.

Secondary Class B—have trail treads at least 8 feet wide, are wider in curves and must be capable of handling groomer power units and drags at least 4 to 8 feet wide. They are cleared to an effective height of at least 10 feet. Bridges costing \$5,000 or more must be built according to approved engineering designs. Class B trails can be wider than 8 feet. Where possible, add an additional 2 feet of width in order to improve safety in high use areas.

The following three required elements must be submitted with the application form **at the time of a trail approval request. Incomplete applications will be rejected.**

1. **Trail Data:** only a projected GIS coverage (shapefile, geodatabase or coverage) will be accepted. (GPX files must be converted to a shapefile format)
2. **Justification:** this narrative-type document that provides clear, concise and convincing reasons as to why this trail should be added to, reclassified or re-designated as part of the state funded trail system. Justifications that are not clear concise or convincing will be rejected.
3. **Priority Ranking:** the Local Sponsor must prioritize each new trail and reroute in numerical order. The trail project with the highest priority should be ranked number one.
4. **Snowmobile Trail Meta-data form.** (found on page 11)

OPRHP Trail Approval

OPRHP will evaluate proposals for new trail development (new, reroutes, re-designations and reclassifications) within the context of its statutory authority and obligations. Trail proposals are balanced and measured against multiple management goals. The overall goals are to provide an interconnected Statewide snowmobile trail system for public use, while protecting the environment, providing enjoyment for snowmobile owners and properly addressing the concerns of the non-snowmobiling public. OPRHP is committed to providing trail development that assures for the safe utilization of the trail system, encourages tourism, as well as addresses the protection of the environmental resources.

The following important considerations will guide the selection of new trail development segments:

1. Minimize environmental and residential area disturbances to the greatest extent possible.
2. Minimize major highway crossings and snowmobile operation on the inside banks and along highways to the greatest extent possible.
3. Minimize major water crossings such as large rivers, and streams to the greatest extent possible.

4. Maximize the use of utility rights-of-way and abandoned Railroad beds and trestles, where permissible.
5. Maximize the use of existing Statewide trail mileage maintained with the assistance of snowmobile trail funds.
6. Maximize the effort to have trails pass close to existing support facilities, when possible (i.e., food establishments, lodging, picnic areas, service stations, as well as repair shops).
7. Maximize the effort to include as many points of scenic interest as possible.
8. Maximize the effort to interconnect adjacent communities.
9. Maximize utilization of an existing trail network.
10. Establishment of trails in semi-remote areas when possible (i.e., locate trails in wooded areas for protection from weather).
11. Establishment of trail accessibility for handicapped people who are capable of operating a snowmobile or as a passenger on a snowmobile.
12. Minimize the use of highway inside banks, and any highway outside banks of less than 8 foot widths.

Using the above, OPRHP will determine if the requested trail segments are eligible for inclusion to the State system. **Priority selection will be given to connecting corridor segments. Corridor trails that remain separated will be reclassified to secondary trails if they do not meet the definition of a corridor trail. Rerouting of existing trails is also a priority in order to maintain trail continuity. Secondary trails that clearly identify connection to services, trail heads, parking will be given priority over trails that connect loops. No corridor trail will be approved that terminates at a body of water.**

Justification for all trail requests should be attached to the change request form (page 15). The Local Sponsor should also prioritize all new trails and upgrade requests.

***Note:** A review of all existing trails will be undertaken during upcoming seasons so that all trails comply with the definitions of corridors and secondary trail classifications. Trails found not to be in compliance will generate a notice to the Local Sponsor that those trails will need to be brought into compliance in order to ensure continued funding or they will be reclassified to their appropriate classification or removed from funding.*

The Role of GPS Data in the New York Statewide Funded Snowmobile Trail System

The use of GPS data to update the statewide trail database has become critical in ensuring the accuracy and quality of the dataset. Since 2004, we have used GPS derived data to enhance the overall statewide trail system, OPRHP began improving and refining the computer-based trail inventory. As a result, the Snowmobile Unit has produced a much more accurate depiction of the actual location and distance of the trail system, but we still have a long way to go. With less than 40% of the trails located with GPS, the OPRHP Snowmobile Unit has decided that it is vitally important to move this process along faster. We now have many agencies, local governments, companies, groups and individual users of this data that depend on its accuracy. Some of the uses are for: Emergency 911 (E-911) mapping, (local, regional, and statewide) trail maps, placement of highway crossing signs, state/local government master planning decisions, and various research projects.

