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ATV Enthusiasts Offer Broad Support for Increased  
Fees to Develop a Public ATV Trail System

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Many unnamed friends of OHV recreation assisted with this survey project.  
For their efforts we are grateful, and it is to them that we dedicate this report.

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## **NYSORVA Trails Survey – Preliminary Report**

The New York State Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Association (“NYSORVA”)<sup>1</sup> has undertaken a survey to determine, among other things, whether and to what extent ATV enthusiasts support a ten dollar increase in the annual registration fee to be dedicated to the development of a public ATV trail network in New York State. The outcome of this survey is particularly relevant with regard to pending legislation in both houses of the New York State Legislature; specifically, S.632-B and A.1060. One principal objective of this legislation is to establish an ATV Trail Fund financed by a ten dollar fee to be collected in addition to the present ten dollar ATV registration fee.<sup>2</sup> As will be discussed in more detail below, the preliminary survey results reveal an overwhelming level of support among ATV enthusiasts for a public ATV trail system and the associated ten dollar increase in fees.

This report is preliminary in two respects. First, as survey results continue to flow in, a final tally of responses is necessarily delayed until such time as responses cease to be submitted. Nevertheless, we believe that the number of responses received thus far (nearly 1,500) is sufficient to draw conclusions about the larger community of ATV enthusiasts (see below). Second, as can be seen from the sample survey (see Attachment 1), the survey is constructed in two principal parts in addition to a section for entering the respondent’s contact information. Part 1 was designed to elicit information that is relevant to the pending Trail Fund legislation, while Part 2 is designed to learn more about ATV ownership, usage, and the amount of money spent by ATV enthusiasts in connection with their favored pastime. Since NYSORVA believes it is imperative that the Trail Fund legislation be moved early in the current legislative session, this preliminary report focuses on Part 1 results received to date. Analysis and discussion of the full survey and complete set of responses will be presented in our final report, to be issued later this year.<sup>3</sup>

### **Survey Results**

A review of the preliminary survey results reveals that ATV enthusiasts care deeply about the issue of insufficient access to lands on which they may pursue their chosen sport. In this regard, a vast majority of respondents expressed their support in the following areas:

- Development of a public trail system for ATVs;
- legislation to create a public trail system for ATVs; and
- a ten dollar fee to be dedicated to development of said trail system.

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<sup>1</sup> NYSORVA is New York State’s only statewide organization dedicated to promoting the interests of New York’s estimated 250 thousand ATV enthusiasts. NYSORVA is recognized by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in policy statements as the State’s central representative organization for wheeled off-highway vehicle enthusiasts.

<sup>2</sup> The term "ATV", as used herein, conforms to the definition contained in New York State's Vehicle and Traffic Law, Article 48B, Section 2281; specifically, "ATV" refers most commonly to three- and four-wheel off highway vehicles and off-highway motorcycles.

<sup>3</sup> While survey responses continue to arrive, it should be noted that the daily rate of receipt has tapered off significantly. Therefore, we do not expect the total number of responses to be substantially greater than the number received to date.

Table 1 below summarizes the results of questions one through five of Part 1, expressed as a percentage of total responses.

