

**Winona Forest Recreation Association, Inc.
Trail Maintenance Equipment Policy, Grooming Policy and Program Plan**

**Name of Club: Winona Forest Recreation Association. Inc.
(Hereinafter referred to as the “Association”**

County: Oswego and Jefferson Counties

Date Reviewed / Adopted: _____September 11, 2013_____

Equipment and Grooming Manager: Trail Committee

Introduction: It is understood that Winona Forest Recreation Area, is a four seasons, multi user group area. The area making up Winona Forest Recreation Area encompasses State Land, County Land, various Municipalities, as well as some private land owners. Each of these property owners has specific requirements and it is understood that these requirements, guidelines or regulations supersede any part of this document, when on the appropriate property

For ease of organization and understanding this document is divided into five sections.

- 1. General**
- 2. Year around**
- 3. Trail Maintenance**
- 4. Winter Grooming**
- 5. Non Winter Grooming**

Section 1. General

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to state the goals and objectives of the Association’s grooming, trail maintenance and training program, list the topics and policies that all Association’s members involved with grooming, trail maintenance, need to understand, and provide details that explains what each person responsibilities are. It is the responsibility of the Winona Forest Recreation Association to work within this policy and program.

This document shall not supersede any contract, law, or policy as established by the appropriate government agency. Such agencies are, but not limited to, New York State DEC, primary controlling agency for Winona State Forest, and the Jefferson and Oswego County Legislature’s (or designee) primary controlling agencies for the County Forest known as Winona Tract.

Goals and Objectives:

- Meet the legal mandate on the Association in providing annual training to those Association members participating in grooming and trail maintenance of Association trails.
- Provide leadership and guidance of Association members in the Association’s grooming and trail maintenance program by stating Program procedures, guidelines, rules, policies, and other expectations that currently are part of the grooming and trail maintenance program.

- Determine the procedures and tasks experienced grooming members must complete to maintain their proficiency.
- Determine procedures and tasks for Association members that are entering the Association's Trail Maintenance and Grooming Program.

Review: This document is subject to review each year. This review shall be attested to by Chairperson of the Trail Committee.

Program Management: The Association's Trail Maintenance and Grooming program is to be managed by the Trail Committee. A Safety Officer shall be selected from Association membership, appointed by and become a member of the board of directors.

Program Management Responsibilities:

- Schedule equipment maintenance as required or needed.
- Verify status of current equipment operator and solicit new operators that want to enter the Grooming Program.
- Schedule training of all equipment operators following the guidelines as issued in this document. Determine equipment operator teams.
- Design a grooming territory responsibility for each grooming team.
- Assure activity log data are made available for entry into the trail grant program.
- Review maintenance logs to insure maximum equipment availability.
- Assure trails are hazard free and all signage is in place the start of the snowmobile season.
- Act as liaison between the Association and the DEC.
- Provide trail condition information to the Association.
- Submit to the Board of Directors, at the annual meeting, when requested, budget plans that would need Association approval.

Safety Officer Responsibilities:

- Ensure notification procedures identified in the NYSSA insurance handbook are followed.
- Ensure safety procedures are followed for any event sponsored by the Association.
- Review all maintenance procedures for safety content.
- Ensure all reported safety hazards are corrected.

Section 2. Year Around

Safety: The safety of those working on or using the trail system is first priority.

All Trail Crew personnel shall wear a high visibility safety vest when performing trail work.

All trail crew personal are required to document any safety hazard they come upon and manage as follows:

1. If reasonable and safe the safety hazard is to be corrected immediately.
2. If not reasonable and safe, the hazard is will be clearly marked with warning flags.
3. Report all hazards to the trail committee, or to the safety officer. If neither is available CLOSE THE TRAIL and notify the appropriate authority.

Grooming: The Association grooming equipment consists of TUCKER , KUBOTA, SKANDIC. Operation of his equipment shall at all times be in accordance with the manufacturer's directions for its use.

The use of this equipment should be by the buddy system: One qualified operator plus trainee or passenger, if permitted by manufacturer's specifications and directions.

If dual operation is not permitted, departure time, destination, expected return time shall be communicated to a responsible individual. When the operator returns, this same individual shall be notified.