In an effort to ensure that the most accurate data is used, OPRHP will only accept projected GPS derived shapefiles for any trails that are submitted from 2012-13 season forward. ***By the Phase I***

deadline for the 2012-2013 season (June 30, 2012), projected GPS data will be required for ALL TRAILS that wish to continue receiving state funding.

This can be accomplished with a recreational GPS receiver (following all of the steps as outlined in the NYSSA publication: “*Guide to trail GPS Mapping*” by Jim Bode) or with any of the higher level mapping GPS receivers available.

How to Obtain Current Trail Data – Local Sponsors Only

Please use the form on page 13 to request the GIS data and county-wide maps to identify the trails. Changes should be sent in using GIS files.

Mapping Procedure for New and Rerouted Trails

For proposed new trails, identify each trail by a **letter**. Use the same letter label on each GIS map and on the trail justification for the proposed trail. Trail justifications should include the above information plus a description of how this trail will benefit the overall Statewide system if it is a corridor trail proposal, or how it will connect to services if it is a secondary trail proposal.

Alongside the trail, write in mileages of each trail segment maintained by each TME or the trail sponsor along with the TME or trail sponsor name. Along with the mileage, identify the potential classification of trail being requested for review. Trails that show endpoints need to indicate the snowmobile-service that exists at that trail endpoint. Denote each trail proposal on the maps with a letter that corresponds to an appropriate justification. Any public trailhead parking areas need to be denoted on the map with the number of spaces available, if known.

If a request is being made to change classification from a Class B to Class A trail, then the Local Sponsor must use the county-wide map to highlight the trail segments for re-classification or re-designation consideration. Additionally, the Local Sponsor must prepare a justification explaining the reasons for approving this request. Number each request on the county-wide map. Each respective justification needs to be numbered the same as what was shown on the county-wide map.

When OPRHP receives the map and justification, it will review the request. If any part of or the entire request is approved, OPRHP will inform the Local Sponsor which trails are designated corridor or secondary, and the appropriate identification number. OPRHP will keep a database of mileage for each Class of trail (Class A corridor, Class B corridor, Class A secondary, Class B secondary). **Once a trail is approved, OPRHP will assign the trail identification number** for that trail.

When the Local Sponsor receives the determination information from OPRHP, keep this information for your records. Also enclosed will be a table outlining approved mileage and trail identification numbers as well as the county-wide map showing approved changes.

If approval of new trails results in newly designated corridor and secondary trail intersections, appropriate identification signs **MUST** be installed on the trail and at the affected intersections. Local Sponsors are responsible for notifying OPRHP with a list of intersection identifications for all funded and mapped intersections.

Maps and data justifications to OPRHP must be received no later than **June 30, 2012**.

Reminder: For any trails that have been approved for funding in the 2012-2013 season but for various reasons are not available for snowmobiling anytime during the snowmobiling season, the Local Sponsor must notify OPRHP of the trail number, the mileage, and the reason for the trail closure. Reasons for closure may include loss of landowner permission, storm damage, and unsafe conditions. This will assist in maintaining an up-to-date inventory of trails as stipulated in the statutes governing snowmobiling.

The Local Sponsor should keep a copy of all materials mailed to OPRHP.

Snowmobile Trail Mapping (Update Procedure)

1. For updates using GIS data: Local Sponsor updates trail locations using GIS, fills in the appropriate data fields, and sends projected GIS data via email or CD to the OPRHP-Snowmobile Unit in the appropriate data format. If GIS data is submitted, a hard copy map should also be submitted, identifying trails proposed for funding. Specific steps are outlined on pages 8-9.
2. All GPS (global positioning system) trail data must be converted into a projected GIS compatible format (i.e. an ArcView shapefile) before submitting the information to the OPRHP-Snowmobile Unit. We will not accept raw GPS data files.

Trail Delineation Guidelines:

County-Wide Snowmobile Map

- a. Check the breakdown of TME by trail. Please determine if the proper TME and corridor or secondary trail identification number has been identified for each trail segment. If a trail segment was incorrectly identified, please correct where the trail TME assignment should have been. This will be important in calculating trail mileage by TME.
- b. Classification Change: note if any classification changes are being requested on the county-wide map. Note the current class and the proposed new class. Be sure to provide a justification of why the change is being requested.
- c. Label changes on the county-wide map with a number. The number should correspond to the appropriate justification.

