

Snowmachines, ATVs and Other Off-road Vehicles on the UAF Campus

To: Chancellor Marshall Lind
From: John D. Craven, Chair
UAF Master Planning Committee
Subject: MPC Recommendations Related to the Issue of Snowmachines, ATVs and Other Off-road Vehicles on the UAF Campus

Background

The Master Planning Committee has received letters of complaint, in particular, about pedestrian interactions with snow machines on campus travel-ways. Other UAF members are concerned with snow-machine-derived injury to ground cover and plants, destruction of ski trails and funded research projects, and annoying noise. It is the consensus opinion of the MPC that UAF needs to develop, institute, and maintain a formal policy on recreational and commuting use of snow machines, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and other off-road vehicles on campus lands. Their use on campus is not compatible with the MPC's vision of a pedestrian friendly campus and the possibility of accidents is real. These issues are relevant to this committee by virtue of its long-term planning obligations to you for overall pedestrian and vehicular circulation within the campus. As we begin development of a new master plan for UAF, it will be useful to direct the planners to UAF's policies as they relate to snow-machines, ATVs, and other off road vehicles in their use for recreation, commuting, transportation, and work on campus. Your guidance is needed.

UAF is an "island" within the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and as part of the larger issue of trails in general, the borough some day must address the issue of "networked" snow machine and ATV trails. It is appropriate that UAF work with local government and the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities on a long-term trails solution within the borough in order to achieve UAF's goals as articulated in its policies.

A collection of previous communications to the administration and several of more recent vintages are provided as attachments to these recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. Campus policy should anticipate and mitigate problems by developing formal requirements for work-related use within the campus boundaries by authorized university personnel.
2. Campus policy should anticipate and mitigate problems by developing formal requirements for non-work related use by faculty, staff, and students, in residence or living off campus.
3. Campus policy should anticipate and mitigate problems by formally addressing the issue of non-UAF individuals using snow machines, ATVs, and other off-road vehicles anywhere on the UAF campus and its adjoining lands. This issue is complicated by the bisection of these lands by the Alaska Railroad's right-of-way and adjacent state-owned roads. The MPC is aware of the ARRC's position that such vehicles are trespassing on their right-of-way and that State law places restrictions on access by such vehicles to the roads and coincident rights-of-way.
4. In concurrence with UA's general counsel suggestion (letter attached), UAF should make no provision for recreational use of snow-machines, ATVs, and other off-road vehicles by building trails for this purpose or advertising access points. This recommendation is made in the absence of any actions at the

borough and/or state level with regard to trails that would suggest as viable any alternative course of action.

5. UAF should encourage the Fairbanks North Star Borough to further develop their comprehensive trails plan and should actively participate in its development as a member of the Fairbanks community. The further development of a comprehensive, networked trails plan may then allow UAF to reconsider Recommendation 4 in that it may become possible to make provisions for recreational use of snow-machines, ATVs, and other off-road vehicles by designating "bypass" trails, where necessary, at the exterior edges of the campus. The objective would be to facilitate safe movement of these machines within the borough without allowing them to impact UAF pedestrians, grounds, landscaping, research facilities, trails, and other recreational facilities.

Attachments:

- Memo from Joe Adams, former director UAF Risk Management, to Mike Supkis, director of UAF Safety Services (dated February 8, 1999). Subject: Snowmachine Issue.
- Letter from Jamo Parrish, UA General Counsel, to Joe Trubacz, director of Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research (dated March 1, 1999). Subject: Snow Machine Trails.
- Memo from Mike Supkis, director of UAF Safety Services, to VCAS Frank Williams (dated November 29, 2000). Subject: UAF Snow Machine and ATV Policy.
- Memo from John Craven, MPC chair, to Chancellor Lind and VCAS Williams (dated September 27, 1999). Subject: Snowmobiles onUAF Campus.
- Email memo from Stan Justice to John Craven (dated February 12, 2001). Subject: Snowmachines are present this year on the ski trails.
- Newspaper article in the Daily News Miner (dated February 16, 2001). Subject: snowmachine damage to a UAF research project

MPC Recommendations Approved: Meeting of March 22, 2001
Recommendations Submitted to the Chancellor: March 22, 2001