



OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (ORVAW)

Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2024

1 - 3 p.m.

RAM Center-Roscommon MI

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY
WORKGROUP:

- Bob Meyers, Chair
- Keith Lynch, Vice Chair (virtual)
- James Hunt (absent)
- Mike Maves (absent)
- Jarrod Biebel (virtual)
- Trevor Hoffer
- Scott Nestle

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Blake Gingrich, Peter Costa, Greg Kinser, Cpl. Michael Hearn, Heather Durocher, Nicole Hunt, Annalisa Centofanti, Doug Rich, Bobbi Audette, Scott Pratt, Christopher Stark, Jeff Kakuk, Michelle Ballard, Paige Perry, Jason Fleming

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 1:02 p.m.

Roll Call – New ORVAW Member Introduction; Scott Nestle

Motion was made by Scott Nestle to approve the May 1, 2024 minutes, Keith Lynch seconded, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Keith Lynch to approve the August 7 agenda, seconded by Scott Nestle, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

PAUL ANDERSON

Mr. Anderson made a suggestion to reroute motorcycle trails where they cross with ORV's. He believes this change will have a low impact on state lands and will be easy to do.

SKIP SCHULTZ

Mr. Schultz from Ogemaw Hills Snow and ORV Club informed the workgroup that trail routes have been graded and the club has received a snow grant to purchase new equipment.

PAUL MULDER

Mr. Mulder reflected on the February ORVAW minutes regarding his public comment on signage, reiterating that the current ORV signage does not meet MDOT specs and the need to replace over 100 signs this coming spring to replace signs in poor condition.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

DNR EVENT PERMIT PROCESS – ADVISE CHANGES

Greg Kinser, DNR

DNR has received feedback from trail users requesting to streamline the current event permit application process. Scott Nestle mentioned current criteria requests to submit the application 60 days prior to the event date. Greg Kinser assured having a 60-day window is important to have approvals in place. Event guidelines have clear criteria circumstances, ORV (wheeled motorized event forms) have some exceptions for group size. There have been some frustrations expressed around the number of people. If it is a recognized, organized event, then an event permit is required. The approved permit will be shared with state land managers and trail specialists.

MANDATORY ORV EDUCATION COURSE

Bob Meyers

Mr. Meyers has been enforcing ORV laws for many years and with the recent growth in the sport, he receives a lot of "I did not know" from riders that are not aware of rules and laws. Mr. Meyers feels we have reached a time where mandatory ORV education will benefit all riders of all ages. Bob spoke recently with a state representative and learned it

is possible to move forward with support for a bill that will require mandatory ORV education.

Committee discussion:

Scott Nestle suggested to pattern the program like the hunter safety or provide an endorsement on a state driver license. Bob Meyers mentioned Utah has deployed this education requirement, which results in an electronic or paper confirmation. Bob Meyers expressed his point to be that everyone understands and has been exposed to the rules and laws.

Trevor Hofer agrees and supports education opportunities.

Jarrold Biebel agreed that Utah can be a good comparison model but wondered how out of state users be enforced. Bob said ORV users will be required to be legal in order to ride in Michigan. The bill will add this requirement for out of state riders.

Mike Hearn, DNR Law Enforcement, commented that the ORV education program will not take a stance until an actual bill is written and approved. Clearly this bill will be focused on adults, as the current ORV safety and education program requires 16 years and under to complete an education course to be legal. Education brings consistency. Mr. Hearn wonders where the line will be drawn, considering vehicle use, an example is a full-size vehicle driving down a 2-track (seasonal road).

Scott Nestle added if you purchase the ORV trail stickers no matter what vehicle you use, you should be required to complete the ORV safety and education course. Can this requirement be extended at the dealer level.

Greg Kinser, DNR,
Thought and consideration should be given around funding and the implementation of any proposed changes, be sure funding is in place to support.

Keith Lynch stated that ORV riders should be aware of the laws and know where to ride and the speed limits.

MOTION

Keith Lynch made a motion to move forward acknowledging ORVAW committee support for mandatory ORV safety and education for all users, all ages, Trevor Hoffer seconded. With all in favor, motion carried.

UPDATES

LED UPDATE

Cpl. Michael Hearn, Law Enforcement Division (LED)

The Hooligan UTV complaint from January 2024 involving side-by-sides intentionally causing erosion and resource damage on state lands has been arraigned and the Otsego County Prosecuted has taken on the case. Since, there has been one hearing, a civil infraction, for not obtaining an event permit, which found negligence, and a fee was ordered (\$140). Another video surfaced in April and the same individual was involved. Arrest warrants were issued, charging the individual with operating in a closed area. There are two pending jury trials coming up.

Corporal Hearn brought awareness to the Sherp ATV, selling at some Michigan dealers. This machine is classified as an ATV, which weights approximately 2.5 tons, is 8.5 feet wide can go on land and in water. Current ORV laws do not address these new and upcoming machines. Therefore, this Sherp ATV vehicle is allowed with the current ORV laws in place. ORV archaic laws need to be reviewed and changes carried out.

Corporal Hearn was asked by DNR staff to include the ORV safety Ride Right campaign message to ORV training and he mentioned it is easy to add the message to the training modules.

RIDE RIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Heather Durocher, DNR

The ORV Ride Right campaign messaging can be found on DNR's ORV riding web pages. DNR marketing is working on spreading the word, providing downloadable graphics on the web page, giving the opportunity to share the message with social media and clubs. A side note, DNR marketing is working on safety messages for the Silver Lake Dunes.

Bob Meyers asked if there are any plans for commercials or social media messaging. Heather is working on a plan to get these messages out, especially for the upcoming snow season. Ideas have been talked about adding stickers to cooler doors in party stores or gas top decals and other ideas to spread the message.

ORV EQUIPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Greg Kinser, DNR

The ORV equipment subcommittee met recently and is in the process of developing a questionnaire to send out to clubs determining what equipment is used, Scott Nestle is leading with the survey.

2024 MEETING DATES

- September 25-26 / Trails Summit - Lansing

- October 30 – Grayling Twp. Hall

ROUND ROBIN/CLOSING

Bob Meyers

Last year's trail summit was enlightening to have everyone together, seeing and experiencing the passion from other trail user groups. Welcome Scott Nestle to the workgroup.

Keith Lynch

Forest Island trail system is complete. Tim Kobasic led an effort to update trails in Delta County to accommodate for increasing ORV use. Improvements include vault toilets and a handicap pad with a picnic table. August 18 will be dedication at the trail head including the DNR and public.

Jarrold Biebel

There is a scheduled poker run on August 24 in Marquette County. United Way is organizing a hockey game with Detroit Red Wing Alumni and the local hockey team on September 13.

Scott Nestle

Look forward to working on the ORVAW workgroups goals.

Last Call Public Comment

Tom Craig

Mr. Craig is in support of Bob Meyers proposal on mandatory ORV training. Mr. Craig pointed out the Utah's course for all off highway vehicles is focused on ethics, and education (tread lightly). Mr. Craig said the major offense seems to be understanding where you can and cannot ride. Therefore, Mr. Criag is suggesting training for users over 16 to be focused on ethics and not how to operate the machines.

Skip Schulz

Announced that MISORVA will sponsor a dirt groomer workshop in September 27 in West Branch Michigan.

Paul Mulder would like to know if "other" subcommittee members (ORV Equipment Subcommittee) attend the trails summit. DNR will get back to Mr. Mulder.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

DRAFT