**Table 1: Responses as a Percent of All Responses**

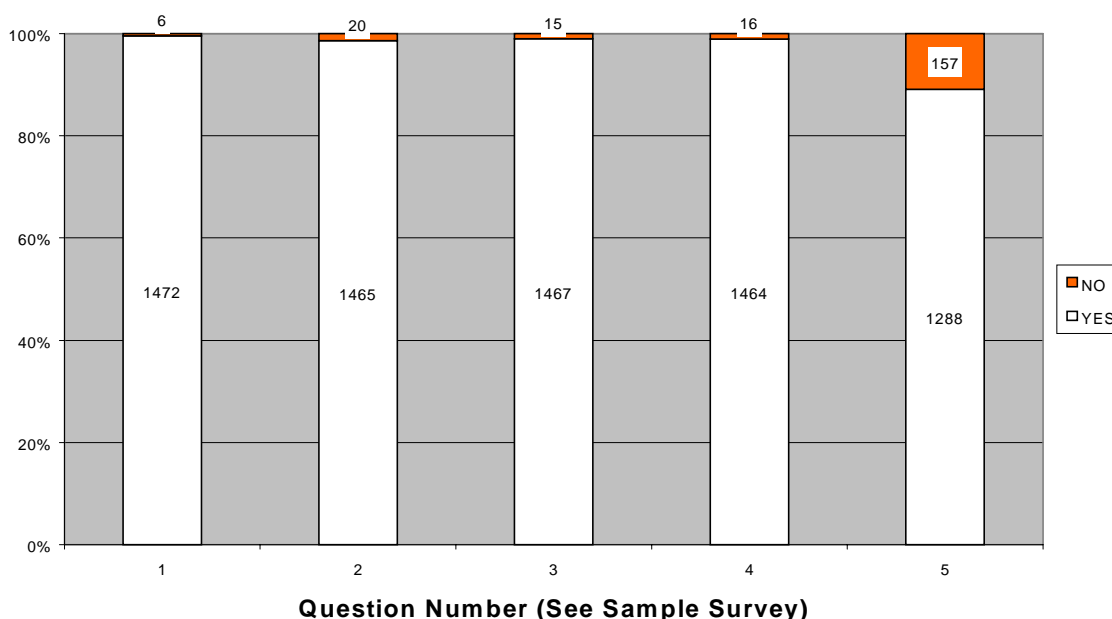
| NYSORVA Survey Questions – Part 1  | Yes (%)     | No (%)      | DNK/DNR*   |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 1 – My opinion is important and I want my legislative members to know how I feel.                  | 98.9        | 0.4         | 0.7        |
| 2 -- I am an owner of an ATV or Off-highway Motorcycle.  | 98.5        | 1.3         | 0.2        |
| 3 -- I support the development of a public trail system for ATVs and Off-highway motorcycles.      | 98.6        | 1.0         | 0.4        |
| 4 -- I support legislation to create a public trail system for ATVs and Off-highway motorcycles.   | 98.4        | 1.1         | 0.5        |
| <b>5 -- I support a \$10 fee to be dedicated to the development of such a public trail system.</b> | <b>86.6</b> | <b>10.5</b> | <b>2.9</b> |

\* "Do Not Know" or Did Not Respond

Particularly noteworthy is that 98.5% of respondents own an ATV (to include off-highway motorcycles), indicating that the results of this survey are highly reflective of ATV enthusiasts' views. Highlighting the dearth of recreational opportunities, development of a public ATV trail system along with legislation to create such a system (questions three and four, respectively) received nearly unanimous support. Question five, regarding the ten dollar increase in fees, received a slightly lower level of affirmative responses, although the number still constitutes an overwhelming majority (86.6%). Analysis of written comments regarding respondents' "no" responses to this question reveals a plurality that cite the negative experience with the previous Trail Fund fee (i.e., the collected fees' being spent for other than their originally designated purpose), as the basis for their opposition to the ten dollar fee increase today.

Chart 1 below depicts the percent of "Yes" and "No" responses to Part 1 questions as a percent of all such responses. Again, the extremely high level of affirmative responses is clearly evident, and 89.1% support the ten dollar fee.

**Chart 1: Yes and No Responses to Part 1 Questions**



## Survey Construction

With material support from the Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA and the American Motorcyclist Association (“AMA”), nearly 20,000 surveys were mailed to New York ATV registrants and AMA members, while ATV clubs and the Internet accounted for distribution of a further 1,500 surveys.<sup>4</sup> The main group of 20,000 surveys was mailed in two roughly equal batches on January 6<sup>th</sup> and January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2000 while responses included in this report were received no later than February 10, 2000. As of February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1,488 responses were received accounting for a 6.9% response rate thus far, which is in line with an expected response rate of 5-10%. Importantly, with nearly 1,500 survey responses on which to base our analysis, the number of responses is sufficient to draw conclusions about the larger population of ATV enthusiasts.

