

- No signage should indicate any town, trail, or business on opposite side of body of water
4. In some areas, trail signs may be left in place in the off-season at the landowner’s discretion.
  5. All signs that are visible from a public right of way installed by a VAST club shall be removed at the end of the snowmobile season.

## **C. Equipment Program Policies**

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### **1. Minimum Standards for Power Units and Grooming Equipment**

#### **a. Power Units**

<b><u>Class</u></b>	<b><u>Power Unit Drag Width</u></b>	<b><u>Examples</u></b>
1	Minimum 8’ Drag	Tucker 2000 Series, Tractor Conversion - 8'+, PistenBully 100 or larger, Prinoth Husky & other units as approved by the Trails Committee & VAST Trails Administrator.
2	Minimum 7’ Drag	Tucker 1100, Tractor Conversion 7'+, Snow Rabbit, PistenBully Paana, Scout & other units as approved by the Trails Committee VAST Trails Administrator
3	Minimum 6’ Drag	Tractor Conversions 6' +, Track Truck, Argo Centaur, tracked ATV’s & other units as approved by the Trails Committee VAST Trails Administrator.
4	Minimum 4’ Drag	Alpine, Skandic, Polaris wide track/long track, Yamaha VK 540, Arctic Cat Bearcat, Tracked ATV’s & other units as approved by The Trails Committee & VAST Trails Administrator.

#### **b. Class 4 Grooming Policy**

Class 4 power units must be utility vehicles of a twin-track design or single-track snowmobiles with a track at least 20 inches wide and 150 inches long. ATV’s that have a snow track conversion kit may be utilized for Class 4 grooming with the following installed on the vehicle for trail grooming and/or maintenance and snowmobile rescue only during the winter months:

1. Landowner Permission for Class 4 ATV Power Unit
  - a. Visible mounted beacon
  - b. Slow moving vehicle sign
  - c. All safety gear and equipment (*first aid kit, etc*)
  - d. Display VAST Trail Maintenance sign on front and rear of power unit.

Clubs and grooming contractors may only operate this unit on the VAST trail system upon the approval of the VAST Trails Administrator and the County Trails Coordinator. Once approved, the club/contractor must have a VAST grooming contract that is approved by the VAST Board of Directors.

**c. Groomer Classification**

If a VAST Club/Contractor is pulling a drag (*the drag must meet the requirements of the current VAST policy for grooming equipment*) with a narrower power unit and has successfully groomed their trails to the VAST Corridor Trail Standards, both the County Trails Coordinator and the VAST Trails Administrator shall approve the grooming classification for the equipment upon their discretion.

**d. Groomer Drags**

Grooming drags (*for Class 1, 2 and 3 Equipment*) must be of a side-rail design with multiple cutting blades, packing pan and rear trailing wheels. The purchase of new AFMI drags will not be eligible in this program.

**2. Grooming Equipment Grant-In-Aid Policies and Procedures** *(Revised 8/2022)*

At times it may become necessary to place a moratorium on the purchase of grooming equipment due to a lack of revenue. A moratorium on the purchase of grooming equipment will be at the recommendation of the VAST Trails Administrator and approved by the VAST Board of Directors and Governors Snowmobile Council.

**a. Equipment Grant-In-Aid Criteria**

1. Grant amount will be based on the net purchase price. The maximum purchase price used for calculating a power unit grant will be set at \$275,000. Any expense above \$275,000 will be the responsibility of the grant applicant.
2. No equipment grant-in-aid for acquisition of equipment over 20 years old. Exception may be made if power unit has low mileage/hours and is in sound mechanical condition.
3. Financial capabilities of the Club/Contractor including anticipated or received funding from any grants or loans.
4. Volume of Non-Commercial Snowmobile Traffic
5. Priority Order:
  - a. Equipment being replaced is more than 20 years old.
  - b. Documented record of serious mechanical failure that has caused repeated/excessive down time.
  - c. Class upgrade (Class 3 to 1 for example)  
(as approved by the Trails Committee & Board of Directors).
  - d. An incremental increase in the number of miles of trail groomed resulting in current equipment no longer being sufficient for the job.

e. Other.

**b. Application Procedures**

The VAST club/contractor must submit an equipment grant-in-aid application online by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

All clubs must have a current W9 and EIN Number on file with the VAST office.

All clubs must be registered with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office and the IRS as a business entity by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Clubs may provide documents supporting their efforts to obtain the necessary status with the Vermont Secretary of State and IRS.

