

I am writing in firm opposition to the proposed amendment allowing motorized trails systems on DNR commercial forest land in Whatcom County. I live on Sumas Mountain adjacent to the DNR land that is currently open to ORV.

Don't stretch volunteer emergency response teams. Statistically speaking there were about 101,200 emergency room treated injuries related to ORVs in 2016. We rely on a dedicated Volunteer emergency response team and putting an additional burden in a remote area is not wise.

Opening the trails to off road vehicles make the trails closes it off to other forms of recreation. I have seen the argument that it will increase the purchases of Discovery Passes. This is not true, there will be many, if not more people denied access to the area for hiking, nature studies and trail running and more. People and fast moving vehicles don't mix.

Off road vehicles are destructive to the vegetation, hard on wildlife habitats, potentially harming riparian zones and critical waterways that feed the North Fork and undermines sound road upkeep by making deep ruts that can be destructive to roads and trails during heavy rains that happen frequently in the area.

ORVs don't make good neighbors. We have witnessed (and reported) trash, dumping and debris as well as trespassing on our property. Will this be a fenced area like other ORV parks? Who is responsible for the garbage and road trail maintenance? Is law enforcement willing to address hear noise and trespassing complaints?

It is disappointing to see many of the citizen-based recreation planning committee working with the DNR so heavily weighted towards folks with a personal interest in getting DNR land open to off road vehicles. It doesn't appear to be a fair representation of all interests and that's a shame.

I live at the base of Stewart Mountain. Every once in a while a pack of dirt bikers buzz up the road, obscenely LOUD, and shatter the quiet morning.

My concern in writing to you, is the DNR's heavily stacked ORV proponent bias on the Recreation Advisory Committee for DNR's rezone.

It is my opinion that ruling in favor of the zoning amendment PLN 2018-004 to allow motorized trail systems on DNR commercial land in Whatcom County would be a bad idea, have a negative impact on the lands and property owners, AND last but not least, would be disruptive to wildlife.

PLEASE be sensible, and unequivocally oppose this this zoning amendment. It does not merit further consideration.

ORV users will not be able to police themselves.

I (and my son and grandkids) live and work in Whatcom County. I am in support of the DNR request to modify county code allowing motorized vehicles in land zoned commercial forestry through a "conditional use" permit.

While having the right to be docketed does not guarantee that there will be a final DNR plan which includes motorized recreation, I heartily believe and endorse the fact that a legal, planned, and regulated area that the ORV community can maintain stewardship of is a safer and better alternative for the environment than the existing illegal, dispersed use currently taking place.

It has been proven time and again in other counties that a managed forest alleviates most of the concerns of residents who are experiencing the ill effects of illegal ORV use.

On a personal note, my family and I all enjoy taking a day to hop in our jeep and test our technical skills

at one of the DNR rec areas today, unfortunately this has to be a well planned event with kids due to the time and distance involved to travel to another County. We would love to recreate within the area we work and live in. To be able to teach my kids responsible stewardship of a managed forest area and pass along the lessons I learned from my dad would be a blessing.

Thanks very much for your time, and please support this effort.

Please DO NOT amend our county code which currently bans all motorized vehicles from county trails. As a resident of Whatcom county (22 years) I have seen first-hand what ORVs and ATVs bring: noise, traffic, garbage (including human waste and toilet paper on the ground), muddy runoff that destroys salmon habitat, and many risky behaviors. Not only am I personally invested in my rural community, but my family and I are financially invested in our property. Land values near ORV trails decrease. Plain and simple.

The ORV users account for a very small segment of the population and their right to HAVE FUN is not more important than my property rights.

If ORV users are allowed to go off-road on Whatcom County public lands then most non-motorized users will simply stop showing up. Much more financial income is generated from non-motorized tourism and recreation than ORVs. I have attached a very informative fact sheet from 2015 that quantifies the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Washington State, and shows economic contributions of outdoor recreation in all counties. On page 4 of the report is "Participation and Expenditures by Activity". **Guess what? Off-Roading for Recreation provides just 5.5% of the Total Economic Contribution of all forms of recreation in our state. It's not an economic driver.**

When we weigh the alleged benefits against the many, many, many drawbacks, it seems like a clear and logical choice to NOT allow motorized vehicles on county trails. I absolutely oppose zoning amendment PLN 2018-0004, which would allow motorized trail systems on DNR commercial forest land in Whatcom County.

Please DO NOT amend our county code which - wisely - bans all motorized vehicles from county trails.

I unequivocally oppose zoning amendment PLN 2018-0004, to allow motorized trails systems on DNR commercial forest land in Whatcom County.

Here are just some of the reasons I don't think it's a good idea:

1. ORV riding in our wet climate increases muddy runoff into streams and degrades salmon habitat. The state, feds, nonprofits and tribes have invested hundreds of millions (if not billions) of dollars in recent years to improve salmon habitat. It doesn't make sense to open our public lands to activities that are known to harm salmon!
2. In addition to destroying habitat, ORVs frighten and disrupt wildlife of all kinds.
3. **ORV use is incompatible with most other types of recreation, and only accounts for 5.5% of**

recreation dollars in WA State.

4. Communities/neighborhoods that have experienced ORV activity in the past know that too many of the riders are not good stewards of our public lands. Common issues include speeding on 35 mph roads, leaving garbage (including human waste and toilet paper), irresponsible shooting, riding in streams and the river, disrupting peace and quiet, and having illegal fires. Our law enforcement and first responders are already stretched too thin and do not have the resources needed to deal with the inevitable accidents and issues that will come up.

5. Fire danger is becoming more extreme each year. It is irresponsible to open public lands to increased use like this!

6. Our properties are not just our homes, they are investments. While homes near non-motorized trail systems and parks increase in value, the opposite is true near ORV trail systems.

7. ORV riders represent a tiny fraction of the recreation community. It is NOT RIGHT for their choice of fun to interfere with our rights for enjoying the tranquility of nature.

Thank you for your consideration of this serious matter.

Thank you so much for advocating for our community and forests with this excellent letter!

I am a resident of Bell Creek Logging Road, a private road which runs up Sumas Mountain and then onto DNR land.

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed ORV-use, PLN 2018-0004.

While I wholeheartedly support the use of public lands for recreational use, and applaud the divided sections (i.e. horses not in the same area as mountain bikes, etc), I have come to negatively view the ORV park proposal. Please note that I was originally somewhat inclined to accept the ORV park, believing the area to be *'already wrecked by illegal ORV use, so make it legal and regulate it'*. But after the past month of trekking through the areas proposed in Concept Maps D and E, researching the outcome which would set this as a legal precedent for further sites in the state, language in the proposals, and discussing with (literally) several dozen community members, I now *resolutely oppose* this inclusion.

In short (you've heard many details of these points from other residents), my concerns rest with:

1. Noise nuisance
2. Boundary/Trespassing Compliance
3. Forest degradation/mudslides/erosion
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8. Wildlife impact (physical and stress-related impacts)
9. The setting of legal precedent to open even more areas throughout the state
10. The (horrifying) potential to open these areas to commercial ORV events and the devastation and impact resulting from them.

Additional Points to note:

The Whatcom County definition in the CCPRPOSP of Multi-purpose trails for hiking, biking and horse riding and DOES NOT include off-road ATV, motorcycle, and ORV parks.

Recall there have been two prior attempts in Whatcom County to establish ORV parks, which failed to gain approval. While a small group of vocal people vehemently wish to open an ORV area for themselves, the local community has clearly demonstrated a desire NOT to have this activity legalized anywhere near us. Noise-decibel studies near one of the proposed sites where ORV riders were illegally riding clearly documented unacceptable nuisance to neighboring areas within several miles of individual machines.

It is to be suspected that a great number of those wishing to open the land to this noisy, disrupting, and disturbing recreational activity do not live here.