## Conclusion

Insufficient land access is frequently expressed as an overriding concern of ATV enthusiasts, a fact that is underscored by the written comments accompanying survey responses. The Trail Fund legislation, if enacted, would represent a major accomplishment toward redressing the inadequacy of publicly accessible ATV trails. Enactment of the legislation would also mark a major legislative milestone in support of the ATV community, a constituency that heretofore has met with only limited success in voicing its concerns to the Legislature, notwithstanding the substantial support and noteworthy efforts on the part of certain Senators and Assembly Members.

The concept of a public ATV trail system, the legislation to create it, and a ten dollar fee increase to finance its development are deeply popular within the ATV community. The survey results are clear in this regard, and it is NYSORVA’s wish that this information be firmly impressed upon all relevant parties in New York State’s legislative and executive bodies. In that event, NYSORVA hopes that the ATV Trail Funding legislation will pass early in the present session, and that the executive branch will enact the legislation as soon as is practicable.

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<sup>4</sup> In this case, the term “ATV registrants” refers to individuals registering three- and/or four-wheel off-highway vehicles. AMA members received surveys irrespective of whether or not they were interested or participated in ATV recreation.

# ATTACHMENT 1

## NYSORVA ATV TRAILS SURVEY

Please provide your contact information:

PRIVACY: Your information will be held in confidence and will not be lent or sold. Check here (\_\_\_) if you do not want your response shared with your State Assembly Member and State Senator.

Providing at least your ZIP+4 postal code will help us to determine your voting district and will help in developing statistics from this survey as they relate to geographic location.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here (\_\_\_) to receive by mail an information packet about the ATV Trail Funding Legislation. (Your optional donation will help defray the cost of mailing.) Or go to [www.nysorva.org/legislation](http://www.nysorva.org/legislation) to read and download the information.

### PART 1- Regarding Legislative Issues:

YES NO (Check one for each question)

1. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ My opinion is important and I want my Legislative Members to know how I feel.
2. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I am an owner of an ATV or Off-Highway Motorcycle.
3. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I support the development of a public Trail System for ATVs and Off-Highway Motorcycles.
4. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I support legislation to create a public Trail System for ATVs and Off-Highway Motorcycles.
5. \_\_\_ \_\_\_ I support a \$10 fee to be dedicated to the development of such a public Trail System.

## NYSORVA ATV TRAILS SURVEY (Continued)

### PART 2- General Questions:

Please respond based on the past year and on your entire household.

1a. How many off-highway motorcycles do you own (including Dual-sport bikes)? \_\_\_\_\_

1b. And/or how many ATVs do you own? \_\_\_\_\_

2a. Estimate the year's spending on trail riding (machine, gas, equipment, travel, etc.):

2b. Estimate what you expect to spend in the coming year:

3. About how many times this year did you...

a. Ride in your own community \_\_\_\_\_; b. Ride in another region within NY \_\_\_\_\_;

c. Ride out-of-state \_\_\_\_\_? (To which states did you travel to ride (list top three)? )

4. List any OHV-related clubs or associations of which you are a member:

5. In what ways are you willing to advance the cause of OHV recreation? (check any that apply)

a. Join a club \_\_\_\_; b. Make a donation \_\_\_\_; c. Volunteer on a trail work party \_\_\_\_; d. Write letters to politicians \_\_\_\_; e. Other (describe):

6. If you purchased your trail bike or ATV at a dealer, did they provide any information about local clubs or state/national associations? (Yes \_\_\_\_) (No \_\_\_\_) If yes, what kind of information?

Please use this space for your comments: