

Gorham; Appalachian Trail Community or ATV Town?

JUN 17, 2019 : [WILL KRAKOW APPALACHIAN TRAIL](#)

When in Gorham

Descending from Wildcat Ridge and leaving White Mountain National Forest I felt at once accomplished and weary and relieved and sad. For nearly 1,000 miles the Whites had loomed ahead as both the literal and metaphorical apex of my hike. I'd heard time and again that New Hampshire was the toughest state on the trail. And now that I was through with it, Maine looked to be nothing but a victory lap. A 280-mile victory lap...

Blood sugar surging, I booked a room at a tired motel next to the gas station. The outside of the motel was shabby—cracking paint, red doors sticky on both sides with Who-Knows-What, and small dusty windows—but the room was nice and clean and air conditioned, the shower hot and cleanish, and there was a Chinese buffet next door.

I washed off an entire state's worth of grime and walked over to the buffet. A sign above the steam trays warned that "Any uneaten food is charged at an additional \$6.99 / lb." but the waitress dropped off my final check with a knowing nod just moments after I sat down. I nodded a thanks in return and smiled through a mouthful of spicy beef. We both knew that there would be no additional charge. If anything, the restaurant should have compensated me. By the end of my meal those plates were cleaner than I'd found them.

After lunch I went back to the hotel and collapsed in the cool darkness.

Then, around 8 p.m., a roar of diesel engines and a chorus of low hoots woke me from my MSG coma. I rolled over and pulled the corner of the heavy curtain back and peeked out the window, eyes squinted against the last of the day's light.

Ten or so muddy ATVs idled in a rough circle in the parking lot. Meanwhile, their riders slapped backs and cackled and smoked in a smaller circle (which was also rough but in a different way) just outside my room. The ATV riders were all men, all middle-aged or older, and despite the fierce heat they wore dark heavy coats and black cargo pants. On their sunburned necks and wrists I made out the edges of colorful exotic tattoos that undoubtedly continued for quite some distance beneath their clothes. At the center of the circle were enough cases of beer to get a large fraternity through a weekend tailgate.

I rolled back over, letting the curtain shut out most of the light but none of the raucousness, and sighed, defeated. I thought about hitching a ride back to the trail and forfeiting the cost of the room in favor of a good night's sleep, but the streets of Gorham were empty of cars and quiet but for this little clusterfuck right outside my door.

And so that night I dozed off to the dull crunch of aluminum under heavy boots, '80s rock ballads booming from a blown-out speaker, and nonstop drunken guffaws. Unfortunately appropriate for the party scene, my window AC unit became a fog machine that smelled of stale Marlboro 20s and cheap weed.

Around 3 a.m. the speaker coughed its last Aerosmith riff and the lot grew quiet.

<https://thetrek.co/appalachian-trail/when-in-gorham/>

“Scientists have known for decades that noise — even at the seemingly innocuous volume of car traffic — is bad for us. “Calling noise a nuisance is like calling smog an inconvenience,” former U.S. Surgeon General William Stewart said in 1978. In the years since, numerous studies have only underscored his assertion that noise “must be considered a hazard to the health of people everywhere.” Say you’re trying to fall asleep. You may think you’ve tuned out the grumble of trucks downshifting outside, but your body has not: Your adrenal glands are pumping stress hormones, your blood pressure and heart rate are rising, your digestion is slowing down. Your brain continues to process sounds while you snooze, and your blood pressure spikes in response to clatter as low as 33 decibels—slightly louder than a purring cat.