It would be worthwhile evidence to ask every person wishing to open the land to ORV use to reveal the address of their residence. Likewise, collect the addresses of those opposing the ORV designation. My suspicion is that a hefty percentage of the supporters live out of area - and very likely, out of county. It would therefore have no negative effects on *their* personal quality of life. Whereas opponents of this proposal live in our county, in our foothills, and this activity would greatly impact and reduce the quality of life for everyone who lives within an enormous radius around the proposed site(s).

Finally, please make note of **WCC 20.97.186** which holds the concept of general welfare, safety, health and well-being of the entire community as a whole.

"Illegal spot zoning" is defined as a zoning action by which a smaller area is singled out of a larger area or district and specially zoned for a use classification totally different from, and inconsistent with, the classification of surrounding land and not in accordance with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Spot zoning is zoning for private gain designed to favor or benefit a particular individual or group and not the welfare of the community as a whole. Opening this ORV site seems tantamount to "Illegal spot zoning".

In contrast, opening up these lands to non-destructive user groups - hikers, bikers, hunters, mushroom pickers, bird watchers, skiers, fishermen, foragers, and paragliders, all hoping to glory in a peaceful parcel of nature - is appropriate. Destroying it in the interest of a minority user group who already have other places to play nearby (Skagit county, etc) would be a travesty that cannot be repaired once they have ripped it apart.

In summary:

1. I urge the council to NOT put an ORV-use proposal on the docket for discussion.
2. I ask that Off-road Vehicle Parks be specifically excluded in the Proposed Amendment from DNR's Motorized Trail System.

we stay healthy and enjoy our wonderful surrounding environment. Now I hear that an unelected, unrepresentative panel is changing our zoning laws to allow special interests, in this case ORV's, to be given equal rights on public forestry trails with people, dogs and bikes.

Apart from the obvious safety, fire and erosion/water quality reasons that make this a really bad idea. This is going to be a cost to taxpayers for a users group that already illegally damages stream banks and hillsides. I saw this first hand while leading Ferndale HS students on a watershed tour.

We are experiencing enough gerrymandering and undemocracy at the national level. Please stand up for the people and NW streams and wildlife and uphold Whatcom County Zoning regulations that prohibit motorized trails on lands zoned for commercial forestry.

As a citizen of Bellingham who is very concerned for appropriate multiple use of public lands, I am firmly opposed to the proposition to allow Off Road Vehicles on DNR land. My opposition stems from three concerns:

1. Increased fire hazard during the summer dry season;
2. ORVs are a poor component of multiple use - once they are present in any significant numbers, other recreational uses become very heavily impacted;
3. Many people who live near the proposed trails stand to have their quiet rural location turned into a freeway (or worse, given ORVs penchant for not staying on trails).

Please do not amend the Whatcom County Zoning regulations to allow this! Thanks for your consideration.

I strongly oppose the proposal to allow motorized vehicles of any kind in the DNR Baker to Bellingham Recreation Plan and anywhere else in Whatcom County. Allowing the use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) on DNR managed lands will cause irreparable environmental damage to these lands. ATV use will pollute the air and water, tear up trails, cause soil erosion, damage stream and river beds, destroy plants, negatively impact birds and other wildlife and cause horrible noise pollution.

I am an avid hiker and birder and I enjoy the sounds, sights and smells of nature. The last thing I want to experience when I visit these and any other DNR lands, is the extremely loud roar and foul exhaust fumes of an ATV zooming along a trail. When I go for a walk in the woods, I want to listen to and observe birds and other wildlife and I want to admire the beauty of undisturbed trees and plants. I want to experience the serenity of nature. I do NOT want to interact in any way with any motorized vehicles!

We need to protect our precious public lands, not destroy them. Allowing the use of ATVs on these lands will cause severe and irreparable damage to our environment. I urge you to remove the proposed use of ATV's from the Baker to Bellingham Recreation Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

I wanted to add my name to the list of those who unequivocally oppose the zoning amendment to PLN 2018-0004.

The idea of ORV parks and usage on DNR lands is not new. Over 30 yrs ago the Sheriff's department employed a full time deputy to assess and promote this concept. The idea was overwhelmingly opposed and gained no traction within our county.

The reasons for that opposition have not changed and in fact are more relevant today with our population having more than doubled over the past 30 yrs.

The DNR has a sordid past of not being able to manage Law enforcement issues on their lands and the burden of this will become the problem and expense of Whatcom County tax payers. We will be the entity that will be faced with dealing with trespassing complaints, vandalism, firearm violations, forest fires and EMS calls to name just a few of the problems associated with this activity.

Thank you for adding me to the list of opponents.

I am writing to you in opposition to changing the zoning amendment PLN 2018 – 0004. I will focus on three points for the sake of brevity today although I have many other concerns.

1. I'm sure you have spent time in the foothills and mountains where you experienced ORV's. If your experiences were similar to mine, my focus quickly moved from one of enjoying my time outside to one of trying to leave the area as soon as possible. The noise is omnipresent for miles around and deafening when near them. High performance ORV machines seem to require that mufflers be removed or modified to gain maximum horse power generating unreasonable noise decibels from their operation.

Again, my experience on the roads and adjacent social trails being utilized by ORV's demonstrates that the majority of users are there for speed and a thrill. This is verified by the armoring they wear from head to toe worn by almost every rider I've seen in recent years.

Ultimately what their presence brings is exclusive use to the area they are in. Noise, danger from being run over or at least enduring the screaming machines racing past you prevent one from enjoying any other form of recreation on mutually used land.

2. I have a real concern for the ability of DNR to reasonably respond to the many issues that will undoubtedly arise from this usage. DNR appears to have **two** Law Enforcement officers with enforcement credentialing assigned to the NW Region which encompasses five counties. It is reasonable to deduct that they will continue to be grossly understaffed to address the needs of Whatcom County. Virtually every EMS entity will be affected by a sanctioned increase of use on DNR lands by this proposed change. All of our county departments are understaffed and struggle to provide basic service for residents now. Adding a whole new level of service need enjoyed by relatively few exclusive users makes no sense. This is not how I want my tax dollars spent. DNR is unable to manage and enforce their current land resources without adding any additional scope of work to their staff. They would be better off spending their time and money managing existing areas such as Walker Valley.

3. Millions of dollars of tax payer monies have been spent trying to restore habitat and increase our wildlife and salmon populations in Whatcom County. All of the DNR lands are within the Nooksack or Samish Rivers watersheds and they adjoin many other land owners both private and public. This user group is noted for trespassing and creating vast illegal trail networks on those same lands. The very nature of many ORV users is to get out and tear up the ground. While doing that they cross streams and wetlands causing gross amounts of erosion in their wake. Of course, that erosion travels through those critical habitats compromising the vary species we are spending a fortune trying to protect and restore.

Destination recreation is a concept we all adhere to i.e.; skiing, whale watching, fishing/hunting, Disneyland, Woodland park zoo. We are much better off concentrating resources for this high impact, exclusive usage to fewer sites so they can be managed in a reasonable way. Walker Valley costs DNR hundreds of thousands of dollars to maintain, much of which is grant money. They simply cannot manage or afford another site.

Our world is shrinking and we can no longer allow our land and water resources to be desecrated just for the pleasure of a small number of users that have a massive impact on the public lands they

propose to use.

Thank you for considering my comments and viewpoints.

I live on Silver Lake Rd between Maple Falls and Silver Lake Park. There's also a rock quarry in this area. I can tell you that the noise from the park, the quarry, and logging operations on Red and Black Mountains, as well as gun shot reports from across the river three miles away, are easily heard in this valley between these two mountains. It's name is Echo Valley for a reason.

I, along with my neighbors, are strongly opposed to the DNR's efforts to allow motorized vehicles on Red Mountain so close to residents and a county park.

If Red Mountain becomes a motorized use area, then that will alienate it's use to all other interested parties. These trails would also be accessed by British Columbia ORVs, of which, there are over a dozen clubs in B.C.. That's a lot of ORV riders! Can we absorb that kind of influx. This plan seems to cater to a special interest group.