Chainsaw operation: Only personal on the authorized list shall operate chainsaw equipment anywhere on the trail system. The buddy system will be used anytime chainsaw operations occur. All people involved in this work are required to wear the appropriate protective equipment such as proper footwear, chaps gloves, helmet with eye and ear protection whenever possible.

Emergency Response: As a regular user of Winona Forest your in depth knowledge of both the trail system and our equipment could be of great value in an emergency. All available Association resources will be made available to the responsible agency for use in responding to an emergency.

When responding to an emergency, equipment use will be directed by the controlling agency.

Association members are to work with such an agency however must call on their knowledge and experience to limit such use. Do not take unnecessary risk to life or equipment

Warning Beacons: All motorized equipment used in trail maintenance are to be equipped with warning beacons, either strobe or rotating.

When any motorized equipment is operating or temporarily parked on the trail system they must have their lights and warning beacons turned on.

Non- Motorized equipment: Any towed non- motorized equipment used on the trail shall be equipped with a slow moving vehicle warning placard or reflective marking.

Drug/Alcohol Policy - Zero tolerance. Absolutely no drugs or alcohol are allowed during any trail maintenance activity. Absolutely no drugs or alcohol are allowed on or in any equipment owned or operated by the Association. This applies to both operator and any passengers. Anyone involved in any trail maintenance or grooming is not allowed to take part in such activity under the influence of any drug or alcohol.

There will be a NO Smoking Policy in any club equipment, and Non Approved areas including meeting areas and CCC Buildings.

Communications: When work is taking place on the trail system it is critical that this information is communicated to the trail committee or safety officer.

Volunteer Work Ticket: Regardless of the work performed, you must record this information on a Volunteer Work Ticket. At a minimum you must record:

Date and time work was done.

What work was done and on what trail.

Who was there working.

Equipment used.

Anytime you are out working on the trail system you must have a means of communicating with someone to summon help. At a minimum you must have a cell phone with you. Caution – cell phones do not work everywhere in the Forest.

Telephone – there is telephone service at the CCC Camp for emergency use only.

Personal Property: The Association is not responsible for the use or replacement of personal property used on the trail system. Any personal property used is the sole responsibility of the owner, and the owner must have all appropriate license and insurance. When any Association member uses their personal equipment in authorized trail maintenance or trail grooming, the Association agrees to replace the fuel consumed. This will be accomplished in the following method: Prior to starting your task, you are requested to have a full tank. When you are done for the day, you are authorized to refill your fuel tank with Association provided fuel. If no fuel is available, you may provide a valid receipt from a service station covering only the amount consumed. On the back of receipt note, name, date, and work done. A check will be issued only with the proper documentation.

At the discretion of the Association, consumable items may be replaced, if need for replace is directly related to trail work. Examples of such items would be chainsaw chains, bar oil, spark plugs, or equipment drive belts. Proper documentation must be provided.

Section 3. Trail Maintenance

Trail Maintenance General: Trail maintenance is the responsibility of all Association members. All Association members are asked to volunteer some time to improve and maintain the trail system.

Equipment operation: Association equipment should be operated by the buddy system IF feasible. If not feasible, departure time, destination, expected return time shall be communicated to a responsible individual. When you return this same individual will be notified.

Volunteer: Any Association member may volunteer time to work on the trail system. All volunteers must sign in on the Volunteer Work Ticket. As the majority of our trail system is within DEC Property, all volunteers must be listed with the DEC as a trail volunteer. If not already listed, you may complete the form on the day of the activity. All volunteers must know their limits and agree to work within these limits. Use of Association owed equipment is restricted to authorize trail crew members a record of work planned and accomplished must be recorded on the Volunteer Work Ticket.

Trail Crew Member: Any Association member may be a member of the trail crew. Any member under the age of 18 must have written parental permission and will have strict limitations as to the work they can do. A Trail Crew member must be willing to donate time to help in the maintenance of the trail system. A Trail Crew member agrees to take part in necessary training. A Trail Crew member agrees to abide by this document. Anyone volunteering to be a Trail Crew member must know their physical limits and agree to work within these limits. Trail Crew members are authorized to operate Association equipment upon meeting any required qualifications and/or training requirements.