Experts say your body does not adapt to noise. Large-scale studies show that if the din keeps up over days, months, years—noise exposure increases your risk of high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, and heart attacks, as well as strokes, diabetes, dementia, and depression... Noise might also make us mean: A 1969 study suggested that test subjects exposed to noise, even the gentle fuzz of white noise, become more aggressive and more eager to zap fellow subjects with electric shocks.” (‘The End of Silence’, Bianca Bosker, The Atlantic, November 2019)

On October 15, 2020 the Town of Gorham was officially official designated as the 48th Appalachian Trail (A.T.) Community™

“It is an honor to be engaged in the partnership of managing the Appalachian Trail and this celebration of designating Gorham as an Appalachian Trail Community,” said Derek Ibarguen, forest supervisor for the White Mountain National Forest. “Gorham truly is an outdoor recreation destination and we’re pleased the Androscoggin Ranger District is part of the community.”

The ATC’s A.T. Community™ program proudly recognizes communities along the 2,193 miles of the Trail. The program encourages residents and visitors to learn more about the fantastic outdoor recreation and volunteer opportunities available in the surrounding area, including on the A.T. and throughout the White Mountain National Forest

“The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is thrilled to celebrate Gorham as a community partner that promotes and protects the Appalachian Trail,” said Julie Judkins, Director of Education and Outreach for the ATC. “Gorham has been a long-time partner supporting place-based service learning in schools, growing outdoor recreation and conservation planning, and encouraging healthy lifestyles for its community members.”

[http://mtwashingtonvalley.org/blog/#:~:text=GORHAM%2C%20N.H.%20\(Oct.,the%2048th%20Appalachian%20Trail%20\(A.T.\)](http://mtwashingtonvalley.org/blog/#:~:text=GORHAM%2C%20N.H.%20(Oct.,the%2048th%20Appalachian%20Trail%20(A.T.))

The Appalachian Trail Community program is designed to recognize communities that promote and protect the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). Town, counties, and communities along the A.T.’s corridor are considered assets by all that use the A.T., and many of these towns act as good friends and neighbors to the Trail. The program serves to assist communities with sustainable economic development through tourism and outdoor recreation while preserving and protecting the A.T.”

A.T. Community or ATV corridor. Which would you want your town to be?

Sent: Tuesday, February 5, 2019 9:23 PM
To: Stewart, Sarah <Sarah.Stewart@dncr.nh.gov>
Subject: Fw: OHRVs in Coos..... a problem

Hello Commissioner Stewart ,

My wife and I recently bought a home in Gorham NH after being away for some years. As a native of Coos NH it was nice to be back, the honey moon however was short lived. We've become acutely aware of the HUGE OHRV problem in Gorham and surrounding areas. About once a month we have the "should we move" conversation. The current situation with OHRV's over running our streets and trails for most of the year just plane sucks. This is not what we moved to Coos for. As a young couple, entrepreneurs, and growing family we cant help but think OHRVs are driving people like us away. Who are we? Gorham's future.

Ride the Wilds Facebook post:



Joan White

It seems like a lot of the issues started after roads were open. Residents complaining of atv traffic and those on private dirt roads left to fix their roads from ATV use without financial help. Maybe as a step to leave the trails open limit road use to landowners and their guests to get to the off road trails system and also to and from rentals, lodges, services. There seems to be too much road riding in town including after hours. The roads should only be used by those above and connecting to other off road trail systems. Perhaps the selectmen can think about this.

Like · Reply · 3h



“Deidre Blair: Gorham taxpayer subsidizes OHRV tourism and business

Nov 4, 2020

To the Editor:

Last week, I drove past the Lancaster Road Rail Trail parking lot and was dismayed at the congestion and traffic created by ATVs.

Despite new signage directing riders and trailers to the new Route 16 OHRV parking lot and trail access, trailers filled not only the parking lot, but lined the other side of the road as well. Random ATV riders were directing traffic. It was out of control and dangerous.

The new ATV trailhead and the promises by our select board and Bureau of Trails Chief Chris Gamache to alleviate 80-90 percent of the traffic on Route 2 clearly have fallen short.

We need to shut down the Lancaster Road Trailhead and Corridor 19 already. The broader needs of our town are continuing to be overlooked for the benefit of a single user group. And to what end? We, as taxpayers, are paying the price, tens of thousands of tax dollars, literally.