The application should include information regarding sources of funding for the purchase. If grants have been applied for, or will be applied for, information regarding them shall be appended to the application. If loans have been applied for, all information regarding them should be included with the application.

If the financial position of the club changes after submission of the application, the application shall be amended to reflect the change.

When VAST acts to review the application, it should be fully informed regarding all financial circumstances surrounding the proposed purchase.

The designated agent for the grooming contractor and/or the club president will be asked to sign the application. The club/contractor will be responsible to VAST for the accuracy of the information submitted on the grant application. If information contained within the submitted and signed application is found to be false/inaccurate the grant will be denied/revoked upon discretion of the VAST Trails Administrator.

Grooming equipment grants may be approved only for grantees with an approved (current or pending) VAST grooming contract. The following are minimum contracted miles required to be eligible to apply for grant-in-aid for grooming equipment.

- Class 1: 25 miles
- Class 2: 25 miles
- Class 3: 15 miles
- Class 4: 10 miles

New grooming contracts issued after the 2022 season must have a minimum of 35 one-way miles for Class 1 and a minimum of 30 miles for Class 2.

Grooming equipment should not be contracted for more than 80 one-way miles of trail

### **c. Purchase of Equipment**

Up to 60% of the net purchase price (*as defined below*) for the purchase of new and/or used Class 1, 2 and 3 Power Units will be allowed with the maximum grant amount to be determined based on the mileage quota allocated to each club/contractor in their current VAST Grooming Contract and the criteria listed below.

Maximum Grant Amounts are subject to change based on the following: *Table A. Percent changes in CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. city average-All Items less food and energy*; <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpid1401.pdf>. The percentage in the *Unadjusted 12-mos. ended Jan.* of the current year will be multiplied by the maximum grant amount from the preceding year to come up with the new maximum grant amount. Once calculated the grant amounts will need to be approved by the Trails Committee and Board of Directors.

Mileage Quota 0-500 Miles = Maximum Grant Amount of \$42,120

Mileage Quota 501-1,000 Miles = Maximum Grant Amount of \$63,000

Mileage Quota 1000+ Miles = Maximum Grant Amount of \$84,000

1 additional percent will be added to the grant amount received for the applying club for each point accumulated based on the following criteria.

Not to exceed maximum grant amount listed above.

#### **VAST Membership from previous season**

Less than 150: +7 Points

151-400: +4 Points

401-600: +1 Points

600+: 0 Points

#### **Consolidation of Grooming Equipment**

+3 Points

#### **Power Unit Remains in VAST System**

+ 2 Points-Selling Club/Contractor

+2 Points-Buying Club/Contractor

#### **Equipment Being Replaced**

+1 Point for every 1,000 hours over 3,000 the club/contractor has put on equipment being replaced.

Net purchase price means the total paid for the grooming equipment after deducting the value of any trade-ins, credits, discounts, incentives, grants (*whether received or pending*). All amounts of potential funding shall be clearly disclosed by the applicant prior to the release of any grant in aid funding by VAST.

VAST shall have the right to request copies of bank statements and approved treasurers reports from the applying club for review of information pertaining to the

club's financial status, which may affect the approval and/or funding provided through the grant in aid program.

If grants have been applied for, a description of the grant, the amount, and the proposed date of notification of approval shall be provided to the Trails Administrator. The applying club shall provide a signed authorization for release of information to VAST which will disclose all grant information as part of the grant application process and prior to any grant funds being released.

VAST grant funds shall not be applied towards grant writing fees or any other pre or post administrative grant costs.

If a grant or other source of funding is secured by the applicant after approval, or receipt of the VAST grant VAST reserves the right to reevaluate the VAST portion of the grant and act upon the decision accordingly.

A copy of the bill of sale for all power units being traded/sold will be required. The selling price will be deducted from the purchase price of the new power unit. Net purchase price will be calculated as noted above. It will be up to the discretion of the VAST Trails Administrator to determine if the bill of sale reflects the actual fair market value of the equipment being traded/sold.

**d. Purchase of Equipment – Additional Units**

VAST recognizes that special circumstances may arise, and that additional grooming equipment is necessary to maintain the trail system within a contracted area. VAST clubs and contractors that have a grooming contract for 70+ miles may be eligible for an equipment grant for multiple power units. The mileage quota allocated in the grooming contract will be divided into equal amounts for each power unit, and the grants will be distributed according to the criteria noted above. Clubs that require multiple units for a grooming contract that is less than seventy miles may apply for an equipment grant; however, a subcommittee will review their request. The members of the subcommittee shall include the VAST Trails Administrator, Trail Committee Chair and Co-Chair and one member from the Trails Committee. The member from the Trails Committee may not be from the same county as the club whose application is being reviewed. The subcommittee will approve or deny the special request according to eligibility and need.