I've written before on this subject and have brought up the issues of safety, user self-policing, couch dumping, reduced property value, and the like. The negatives to this plan keep mounting. The positives are minimal at best.

We aren't hermits up here. People come to the park or live this far out for a reason. That reason is to become enveloped by the peace and quite of this area. The existing noise is infrequent and is accepted as "necessary noise". A motorized ORV trail on Red Mountain would introduce an extremely annoying drone at all hours.

Lastly, we citizens are engaged in the Whatcom community and we talk to a lot of people. This plan is not in the best interest of Whatcom County citizens as a whole.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and giving it some serious thought.

My wife and I reside at [redacted]. It has come to our attention that there are plans to develop a Motorized ORV area near Red Mountain (our backyard).

I am writing to state my displeasure of this idea for several reasons.

1) Most of us moved up here to get away from the noise and stink pollution of the big city. Having this 2, 3 and 4 wheeled ORV circus practically in our backyard was the furthest thing from our minds when we decided to purchase our houses here. I'm sure you all would agree that you wouldn't want this next your home where you live now. To us this is a most unwanted neighbor.

2) I would also think that all of the fishermen, as well as the campers who so frequently visit Silver Lake Park, don't want to listen to these ORV's running wild as they try and relax on the lake or in the park.

3) The echo off of Black Mountain is incredible. We quite often hear campers from the park, as well as people at Camp Saturna yelling at the hill so they can hear their echos return. Having to listen to the noise first behind us, then listening to it again as it echoes back would most certainly

be a not so fun surround sound experience for everyone trying to spend some nice quiet time here in on the lake/in the mountains. Listening to a thunder storm as it echoes off the mountain is incredibly awesome. Listening to the echo of all the motorized toys would be anything but awesome.

4) I don't like the idea of having so many fire hazards racing around in our beautiful forests. Just one loose spark in the middle of a hot Summer up here and we lose everything we are so grateful for. Including our homes. I don't like the idea of this in any forested area to tell you the truth. It is literally playing with fire. It seems odd to me that as environmentally concerned as our County is, that they would be so willing to trash such a beautiful place with noise, garbage and the risk of torching everything.

5) Having all this near our home would most certainly impact the value of all of our houses as well. I know I would think twice before purchasing a house when I would be listening to the racket all day and into the night. Who wants to listen to that?

In closing, I would ask you to put yourselves in our shoes and ask if this is something you would want moving into the neighborhood you grew up, and live in. I would bet the answer is no.

I understand the need for something like this, but this is not the right place to put it for the reasons I've stated above.

Please don't ruin our beautiful and peaceful neighborhood.

I have been a property owner in Whatcom County for nearly 25 years. My wife Jennifer and I raised our sons here, we all work here and we all play here. We are active mountain bikers who are involved in that community. Jennifer is a second grade teacher and became an IMBA Certified Guide so that she could take kids, and parents, out on the local trails after school. Over the years, I have volunteered building and maintaining mountain bike trails on Galbraith Mountain. Because of our love of Mountain Biking, we travel around the western states every summer and have experienced some amazing trails and some amazing places. Many of these places have co-existing, recreational resources for motorized users in both working **and** non-working forests.

Crested Butte, Hood River, Salmon, Oakridge, Fruita, Jarbidge, Park City, Winthrop, Moab, La Grand and so many more, have nearby trails that allow legal, motorized access for Dirt bikes, ATV's and 4x4's. These are places on the coast, the deserts, the forests and the mountains. Wet places and dry places. These are fun places to go and to play and to stay and to spend money - places people are happy to be. The residents of Bellingham, and its' visitors, deserve to have a similar experience in the place they live and visit.

This variance is not asking to allow for motorized use in the pristine places of Whatcom County. We are not asking to tread on "Sky Islands" or wheelie across mountain meadows - these are the working forests of the county that we are asking for access into. These are the 'log factories', to be crass, providing money for our societal needs and recreation for the areas' residents and visitors. These places all have roads and trails and heavy logging, mining and other uses, and have had for nearly a hundred years, and they deserve to be opened up and enjoyed by everybody. Not just the people whose uses we may align ourselves with. There needs to be places for each and all of us, because we all have a stake in access for all. We are involved, we are responsible, we are productive, and we are generous. And we

deserve a place to play.

Motorized users do not deserve to be excluded. Because certain groups think that we may be a small minority (not true) or decide that they don't like how we choose to recreate, doesn't give them a right to to say NIMBY. We all pay taxes and are your neighbors and deserve no less than any other. We are responsible and safe users and allowing us a legal place to recreate, will remove the pressure for unsanctioned use in other unauthorized places, while engendering a sense of inclusion and involvement in making the places we come to play, better than they were previously left. I know many responsible motorized users who bring truck- loads of trash out of our woods, and none that leave trash there. I know many who have come to other people's aid or responded to emergencies or have helped in many other ways. We will be involved in the stewardship of these places with our time, our resources, and our love for their appropriate use and preservation.

Allowing the DNR to proceed with its' thoughtful and studied plan, will help make Whatcom County a better, more valuable place, both now and in the future. Whatcom County is a huge and beautiful place and there should be adequate space set aside for all legitimate users.

I ask that you support the approval of this change.

As a resident of Deming, WA and Whatcom County, rather than reiterating the significant points Tracy Petroske

makes in her email to each of you,

I would like to join Tracy and many other Whatcom County concerned citizens in requesting that

the council to NOT put an ORV-use proposal on the docket for discussion

and

Off-road Vehicle Parks be specifically excluded in the Proposed Amendment from DNR's Motorized Trail System.

Thank you for your attention to these requests,

I am a resident of Bell Creek Logging Road, a private road which runs up Sumas Mountain and then onto DNR land.

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed ORV-use, PLN 2018-0004.

While I wholeheartedly support the use of public lands for recreational use, and applaud the divided sections (i.e. horses not in the same area as mountain bikes, etc), I have come to negatively view the ORV park proposal. Please note that I was originally somewhat inclined to accept the ORV park, believing the area to be *'already wrecked by illegal ORV use, so make it legal and regulate it'*. But after the past month of trekking through the areas proposed in Concept Maps D and E, researching the outcome which would set this as a legal precedent for further sites in the state, language in the proposals, and discussing with (literally) several dozen community members, I now *resolutely oppose* this inclusion.

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It would be worthwhile evidence to ask every person wishing to open the land to ORV use to reveal the address of their residence. Likewise, collect the addresses of those opposing the ORV designation. My suspicion is that a hefty percentage of the supporters live out of area - and very likely, out of county. It would therefore have no negative effects on *their* personal quality of life. Whereas opponents of this proposal live in our county, in our foothills, and this activity would greatly impact and reduce the quality of life for everyone who lives within an enormous radius around the proposed site(s).

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Regarding DNRs attempt to create ORV trail areas in Whatcom County: As a Fire/EMS responder with WCFD in the east county for over 15 years I have been on many ORV incidents and have seen many serious injuries

due to these on a fairly regular basis, some involving fatalities.

These are toned as motor vehicle incidents, but unlike our usual MVAs, these often involve MINORS driving at very high speed, often with little or no protection, on extremely dangerous roads and terrain.

The industry seems to frequently tout this as a "family friendly sport." One of my first fire calls as a volunteer was a long drive up

a logging road to perform CPR without success on a 15 year old who lost control of an ATV and sustained major trauma--it made an impression. It has only been reinforced many, many times since. There is usually no cell coverage where these incidents occur, so often it

is quite delayed before we even hear about an incident, and then information is sometimes sketchy or inaccurate, so it is often difficult locating the patient (or where they left the road or trail) and then involves a difficult and lengthy process of accessing them and safely extricating them.