Recently, the Gorham select board voted unanimously to take \$23,000 plus out of the fire truck capital reserve fund to purchase a new 2021 Polaris UTV from Absolute Powersports for snowmobile rescues. No other group we invite to our town requires this kind of taxpayer subsidy. How will we pay for a new fire truck in the future?

No funds have gone to support local businesses that have been hit hard from COVID; no funds yet spent on what taxpayers asked for in our Master Plan. The water and sewer department has lost income directly due to COVID, resulting in higher water/sewer bills for all of us.

I would rather my tax dollars subsidize a public service which benefits every town person equally rather than a private industry which has alienated and divided townspeople. Water and sewers are needs; ATV recreation is discretionary.”

https://www.conwaydailysun.com/berlin_sun/opinion/letters/deidre-blair-gorham-taxpayer-subsidizes-ohrv-tourism-and-business/article_dd968fee-17a4-11eb-b5fc-570b676443f5.html

The problem of ATVs damaging communities and terrain on and off-road is a nationwide problem.

Moab, Utah, a former hidden gem of a town, set in stunning desert, now mechanically scarred and rubber-marked, recently voted to control not only on-road ATV traffic, but also the number of ATV businesses. The park service also closed several surrounding National Parks to ATVs.

“ROV Noise Concerns Prompt New Restrictions in Moab, UT

On Oct. 20, the Grand County Commission and City of Moab held a joint meeting to vote on three joint resolutions affecting all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). The impetus for the meeting was the record number of public comments objecting to noise impacts from ATVs. There has also been a recent increase in business license applications in the City and County for sales, rentals, and licensing of ATVs and related guide services that serve non-residents.

The rapid growth of ATV rentals and tours has resulted in a sharp increase in noise impacts to the residents of the City and County. “We need to reduce the volume by reducing the volume of the number of ATVs, of the recreational vehicles that are driving on our city streets,” said Emily Niehaus, Mayor of Moab. Although the County and City received comments from industry organizations with their intent to compromise on the issue, the proposal being put forward is one of the tools to address the noise issue. To address the noise issue, County and City officials voted on the following joint resolutions:

Joint Resolution #1 – To impose a temporary moratorium on issuing new business licenses for the sale, rental, or leasing of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for commercial outdoor recreational uses involving an ATV, and ATV outfitting, guiding, and touring. To impose a temporary moratorium on issuing new special events permits for all-terrain vehicle vendors, associations, and groups. Passed 5-1 by the County Commission and 4-1 by the City of Moab.

Joint Resolution #2 – Approving ordinance to establish speed limits for off-highway vehicles (OHV), not including motorcycles, in the City of Moab for 15 mph on city streets. Passed 4-1 despite acknowledging they do not have the resources to enforce the speed limit.

Joint Resolution #3 – Approving ordinance to establish speed limits for off-highway vehicles (OHV),

not including motorcycles, in Grand County (10 mph slower than the posted speed limit). Passed 4-2.

For the record, the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA) and the Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROHVA) submitted their policy to County and City of Moab officials stating their opposition to on-road use of ATVs and side-by-sides.”

Posts in response:

“Time for a huge protest rally! SxS as far as the eye can see, blocking traffic and doing brodies in every intersection, pelting pedestrians with empty beer cans, driving through people's yards and parking on the sidewalks, just gotta fly Black Lives Matter flags and they're all good! Just like the Hollister Riot of 47, imagine what 4-5k SxSs would look like in a town that size lol.”

“Moab is having the same second thoughts as Silverton apparently.”

“As far as the noise ordinance, why don't they start with 96db testing since the majority of the machines we see, we HEAR well before we see them.”

“eff that, I WANT SxS loud, so I can hear them coming and get tf out the way.”

“A lot of it has to do with the sheer numbers I think“

“SxS should be street legal everywhere West of the Mississippi. Imagine how much single track we could build and ride if law enforcement was preoccupied with keeping a lid on millions of those idiots.”