It may become necessary to transfer grooming mileage to adjacent club/contractors grooming contracts in lieu of additional power units being added to the grooming fleet.

**e. Class 4 Equipment**

Clubs applying for an equipment grant for Class 4 equipment shall be eligible for 60% of the net purchase price (*as defined above*).

If the club/contractor has more than 20 class 4 contract miles, they may be eligible for an additional power unit.

**f. Grooming Drags**

VAST equipment grants ranging from 40% to 60% of the net purchase price are available for clubs or contractors wishing to purchase new or used approved manufacturer side-rail style grooming drags.

Percentage of grant amount funded shall be equal for all clubs and based on amount of available funding.

Fair-market value of used drags to be determined by the VAST Trails Administrator taking into consideration drag condition, age, and size.

Approved side-rail drag manufacturers are: Mogul Master, Mountain Grooming, Trail Paver, and other drags approved by the VAST Trails Administrator.

**g. Capital Repairs of Existing Owned Equipment**

Capital Repairs Grants for multiple power units shall be submitted separately per minimum (*for each power unit*) below.

60% of documented purchased parts and labor per minimum below will be reimbursed at the Trails Administrators discretion. The Trails Administrator shall have the right to all information deemed by him/her to be relevant to the decision, including but not limited to, the need for the repair, the cause of the need for repair, the age of the equipment and expected useful life of the equipment, and the financial ability of the owner of the equipment.

Total not to exceed 50% of fair market value of equipment.

The total grant amount per power unit will be capped at \$20,000 per year.

- Class 1 = \$2,000
- Class 2 = \$1,500
- Class 3 = \$1,000
- Class 4 = \$800

Glass, fluids, filters, batteries, paint, and body work or add on accessories and equipment or any repairs that could be considered annual routine maintenance will not be considered for reimbursement.

Capital Repairs Grants will not cover tracks, track belts, grousers, and cleats for any equipment less than 10 years old.

Power units that are minimum of 10 years old may be eligible for capital repairs grants for expenses incurred, due to normal wear and tear, on tracks, track belts, grousers, as priority and funding allow and at discretion of the Trails Administrator. All other capital repairs of existing owned equipment policies shall apply.

A minimum of \$25,000 will be set aside from the equipment grants line item to be used for emergency repairs to power units during the winter months. Funding for emergency repairs will be on a first come, first serve basis determined by the date a completed application is received at the VAST office. The amount of this funding that is not used in a given fiscal year will be carried forward into the next fiscal year to be used for the same purpose.

#### **h. Lien Period for Service Payback**

1. VAST Clubs and contractors that purchase *new* Class 1, 2 and 3 power units will be eligible for another equipment grant once the power unit in service which is proposed to be traded or sold for a new unit has groomed 4,000 hours or eight seasons following the receipt of the initial grant. This policy is in effect starting with the FY 21 grants and will apply to all subsequent grants thereafter.
2. VAST Clubs and contractors that purchase *used* Class 1, 2 and 3 power units will be eligible for an equipment grant once the power unit in service which is proposed to be traded or sold for another unit has groomed an additional 2,000 hours or seven seasons following the receipt of the initial grant. This policy is in effect starting with the FY 21 grants and will apply to all subsequent grants thereafter.
3. VAST Clubs and contractors that purchase *new* Class 4 power units will be eligible for an equipment grant once the power unit in service, which is proposed to be traded or sold has groomed 4,500 miles or five seasons following the receipt of the initial grant.
4. VAST Clubs and contractors that purchase *used* Class 4 power units will be eligible for an equipment grant once the power unit in service which is proposed to be traded or sold has groomed 2,000 miles or five seasons following the receipt of the initial grant.
5. Additional units for a contracted area will be considered as new units and will not require payoff of depreciation liens held by VAST on other units.
6. VAST clubs and contractors that receive a Capital Repairs Grant will not be eligible for a grant to replace the power unit they received the grant for based on the following.
  - Up to \$5,000 Grant Amount - 1 Year
  - Up to \$10,000 Grant Amount - 2 Years
  - Up to \$20,000 Grant Amount - 3 Years

When equipment is purchased or repaired, using any of the above listed grant in aid programs, a lien will be placed on said equipment based on the expected useful life of the equipment which is outlined in 1 through 6 above. If the grooming club/contractor holds the equipment for the specified number of miles, hours and/or seasons as outlined in 1 through 6 above following the receipt of the initial grant there is no proration of the Grant-in-Aid amount. If the equipment is sold, traded or any interest in ownership is transferred before the specified number of miles, hours and/or seasons as outlined in 1 through 6 above, the owner will be obligated to repay VAST for the

remaining prorated amount, or that amount will be deducted from any successive Grant-in-Aid approved.

