

Winter Access Plan Hoback Ranches SID

Introduction

This amended **Winter Access Plan** for Hoback Ranches is adopted for the purpose of providing for safe snow removal within Hoback Ranches, minimizing driving risks to residents and the general public, and preventing road damage to road surfaces, culverts or ditches due to snow removal activity.

Within Hoback Ranches there are two types of road. Roads owned by the Hoback Ranches Service and Improvement District (HRSID) and private roads. The Winter Committee has no authority over private roads, but is responsible to the HRSID for winter activity on HRSID roads. HRSID assumes no liability due to snow removal and in accordance with insurance requirements requires all individuals removing snow from roads within Hoback Ranches to sign a liability waiver (attached) indemnifying and holding harmless HRSID.

For snow removal purposes, the Winter Committee has divided roads into primary and secondary roads. This designation is specifically related to the use of funds for snow removal. Rim Road from the intersection of Elk to Highway 191 is the only primary road. All other roads are secondary.

The Winter Committee has limited law enforcement authority and use of the Sublette County Sheriff's office is considered a last resort when disputes arise. The goal of the Winter Committee is to promote cooperation among residents and keep as many roads as possible open and safe for use by both automobiles and over the snow vehicles. For example, Rim Road from Elk to the parking lot was kept open during the winter of 2018-19 by 8 individuals, at their expense, and without controversy.

The Winter Committee is 100 per cent funded by donations. No HRSID funds are provided to the Winter Committee. In addition, these funds are only used for snow removal on the primary road, (Rim Road from Elk to Highway 191), and the parking lot at Skyline and Rim. Funding for all other snow removal is provided by individual road users.

It must be noted that parking at the Highway is not an option (prohibited by the WDOT and the USFS). This mandates the Winter Committee insure Rim Road from Skyline Drive to Highway 191 is kept open in winter. In addition, the parking lot at Skyline Drive is private land made available to the Winter Committee by the land owner. This parking lot is critical to insuring winter access and consideration/respect for the land is paramount.

General Rules that apply to all roads

Several factors are used as a means of assessing the overall safe conditions of the roads. All winter residents should consider these factors, along with common sense, to provide for safe access and or snow removal. These include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Storms, wind, weather conditions, snow accumulation.
2. Driving Hazard(s), safety of residents and the general public.
3. Protection of roads from Damage.
4. Feasibility and/or cost of snow removal and maintenance.

Snow removal standards

- A. Snow shall be removed to allow oncoming traffic to pass in both directions. If this is not feasible turnouts should be provided at reasonable intervals.
- B. Snow banks/berms along the road should be kept at “reasonable heights” at driveways and intersections to provide access for over snow vehicles. This does not relieve individual driveway owners of clearing their own driveway.
- C. Adequate turnout areas shall be provided at the end of plowed roads. This prevents problems when vehicles turn around or snowmobiles continue on unplowed sections of roads. Berms will not be left the end of plowed roads.
- D. Adequate snow shall be left on plowed roads to provide for snowmobile travel and to prevent road gravel from being displaced during plowing.
- E. Areas with limited sight distance and/or potential hazards shall be marked appropriately.
- F. The posted maximum speed of 20 mph for all types of vehicles remains in effect for all modes of travel over the road system during winter. In addition, it is the recommendation that all vehicles drive/operate with their lights on.
- G. Safety and information signs shall be erected and maintained where necessary.
- H. The only designated parking area for use by residents and visitors is located at the corner of Rim Road and Skyline Drive. Parking at individual driveways or along roads is allowed only if sufficient space is provided for the passage of emergency vehicles, including snow removal equipment. If sufficient room for passage is not provided, the Sublette County Sheriffs Office will be notified and they could possibly tag the vehicle for removal.
- I. In all snow removal situations there will be consideration for individuals using over the snow machines.

Requirements Specific to the Primary Road

- A. The Winter Committee shall be responsible for the snow removal and maintenance of the **primary road and the designated parking area only**. This section of road is used by all residents, many traveling daily to jobs in Jackson and Pinedale; therefore, snow removal will be to a high standard (as funding allows).