“We would be effectively invisible“

“This is the evolution of the quad tard which has now become a locust on the landscape of OHV recreation. However, allowing more of them and having them litter up mud holes and gravel roads definitely provides cover for trail building er I mean full legal trail riding only.”

“Drove thru Moab not too long ago. Item 3 is downright dangerous! In town, ok, keep em slower than everyone (right...like that'll happen, but it gives cops an ez ticket for the ones they catch).

But I was really surprised to see em drving on 191 south of town, holdin up big lines of cars. With all the traffic nowadays, ya can't hardly pass em till the big hill where theres a passing lane. Then its like...haul flippin @\$ \$ cuz you're pissed from drivin slow for so long. Saw multiple groups goin both south and north both times I came through.

Net net, I think the SVIA has it right...keep em off the roads!”

“We did a protest ride out there years ago. Protesting the expansion of wilderness that was proposed to come up pretty much to Moab's doorstep on the south and west. Eventually, obummer designated it Bears Ears, but President Trump corrected a lot of that wrong.”

<https://thumpertalk.com/forums/topic/1353272-rov-noise-concerns-prompt-new-restrictions-in-moab-ut/>

Industry and ATV groups push for on and off-road access, using the problems with each use as a reason to expand the other.

Coos was sold to Can-Am. Honda, Kawasaki, Polaris, Suzuki, Yamaha. The plan came from above, through DNCR. Corporations get the profits, lobbyists get paid, legislators get votes, the riders get the right to degrade terrain, towns, peoples' homes and roads, Coos has become an occupied zone, with residents afraid of the riders and the OHRV lobby, and exhausted from fighting DNCR and BOT.