It usually demands all available of our already stretched volunteer EMS crews out in the rural county, impacting the ability to respond to other calls by the public for the

Fire and EMS system. Realistically, the WSO response with Search and Rescue (also volunteer and based in Bellingham) is a MUCH slower response. If you plan to allow this rule change, I think you all have

to know our current experience will be magnified terrifically (I wonder if DNR has done any projections for you on those potential

numbers and how they will impact local fire districts. Do NOT rely on this industry for such projections!).

I should not neglect to point out again also that I feel DNR is woefully ignoring the obvious potential impacts on our increasing fire season risks out here. For an agency that in my experience seems slow to respond, and often too overtaxed to respond, to current fires we experience (expecting local volunteer agencies to fill in for them for far longer than they should be required), I find it extremely

concerning that they seem so anxious to add a huge new probability of fire starts. Working in USFS Fire many years on National Forests, I

noted the trails where ORV use was permitted were always eroded beyond repair and surrounded by lots of self made side trails of destruction

with abundant evidence of illegal campsites and campfires in what prior to the ORV allowance were pristine meadows. Normal hiking trails bear NO resemblance to this.

This just feels like DNR is caving to a very loud (pun intended) user group who has lots of funding and active advocates with political savvy, and is attempting to foist an ill conceived and flawed plan on our county, whose agencies will then be tremendously burdened in dealing ALONE with all of the obvious and foreseeable negative consequences. Please refrain from ever putting this ill advised plan

on the docket.

ORV use on public lands is completely incompatible with other recreational uses. The amount of land open to ORV's should be limited. Opening any DNR land to ORV's should be very limited.

I urge you to vote against the amendment PLN 2018-0004.

Attached please find a pdf describing a concern I have regarding OHV usage on DNR lands, potentially

creating a public health hazard from naturally-occurring asbestos. This is the same asbestos that Whatcom County is dealing with at the Swift Creek Superfund Site near Everson.

I submitted an earlier comment also in opposition to PLN 2018-0004, but this new one raises an entirely different subject. Thank you.

I am writing to encourage you to oppose the above-referenced plan to allow ORV use on DNR state lands within Whatcom County. I live on the east flank of Sumas mountain near Welcome, and will be very negatively impacted by the Concept D and Concept E plans being proposed for the Bay to Baker development. ORV's are a very loud, very obtrusive, and very damaging form of entertainment that takes a big toll on the land. A few second google search on ORV areas in Washington State will show exactly what I am referring to, and I am copying one of literally hundreds of internet images of similar damage created in the name of fun for the few. This is not some accidental byproduct of ORV use: this is EXACTLY what ORV users come to do. It is difficult for me to image turning over state lands in the county to this level of abuse. All that can follow is a degraded landscape subject to erosion, landsliding, tree death, and human-caused fires. Why? What is the counter-balancing upside?

Beyond the localized damage, I think we need to consider the long term message that such an approval would send. In an era in which we all see every day the consequences of fossil-fuel induced climate change, do we really want to encourage a gas-guzzling activity on state lands? Do we want to develop an industry that entertains the few and burdens the rest of us with climate change? Approving ORV use on state lands in Whatcom county would create a whole new generation of ORVers: bigger, stronger, and more damaging, in the future. This would be a serious mistake.

I hope you will put a stop to this plan by refusing to even put it on the County Council docket. Some ideas are so bad they should be stopped before they have a chance to grow.

I am writing in opposition to ORV use on DNR state lands. I live on the east flank of Sumas mountain near Welcome, and will be very negatively impacted by the Concept D and Concept E plans being proposed for the Bay to Baker development. ORV's are a very loud, very obtrusive, and very damaging form of entertainment that takes a big toll on the land. A few second google search on ORV areas in Washington State will show exactly what I am referring to, and I am copying one of literally hundreds of internet images of similar damage created in the name of fun for the few. This is not some accidental byproduct of ORV use: this is EXACTLY what ORV users come to do. It is difficult for me to imagine turning over state lands in the county to this level of abuse. All that can follow is a degraded landscape subject to erosion, landsliding, tree death, and human-caused fires. Why? What is the counter-balancing upside? I know their are members of the committee who strongly favor such usage. Perhaps they should buy private land for their hobby rather than trying to get the state to give them p[ublic property.

Beyond the localized damage, I think we need to consider the long term message that new sanctioned ORV areas send. In an era in which we all see every day the consequences of fossil-fuel induced climate change, do we really want to encourage a gas-guzzling activity on state lands? Do we want to develop an industry that entertains the few and burdens the rest of us with climate change? Approving ORV use on state lands would create a whole new generation of ORVers: bigger, stronger, and more damaging, in the future. This would be a serious mistake.

I am in strong opposition to any options that allow ORV usage on state lands.

RE: PLN 2018-0004

*Proposed Zoning Amendment to Whatcom County from the DNR for development of motorized trails on DNR land

To Whatcom County Council Members, DNR Representatives Planning Committee:

I am writing this letter to oppose the amendment for ORV trails on DNR lands.

My husband and I have lived in the Deming area for over 15 years. We choose to live in this area because of the natural beauty, peace and privacy it offers. When I heard of the proposal of an amendment to change to usage of the DNR lands, I was immediately concerned and opposed to such a proposal. On our own road, there has been road access to the mountain known as Van Zandt dike, that many of us on the road hike or horseback ride regularly. Over the years, we have continually encountered make-shift fire pits littered with debris, empty alcohol containers, broken glass, and gun shots have been heard with animals killed and left to rot. The DNR had to install a gate to stop access for any motorized vehicles. Nobody patrols or monitors these areas and the problems are upsetting and unacceptable.

I urge you to **oppose** this zoning amendment and continue to maintain the beauty, natural resources and quiet recreation that we enjoy, along with protecting our property values and the peace that we all treasure!

I am a resident of Whatcom County, an avid outdoorsman and a biologist. I have traveled widely throughout the west and seen (as well as experienced) first hand the destruction that off-road vehicles can cause as well as the impact they can have on one's enjoyment of the outdoors. I'm sure they are often fun and often useful; they have their place in public lands. Their place is not every place, however, and opening public lands to them should be carefully considered. The same can be said for mountain bikes and, indeed, any and all uses of public lands. Please consider this issue carefully.

Hello I am a community member and a resident of East Whatcom County, I live in Van Zandt right below the dike and on 17 acres of DNR land trust forest.

I am very concerned about the environmental impact of allowing ORV trails in the forests. I and all my neighbors are VERY OPPOSED to zoning amendment PLN 2018-0004 which would allow motorized trail systems on commercial DNR land in Whatcom County. It would be detrimental to plant and animal ecosystems important to the health of the forests and surrounding land. It would be loud and disturb people and animals living nearby.

Please take into account the negative impact this amendment will have on our community out here and that the majority of us oppose it. Thank you.

I am a resident of Whatcom County - address 43 Cascade Lane, Bellingham, WA - my family moved to this beautiful corner of the country in 2004. I am writing to let you know that I unequivocally oppose zoning amendment PLN 2018-0004 to allow motorized trails systems on DNR commercial forest land in Whatcom County as part of the Bay to Baker recreation plan.

I have written to each of the Whatcom Co Council Commissioners, but I was also told that even if the County Council does not approve the ill-advised plan to the detriment of our many pristine natural resources, that the DNR could override that decision. Please abandon any ATV Park, allowing for more noisy, polluting fossil fuel to recreate in land that belongs to all of us.

I am very concerned about the proposed ATV Park on Sumas Mountain, or for that matter any place in our pristine Cascades.

Please know that preserving Mother Nature is vitally important for so many reasons. Introducing ATV on trails and forests will destroy the peace and beauty, negatively impact conservation of plants and soil erosion, water and air quality, as well wild life. For those of us who love the quiet, natural beauty and recreation of hiking and backpacking hearing, seeing the impact of ATV is a disaster.

The County Council is charged with preserving our natural resources, and bio- diversity, not eroding them.

I would like to see a focus on ways to cut back on use of fossil fuel, not increase more opportunity for loud, polluting recreating.

