



Off-Highway Vehicle Management Program

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

May 2005

Program Profile: Recreational use of Off-Highway Vehicles or 'OHVs' on state lands has increased substantially in recent years. Statutes enacted in 1984 and 1993 established dedicated funding for the development and management of designated OHV trails commensurate with the demands of this clientele. Vehicle registration data from Dec. 2004 shows 222,594 All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), 12,163 Off-Highway Motorcycles (OHMs), and 5,497 Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) registered for off-road use in Minnesota (Table 2). Increased activity has resulted in overuse and resource damage in some areas, especially in areas with few designated trails and limited maintenance. This situation has prompted DNR to more actively manage and regulate OHV activity on over 4 million acres of DNR-administered forest lands.

Mission, Vision & Goals: The DNR is committed to providing quality off-road recreation opportunities, while protecting natural resources and minimizing land-use and visitor conflicts. All DNR administered vehicular recreational facilities will be planned, designed, constructed, operated and maintained in a safe, sustainable and environmentally responsible manner.

Program Funding: This activity is funded primarily through dedicated revenues with supplemental funding from the General Fund for salaries and support services. Revenues generated for the ATV, OHM and ORV funds are derived from vehicle registrations and unrefunded gas tax dollars attributable to fuel consumed by these machines while operating on unimproved roads and trails. The percentages, .15% for ATVs; .046% for OHMs; and .164% for ORVs were determined through research sponsored by DNR, MNDOT and the Dept. of Administration. The DNR will ask that the ATV percentage be revisited during the 2005 Legislative Session. Fuel taxes generate about \$2.0 million annually for OHV-related program initiatives. Another \$1.0 million annually is derived from vehicle registrations.

Initiatives for FY 2004 - 05

A.) State Forest Classification and Motor Route Designation [T&W / Forestry Lead]

The 2003 Legislature directed DNR to conduct a forest-by-forest inventory of State Forests classified as 'managed' with an eye towards reclassifying these as either 'Limited' or 'Closed' to OHVs. All forest access routes are to be inventoried and mapped, and recommended motor routes will be identified by the Dec. 31, 2008 legislative deadline. A status report was presented to the legislature in Jan 2005.

B.) ATV Bill of 2003 – OHV Damage Acct, OHV Volunteer Program, 70-Mile ATV / OHM Trail [T&W Lead]

Other provisions enacted in 2003 include: creating an OHV Damage Account and an OHV Safety and Conservation (Volunteer) Program; and a directive to develop a 70-mile ATV / OHM loop trail somewhere in Minnesota. The OHV Damage Account is up and operating, while work continues on the OHV Volunteer Program and the 70-Mile Trail. The Damage Account is funded from the OHV dedicated accounts.

C.) Local OHV Enforcement & Education Grants [Enforcement]

The 2003 ATV Bill provides \$225,000 annually for grants to county law enforcement agencies for OHV enforcement and rider education activities. The counties can, in turn, issue grants to local or municipal enforcement agencies. This ongoing effort is funded by appropriations from the dedicated OHV accounts. Online grant applications, and a listing of recent grant awards, are available on DNR's Website.

D.) ATV Safety Training & Rider Education (Enforcement)

The DNR Div. of Enforcement administers an ATV safety training program for youth ages 12-15 who wish to operate an ATV larger than 90cc on public lands or waters. Over 340 volunteer instructors and over 1,000 students were certified in just the first six months of the newly revised program. Students can enroll in the course, which features both an independent study and riding component, by contacting the DNR Safety Training Program via the DNR's website. OHV training programs are funded by appropriations from the dedicated OHV accounts.

E.) Responsible Rider Media Campaign [T&W Lead w/DNR's Info & Education Bureau]

The DNR has contracted with Kruskopf-Coontz Inc. to craft an integrated marketing plan and to provide associated creative services for the purpose of promoting safe and responsible OHV use. This multi-year campaign is intended to educate riders about the environmental impacts associated with poor riding behavior, and encourage riders to model positive behaviors. This effort is funded by annual appropriations from the dedicated OHV accounts.