Section 4. Winter Grooming

Passenger in the Groomer Policy: Passengers in the groomer are limited to Association members or a person serving in an official capacity, i.e.; DEC, Police, or Rescue Personnel.

Grooming Teams: With the diverse type of equipment, the individual level of commitment of crew members, and level of experience, the following teams have been established:

Trail Crew Member: Are authorized to operator Association snowmobiles when approved by Trail Committee

Class A/B Groomer Operator All Groomer Operators must attend the Association preseason training.

Within this group there are four classifications.

1. **Trainee:** Any Association Trail Crew Member may become a groomer operator. As a groomer operator you must:
 - Make a commitment to be available as part of a regular grooming schedule and to assist in repairs when that becomes necessary.
 - View the New York State Groomer Operator Safety Course DVD, before becoming a qualified operator.
 - Become a grooming partner to work with an experienced groomer operator to learn how to groom the trail system and take care of the equipment.
 - Accompany an experienced groomer operator in the machine, while it is grooming the Association trails, until being deemed able to operate the machine alone as judged by the experienced groomer operator.
 - Attend preseason equipment maintenance work details.
 - Attend the Association annual groomer operator training held before the season begins.
2. **Operator:**
 - Will have viewed the New York State Groomer Operator Safety Course DVD and recommended review yearly.
 - Will have read and understand “Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Groomer Operator Training” manual.
 - Will maintain trails to the established width.
3. **Experienced Operator:**
 - Will have viewed the New York State Groomer Operator Safety Course DVD and recommend yearly review.
 - Will have completed at a minimum one season of grooming, with documented grooming hours in that season totaling a minimum of forty hours.
 - Only experienced groomer operators will set trail width.
4. **Class A/B Groomer Team Leader:**
 - Is the primary contact for each operator assigned to the machine.
 - Respond when contacted by the operator in the event of a breakdown, an accident or a trail condition that cannot be resolved by the operator.

Class C- Snowmobile Groomer Operator (SGO)

All SGO's must attend pre- season training.

Within this group there are three classifications

1. Trainee:

- Must be a Trail Crew Member.
- Must be an experienced snowmobile operator. .
- Must be physically fit and capable of heavy lifting under extreme conditions.
- Must receive instruction on grooming principles and process.
- Will only operate Snowmobile Groomer with a second snowmobile working in the same area.

2. SGO Operator:

- Has completed trail grooming supervised by a qualified Snowmobile Groomer Operator
- Has been certified by the Trail Committee.
- Is responsible to work within the grooming plan and groom only designated trails.
- Fully understands the limits of the equipment they are using.
- Must have read and understands the instruction manual for all related grooming equipment.

3. Snowmobile Groomer Team Leader:

- Must be a SGO operator.
- Must have completed and documented at a minimum of one season of grooming.
- At a minimum, must have read and understand "Guidelines for Snowmobile Trail Groomer Operator Training" manual & viewed the grooming DV.
- Be willing to be the primary contact for each operator assigned to the snowmobile groomers.
- Respond when requested by an operator.
- Fill out all required work logs.

Winter Trail Season: It will be the responsibility of the Trail Committee to determine when grooming operations are to be undertaken.

Grooming Schedule: Each fall and prior to the beginning of the grooming season, the grooming team leaders will meet to determine appropriate groomer territory assignments.

All Groomer Operator Responsibilities:

- Each groomer operator is responsible for following the procedures listed in each category below each and every time a machine is taken onto the trails.
- Each groomer operator must complete a groomer log sheet after each run.

Plan: Each time a groomer goes out, there shall be a plan.

This plan will clearly state what trails will be worked on. If there is a change to this Plan once underway, an attempt must be made it must be communicated to a responsible person. The plan must be reviewed and approved by the Team Leader or the Trail Committee prior to starting operation.

Every time a groomer goes out, if other than a scheduled grooming operation, a responsible person must know where it is going, what time it is leaving, expected return time to the base, and who will be in the groomer. Once returned to base, you must check in.

Pre-Grooming Checklist: Regardless of the piece of equipment you must complete a pre-grooming checklist for that specific piece of equipment.