Mountain biking does not disturb me as much, but it has made Galbraith Mountain unusable for any other use. Hikers are putting their life endanger of some speeding mountain biker running them over.

I urge you to not open up this Pandora's Box. Do not be swayed by the proponents of this ill-advised use of public land.

I am clearly a little late to this subject as I now see that a public meeting was held in Bellingham in 2016 regarding the Baker to Bellingham corridor and land managed by WA state DNR. I have been unable to determine where I can learn about the current status of this planning effort but would like my comments to be included in the public record if at all possible.

Motorized vehicle use (all--ORV, 4 x 4, etc. is incompatible with the vast majority of other uses specifically designated as sanctioned by the Department of Natural Resources on trails open to the public. Not only is motorized vehicle use dangerous to hikers, runners, mountain bikers, birders, and especially horse riders, but it is immensely more degrading to the environment (both the trail and the greater environment of the region. As such, it should have no place on DNR land.

Thank you for including this comment in the public process if at all possible. Any additional information about how the public can engage with this work would be welcome.

Here is a comprehensive government report on the effects of ORVs. It covers many of the different issues posed by intense ORV use.

Please include my letter of support for Concept A Motorized recreation on Sumas and Red Mountains

I support the Committee's Concept A, especially its proposal to have motorized areas on Sumas

and Red Mountains.

Whatcom County has a great need for legitimate motorized recreational areas. Having designated, technically challenging areas of sufficient size will make riding safer and make riding safer and easier to regulate for environmental concerns. It will also increase the feeling of ownership, encouraging people to take care of "their" area.

It's great that the Committee is really considering supporting ALL forms of sport in Whatcom County. As someone who enjoys many forms of recreation, I look forward to sharing space with both motorized and non-motorized enthusiasts.

I live in Bellingham, WA, and I'm writing to state my opposition to allowing a motorized trail system on DNR forest land in Whatcom county. There are a number of problems with this amendment including:

- 1) increased pressure on fish and wildlife habitat (e.g., leaking of oil/gas into streams)
- 2) increased probability of fire due to sparks from tailpipes, etc, which would damage forest lands
- 3) increased pressure on DNR staff resources because of the need to monitor these trails (e.g., does DNR have the budget to track impacts, etc of these activities).

Again, I'm in opposition to this amendment and I strongly encourage you to not allow its passage.

I live on North fork Rd. in Deming. As a resident of Whatcom county since 1984 I am unequivocally opposed to the amendment PLN2018-0004 to allow motorized trails systems on DNR commercial forest lands in Whatcom County.

Having seen the mess made at the unauthorized ORV at the end of North fork Rd. I could not believe DNR would even consider the proposition. Watersheds and wildlife habitat would sustain unmitigated damage.

Recently we submitted a letter asking that the DNR and the Whatcom County Council not allow the use of ORV motorized trails in Whatcom County's recreational planning. That letter addressed our personal property and the damage that we have been dealing with over several years from ORV users.

This letter looks at the broader mission of DNR. We plan on attending all meetings regarding this amendment and will continue to write letters and participate as outdoor recreation users and as property owners in Whatcom County who support all other forms of recreational activity on DNR lands **except** ORVs.

Letter:

Taken from Hillary Franz's DNR web page 02/19/2018

"Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz knows the threat that climate change poses to our state lands and waters.

A recent [Climate Risk Assessment](#) – the work of DNR and an Expert Council on Climate & Environmental Change - warns of increased frequency and extent of wildfires; increased coastal flooding; summer water shortages, lack of water for agriculture; decreases in shell-forming organisms, such as oysters; increases in landslides; and more non-native species.

The Commissioner is calling for our state to adopt a carbon policy that adheres to Four Resilience Principles. These Resilience Principles are intended to guide and inform the statewide debate on carbon policy:

1. Tackle the root cause - carbon pollution - and invest in reduction efforts
2. Strengthen the health and resilience of our lands, waters, and communities
3. Accelerate carbon sequestration
4. Invest in and incentivize solutions with multiple benefits

"Smart carbon policy means that we must both reduce carbon pollution and strengthen our communities. We must make this a win-win proposition for all Washingtonians." ~ Commissioner Franz"

Using the Commissioner's own principles – how do off road vehicle (ORV) motorized trails meet any of these four principles?

1. Carbon pollution and reduction efforts - **ORV motorized trails on DNR lands increases carbon pollution.**
2. Strengthen the health and resilience of our lands, waters, communities – **ORV motorized trails on DNR land destroys the land, destroys the water (salmon and trout feeding streams and creeks) and destroys the surrounding communities because of 24-hour noise, carbon pollution, trash dumping, illegal gunfire and increased wildfire risks.**
3. Accelerate carbon sequestration – **ORV motorized trails on Sumas Mountain and Red Mountain or anywhere on DNR land does nothing to sequester carbon emissions – it increases carbon emissions first from the pick-up trucks bringing in the ORVs and then from the ORVs. Huge trucks and trailers from Seattle, the eastern part of Washington State and other Washington counties as well as other states and Vancouver BC will come to our remote wild lands. All of this leads to the dumping of toxic air on our residential communities, our forests, our schools, our farms and our wildlife.**
4. Invest in and incentivize solutions with multiple benefits – **The only groups that will benefit from this proposed amendment for ORV motorized trails in DNR lands are the most destructive recreational groups. The surrounding residents will deal with the increased illegal activities, with trash dumping, with noise pollution 24- hours/day, with increased CO2 emissions, with increased fire danger, with increased wildlife poaching and harassment moving animals into residential areas and creating safety risks, with increased wildfire risks, with increased polluted and damaged stream beds, with increased land erosion, with increased illegal tree cutting to make new illegal roads and the list goes on...and on...**

Residents will have to live with DNRs poor recreational plan allowing ORVs into our back yards and surrounding forests essentially on their own. On their own because of limited DNR law enforcement officers, limited local law enforcement officers and limited fire and EMS resources.

Please consider other recreational activities on DNR lands and follow Commissioner Franz's Four Resilience Principles.

I wish to be a party of record for any further action. Notice via email. thommymac@hotmail.com

Does the DNR currently have adequate coverage for policing the lands under their management and if so could you provide their man power and budget.

Does **Washington State Growth Management Act** (GMA) prescribe environmental responsibility and stewardship of lands located in Whatcom county?

Will there be a demand on already strained Fire and healthy safety services existing in Whatcom county?

As there will be potential heighten fire hazard in remote areas is there a monetarily supported plan to accommodate safe operation and enforcement and provide assurance and compensation by DNR to neighboring land holders for any precipitant damage occurring?

Has Whatcom county closed down private rider parks?

Drivers of land and resource degradation and mitigation strategies need to be established when considering such a stray from recreational use of existing road ways. All these proposal/ conceived plans (including the Van Zandt dike) need to address the big picture of preservation and stewardship prior to petition of council to changing rules created by WA state mandate of GMA. Does it make sense to have a variance in our resource tax base without completed strategy and researched outcomes?

There are many more points to be made. And questions to answer.

I trust many of the questions you may have considered previously to any votes.

I would vote to send the DNR back to the drawing board to direct a full attestation of viability, monetary, need and public expense prior to even considering council consideration.

This proposal is incomplete.

I'm a trail runner in northern California. I know, I'm a long ways away from Bellingham and Mt. Baker, so why would I be interested in this trail system coming into existence? I run a lot of trail Ultras (any race distance beyond a marathon - actually I've finished over a hundred of them) and enjoy traveling to experience new mountains, different areas, and discovering new scenery and challenges. I generally travel to about 7 to 10 different venues each year, and of course it's always a tough decision as to which areas to visit. Two years ago I drove to the Gifford-Pinchot National Forest near Randall WA, for the Bigfoot 200-mile event, and really enjoyed the remoteness and beauty of the region and hope to go back. I've never raced in Canada, but there are many events that appeal to me in the Whistler, Banff, and Squamish areas and I plan to make several trips to the PNW in the upcoming years. Coupled with the fact that I've known Dan for over 10 years (we met at a 100-mile race on Oahu in 2007), I have friends to visit and would love to participate in his Mt. Baker Marathons (but would ONLY do that if it was primarily on trails and not much pavement - I have no interest in road running). So I thought it would be relevant for me to also show support

for this trail system to be included in the DNR recreation plan - to let you know that out-of-towners would travel to your area to experience and enjoy your mountain trails. There are actually a lot of Californians who make the journey to PNW regularly to run trails (not only race events, but also for hiking/fastpacking such as on the Wonderland Trail around Mt. Ranier), so it's reasonable to include out of state runners as potential recreators on your trail system. Thanks for considering those of us far to the south of you, and I hope to come visit soon!