F.) OHV Grants-In-Aid (GIA) Program - [T&W – Grant Administrator]

The GIA Program pays 65% of the costs for corridor acquisition, trail development and administration. Trail maintenance is reimbursed at 90%. Local sponsors provide the in-kind volunteer support. Recent improvements ensure improved accountability for both DNR and local Sponsors. Table 1 summarizes current GIA activity. Other cost-share grant programs administered by the DNR include the *National Recreational Trails Program (N RTP)*, *Cooperative Trail Grants Program (CTGP)*, and *Regional Trail Initiative Grants Program (RTIGP)*. Motorized trail project funding is available through each of these state and federally-administered programs.

Table 1. GIA Project Activity, 2004

Source: Unpublished Data, MN DNR, Trails & Waterways, OHV Mgmt Program, Dec. 2004. St. Paul, MN 55155

OHM	No. of Clubs	Mileage	Funding Level
Funded	3	125	\$40,000
In Review	2	4 miles + 1 area	\$57,000
Proposed	3	15 miles = 1 area	\$160,000
ATV	No. of Clubs	Mileage	Funding Level
Funded	27 active	631miles + 2 areas	\$393,000
In Review	6	175miles + 1 area	\$310,000
Proposed	6	77 miles + 1 area	\$1,250,000
ORV	No. of Clubs	Mileage	Funding Level
Funded	0	0	\$100,000
In Review	2	40 miles + 1 area	\$150,000
Proposed	2	2 Areas ((400 ac. & 290 ac.)	\$2,600,000

G.) Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area [T&W - Lead]

Authorized in 1996, the Iron Range OHV Recreation Area is located on former minelands adjacent to the City of Gilbert in north-central St. Louis County. An adjacent 3,500 acre site just east of the City of Virginia was added in 1999. When completed, the two sites will feature trails and special event facilities specially designed for off-highway vehicle use. The Gilbert site opened October 2002. Planning and land acquisition for the nearby Virginia Site is currently underway. Development of both facilities is funded by legislative appropriations from the dedicated OHV accounts.

H.) Trail Design & Development Guidelines [T&W Lead]

A comprehensive technical reference on site-level trail design, construction, maintenance techniques for all types of recreational trails is currently being developed. This updated field guide will replace previous DNR manuals and should be available in 2005. Special emphasis is placed on environmentally sustainable trail siting and design, on innovative and naturalistic construction, and on effective maintenance and monitoring approaches. This effort is funded by appropriations from the dedicated OHV accounts, and by a federal trails funding grant.

Definitions:

ATV = All Terrain Vehicles are motorized, floatation-tired vehicles with from 3-6 low-pressure tires, with an engine displacement of less than 800cc and total dry weight of less than 900 lbs. ATVs over 900 lbs are ORVs. [MS.84.92, Subd. 8]

OHM = Off-Highway Motorcycles are motorized off-highway vehicles traveling on two wheels. OHMs have a seat or saddle and handlebars for steering. Street-legal motorcycles considered OHMs if operated off-road on trails or natural terrain. [MS 84.797, Subd. 7]

OHV = Off-Highway Vehicle; includes all OHMs, ATVs and ORVs operated off-road [MS 84.771]

ORV = Off Road Vehicles are motorized recreational vehicles with an engine displacement of more than 800 cc and total dry weight of more than 800 lbs. Included are 4-wheel drive trucks and jeeps; not included are snowmobiles, ATVs, motorcycles watercraft or aircraft. Farm, utility and enforcement vehicles are also not considered to be ORVs when used for their intended purpose. [MS 84.797, Subd. 7]

For Further Information Contact:

Ron Potter, Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator

Trail Recreation Section

MN DNR, Trails & Waterways Unit,

Box 52, 500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4052

Phone: 651/297-2362 (St. Paul), 651/402-7658 (Mobile)