No equipment grants will be awarded based on the above criteria unless the club/contractor is eligible for a grant for multiple units. Hour meter readings will be tracked through the submission of the grooming log sheets during the snowmobile season and verified by the County Trails Coordinator or VAST Trails Administrator. If hour meter readings are not available, the number of seasons the equipment has groomed will be used to determine eligibility for the grant.

Provided, however, that if the owner proposes to sell equipment purchased with the benefit of any of the listed grant in aid programs prior the expected useful life of the equipment, which is outlined in 1 through 6 above, VAST shall have the Right of First Refusal to purchase the equipment on the same terms as are proposed for the sale or transfer by the owner. VAST shall have thirty days from the written notification to VAST by the owner of the proposed transfer, and the terms of the proposed sale. VAST shall have the right to deduct the prorated amount of the grant remaining from the price paid by it under this Right of First Refusal.

If any equipment which was purchased or repaired with the use of funds from or through any VAST program is proposed to be sold or traded the VAST Trails Administrator shall be notified and shall be given all information requested regarding the proposed transfer.

A Release signed by the VAST Trails Administrator and VAST Executive Director shall be required to release VASTS interests in any equipment being sold or transferred for which Grant-in-Aid funding was received in which a lien still applies. This policy is in effect starting with the FY 17 grants and will apply to all subsequent grants thereafter.

Class 3 and 4 equipment for which grant in aid funding is sought that is titled according to Vermont law shall have VAST listed as a lien holder in the second position if bank financing has been a source of funding, or as the first lien holder if there is no bank financing involved in the purchase. A copy of the title listing VAST as a lien holder shall be provided to VAST prior to any funding being released for the said equipment.

**i. Filing Equipment Grants under the UCC-1 Codes**

All equipment grants shall be filed with the Secretary of State under the UCC-1 code. After the equipment grant is awarded, it will be the responsibility of the VAST Trails Administrator to file the lien with the Secretary of State.

**j. Grooming Contractors**

All VAST Grooming Contractors shall establish accomplish the following before the grooming contract goes into effect for the season.

- Establish a business name registered with the Vermont Secretary of State.



- Provide proof of General Liability Insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000, naming VAST as an additional insured on the policy.
- Provide proof of Workers Compensation Insurance or provide a Form 29 signed by the Vermont Department of Labor.
- Provide VAST with a current W9 and EIN number.

### **3. Rescue Equipment Grant-In-Aid** *(Revised 5/16)*

#### **a. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to financially aid those county clubs or local clubs in the purchase of up-to-date rescue equipment to be used in emergencies related to snowmobiling, or any other cause that would necessitate this type of equipment. Clubs shall make this available to communities, local rescue squads, state/local police departments, emergency response services and other membership clubs and organizations, for the reasons stated above.

All counties should have at least one unit standing ready.

Remember that the purchase of the necessary equipment is only one component of rescue readiness. A comprehensive plan including location of equipment manager (responsible for maintenance and repair), a network of club/rescue personnel available to respond in cases of emergency and communications systems should be in place prior or in conjunction with equipment purchase. **An outline of this plan will be a requirement for receiving grant-in-aid monies.**

#### **b. Application Procedure**

1. The VAST Club should apply for the rescue grant-in-aid and must submit a Rescue Equipment Grant-in-Aid Application to the VAST Office by **June 1st**.
  - a.) All clubs must have a current W9 and EIN Number on file with the VAST office to be eligible for Rescue Equipment Grant in Aid funding.
  - b.) The application should include information regarding sources of funding for the purchase, whether the funding is coming through the club or the organization the club is assisting with the grant. If grants have been applied for, or will be applied for, information regarding them shall be appended to the application. If loans have been applied for, all information regarding them should be included with the application. If the financial position of the applicant (club and/or organization being assisted) changes after submission of the application, the application shall be amended to reflect the change. When VAST acts to review the application, it should be fully informed regarding all financial circumstances surrounding the proposed purchase. Upon approval of the grant request, the payment will be made directly to the club applying for the grant-in-aid upon proof of payment. The club should

submit the application and disperse the grant-in-aid money to the organization they are assisting upon final approval and receipt of the grant.