Dominate Everything

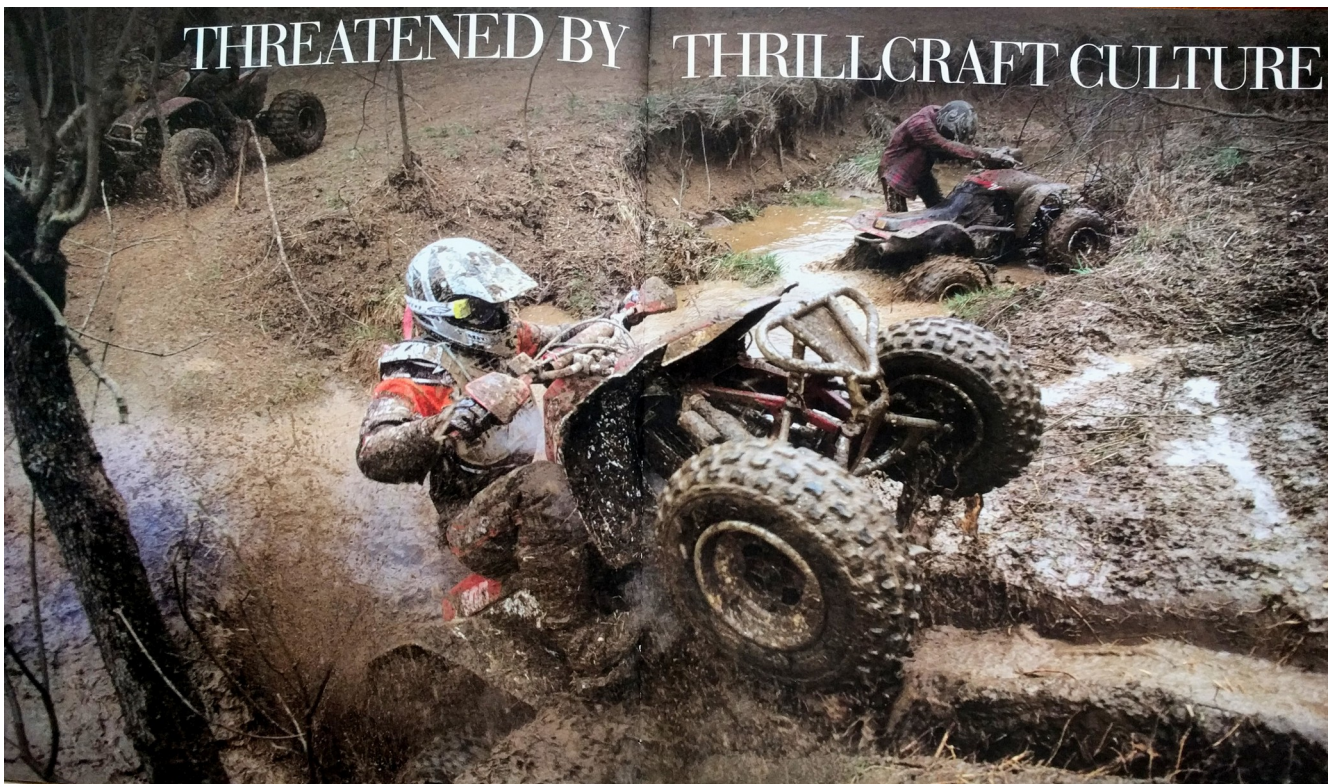


Brute: As in beats up stuff. Force: As in beats up stuff.

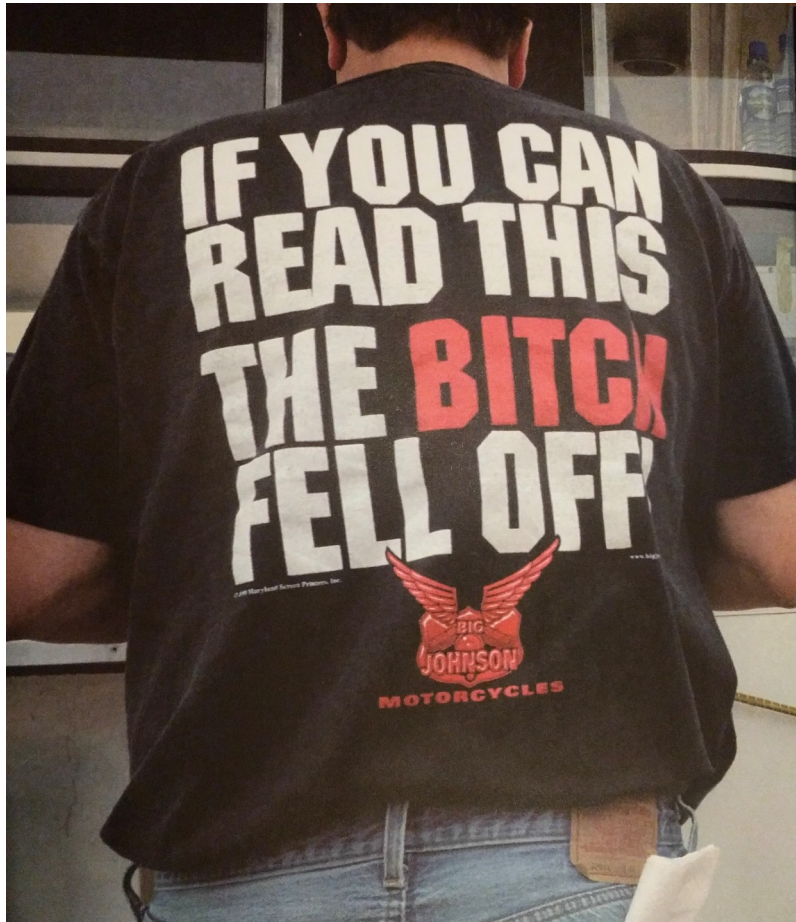
“Why should I be punished because I choose to recreate different than they do,”

(Kent Green, owner of Moab Cowboy Off Road Adventures)

The presumption of the right to damage the climate and environment is implicit in ATV culture:



The presumption of the right to damage others is implicit in ATV culture.