Marked up county-wide maps should be included in the Trail System Prior Approval Packet, to be returned to James MacFarland at the address listed in Section 1 by **June 30, 2012**.

Submitting GIS data

The Local Sponsor may submit GIS data to the OPRHP-Snowmobile Unit directly. To do this, the following steps must be followed.

1. Submit **one** countywide projected GIS file. Acceptable formats – shapefile, geodatabase, coverage (export file).
2. GIS data must include fields that are in the current file maintained by OPRHP. An example for fields, field type, and field length is available upon request in a PDF file.
3. Appropriate fields only must be filled in. Again, follow guidance in example table.

4. Metadata must be provided. For GIS data was developed from GPS data, GPS data collection procedures and standards must be included. Page 9 outlines the steps to follow when using GPS data.
5. A hard copy map must be submitted in addition to the GIS data, with changes shown and highlighted. This is important to have when the Prior Approval application is reviewed. It eliminates confusion when viewing the data.
6. If any GIS data is being submitted is not GPS based, the Local Sponsor must get an OK *in writing* from the OPRHP-Snowmobile Unit first. This can save time and effort by both the Local Sponsor and OPRHP as only a few alternative data collection methods are authorized. By 2015 all trails data must be GPS derived.

Snowmobile Trails and GPS

TMEs have been mapping their trail systems using GPS this past winter. At this time, OPRHP Snowmobile Unit ***will not*** accept raw GPS data directly from TME. It must go through the Local Sponsor and sent to us in a projected shapefile format. The following information is intended to provide initial guidance to the Local Sponsor for the use of GPS data collected by the TME.

If the Local Sponsor does not have a GIS capability but would still like to pass on GPS data collected by its local TME, they may send this information to OPRHP in a projected ESRI shapefile format. The data needs to have been collected according to the NYSSA “Guideline to Trail GPS Mapping” publication and must conform to the requirements listed below.

Metadata:

Metadata is defined as data about data. It is a descriptive document outlining the data collection process and describing the data itself. It is very important to include as much information as possible about how the data was collected. This would be the responsibility of the TME if they were mapping their trails using GPS.

Variables that are important to document are: date, time, map datum used, coordinate system used, map projection used, field data collector’s name and contact information (such as: address, phone number and email address), the brand and model number of GPS unit, software (name and version number) used to download and/or process GPS field data, and any other pertinent information about the data collection process.

Coordinate System:

It is extremely important to know the coordinate system and the datum used to collect the data. Most commonly used formats are UTM, State Plane and Latitude/Longitude (DD, DMS, DMM) with either the NAD 27 or NAD 83 datum. **Please provide OPRHP with any data in UTM Zone 18 coordinates using NAD 83 datum.**

Data format:

The data that is submitted to OPRHP from the Local Sponsor must be in a projected GIS format. This includes a shapefile, geodatabase, or coverage (ESRI file formats). No other file formats will be accepted for the purposes of updating trail locations and mileages. The steps outlined on pages 8-9 must be followed when submitting GIS data. OPRHP will not accept raw GPS data such as a text file, or GOOGLE map.

Metadata Sheets

Please fill in these sheets as completely as possible.

The more information that is provided to the OPRHP-Snowmobile Unit, the more useful the data will be and the quicker it can be processed. The NYSSA Excel worksheet is not sufficient. Please use the form found on page 11.

Trail Data Viewing

If the Local Sponsor wants to review this data but does not have access to a GIS or mapping software then a free downloadable viewer is available at:

<http://www.esri.com/software/arcgis/explorer/index.html>

Overview

ArcGIS Explorer Desktop is a free GIS viewer that gives you an easy way to explore, visualize, and share GIS information. ArcGIS Explorer adds value to any GIS because it helps you deliver your authoritative data to a broad audience.

With ArcGIS Explorer, you can

- Access ready-to-use ArcGIS Online basemaps and layers.
- Fuse your local data with map services to create custom maps.
- Add photos, reports, videos, and other information to your maps.
- Perform spatial analysis (e.g., visibility, modeling, proximity search).

System Requirements

ArcGIS Explorer is supported on the following platforms:

- Microsoft Windows 7 (32 bit, 64 bit)
- Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2 or higher (32 bit, 64 bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 (Service Pack 2 is required.) (32 bit, 64 bit)
- Microsoft Windows Vista Service Pack 1 or Service Pack 2 (32 bit, 64 bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 (Service Packs are optional) (32 bit, 64 bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2

Additional Software Requirements

Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5 Service Pack 1 is required.