- c.) If grants have been applied for, by either the club or the organization being assisted, a description of the grant, the amount, and the proposed date of notification of approval shall be provided to the Trails Administrator. The applying club or organization being assisted shall provide a signed authorization for release of information to VAST which will disclose all grant information as part of the grant application process and prior to any grant funds being released.
  - d.) VAST grant funds shall not be applied towards grant writing fees or any other pre or post administrative grant costs.
  - e.) If a grant or other source of funding is secured by the club or the organization being assisted after approval, or receipt of the VAST grant, VAST reserves the right to reevaluate the VAST portion of the grant and act upon the decision accordingly.
  - f.) The designated agent for the club, along with a designated agent of the organization being assisted, will be asked to sign the application, and will be responsible to VAST for the accuracy of the information submitted on the grant application. If information contained within the submitted and signed application is found to be false/inaccurate the grant will be denied/revoked upon discretion of the VAST Trails Administrator.
2. The rescue sled by itself is only one component of the total package. Necessary applications may include the purchase of a power unit with the cost of the rescue sled. Power units currently approved for grant-in-aid under the Equipment Policy, Class 4 power units will qualify for this purpose. Further, mobility is essential for a fast response to emergencies, therefore a trailer may also be part of the grant-in-aid application. This is a one-time purchase and should be looked at as a total package.
  3. Grant-in-aid may be 50% of the net purchase price not to exceed a maximum of \$10,000.  
*Net purchase price means the total paid for the rescue equipment after deducting the value of any trade-ins, credits, discounts, incentives, grants (whether received or pending). All amounts of potential funding shall be clearly disclosed by the applicant prior to the release of any grant in aid funding by VAST*
  4. Grant-in-aid liens will be placed on all equipment and repayment will be five years.
    - a.) Provided, however, that if the owner proposes to sell equipment purchased with the benefit of any of the listed grant in aid programs prior the expected useful life of the equipment, VAST shall have the Right of First Refusal to purchase the equipment on the same terms as are proposed for the sale or transfer by the owner. VAST shall have thirty days from the written notification to VAST by the owner of the proposed transfer, and the terms of the proposed sale. VAST shall have the right to deduct the prorated amount of

the grant remaining from the price paid by it under this Right of First Refusal.

- b.) If any equipment which was purchased with the use of funds from or through any VAST program is proposed to be sold or traded the VAST Trails Administrator shall be notified and shall be given all information requested regarding the proposed transfer.
- c.) A Release signed by the VAST Trails Administrator and VAST Executive Director shall be required to release VASTS interests in any equipment being sold or transferred for which Grant-in-Aid funding was received in which a lien still applies.

## **D. Grooming Contract Policies and Procedures**

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### **1. Grooming Contract**

Each club/contractor will be issued a mileage quota to be used to groom their contracted section of trail for the duration of the season. Mileage quotas are based on the highest actual grooming activity in the 6 seasons from 2017-2022 (adjusted for contract changes) and may be adjusted in the future; either automatically by percentage change if the one-way mileage of the contract changes, or by vote of the trails committee if grooming needs change due to snow or traffic.

For clubs/contractors being issued new grooming contracts the mileage quota will be determined by the County Trail Coordinator and VAST Trails Administrator, considering the quotas for similar terrain in the surrounding area and/or existing quotas for the contracted trails.

The mileage quota will be used to determine the startup payment and contract cap as described below.

### **2. Grooming Contract CAP**

Every club or contractor being issued a Grooming Contract will also be issued a grooming cap figure. This grooming cap figure will be based on the mileage quota allocated to each club/contractor multiplied by their rate of pay per mile.

The mileage quota provides clubs/contractors with the total mileage they are able to groom for the season. Not all trails need to be groomed multiple times per week. VAST encourages clubs to manage grooming of their trail system to groom trails as often as prudent while not exceeding their mileage quota prior to the end of the season.

Clubs/contractors will not be reimbursed for grooming beyond their mileage quota under any circumstances.

All grooming will be monitored. Significant changes in weekly grooming will be reviewed before payment is issued. All payments may be withheld and/or revoked at the discretion of the County Trail Coordinator and VAST Trails Administrator.