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[Two teens killed after truck vs. ATV crash in Mohave County ...](#)

Jul 27, 2020 – **ATV crash** in Mohave County; **truck** driver arrested ... Two 13-year-old **girls** are **dead** and a 19-year-old is in the hospital with serious ... **crash** happened sometime before 8:30 p.m. Saturday on Pierce Ferry **Road** a milepost 5.

journalstar.com › [news](#) › [state-and-regional](#) › [nebraska](#)

[Gosper County teen killed in ATV collision with pickup ...](#)

May 8, 2020 – The **ATV** entered the **road** from a private driveway and collided with an F-250 Ford **pickup**, driven by 48-year-old Chad Johnson of rural ...

www.wdsu.com › [article](#) › [14-year-old-behind-wheel-o...](#) ▼

[14-year-old behind wheel of Pearl River crash that killed teen ...](#)

Aug 4, 2020 – A 16-year-old **girl** has **died** after a **crash** involving a **pickup truck** and an **ATV**. ... deputies were dispatched to the area of Teal **Road** near Pearl River. ... Two 16-year-old **girls** were with an **ATV** on the opposite side of the gate.

 ABC NEWS 4

SCHP: 1 dead after SUV strikes low-speed vehicle in Berkeley Co.

(WCIV) — One person is dead after a collision involving a low-speed vehicle in Berkeley County. According to South Carolina Highway Patrol, the

...

6 days ago




 CTV News

Man dies in ATV crash on Highway 48 near Vibank: RCMP

10 at about 8:15 p.m. to a serious vehicle collision on Highway 48 west of Vibank, Sask. Advertisement. Fire Department, EMS and Fort ...

1 month ago



 GoLocalProv


Chaos in Providence — Hundreds of ATVs and Dirt Bikes

...

The call came following a weekend which saw accidents send people to the hospital, after groups of over a hundred off-road vehicles roamed ...

3 weeks ago



 Globalnews.ca

Zorra Twp. crash claims life of 49-year-old ATV driver: OPP

A 49-year-old Zorra Township man has died after a two-vehicle collision Wednesday morning involving an ATV and car.

15 hours ago



These dead children and adults are implicit in the Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association document which you have all seen, and which will be an exhibit in the lawsuit over the first New Hampshire ATV road fatality.

The Specialty Vehicle of America also tried to prevent these deaths in their position paper: “SVIA emphasizes that ATVs are not designed, manufactured, or in any way intended for use on public streets, roads or highways and urges that on-highway use of ATVs be prohibited and that law enforcement efforts be strengthened to eliminate this dangerous practice.”

Is DOT aware of the problems associated with ATVs on the street of Gorham? Would they be proposing \$1,700,000. of upgrades to make Route 2 more pedestrian and bicycle friendly if they understood that ATVs are not compatible with bicycles, businesses and pedestrians, on or off-road?

TEN YEAR PLAN

Gorham US2



Sidewalk improvements and separated bike lanes

When this cyclist is passed by a loud motorcycle or ATV, she will experience a fight or flight stress response, which, since she has nowhere to flee, will become fear and/or anger. DOT should make this project contingent on the prohibition of ATVs from Route 2 in Gorham, to avoid public health and safety issues and the waste of taxpayer dollars on a project which now includes an element (ATVs) incompatible with its goals.

TEN YEAR PLAN

Gorham US2

Project Strengths:

- Improves safety of cyclists
- Improves mobility of pedestrians and cyclists
- Improves state of repair (sidewalks)
- Addresses equity & environmental justice
- Important facility; steady traffic volume
- Supported in Master Plan and locally

Cost: \$1,700,000

Weighted Criteria Score:



While other towns and cities are closing streets to cars, making these streets into pedestrian-friendly areas where people can gather, shop and dine without noise and fumes degrading their hours, towns in Coos, and the legislature, are pursuing degradation; streets made noisier, dirtier and more hostile to pedestrians, business and culture.



