

# Renfrew County ATV Club response and feedback to Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail

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The following comments and shared thoughts have been provided by the Board of Directors and members of Renfrew County ATV Club

We have had the opportunity to have excellent conversations with other trail user-groups and council members and look forward to actively participating in the development and promotion of the trail.

## Multi-use Trail Etiquette

- Active education on trail etiquette and how to share the trail between pedestrian, motorized and non-motorized users. It is important the active education should be for all trail user-groups, not just motorized users.
- The Renfrew County ATV Club take safety very seriously and works very closely with the Ontario Federation of ATV, Eastern Ontario Trail Alliance and the Canadian AQCC Safety Institute (CASI) to provide driver training throughout Ontario. CASI is a division of the [All Terrain Quad Council of Canada](#) (AQCC). The Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs is the provincially recognized body that sits on the AQCC Board of Directors.
- The Canadian AQCC Safety Institute (CASI) has joined forces with the [ATV Safety Institute](#) (ASI) and the [Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors](#)



Council (COHV) to offer the CASI ATV Rider Course SM and the Recreational Off Highway Vehicle Basic Driver Course.

- By ensuring that ATV enthusiasts using the trail are registered members in good standing of a recognized ATV club it helps ensure greater safety of the rider and other trail users.
- A suggestion of 20km limit in town is what RCATV recommends
- Active education could include:
  - multi-use trail etiquette videos like the ones RCATV/EOTA already use <https://youtu.be/mdQNPuK26p8> or <https://youtu.be/-PSqT6mRw-0>
  - etiquette signage
  - social media monthly safety and etiquette tips on an OVRT facebook page and website like this one attached
  - ride sober campaigns like the recent video by Kim Mitchell <http://ofatv.org/ride-safe-ride-sober/> and this joint EOTA/OPP/MAD posters setup at a Tim Horton's Drive Through in Tweed Ontario.
- During the open houses, RCATV have discussed shared trail use with other trail user-groups for things like how to support each other during organized rides where one club would notify users if another user-group is planning a rally or large event. We have even discussed mutual support at events.



## Trail-Head Parking

- ATV trailers/snowmobile trailers and trucks can take up a significant amount of space. Many travel from outside the County to attend, and many families are two machine families or come in groups. Sufficient parking is required for full size trucks and a 12-16 ft trailer.
- Many choose to back their trailers into field to keep the trailers out of the way of other truck traffic and maximize parking. An ATV Rally weekend can bring as many as 40-50 trucks/trailers.
- Parking locations need to allow drivers to safely back and turn around without risk of oncoming traffic or impeding traffic.
- It is preferred that parking areas be hard surface, flat and not have low wooden fencing or other barriers around the parking, this could make it difficult to load and unload equipment and not allow for maximum use of the parking area for trucks.



## RV Parking on Trails

- Nothing encourages tourism like an RV parking area outside of local business areas and attractions, or sensitive environmental or viewing spots.
- Providing RV parking along the trail in points of interest helps keep the trail clear of vehicles and keeps the trail safe for everyone when users pull over to take photos, swim or have a snack, especially in large groups.
- RV designated parking is a great opportunity to promote safety, riding sober, provide maps and GPS coordinates.



### **Gates & Barriers**

- The balance between allowing off-road vehicles (ORV) and disallowing trucks and motorized vehicles is a challenge.
- While off-road vehicle manufacturers are continuing to increase ORV widths and sizes, MTO guidelines define an vehicle under the Off-Road Vehicles Act as 76 inches. This is what we suggest having barricades at that distance as a minimum, recognizing some side by sides may not be able to access gates in urban areas, however vehicles greater than 76”

wide are likely not the best option for safe two-way traffic in busier sections of the trail. In rural and unpopulated areas, this isn't a problem.

### **Trail Surface:**

- RCATV members have experience on a variety of surfaces. We recommend calcium chloride in built up areas to minimize the dust that can occur.
- In rural sections of the trail, hard-packed dirt is just fine, cost effective to grade and truly provide the best experience for users.

