



Toolkits for the Quiet Majority Challenging Public Funding of Motorized Recreation

Action Step #1

Citizen Audits of Snowmobile and ATV Clubs and their Local Government Fiscal Agents

a. Complete and Mail Data Request Letter

To find out how your gas-tax dollars are being spent by your local government and local snowmobile and ATV clubs, public data is needed. Requesting public data is easy with the below “Data Request Letter”.

Data requests should be directed to your local government’s “Data Practices Officer”. Call your local government and ask for the name and address of that person. Complete the attached **Data Request Letter** with this information and mail! Call the Data Practices Officer to verify receipt.

Local governments will charge you for data “retrieval” and copying. The attached letter requests an invoice of these costs including reduced costs scenarios should you choose to physically visit your local government and make copies yourself on the government’s copy machine. Data request includes five years of funding. Requesting fewer years of data will cost you less. The Minnesota Data Practices Act requires government agencies to respond in a “timely manner”. 20 days is considered “timely”.

Sometimes local units of government refuse or delay providing requested data. Responding to this situation requires action steps not easily provided here in summary form. **Contact MRR for help: 218-740-3175.**

b. Analyze Data: Contact MRR for help in analyzing your data!

Grant Applications: This simple form will tell you the name of the *Trail Administrator*, what funds are being requested for, where excavation and other work is to be done, etc. The Trail Administrator often takes a sizeable cut. How much is the Trail Administrator in your local publicly funded snowmobile club taking? What new routes are being constructed, by who and why?

Grooming Logs and Requests for Reimbursements: These documents will list who is getting paid to do what. Officers of the club, especially Treasurers and government officials engaged as fiscal agents should not be receiving funds. Are the people being reimbursed family members of club officers? Documents will reveal the local web of relationships involved in the receipt of public trail funds.

Signed Grant Agreements: Local government officials signing agreements should not appear in any “Request for Reimbursement”. This would be considered a conflict of interest.

Maps: All publicly funded snowmobile and ATV routes must have on file maps of the funded route. Are maps included? If maps are provided a field visit in Action Step #2 will determine if route is where it is funded to be.

Ownership Lists: All publicly funded snowmobile and ATV routes must have on file ownership lists of all properties crossed. Use this in the next Action Step to contact property owners and see how they are doing.

Written Permission from Property Owners: All publicly funded snowmobile and ATV routes must have on file written permission from property owners whose land is crossed by the publicly funded route. These documents are most often missing. No public funds should be disbursed if local units of government do not have written permission from landowners to cross their property. **(Property Owners See Easement Education!)**

Other Related Data: Often clubs are involved in public or private property damage. What is your local club’s record? If problems, what consequences have been applied?