- B. The Parking lot is privately owned and is for winter residents only. It is not a storage area. Camp trailers, boats or other items deemed inappropriate by the Winter Committee are not authorized. Use ends when roads open in spring.

Requirements Specific to Secondary Roads

- A. The Winter Committee oversees the snow removal and maintenance of secondary roads for safety, and adherence to the winter plan, but does not take any financial responsibility for these roads.
 - B. Over the snow vehicles have the same rights as other vehicles and secondary roads shall provide safe travel for all vehicles, especially providing a snow base for over the snow travel.
 - C. If complaints are received, the Winter Committee will review to ensure safety requirements are being met and snow removal is in accordance with this plan. Unsafe roads, or roads not in compliance, may be recommended for closure until unsafe conditions are corrected.
- D. The requirements for opening roads in the spring are the same as the requirements for winter snow removal. A liability waiver must be provided to the Winter Committee and all snow removal must be done without damage to the road and in a safe manner. Most important is to coordinate with others using the road so that over the snow vehicle users do not find themselves without snow for travel

Requirements for Those Removing Snow

- A. Any individual removing snow commercially is expected to be fully insured and all individuals removing snow shall sign a liability waiver exempting HRSID from legal action.
- B. All individuals plowing secondary roads are expected to operate equipment safely, and their equipment is expected to be in a safe operating condition. In addition, they are expected to:
 - 1. Contribute to the snow removal fund for Rim Road and the designated parking area.
 - 2. Coordinate all plowing activity with neighbors to ensure individuals are able to move vehicles to the parking area if a road will not be plowed for an extended period of time (for example the operator going on vacation).

The Winter Committee

The Winter Committee consists of volunteers and operates with donations only. As previously stated, the goals of the Winter Committee are safety, insuring over the snow vehicles have sufficient snow for travel, and the prevention of road damage. In addition, the Winter Committee manages the donated funds used for snow removal of the primary road and parking lot.

- A. The Winter Committee has no set number of representatives, but has historically operated between 5 and 7 members. Required members are

Chairman, Treasurer/secretary, and at least one HRSID Director. Winter resident members are preferred. For the winter of 2023-2024 only three members have been selected.

- B. Committee members are appointed and approved by the current committee at the regularly scheduled meeting prior to the winter season. There are no time limits on committee member terms and vacancies/changes in membership are an agenda item for the Winter Committee meeting held each fall.
- C. The members of the Winter Committee shall vote on all substantive issues or changes in policy, which shall be approved or denied by simple majority, and documented in the meeting minutes. A majority of members, including the HRSID Director constitutes a quorum.

Committee Responsibilities

- A. The Winter Committee schedules and conducts the fall committee meeting. Additional meetings are scheduled based on issues needing attention.
- B. The Winter Committee updates the Winter Plan as needed and changes are presented and approved/denied at the winter meeting.
- C. Other Winter Committee tasks include:
 - 1. Ensuring the current approved Winter Plan is posted on the HRSID website and copies of the winter meeting minutes are made available.
 - 2. Selecting and managing the contractor responsible for snow removal on the primary road. This includes work quality, invoice monitoring, and payment for snow removal activities.
 - 3. Managing donations and providing a budget briefing at the winter meeting.
 - 4. Monitoring snow removal on secondary roads and insuring compliance with the Winter Plan.
 - 5. Promoting/coordinating communication among winter residents.
 - 6. Notifying, as soon as possible, other committee members and HRSID Board Members of any serious incident with the Hoback Ranches winter road network.

Hoback Ranches Service and Improvement District Board provisions

- A. All costs associated with winter plowing and snow removal, including the cost of signs, delineators, equipment, repairs and fuel shall not be eligible for HRSID funding. Owner operators of snow removal equipment shall be fully responsible for individual liability insurance.
- B. The Winter Plan provides the standards for safe snow removal. Failure to comply with these standards could result in secondary road closures until compliance is obtained.

Winter Committee Members for winter 2023-2024

Willy Watsabaugh, Chairman
Teresa Schrader, Secretary/Treasurer
Sam Sumrall, HRSID Board Representative
Troy Jerup (non voting committee member)

Rev. 10/23