The ability of a town to allow social distancing is now understood to be critical to its survival. New Hampshire should be moving to low to no-motorized traffic plans for towns and cities, with outdoor eating, gathering areas, and trees.

To address equity, global warming, and environmental justice, the Legislature, the 1182 Committee, the ATV clubs and riders and DNCR need to prohibit ATVs on all trails on private and public lands and roads. “Walk the Wilds” with a few shelters, could be the start of eco-tourism in Coos.

From the start the ATV clubs and riders have portrayed themselves as discriminated against; just another user group trying to secure access to public lands. Equal access for any user group requires equal impact. Recreational ATV users simply cannot meet this standard .

Road access for ATVs was described as a temporary measure to connect trails until off-road routes could be found. Instead, DNCR and the ATV Clubs have used the problems of on-road use to place pressure to open more trails on public lands to ATVs (Nash Stream State Forest, the Connecticut Lake Headwaters, Coleman State Park, Umbagog National Wildlife refuge) while at the same time pushing for more roads to be open to ATVs. The goal is to open all roads, except the interstate, to ATVs.

At a time when we need to stop all non-essential fossil fuel use, ATVers demand a plunge into fossil fueled destruction of the very lands and air we depend on to survive global warming.

“Any hope of keeping Earth habitable now requires sucking carbon back out of the atmosphere, a new study found.” <https://www.businessinsider.com/climate-change-too-late-carbon-capture-needed-2020-11> (and what if carbon capture is a pipe dream...?)



Ride the Wilds
comment: “Why does it have to be an either (pedestrian) or (OHRV) scenario. Why can't the two groups live in harmony...?”

ATV sounds:

[https://
www.youtube.com/
watch?v=zgzt8AwLX4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgzt8AwLX4s)

[https://
www.youtube.com/
watch?v=JiyZZhn6QkE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiyZZhn6QkE)

(photo: Conway Daily Sun)

“Yamaha... states in its ATV owner’s manuals: “Never operate an ATV on any public street, road or highway, even a dirt or gravel one.” But Yamaha, through a grant program that provided more than \$350,000 last year for trail development, maintenance and safety, gave a portion to riders clubs that also fight for opening public roads to off-highway vehicles...

Polaris, which bills itself as the world leader in an industry that annually sells about 400,000 ATVs and 480,000 ROVs, has also provided trail grants to a handful of rider clubs that have pushed for local governments to open public roadways...

Polaris, based in Medina, Minn., declined an interview request but, in a prepared statement, said, “Our vehicles are designed for off-road use and should not be operated on public roads, unless they have been marked for off-road use by local or state legislation.”

The Consumer Federation of America’s Weintraub said Polaris’ reference to local or state legislation “entirely muddies the water.

In the first half of 2017, the federation sent 28 letters highlighting the hazards to government bodies considering on-road use. That’s nearly as many as in all of 2015 or all of 2016, a response to the stepped up push at the local level by off-highway enthusiasts.

<https://www.fairwarning.org/2017/08/despite-hazards-towns-keep-opening-roads-off-road-vehicles/>”

“Chief” Gamache, who ran Board of Trails for DNCR now works for Polaris.

If a woman takes over his position, will she also be a “Chief”?

If Clint Savage takes over “Chief” Gamache’s position, will he be “Chief” Savage?

What does this quasi-military title say about the Board of Trails and its constituency, the ATV Clubs?