Email: <http://www.ron.potter@dnr.state.mn.us>

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Chronology 1984 – 2005

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1984 - 85	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Legislature requires ATV registration, establishes dedicated ATV account.> ATV Grants-in-Aid Program begun. First designated ATV trails developed on State Forest Lands.
1993 - 95	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Legislature extends registration requirements to OHMs & ORVs. Dedicated accounts established.> Legislature requests DNR OHV Management Study and restricts development of Motorsports Areas (MS 84.915).> OHV Mgmt Program created and OHV Coordinator Position filled.
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Interdisciplinary OHV Coordinating Committee established within DNR. State Forest Rule revisions begun (MR 6100).> Legislature authorizes Iron Range OHV Recreation Area at Gilbert.> First Statewide Motorized Trails Conference held.
1997 - 98	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Regional information meetings held to describe DNR's proposed OHV management approach.> OHV registration, safety and general operating (non-controversial) rules adopted by DNR.> Public hearings held on proposed State Forest Classifications. Interim classifications announced.> Regional OHV System Planning begun.> OHM & ORV Trails Assistance (GIA) Program begun.> DNR adopts ATV / grouse 50-yard hunting rule.
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Legislature authorizes Virginia addition to Iron Range OHV Recreation Area.> Legislature amends State Forest Rules to permit off-trail travel.
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Legislature reinstates off-trail travel ban in 'limited' forests.> Final State Forest classifications adopted 01/01/00. State Forest Rule revisions adopted 08/28/00.> Petitions and lawsuits filed calling for environmental review of Central Region OHV process, plans and projects.
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Regional OHV System Plans publicly reviewed. SW MN OHV Plan approved and implemented 12/11/01.> T&W assumes responsibility for 2,000 miles of multi-use State Forest Unit Trails.> Petitions and complaints served in NW & NE Regions requesting EAW on OHV plans and named projects.> Trail Design / Development Guidelines project begun, Genereux OHV Market Allocation Report completed.
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> SE MN OHV System Plan approved and implemented 03/27/02.> Legislature establishes off-trail travel ban in 'managed' forests.> Lawsuit filed requesting EIS on proposed Moosewalk / Mooserun ATV Trail Project.> Appeals Court calls for EAWs on eight projects identified in the Central Region OHV System Plan.> Legislature establishes Motorized Trails Task Force and calls for audit of Motorized Trails Asst. Programs.> Iron Range OHVRA @ Gilbert opens October 2002.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Summary Judgement granted to DNR in Moosewalk / Mooserun litigation on Jan. 27, 2003.> Southern portion of the Foothills State Forest reclassified to 'limited' effective 05/05/03.> Legislature creates OHV Damage Acct, provides OHV enforcement grants to LUGs, curtails most OHV wetland operation, eliminates 'managed' forest classification and orders forest road/trail inventory and motor route designation effort. Local road authorities authorized to restrict OHV use in road ROW and ditches. OHV Trails Supply/Demand Study requested of DNR.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Legislature modified wetland riding restrictions to allow crossings as per Wetland Area Conservation Act provisions.> Trail designation legislatively exempted from rulemaking requirements.> Appleton OHV Park in Swift County (grant-in-aid funded) opens June 12, 2004. .> State Forest road and trail access inventory completed 11/01/04.> Approx. 47.75 miles of Con Con ATV trails (Phase I) designated effective 11/01/04 pursuant to MS 97A.133, subd 3.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> OHV Study Report presented to 2005 State Legislature.> Responsible Rider OHV Campaign unveiled May 1, 2005.> First four State Forests reclassified, motor routes designated.

Table 2. Off-Highway Vehicle Registration Data; 1999 – 2004¹

Source: Unpublished Data, MN DNR, Bureau of Information, Education & Licensing, Dec. 2004. St. Paul, MN 55155

Minnesota All-Terrain Vehicle Registration
 [Begun 1984¹, excludes agric. registrations]

CALENDAR YEAR ENDING DEC. 31	FIRST-YEAR REGISTRATIONS	CUMULATIVE 3-YR REGISTRATIONS	ACTUAL F.Y RECEIPTS
1999	21,073	110,395	\$954,991
2000	38,813	132,994	\$1,186,122
2001	31,233	148,172	\$1,264,701
2002	35,776	181,755	\$1,478,170
2003	35,083	205,771	\$1,886,688
2004	31,606	222,594	Not Available

Minnesota Off-Highway Motorcycle Registration. [Begun 1994]

CALENDAR YEAR ENDING DEC. 31	FIRST-YEAR REGISTRATIONS	CUMULATIVE 3-YR REGISTRATIONS	ACTUAL F.Y RECEIPTS
1999	906	4,026	\$56,691
2000	1,945	5,078	\$80,695
2001	2,132	6,274	\$80,530
2002	2,506	7,628	\$103,658
2003	3,224	9,283	\$143,178
2004	4,604	12,163	Not Available

Minnesota Off-Road Vehicle (or 4x4 Truck) Registration. [Begun 1994]

CALENDAR YEAR ENDING DEC. 31	FIRST-YEAR REGISTRATIONS	CUMULATIVE 3-YR REGISTRATIONS	ACTUAL F.Y RECEIPTS
1999	383	772	\$11,488
2000	490	1,082	\$16,668
2001	587	1,416	\$31,866
2002	1,451	2,405	\$50,062
2003	1,750	3,850	\$60,222
2004	2,061	5,497	Not Available

¹ Statutes enacted in 1984 [MS Chap. 84.92] and 1993 [MS Chap. 84.787 (OHM) and MS Chap. 84.797 (ORV)] established registration requirements for off-highway vehicles and dedicated revenues for the management and development of off-highway vehicle trails and support programs.

