

# Blue Ox Trail Riders

## Ad Hoc Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, July 8, 2024

List of attendees appended.

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### Meeting Minutes:

1. Call to order by President or Secretary – *meeting called to order by the Secretary at 6:00 pm. 10 board members were present.*
2. Introduction of new board member – Secretary, Eric Jensen (replaces Cindy Laux)
3. Equipment
  - o *Blue Ox representatives went to Tipler to pick groomer, the drag, and Bombardier. The groomer/tractor is in need of routine maintenance. The snow drag appears to be in good/reasonable condition.*
  - o *A motion was tabled by Jim Gehlof to pick up the Chase tractor, drag and other equipment from Tipler and bring them back to Florence for maintenance. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.*
  - o *The Bombardier and drag are now at the garage in Florence.*
  - o *The cutters and other equipment in Tipler will need to be picked up at a later time.*
  - o *The second drag has been repaired and is in Florence.*
  - o *Once the Tipler equipment has been serviced, it will be returned to Tipler and stored at the County property (Salt Shed) at the intersection of WI 139 and Settlement Road.*
  - o *The bucket on one of the New Holland tractors appears damaged – bent and twisted.*
  - o *Jim asked about the list of equipment. Ron Julian was unaware of that a current list exists, but there is a list of repairs and work done.*
  - o *A question was tabled of whether Beaver Machine did maintenance on the Case in 2023 and whether they would have records of what was done.*
  - o Inventory:
    - *There was an equipment list compiled in 2022 equipment list, but is no longer current.*
    - *Doug will work toward updating the equipment list*

- *Dean Lefebvre and Eric Jensen will try to find manuals for all of the major pieces of equipment.*
- *Discussion of the utility of keeping the large T7 200 New Holland tractor. Consideration given to selling the tractor and replacing the large tractor with smaller machines.*
  - *A “rabbit” will cost perhaps half of that of the large New Holland tractors.*
- *Craig Balfanz made the point that the tractors should be sized appropriately to generate revenue rather than being oversized and underused.*
- *Ron Julian will inquire with dealers about the value of the tractors and the cost of smaller replacements (i.e. Rabbit).*
- *Ron Julian says that the bombardier has a leak and water had collected inside the cab.*
- *Forest County uses another type of tractor called an “Athena”, which could be an alternative (?)*
- *Jim Hixon made a motion made that Ron Julian will inquire about the current values of the equipment and replacement and will report back. Matt Petraska seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*
- *Jerry Heidtke suggested that we consider utilizing 3 wheeled and 3 tracked machines.*
- *Storage*
  - *The Bombardier, drag and other equipment for Tipler/Long Lake will be kept at the Florence County Salt Shed off WI 139.*

4. List of active trail groomers and trainers

- *Annual Blue Ox membership fees are waived for groomers – however, this does not include AWSC membership fees (?).*
- *Craig Balfanz will serve as point person as a contact for grooming volunteers. He will point the volunteer toward either Kurt Pearson or the appropriate trail coordinator.*
- *Dean Lefebvre has started a manual for groomer training, but there is no formal organization in terms of brining in new groomers.*
- *Dean Lefebvre is also working on a GPS system that tracks the grooming progress.*
- *To coordinate trail grooming, the Florence groomers use a text group, and this could be expanded to include the other areas in the county.*

- o *Jim Hixon made the point that since ~80% of trail traffic are UTVs/side by sides vs snowmobiles, the Blue Ox equipment and focus of work should be proportioned accordingly.*
  - o *Kurt Pearson made the point that abrasion on grooming equipment is the primary cause of wear and tear; there are hardened steel products available that could be used for drags that would perform much better than soft steel products. There is also no suspension in the tractors, which compounds the problems. Kurt Pearson also made the point that tire pressure can also an issue and these things should monitored carefully and balanced to help the groomers function properly.*
  - o *The crushed aggregate and mine rock on the trails on the grade and by the Buckeye tower are particularly hard on equipment.*
  - o *Ron Julian is checking on costs of abrasive-resistant blades.*
  - o *It seems apparent that the entirety of the trails have not been dragged/groomed in the Tipler/Long Lake area.*
5. Project priority list and use of grant money:
- o *Pat bought gravel with unused grant money this year and also has secured a grant to improve the grade.*
  - o *Ron Julian made the point that crushed asphalt is difficult to groom, but can be panned, which makes a very effective base and trail.*
  - o *Matt Petraska questioned whether we have effective pans.*
  - o *Dean Lefebvre explained that our restricted funds can be used for grooming, signage and brushing. The club is not funded for projects such as bridge replacement and picking rocks.*
  - o *Ron Julian suggests that trail coordinators should survey their domains and make recommendations on what needs to be done.*
  - o *We will ask the trail coordinators to make wish list for projects that we can present to the county for consideration. This will be discussed at the next Blue Ox meeting.*
  - o *Jim Gehlof and Jim Hixon suggested that we set a date to have a coordinated effort to brush the trail systems.*
  - o *Jim Hixon suggested two dates after Labor Day– one for Florence and one for Tipler/Long Lake. It is safer after labor day when trail traffic drops off. Will add to the agenda for next meeting. There will be a cookout at 5pm after the efforts.*
6. Prioritized projects for Summer 2024
- o *Brushing, signing and trail conditioning*

- o *The only major issue brought up we by Kurt Pearson – there is a large hole in the Lake Emily / Flowage area that needs 4-6 yards of material. Jim Hixon will bring the material out to fill the hole. This will prioritized and Craig Balfanz and Matt Petraska will assist.*

**Other Business:**

1. Newly appointed Secretary Eric Jensen:
  - a. Would like to ensure that we have the latest articles of incorporation/bylaws – *the bylaws dated August 7, 2023 were confirmed to be the most current version.*
  - b. *Eric will work with Dean Lefebvre to obtain a debit card for club expenses. In the meantime Eric will use Cindy's debit card to make AWSC payments, etc..*
  - c. Would like to set up a desk/office space to keep club records, laptop and printer; *Jim Gehlof suggested that we ask for permission to put a desk in the Wild Rivers Interpretive center building.*
2. Eric would also like to confirm that Cindy had all club-related documents.
  - a. Are there any documents or archives in anyone else's possession? – *nobody was aware of any documents stored elsewhere other than in the garage facility in Florence.*
3. Confirm that all officers of the Club are also required to be AWSC members – *all officers present were aware of this requirement.*
4. For persons that renewed and paid their memberships in June – have these members received their membership mailings? – *this was not the case, but letters will be mailed in the next week or so.*
5. Who keeps track of volunteers for trail maintenance? Is this delegated to the various trail coordinators? – *this will need to be further discussed, perhaps at the next monthly meeting.*

Meeting adjourned at 8pm.

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#### List of attendees:

Craig Balfanz, Vice President

Dean Lefebvre, Treasurer - Funding Director - Aurora Trail Coordinator

Eric Jensen, Secretary

Ron Julian, Equipment Manager

Jim Petroff, AWSC Director

Jerry Heidtke, WATVA Director

Matt Petraska, Homestead/Fence Trail Coordinator

Jim Gehlof, Director at Large

Kurt Pearson, Director at Large

Jim Hixon, Director at Large