Or try [ArcGIS Explorer Online](#), which works in your browser without a download.

Snowmobile Trails GPS Metadata Form

Name/Position:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	

Date:

Time Began:

Time Ended:

GPS Unit (brand and model):

Software (all software used to download and process the data):

Coordinate System:

Datum:

Trail Name (for example, C5A, S42, etc.) (Please use one sheet per trail.):

Data Collection Process (brief narrative of how the data was collected):

Trail Sub-surface Data (A brief description of the trail's main underlying surface classification. For example: farm field, utility line Right Of Way, seasonal road, asphalt, highway ROW inside bank, highway ROW outside bank, etc.):

Post Processing Process (brief narrative of anything that was done to the data after it was downloaded from the GPS unit):

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County Map/GIS Data Request Form

Only the Local Sponsor may submit this form.

**To: Snowmobile Unit
NYS OPRHP
Albany, NY 12238**

**This form may also be e-mailed to:
Snowmobile.unit@parks.ny.gov**

Or faxed to: (518) 486 - 7378

From:

Local Sponsor (County or Municipality)

Name and Title of Local Sponsor Requesting Maps

Address

Telephone Number

Date

GIS Data

**___ If the Local Sponsor has GIS capabilities and would like to receive an Arc/Info Shapefile of the statewide funded snowmobile trail system, please check here.
If you would like the coverage via email, write your address here.**

Sincerely,

Authorized Signature

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**Prior Approval Application
2012-2013 Project Year**

**The appropriate County-wide maps must accompany all requests made on
this form.**

LOCAL SPONSORS MAY REQUEST THESE MAPS FROM THE OPRHP SNOWMOBILE UNIT.

TRAIL CHANGE REQUEST: Use this form for *upgrades (Changes including GPS updates) of Existing Trail. (* Upgrades include reclassification of a Class B to a Class A trail and re-designation of a secondary trail to a corridor trail. (Also for any trail re-routes.)

Trail and Class _____ Current Mileage _____

County _____ TME _____

Change Request: _____

Local Sponsor Signature _____ Title _____ Date _____

OPRHP Response **Date:** _____

_____ Approved as trail _____

_____ Denied for consideration for this year.

Reason denied:

_____ No decision. Awaiting pending application from adjacent Local Sponsors or TME affected by this request.

(Authorized OPRHP signature)

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**Prior Approval Application
2012-2013 Project Year**

**The appropriate County-wide maps must accompany all requests made on
this form.**

LOCAL SPONSORS MAY REQUEST THESE MAPS FROM THE OPRHP SNOWMOBILE UNIT.

NEW TRAILS: Use this form for new trails or trails Not Funded in the 2011-2012 project year.

County _____ TME _____

Proposed Class Corridor or Secondary (Corr/Sec) and Designation: (A or B) _____
Anticipated Miles of Trail: _____

Priority Ranking: _____

Purpose of trail: _____

Local Sponsor Signature	Title	Date
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OPRHP Response **Date:** _____

_____ Approved as Corridor / Secondary _____ for _____ miles of Class A / B trail.

_____ Denied for consideration for this year.

Reason denied:

_____ No decision. Awaiting pending application from adjacent Local Sponsors or TME affected by this request.

(Authorized OPRHP signature)

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Important Dates 2012 – 2013

Note: All dates shown apply to submission of appropriate documentation from the Local Sponsor. Each Local Sponsor will require their own date of submission from each participating TME. Local Sponsors may remove a TME from funding if it does not comply with submission dates established by the Local Sponsor.

April 1, 2012	Start of the new project year.
June 30, 2012	Trail system Phase I (Prior Approval) application deadline
September 1, 2012	Phase II Trail Funding Application deadline.
October, 2012	Final determination of new trail acceptance or denial.
November, 2012	70% payment process begins. Notification by OPRHP of projected allocation of State aid for each applicant and issuance of 70% vouchers for signature of Local Sponsor (dependant on sufficient funding availability).
March 31, 2013	End of project year.

Contact Information:

Contact: Steve Lewis or James MacFarland
Phone: 518-474-0446 Fax: 518-486-7378
E-Mail: www.snowmobile.unit@parks.ny.gov
Web site: www.nysparks.com
Address:

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