I am a resident of Bell Creek Logging Road, a private road which runs up Sumas Mountain and then onto DNR land.

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed ORV-use, PLN 2018-0004.

While I wholeheartedly support the use of public lands for recreational use, and applaud the divided sections (i.e. horses not in the same area as mountain bikes, etc), I have come to negatively view the ORV park proposal. Please note that I was originally somewhat inclined to accept the ORV park, believing the area to be '*already wrecked by illegal ORV use, so make it legal and regulate it*'. But after the past month of trekking through the areas proposed in Concept Maps D and E, researching the outcome which would set this as a legal precedent for further sites in the state, language in the proposals, and discussing with (literally) several dozen community members, I now *resolutely oppose* this inclusion.

In short (you've heard many details of these points from other residents), my concerns rest with:

1. Noise nuisance
2. Boundary/Trespassing Compliance
3. Forest degradation/mudslides/erosion
4. Resource Stress (Fire/Police/EMS)
5. Fire safety
6. Trash/Dumping/Human Waste
7. Stream and Creek impact
8. Wildlife impact (physical and stress-related impacts)
9. The setting of legal precedent to open even more areas throughout the state
10. The (horrifying) potential to open these areas to commercial ORV events and the devastation and impact resulting from them.

Additional Points to note:

The Whatcom County definition in the CCRPOSP of Multi-purpose trails for hiking, biking and horse riding and DOES NOT include off-road ATV, motorcycle, and ORV parks.

Recall there have been two prior attempts in Whatcom County to establish ORV parks, which failed to gain approval. While a small group of vocal people vehemently wish to open an ORV area for themselves, the local community has clearly demonstrated a desire NOT to have this activity legalized anywhere near us. Noise-decibel studies near one of the proposed sites where ORV riders were illegally riding clearly documented unacceptable nuisance to neighboring areas within several miles of individual machines.

It is to be suspected that a great number of those wishing to open the land to this noisy, disrupting, and disturbing recreational activity do not live here.

It would be worthwhile evidence to ask every person wishing to open the land to ORV use to reveal the address of their residence. Likewise, collect the addresses of those opposing the ORV designation. My suspicion is that a hefty percentage of the supporters live out of area - and very likely, out of county. It would therefore have no negative effects on *their* personal quality of life. Whereas opponents of this proposal live in our county, in our foothills, and this activity would greatly impact and reduce the quality of life for everyone who lives within an enormous radius around the proposed site(s).

Finally, please make note of **WCC 20.97.186** which holds the concept of general welfare, safety, health and well-being of the entire community as a whole.

"Illegal spot zoning" is defined as a zoning action by which a smaller area is singled out of a larger area or district and specially zoned for a use classification totally different from, and inconsistent with, the classification of surrounding land and not in accordance with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Spot zoning is zoning for private gain designed to favor or benefit a particular individual or group and not the welfare of the community as a whole. Opening this ORV site seems tantamount to "Illegal spot zoning".

In contrast, opening up these lands to non-destructive user groups - hikers, bikers, hunters, mushroom pickers, bird watchers, skiers, fishermen, foragers, and paragliders, all hoping to glory in a peaceful parcel of nature - is appropriate. Destroying it in the interest of a minority user group who already have other places to play nearby (Skagit county, etc) would be a travesty that cannot be repaired once they have ripped it apart.

In summary:

1. I urge the council to NOT put an ORV-use proposal on the docket for discussion.
2. I ask that Off-road Vehicle Parks be specifically excluded in the Proposed Amendment from DNR's Motorized Trail System.

RE: PLN 2018-4000

Topic: Data regarding fire hazard from ORV use

"During the current wildfire situation, it's crucial that we do everything we can to prevent human-caused wildfires. Temporarily removing off-road vehicles from the back country is another component of our wildfire prevention strategy."

- Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, BC, Canada (2017 fire season)

To Whatcom Council Members:

Verifiable Data: *May I ask that you please use discretion when reviewing data or statistics given to you. Please require that anyone giving you information must ALSO provide a verifiable source. And finally, check that source before allowing it to be taken into consideration. If you do not have time to check the sources, I personally am happy to do so – on both sides of the issue equitably. Please feel free to send me any evidence or documentation you wish to have confirmed and I will put it as my first priority to research for you.*

If anyone – from either side of the issue – provides ANY data on fire statistics, erosion, air quality, noise, etc., without also providing the verifiable source with links to that source, *the data should be considered hearsay and likely to be fabricated, exaggerated or entirely false.*

Note: For the purposes of this letter, I will use ORV to designate all off-road motorized vehicle use.

Note: In the interest of your personal time, you can simply read each **red** title with the 1-2 sentence synopsis following it. Supportive evidence is taken directly from each source listed. In addition, take-home messages are either in **black** or **red** boldface.

Why: It has come to my attention that someone might have provided ‘statistics’ regarding the number of fires caused by ORV activity compared to the number of fires caused by hikers. In fact, I do not know if that information (real or otherwise) was indeed brought to the attention of the council (*it could be hearsay*) but resolved to learn about it myself in either case.

It is, in fact, quite difficult to find legitimate, definitive statistics on the actual number of fires caused distinctly by either of these potential sources. If data was provided to the council:

- “ I encourage you to make it available for public review, and
- “ I also request that such information is verified before using it to make any decisions.
- “ I am happy to volunteer my time to corroborate the data if needed.

Summary of Findings: Because it appears that fire statistics are not compiled based on type of recreation involved ⁽¹⁾, I am unable to quantify the number of wildfires caused respectively by ORVs or hikers at this time. Analysis is further complicated by the fact that, according to the Washington State Conservation and Recreation Office, ⁽²⁾ hikers (broadly defined to include photographers, wildlife viewers etc.) outstrip ORV users (also broadly defined) by a ratio of 9:1 in terms of total participants and total days participating. This makes fire to fire comparisons between user groups more difficult because user density masks the actual impact of any particular user categories. **However, even a cursory search makes it abundantly clear that professional forest managers, as well as fire suppression agencies, overwhelmingly view ATVs/ORVs as a high firerisk.**

(1) <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/>

(2) <https://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/ORTF/EconomicAnalysisOutdoorRec.pdf>

Evidence that ORV’s Increase Fire Risk #1 (Washington, Idaho, Wisconsin): During level 2 fire danger, forest managers ban 3 activities; **open fires, smoking, and off-road vehicles.** Note that off-road motorized use is put in the same risk category as smoking and open fires. Hiking and other backcountry use is NOT restricted, indicating these forests do not see evidence that hikers create the same level of fire hazard as ORV’s.

<http://www.idahofireinfo.com/p/fire-restrictions.html>

<http://bark-out.org/content/mt-hood-national-forest-issues-campfire-road-vehicle-restrictions>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestFire/causes.html#equipment>

Evidence that ORV’s Increase Fire Risk #2 (Alberta): In a study initiated upon the request of Alberta Environmental Protection to investigate the relationship between all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and fire ignition within Alberta’s forests, the introduction begins, “Both industrial and recreational forest use in Alberta has

increased over the last decade. The number of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs)¹ has also increased as people require or desire access into areas with no roads or poor road conditions. Unfortunately, **the number of wildfires caused by the ATVs has also increased.**

<http://wildfire.fpinnovations.ca/39/AD-3-44.pdf>

-----**Evidence that ORV's Increase Fire Risk #3 (British Columbia)** During the 2017 years fires in British Columbia, all **Off-Road Vehicle use was prohibited because of the known risk of fire. Hiking and other backcountry use was NOT restricted during this time**, indicating the province did not see evidence that hikers created a fire hazard but ORV's do create one.

