

THE DRIVING FORCE — MOTORIZED REC SCOOP

Winter 2025 AWSC Directors Meeting in Siren, Wisconsin

CATHY LAREAU

The Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Club's (AWSC) winter 2025 directors' meeting was held over the weekend of January 3-5 at The Lodge at Crooked Lake, in Siren, Wisconsin.

This event was hosted by the Burnett County Snow Trails Association. Sue Smedegard, our AWSC secretary, is the treasurer of this Burnett County association - and her expertise planning this event helped ensure a delightful weekend!

Many club members within this association put in long volunteer hours and donated raffle prizes for this meeting. Clubs in this organization include Cozy Corner Trails, Lakes & Pines Sno-Trails Lake Country Riders Snowmobile Club, SNOWS, Wonderland Sno-Trails, Phantom Trail Riders Snowmobile Club, and Turf & Tundra ATV Club.

After the Friday check-in, guests enjoyed a lively social gathering at the Lodge while clubs ran the first raffle for some nice prizes. This relaxing atmosphere is great for directors and reps to get re-acquainted with each other, and informally talk about snowmobiling in their areas.

What a change from the last time we were here for the 2023 director's meeting - when attendees enjoyed guided snowmobile tours through Burnett County, thanks to the generous snowstorm of December 2022.

The lack of snow this year couldn't stop us from a Saturday of exploring Burnett County though - directors and reps piled on a bus for a fun tour which included a few different stops for a taste of Northwoods hospitality!

Our Saturday night banquet, catered by the Pour House in Siren, was one of the best AWSC meals that I can recall - and everyone raved about how tender and flavorful the chicken and beef were.

Senator Romaine Quinn often attends our meetings when they are held in this



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Left to right: Representative Chanz Green, AWSC Legislative Committee chair Sam Landes (D-Dane Co), and 2024-25 AWSC Miss Snowflake Jayme Crotteau.

area, but he couldn't make it, so our state representative from the 74th Assembly District, Chanz Green, came to visit our group.

Representative Green is well versed in motorized sports, the tourism value of snowmobiling, and the issues we face, so he was kept busy in conversations throughout the banquet evening. The executive board and many other directors told me how impressed they were with his knowledge and interest in our organization.

The Director's meeting on Sunday was all business as we made our way through the lengthy agenda. First, Don Taylor, Chair of the Burnett County Board of Supervisors, gave a supportive welcome speech. AWSC President Lori Heideman took over with her report on fundraising practices, our youth groups, and scholarship opportunities. She told us that AWSC has sold almost 43,000 trail passes so far, and that the launch of our new raffle calendar has been successful.

Randy Murdoch, our AWSC vice president, spoke of a few legal issues he's been working on, followed by Secretary Sue Smedegard's report on Travel Wisconsin trail condition reporting. Our treasurer, Steve Clark, went over his report and talked about options the board has been looking at to reduce operating costs.

Executive Director, Mike Holden, relayed

best practices for clubs to follow with new members and volunteers, and he briefed us on the Governor's Snowmobile Rec Council ad hoc committees who are taking a closer look at funding bridge repairs/replacements, and cost overruns in the grants process. These issues will be further addressed at the February 6th Rec Council meeting in Arbor Vitae. The Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council is made up of 15 members appointed by the governor and advises the Department of Natural Resources on the snowmobile funding program.

Our AWSC office manager went over bids for future meeting locations, AWSC annual elections coming up at our March Convention, and told us all to watch the AWSC Facebook page on January 29th for a live feed of our first raffle calendar drawing.

Miss Snowflake, Jayme Crotteau, is in the process of gathering snowmobile gear from the businesses who are sponsoring her reign, and she was quite excited about her snowmobile adorned with an amazing wrap! She has been busy visiting clubs and events across the state and is looking forward to snow!

After reports from the executive board, the group broke into their individual committees. The AWSC currently has 17 different committees that members are expected to serve on

— everything from Trails, Memberships, Youth, Environmental, to Fundraising, Legislative and Safety, and more. These committees take a deeper dive into their topics and the issues that might affect us. Don Mrotek is the chair of the Multi-Use Trails Committee, and I am on the Legislative Committee.

The general AWSC meeting resumed after committees finished their meetings. Each chair gave their committee report, and their recommendations to address any concerns affecting their committee's topic. Sometimes directors will vote on an action presented by a committee; other times, we'll kick it back for more information.

If I were to report all the activity from these committees, I'd need a whole page in the paper! If you have questions or would like details about AWSC, reach out to me. One of my responsibilities as the AWSC Sawyer County Director is to keep our snowmobile clubs and members informed, so this week I'll get a detailed AWSC newsletter out to everyone.

Another excellent AWSC meeting is on the books — next is our annual Spring Convention in March! I really hope we will be sharing actual snowmobiling stories at the next meeting - it's been a good long while since we've enjoyed that.