Table 3. Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources Designated Trail Mileages, 2004¹

TRAIL ACTIVITY	UNIT MILES ²	GIA MILES ³	TOTAL MILES (% of Total)
Hiking	1,867	N/A	1,867 (7.0%)
Biking (surfaced trails)	483	N/A	483 (1.8%)
Cross Country Skiing	789	1,003	1,792 (6.7%)
Horseback Riding	1,011	N/A	1,011 (3.8%)
All Terrain Vehicle	300	631	931 (3.0%)
Off Highway Motorcycle	197	125	322 (1.2%)
Off Road Vehicle (4WD)	11	0	11 (.04%)
Snowmobile	2,135	18,300	20,435 (76%)
TOTALS	6,793 Miles	20,059 Miles	26,852 Miles

Notes:

- 1.) Mileage totals for 2004. Unpublished data, MN DNR, Trails & Waterways 2004. Mileage totals are approximate. Multi-use trails, dual trail treadways, and administrative overlap can introduce duplicity in reported mileage totals.
- 2.) Def'n: "Unit miles" includes information from the DNR Divisions of Forestry, Parks & Recreation and Trails & Waterways. The term "Unit" refers to recreational 'units' authorized by the state's Outdoor Recreation Act of 1975 (MS 86A.01 – 86A.24).
- 3.) Def'n: "GIA Miles" refers to Grant-In-Aid Trail miles developed and maintained by local clubs and their sponsors under the auspices of the Minnesota Trails Assistance Program. GIA activity is conducted pursuant to MS Chapt. 84.83 using user-generated dedicated funding which is subject to legislative appropriation and oversight.

Table 4. Michigan, Minnesota & Wisconsin: A Comparison¹

Source: MN DNR, Trails & Waterways, Dec. 2004. Unpublished Data.

	State Forest OHV Trail Miles	GIA-Sponsored ² OHV Trail Miles	State / Federal Forest Acres	County Forest Acres	Registered OHVs
Michigan	2,263 miles ³	837 miles	State - 3,700,000 ac USFS – 2,500,000 ac	256,000 ac	174,420 – All OHVs (2003 Data)
Minnesota	ATV - 300 mi OHM – 197 mi ORV – 11 mi	ATV - 631 mi OHM – 125 mi	State - 4,236,000 ac USFS – 2,800,000 ac	2,900,000 ac	ATV = 222,594 (2004) OHM = 12,163 (2004) ORV = 5,497 (2004)
Wisconsin	137 miles ⁴ All ATV Miles	1,571 Summer ATV 3,996 Winter ATV ⁵	State - 490,000 ac USFS – 1,500,000 ac	2,341,789 ac	200,500 – ATV Only (2004 Data)

FOOTNOTES:

1. All trail mileages are approximate and subject to change. MN totals include designated trail mileage located on (primitive) forest roads. Minnesota also permits OHV operation within local Township or County road rights-of-way subject to local restrictions. MI/WI **do not allow** OHV riding within public road rights-of-way.
2. Grants-in-aid sponsored trails are located on a mix of public and private land ownerships. "GIA Miles" refers to Grant-In-Aid Trail miles developed and maintained by local clubs and their sponsors under the auspices of state funded trails assistance programs. GIA activity is funded by user-generated dedicated funding which is subject to state government appropriation and oversight.
3. Michigan also has five intensive use OHV riding areas ranging from 25-1,200 acres in size totaling 2,100 acres.
4. Wisconsin also has three intensive-use areas that range from 40-500 acres in size.
5. All but 137 miles of this ATV trail is provided through the GIA system. The Summer/Winter mileage fluctuation is due to ATV use of snowmobile trails in Winter. The overall mileage total is 3,996 trail miles (i.e., the summer miles are a subset of the winter miles).

Prog05.Doc
Rev. 01 May 05