Source: Provincial Wildfire Coordination Centre, 250 312-3051, Fire Information

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017FLNR0208-001391>

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/forests-lands-natural-resource-operations-and-rural-development>

Government of BC News Release:

Title: Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development Subtitle: Off-road

vehicles restricted in backcountry

Effective at noon (Pacific time) on Friday, Aug. 4, 2017, the operation of any off-road vehicle for recreational purposes on Crown land will be prohibited throughout the Cariboo Fire Centre, Kamloops Fire Centre and Southeast Fire Centre. In addition, all on-highway vehicles must remain on defined road surfaces.

This step is being taken to help prevent human-caused wildfires and protect public safety. The operation of any off-road vehicles in these regions during the current wildfire situation creates a potential wildfire risk. While jeeps, trucks and other on- highway vehicles are permitted on designated roads, they are not allowed off-road.

Anyone found in contravention of this off-road vehicle prohibition may be issued a violation ticket in the amount of \$767. If the contravention causes or contributes to a wildfire, the person responsible may be ordered to pay all firefighting and associated costs.

To report an off-road violation, call the RAPP line at: 1 877 952-7277.

Quote: Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – “During the current wildfire situation, it’s crucial that we do everything we can to prevent human-caused wildfires. Temporarily removing off-road vehicles from the backcountry is another component of our wildfire prevention strategy.”

Source: TMTVnews.com http://bctvkootenays.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Off_road_ATV_Backroads_Back_road_restriction_BC_gov.png

During last year’s ban on ORV use during high fire season, citizens asked for clarification about what activities were permitted. ORV’s were specifically cited as increasing fire hazard. Camping (which typically includes hiking and cooking) were NOT considered an increased risk and were still allowed. No one was allowed in the Cariboo area because it was entirely closed for active wildfire danger.

TITLE: OFF-ROAD VEHICLES BANNED IN THE BACKCOUNTRY OF SOUTHEAST BC TO HELP PREVENT WILDFIRES

Subtitle: Off-road vehicles restricted in backcountry to help prevent human-caused wildfires
August 4, 2017

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, along with the BC Wildfire Service has banned off-road vehicles on crown land because of the fire risk.

Some people have asked the BC Wildfire Service for clarification on whether current off-road vehicle prohibitions apply to forest service roads. Here is their clarification:

This step is being taken to help prevent human-caused wildfires and protect public safety. The operation of any off-road vehicles in these regions during the current wildfire situation creates a potential wildfire risk. While jeeps, trucks and other on- highway vehicles are permitted on designated roads, they are not allowed off-road.

Links to other BC sources related to ATV/ORV restrictions during fire season:

<http://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/restriction-put-in-place-for-off-road-vehicles-in-b-c-backcountry>

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017FLNR0208-001391>

Evidence that ORV's Increase Fire Risk #4 (Florida): In March 2017, the Florida Forest Service warned residents to avoid wildfires caused by vehicles after a brush fire was caused by an ATV. Note that the **fires are not only caused by ATV rollovers (infrequent) but also by loose chains, exposed wheel rims, hot engine compartments, and old catalytic converters. A spark arrestor does NOTHING to control all these other sources of ignition.**

Source: Florida Forest Service <https://www.tcpalm.com/story/news/local/2017/03/17/take-precautions-avoid-wildfires-caused-vehicles/99299490/>

Title: Take precautions to avoid wildfires caused by vehicles

A recent brush fire caused by an ATV prompted the Florida Forest Service to warn residents vehicles can cause wildfires. The brush fire west of Riverside Park Drive south of the Barber Bridge started Wednesday after an ATV rolled over, catching dead vegetation on fire. The blaze burned two acres before it was brought under control.

Dead fuels — such as leaves, sticks and twigs — hold far less moisture and pulling off to the side of the road into dead vegetation can ignite a wildfire. *The most common way is when the dead vegetation touches the vehicle exhaust system, including the catalytic converter, which can reach up to 1,400 degrees.*

- A loose safety chain or muffler will send a shower of sparks into dry vegetation.
- Driving on an exposed wheel rim throws sparks. Poorly lubricated wheel bearings can overheat and ignite, and worn-out brakes can drop hot material into the grass.
- Engine compartments can collect debris and ignite a spark. Worn-out catalytic converters can degrade and cast off extremely hot pieces of material. A faulty spark arrestor can shed hot metal.
- Avoid driving your vehicle off the road when it's hot and dry because that will increase your chances of a fire starting. If you drive an off-road vehicle, such as an ATV/UTV or airboat, be aware sparks can fly out through the exhaust system. Equip the vehicle with sparkarrestors.

- Oil and transmission fluid are highly flammable. Make sure there are no leaks.
- Keep a fire extinguisher with you.

Evidence that ORV's Increase Fire Risk, Hikers/Hunters Do Not #5 (more from BC):

During last year's ban on ORV use during high fire season, citizens asked for clarification about what activities were permitted. **ORV's were specifically cited as increasing fire hazard. Hunting was not banned in highway legal vehicles on main well defined roads, only accessing hunting areas via quads, side by sides, or dirt bikes.**

Source: news1130

<http://www.news1130.com/2017/09/12/hunters-reminded-bans-wildfires/>

Hunters reminded about off-road vehicle bans because of wildfires

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – Hunters could cause more problems in the Interior if they aren't careful. The BC Wildfire Service is reminding people about restrictions and bans in place because of this record breaking wildfire season.

According to Fire Information Officer Ryan Turcot, hunters in three specific regions may be affected by off-road vehicle prohibitions. So that means no quads, side by sides, or dirt bikes. He says the rationale behind banning these types of vehicles is that the heat generated from exhaust systems and engines can actually spark a wildfire if it comes into contact with dry brush-off-roads.

The main goal is to ensure public safety. It's also to prevent further human-caused fires from starting.

So what about taking your pick-up truck into the back roads?

"The answer to that is yes, as long as you are staying to those well-defined roads." That means absolutely no off-roading.

"You are still allowed to access the backcountry in most of these areas as long as you're in a highway-ready vehicle," he explains.

Evidence that ORV's Increase Fire Risk #6: A Scientific Research Study Finds That All Terrain Vehicles Are a Cause of Fire Ignition in Alberta Forests. In

2001, ATV's caused 10 wildfires. While helpful, spark arrestors do NOT solve all of the problems associated with ATV-caused fire ignition. ATV-caused fires make up roughly 1.3% of Alberta's fires, and there are, on average, 12 ATV-caused fires every year in that province at the time of this study.

Source: Forest Engineering Research Institute of Canada (FERIC)

<http://wildfire.fpinnovations.ca/39/AD-3-44.pdf>

Title: All terrain vehicles as a cause of fire ignition in Alberta forests

Author Greg Baxter, Wildland Fire Operations Research Centre

Abstract This study was initiated upon the request of Alberta Environmental Protection to investigate the relationship between all-terrain vehicle (ATVs) and fire ignition within Alberta's

forests.

Definition of an ATV: "Any motorized off-highway vehicle 50 inches (1270 mm) or less in overall width, with an unladen dry weight of 600 pounds (275 kg) or less, designed to travel on four low pressure tires, having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control, and intended for use by a single operator and no passenger. Width and weight shall be exclusive of accessories and optional equipment." (Roscommon Equipment Center Program 1990)

Introduction Both industrial and recreational forest use in Alberta has increased over the last decade. The number of all terrain vehicles (ATVs)¹ has also increased as people require or desire access into areas with no roads or poor road conditions.