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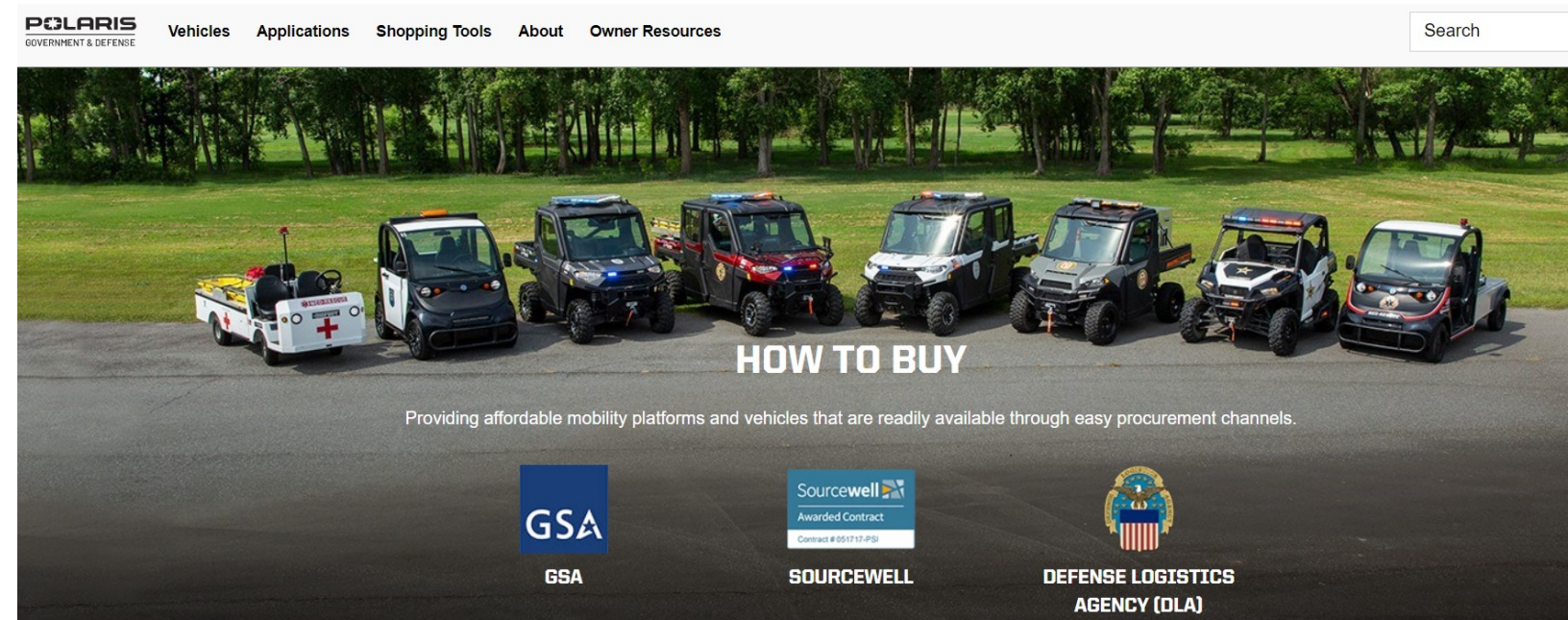
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* I confirm that I am an authorized government purchaser, government supplier, educational institution, non-profit organization, or representing a government agency and I am not inquiring about Polaris Government & Defense products for personal use.

<https://military.polaris.com/en-us/compare-government-vehicles/>



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GSA

Sourcewell
Awarded Contract
Contract # 051717-P9

SOURCEWELL

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY (DLA)

“Providing affordable mobility platforms and vehicles that are readily available through easy procurement channels.”

Gorham's recent UTV purchase mentioned in Deirdre Blair's LTE was a Polaris.

With Polaris having thrust its way into the military-industrial complex, how will small towns have the resources to counteract its political influence? The problem of ATVs on New Hampshire roads and trails is a state and local problem. The real forces behind it are not.

New Hampshire and the 1182 Committee need to make the State serve the terrain, wildlife and people of New Hampshire, not Polaris and other corporations.

Polaris Net Income 2017: 172.5 million Areas "served": Worldwide except Afghanistan,

Polaris Assets 2017: 3.089 billion Cuba, Iran, Syria and North Korea.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polaris_Inc.



This is abuse.

What does it mean if a person looks at abuse without anger and despair, but with excitement?

Kris Pastoriza

krispastoriza@gmail.com

11/13/2020