### **User-Pay System**

- A great number of multi-use trail systems use a user-pay model which minimizes the financial strain on local taxpayers, and encourages users to contribute to the state of the trail.
- Using the Eastern Ontario Trail Alliance model, user-pay fees are on a sliding scale for any non-pedestrian users. This includes cyclists, horse-back, sled-dogs and motorized ATV, dirt-bike and snowmobile trail users.
- We recommend all non-pedestrian users look at user-pay and partnerships for funding of trail maintenance.
- It is our recommendation to look at the EOTA model. If not adopt EOTA as a trail maintenance option, then partner with RCATV to look at what works in the EOTA multi-use trail model and how to adapt a plan for Renfrew County.
- Being an EOTA or RCATV trail pass required trail means the reciprocal agreement is in place to bring trail pass users from throughout Ontario.
- We anticipate that the trail users and infrastructure committees will be coming to organized recreational trail organizations like RCATV to support the development of the trail. RCATV has a proven board of directors, volunteers and has been maintaining and paying for trail

development in the county already. In order for us to continue to play a role, we need the revenue to leverage against provincial trail and tourism dollars, and other funds.

- If the OVRT trails are not a user-pay trail where trail passes are required, not only do we lose the revenue stream to maintain and promote trails and bring the tourism up, but we cannot help actively promote safety, trail awareness, and be ambassadors of the trail on behalf of Renfrew County.
- We would like to ensure that ATV's will be allowed use on all of the trail and not just pieces of the trail. It is critical to the local outdoor recreational and eco-tourism and economic benefit that there is the ability for all trail users to access amenities and connect sections of the trail.
- Currently trail passes are sold on-line and at business partners throughout the county closest to trails. We recommend considering trail passes being sold at tourism locations and town halls closest to the trail. It shows a great partnership and strengthens the message of trail passes required (daily, weekly or annual).
- We would be interested in further partnership and continued discussion with the county regarding trail development funds

### **Infrastructure of existing trail**

- We suggest that the county get out on the rail line right away in spring even though they are not ready to develop the full trail. Some areas are ready to be washed out and could be caught early and save thousands of dollars in repair. For example, the section of trail across from Hugli's Blueberry Farm is about to wash out and likely will not endure much longer. We have spent upwards of \$40k on repairs similar to the one in that section and it could be prevented by getting on it early.

## Ambassadors/Trail Wardens

- RCATV would be happy to partner and offer trail warden's support as trail ambassadors provided the trail system remains a user-pay system. We cannot help monitor and educate individuals who aren't willing to at least pay for a membership or trail pass. It is about due diligence and liability. As a member of an organization, it provides a great ability to educate, and better risk management.
- RCATV could help train volunteer trail patrol enforcement teams who can provide and educate about trail safety, be ambassadors for the trail and County, answer questions about tourism like accommodations and promote local businesses and historic areas.
- Trail patrol teams are also there to identify and recognize hazards, mark environmental and trail hazards and do trail reports for future repairs





- They can sell trail passes on the trail or enforce the trespass act on behalf of the County for individuals who choose to use the trail without purchasing a trail pass when asked to.
- Dan Park is the ATV contact for Upper Ottawa Valley OPP Detachment. The OPP SAVE team contact in Odessa is Sean McCaffrey [sean.mccaffrey@opp.ca](mailto:sean.mccaffrey@opp.ca). It is the OPP SAVE team who could be asked to do random rides on the trails with RCATV members, or set up check spots along the trail checking for safety, helmets, riding sober, licensed and insured users.

### **Insurance**

- If the trail becomes a part of the RCATV user-pay system, we can help cover the trail for third-party liability under our insurance as a club maintained trail. This provides insurance benefits to our land-owners, trail guides, trail wardens with respect to liability.

### **Signage and Safety**

- One of RCATV priorities we are looking at is working with the Ontario Federation of ATV's on their trails committee to establish standardized

signage across Ontario for ATV's. This would incorporate a technical trail rating on sections of trail to help ensure that users are aware of the type of trail that is ahead of them, thus cutting down on misadventures. The president of RCATV, sits on that OFATV trails committee.

- RCATV recommends breaking the trail into marked segments by sequential number so that it is easy to find someone, or for users to find themselves on a map.
- We are also looking at incorporating EMS grid points on trails at major intersections where the signs will have GPS coordinates, and EMS will have a trail map complete with GPS coordinates should the need arise where we have to medically evacuate someone from a trail with serious injuries, or have mechanical failures, or someone lost on the trails.

On behalf of Renfrew County ATV Club board of directors, I or a member of our Board is available to answer questions, provide research, participate in stakeholders meetings.

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