

9/19/19 ATV Task Force meeting Summary

Discussion of 2003 ATV Task Force Report

- 2003 Report indicated we needed a 7000 mile trail system, (we have achieved that goal); is it still the vision that 7,000 miles are adequate?
- Discussed lack of implementation of many items in the 2003 report that are still pertinent today, specifically around education and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP's) for trails
- 2003 Report suggested mitigation fund for landowners (yet to be implemented)
- 2003 Report cited club involvement was important (not implemented to the extent recommended in the report)
- Since the 2003 Report there has been a large increase in ATV riders on state funded trails

Comment: growth in users has outpaced resources available and sufficient ATV program to support current users

Comment: Landowners facing issues with year-round use by ATV riders vs. seasonal on snowmobiles; some liability issues, challenge for landowners to contact ATV clubs, concern about legislative action to tie ATV use to tree growth.

Trail Discussion

- A lot of conversation about trail length and the value of short trail distances
- Discussed removing some trails from existing system and better maintaining a smaller trail system
- Discussed sport riding areas (inactive gravel pits etc); should such areas be a part of the ATV riding opportunity in Maine; overall support of Task Force members to continue discussing such sport riding areas, especially near population centers
- Discussed larger "destination trails" perhaps built to a higher BMP standard (estimate \$700/mile; should smaller trails to access destination trails be built to the same standard?

Comment: The operator has more to do with destruction of trails and property than the size of the trail or size of the machine.

Comment: It takes 100-mile trail loops to attract commerce; it's important to have a variety of trail types, most trail riders drive slow and do not cause a lot of damage, the trails just have not been maintained

Comment: short trail loops are really important; some landowners want just short loop trails and not the larger trail system.

Comment: The abandoned rail bed trails cost approximately \$500/mile to maintain, trails built to a lesser construction standard cost approximately \$658/mile to maintain.

Regulations/programs in other states

- A number of states have off highway recreational vehicle (OHRV) parks. OHRV has a broader definition some states than the Maine ATV definition
- Most states take the responsibility to maintain the trail systems using contractors rather than the club model used in Maine
- Discussed the state maintaining trails using the BMP guide provided by Brian Bronson; overall Task Force support for using the BMP guide as a baseline for trail construction in Maine, it will need to be thoroughly reviewed by the Task Force
- Discussed tire size, including height, and tire pressure as a factor in controlling damage to trails and property; mentioned (non DOT approved tire) what tires are included in that designation?
- Discussed speed limits, faster speeds tend to cause more damage; many states have speed limits based on trail types.

Trail Size vs. ATV/UTV Size:

- Discussed ATV/UTV size; Task Force agreed that we do need a size limit; do we need to classify ATV/UTV by size? Is size an issue if trails are maintained to BMP standards?

Comment: Many farmers are more concerned about the operator/operation that they are about the size of the ATV/UTV, that said, if machines continue to grow in size it could become a problem

Comment: A lot of landowners have a vision of what an ATV/ UTV looks like and feel that the size of some machines are bigger than what they expect. We need to be clear to landowners what to expect, continuously expanding the size will be a concern.

Comment: If trails were maintained to BMP standards size would be less of a concern for damage, but operational safety may be more of a concern (speed)

Trail Construction

- Discussed investing state money into private lands without some sort of MOU/Agreement/Easement. Example given of sharing road grading expenses with landowner or land manager.
- Discussed whether landowners should get a commitment from the state or a ATV club that the trails will be maintained to the highest BMP standards, or an agreed upon level of maintenance

Comment: Would landowners be acceptant to significant investment in their property

No public comment at the meeting

Next Meeting: 10/3/19 Bangor