Post-Grooming Checklist: Upon completion of a grooming run you must complete the post-grooming checklist for that specific piece of equipment.

Meeting Oncoming Traffic: Meeting oncoming traffic on a narrow trail: The groomer must come to a stop. Allow traffic to go around you. If needed, maneuver the groomer to make room for traffic. Grooming equipment should not be moving when a snowmobile passes you on a narrow trail.

Equipment: The following is a minimum list of equipment each groomer operator must have in the groomer or on their person before leaving on a grooming trip.

Association Snowmobile Equipment List:

- Spare belt
- At least one set of NEW spark plugs
- Map
- Two orange safety flags Tow rope or strap Working flashlight Portable Radio
- Shovel
- Flagging Tape

Class A/B Groomer

- Four orange safety flags working flashlight Portable radio Safety Vest for everyone in groomer
- Map
- First Aid Kit
- Fire Extinguisher Foil Rescue Blanket Hand Towels
- Hand Cleaner Snow Scraper Shovel
- Tow Chain Motor Oil Hydraulic Oil
- Pre mixed Anti Freeze Butane Torch/Heater Chainsaw
- Flagging Tape

Repairs: Invariably when using equipment that is under the stress and strain of trail grooming, repairs will be required. Repairs are not the normal routine maintenance activities that every groomer operator needs to know and follow. Repairs result from breakdowns; repairs need immediate attention. If the grooming equipment you are operating begins to malfunction, you are to terminate grooming operations immediately. If you can safely operate the equipment without doing further damage, return it to the groomer base. The secondary stops are the CCC Camp on the North side of the Forest and Parking Lot #1 on the South end of the Forest. Otherwise park it.

Repairs are the responsibility of the entire grooming team, not the team leader. Each groomer operator is expected to assist whenever possible to complete repairs. If a breakdown occurs that does not disable the groomer, report the breakdown as soon as possible to the team leader so that repairs can be done quickly.

Disabling Breakdowns: If a breakdown disables the groomer so that it cannot be moved back to its place of storage, the groomer operator needs to follow these guidelines:

- Secure the area around the machine so that snowmobile traffic does not hit the disabled machine. Immediately place warning flags in both directions on the trail. Be sure these markings carry far enough in each direction approaching the groomer so that the public will be able to react to safely get around the machine.
- Call for assistance and have them bring out safety cones to be placed around the disabled equipment.
- Document the condition of the disabling breakdown scene and if you have a camera, take pictures.
- Contact the team leader and/or Trail Committee. Provide them with information on location, your condition, obstructions to snowmobile traffic flow on the trail around the groomer, and advice on whether repairs can be made at the current location or if the machine needs to be moved to a location to either be repaired or transported.

Groomer involved in an accident: First responsibility is to the condition of the other parties. Contact Trail Committee, (including law enforcement) and the team leader by any means available. (Caution cell phones are very limited within the Forest.) Give accurate information of the location and an assessment of the condition of the other parties. The Trail Committee and Safety Officer are to respond with all necessary equipment and manpower needed to assist at the scene.

Once the personal safety and welfare of those involved has been resolved, use the camera to document the accident scene and any equipment involved. Get information such as name and address of the other party in the accident. All pertinent forms need to be filled out.

Groomer comes upon an accident scene: First responsibility is to the condition of those involved in the accident. Be ready to provide whatever scene securement assistance as necessary. When the accident scene has been secured or your services are no longer needed, use a camera to document the accident scene and any equipment involved, otherwise clearly mark on map details of the site. Take good notes, and fill out all forms and documents that may be required. Information gathered will be provided to the Trail committee and Safety Officer.

Section 5. Non Winter Grooming

Trail maintenance is a year a round activity. Almost all major trail improvements and rehabilitation must take place during the non- winter months. It is understood that the better the trails are during non-winter months, the better they will be during the winter. All work activities must be approved prior to starting. All work will be documented on the Volunteer Work Ticket. For reasons of safety, trail work will be limited during the hunting season.

Non winter activities include such things as: Trail clean up – trash, brush hogging, tree trimming, Repair of trail damage and wet areas, bridge maintenance culvert maintenance and sign maintenance.