

**From:** Abby Evankow [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 10, 2019 7:56 AM  
**To:** Stewart, Sarah  
**Cc:** Quinn, Robert; Sheehan, Victoria; FGC: Director; Cryans, Michael; David.Starr@leg.state.nh.us; Chairman; Rep. Wayne Moynihan; suzanne.smith@leg.state.nh.us; Wendy.E.Thomas@leg.state.nh.us; Henry Noel; william.hatch@leg.state.nh.us  
**Subject:** \$41,000  
**Attachments:** 2001 ATV Study Committee Scope of Work.pdf; 2001 ATV Study Committee.pdf

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Dear Commissioner Stewart,

Are you aware that the state of New Hampshire spent \$41,000 for 7 home appraisals in defense of the Bureau of Trails' decision to place OHRV trails in a residentially zoned neighborhood in Gorham? How much more has the state spent to cover the cost of 5 state attorneys, their support staff, 14 depositions, court time, mediation, expert witnesses etc over the past 15 months? Couldn't these tens of thousands of tax-payer dollars have been better spent by moving these trails to where they actually belong instead of perpetuating an acknowledged problem? As Commissioner of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, who oversees BOT, can't you act to "protect, preserve and promote" the quality of life of residents who have lost their quality of life to OHRV trails running through their neighborhood?

The state put significant effort and resources into a comprehensive OHRV plan that predicted most of the problems in front of us now. Why has BOT been allowed to stray so far from the intent of the 2001 ATV Study Committee's findings and the 2004-2008 state-wide trails plan? If these recommendations had been followed, the OHRV problems of 2001 would have been solved instead of spread through-out Coos and other parts of the state. It's not too late to use this plan as the foundation for addressing these problems.

Here are some highlights from: [A Plan for Developing New Hampshire's Statewide Trail System for ATVs and Trail Bikes 2004 – 2008](#)

*"22,000, registered OHRV or 2 of every 100, New Hampshire residents and 4,500 non-residents currently have wheeled OHRVs registered in the state."* page i

*"This growth in use has generated numerous conflicts in the area of recreation management. For example, based on a recent recreation needs assessment study sponsored by the University of New Hampshire (UNH) and the New Hampshire Office of State Planning (OSP), few households (17 percent) participate in wheeled OHRV riding as compared to other activities such as walking (79 percent) or hiking (73 percent) (OSP 2003)."* (nb: 22,000 is <2% of the population, not 17%)

[F&G: 2017-2018: 23,385 registered OHRVs to NH residents, (still <2% of population) 11,085 - non-resident registrations.]

**"The primary goal for the Bureau will be to align the user expectations with state land management goals rather than the other way around. Trail and resource specialists should first explain the regulatory framework in which decisions are made, and then solicit input from wheeled OHRV users. This is extremely important when stressing the governing agencies mandates to protect public resources."** Page 22/23

"Contrary to popular assertion, providing new trails has not demonstrated a decrease in illicit trail use or creation. It would be a mistake for agencies to perpetuate the perception (often stated in the media) that providing legal trails solves the illegal trail problem. Conversely, the creation of certain trails, such as a through trail into an otherwise prohibited area, could potentially invite illicit use." pg 23

BOT is funded by OHRV registrations (for the "privilege" of riding OHRVs on public trails, yearly registrations fees run from \$48 to a maximum of \$116) so there's no question that BOT speaks for the state's 23,000 riders. OHRV riders also have NHOHVA fighting for them at every turn. Who is speaking up for the residents who pay tens of thousands of dollars in property taxes each year? As Commissioner of Natural and Cultural Resources, you are in the perfect position to implement the balance sought by:

**RSA 215-A:41 Intent. –**

- I. The general court declares it to be in the public interest to balance the demand for ATV and trail bike trails on state lands:
- II. In furtherance of the public interest,
  - (b) Uses public lands that can host ATV and trail bike trails that are *compatible with existing uses* and management goals and plans;

Residential life certainly counts as an "existing use" and furthermore and the management plan of the Presidential Rail Trail explicitly stipulates non-motorized summer uses for the trail.

Please use your office to restore the Gorham neighborhood and the other residential areas around Coos County and the state who have similarly lost their ability to enjoy their own homes and yards. There's no reason we can't respect residents while welcoming riders - but at this point there can be no doubt that residential areas and OHRVs don't mix. Do we really need yet another study to demonstrate that OHRVs are incompatible with residential neighborhoods? The Gorham OHRV trailhead is an agreed upon problem - can you please direct BOT to move these these trails and restore this neighborhood and stop wasting tax-payer money fighting these NH residents who just want their home lives restored?

"To protect, preserve, promote and manage the State's natural and cultural resources, supporting New Hampshire's high quality of life and strengthening the experiences of our residents and guests."

Sincerely,  
Abby Evankow

[REDACTED]  
Gorham, NH  
[REDACTED]