Unfortunately, **the number of wildfires caused by the ATVs has also increased**. FERIC initiated this study upon the request of Alberta Environmental Protection to investigate the relationship between ATVs and fire ignition within Alberta's forests. The report summarizes the use of ATVs in Alberta and the specific causes of wildfires associated with these vehicles, describes fire history from 1990 to 2002, reports on other agencies' strategies to lower the probability of ATV caused fires in forested areas, and makes recommendations for Alberta.

Specific causes of fires ignited by ATVs: Three causes of fires ignited by ATVs have been identified:

1. Solenoids on winches. Fires have been ignited across Canada when solenoids, associated with winches, have exploded.
2. Hot exhaust systems and machine parts. In a forest environment, grass and other fine fuels such as muskeg vegetation, regularly come into contact with the exhaust systems. In some cases, this material accumulates on a heat source, either the exhaust system or the brakes (ASRD 2002). Smouldering combustion can occur at temperatures as low as 272o C, 3 and the temperature of the exhaust system of ATVs easily reaches the ignition point for grass. Fine fuels on the machine may ignite and fall to the ground, initiating a surface fire. Hot gas coming from the exhaust may also ignite these fuels.
3. Sparks from the exhaust system. Almost all muffler systems can produce sparks. While these do not ignite as many fires as direct contact, they are an occasional cause.

Although not part of the study, fires caused by people using ATVs in forested areas numbered 10 in 2001 alone.

Fire history (1990-2002) Alberta's fire history database (ASRD 2002) was queried and all fires having ATVs listed as responsible for fire cause were extracted. Hot exhaust and burning substance are the specific causes listed in the database.

Since 1990, 6.5 fires per year have been caused directly by ATVs. However, the number of fires in the last four years averages 12, three times the number caused by ATVs in the mid-1990s (Figure 1). ATV-caused fires make up roughly 1.3% of Alberta's fires.

Evidence that ORV's Increase Fire Risk #7: Product Recall and Lack of Compliance by ORV Owners:

Clear evidence that ATVs are known fire hazards. In addition, **even with product recalls, many ORV owners do not turn in their recalled vehicles and the hazards continue.**

Source: Minnesota Post, Feb 21, 2018

<https://www.minnpost.com/economy/2018/02/fire-danger-persists-polaris-road-vehicles>

Title: Fire danger persists for Polaris off-road vehicles, By Christopher Jensen

This story was reported by [FairWarning](#), a nonprofit news organization based in Pasadena, California,

that focuses on public health, consumer and environmental issues.

In recent years, Polaris Industries, the leading producer of off-road vehicles, has recalled hundreds of thousands of its trail machines due to a fire danger. The hazard is linked to at least three deaths and three dozen injuries ranging from minor scrapes to limbs burned so badly amputation was required.

Despite the string of recalls, the problem shows no sign of abating – and may actually be getting worse. Just days before last Christmas, the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a **new warning of a fire danger in at least 133,000 Polaris models**, including some that had been previously recalled and **supposedly fixed**.

Among those injured in Polaris fires was 11-year-old Keylee Latham. The vehicle tipped over, pinning her beneath it as the ROV began leaking gasoline. Then the ROV and Keylee caught fire. Keylee suffered third- and fourth-degree burns over 60 percent of her body. Eventually part of her right leg and her left foot had to be amputated.

The first person killed in a Polaris fire was 15-year-old Baylee Hoaldrige in Utah. She died after being badly burned in July 2015, when a Polaris RZR in which she was a passenger tipped over and caught fire.

The other fatalities came in September 2016 in Utah. Two Arizona women were killed when their Polaris Ranger tipped over, sparking a fire.

“A large and lethal amount of gasoline saturated the area around the occupants, who were restrained in the vehicle by seat belts, and a large fire ignited,” according to a suit filed in Minnesota last year against Polaris by the families of Destiny Dixon and Deborah Swann.

“Within a few seconds, the Ranger was completely consumed in extremely hot and high flames,” the suit said. It added that the women were burned to death before they could release their seat belts.

In its April 2016 recall announcement, which included the model involved in Hoaldrige’s death, the CPSC said it was aware of **at least 160 reports of fires** and 19 injuries with first, second and third-degree burns.

Overall, according to a review of CPSC records by FairWarning, Polaris has recalled about 600,000 vehicles due to fire risk over the last 12 years — with nearly two-thirds of those vehicles, or 374,000, recalled in 2016 and 2017.

Polaris’ vehicles are built in the United States, Mexico and Taiwan. **There’s no single cause for the fires, with recall notices mentioning leaking fuel lines and tanks, overheating engines and inadequate heat shields.**

“I just don’t think there is much effort put into what we would classically call durability testing, you really put it through its paces,” said Mark Arndt, the president of Transportation Safety Technologies and a consultant in motor vehicle fires who has testified in suits against Polaris. But Arndt said there may be other factors, **such as owners making modifications or carrying gasoline in containers, raising the risk of a leak.**

And, on a related note: What other kinds of environmental issues must be considered?

The impacts of OHV activities on wildlife and their habitats are numerous, well documented, and have serious consequences for wildlife: USGS study shows, (among other things), that OHVs can contribute directly to mortality (and possible population declines) of wildlife species through

collisions with vehicles, nest destruction, and collapsing burrows. In addition, noise may alter animal behaviors, breeding populations, the abilities of some species to detect predators. These impacts are especially significant for endangered species.

<https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2007/1353/report.pdf>

2.4 OHV Effects on Wildlife and Habitats: Native, Threatened, and Endangered Species

2.4.1 Section Summary The impacts of OHV activities on wildlife and their habitats are numerous and well documented. Networks of roads and trails fragment habitat, reduce patch size, and increase the ratio of edge to interior. This may have serious consequences for area-sensitive species (those that cannot carry out certain aspects of their life cycles without large blocks of habitat or corridors linking habitat patches), predator-prey relationships, and overall population dynamics. In particular, fragmentation and edges created by OHV routes may have strong effects on animal movement patterns. Precluding or inhibiting animal movements effectively diminishes dispersal to and recolonization in other areas, thus increasing the likelihood of local extirpations. Overall, studies demonstrate that even narrow roads (paved and unpaved) and trails can represent significant barriers to the movements of animals. Reluctance to cross even narrow trails similar in width to routes created by OHV travel may alter or preclude the movements of various species. The cumulative effects of OHV-route networks proliferating across the landscape may have serious ecological consequences for species reluctant to cross OHV routes. Where threatened and endangered species are at risk, understanding their particular responses to roads of varying types, widths, use intensities, and habitat contexts is crucial. OHV routes also generate conditions unlikely to occur in environments unaffected by OHV activity; in turn, these conditions can facilitate range extensions and invasions of nonnative and/or opportunistic species. In addition, OHVs can contribute directly to mortality (and possible population declines) of wildlife species through collisions with vehicles, nest destruction, and collapsing burrows. Noise generated by OHVs also has been found to cause inner ear bleeding. In particular, noise may alter animal behaviors, breeding populations, the abilities of some species to detect predators (through auditory cues), and it can stimulate estivating animals to emerge from their underground burrows at inappropriate times. These factors may result in diminished body mass, reduced productivity, and/or poor survivorship

Evidence that ORV's Irreparably Damage the Environment : Scientific study shows that ATV-damage exceeds the land's ability to rehabilitate itself.

Source US Department of Agriculture <https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/pdf/ATV/TOContents.pdf>

Title: Effects of All-Terrain Vehicles on Forested Lands and Grasslands,
December 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: One goal of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is to provide outdoor recreation opportunities with minimized impacts to natural resources (USDA Forest Service 2006). All-terrainvehicle (ATV) use on public lands is a rapidly expanding recreational activity. An estimated 11 million visits to national forests involve ATV use. This constitutes about 5 percent of all recreation visits to national forests. **When repeated ATV use occurs on undesignated trails, the impacts can exceed the land's ability to rehabilitate itself. The challenge for recreation managers is to address the needs—and conflicting expectations—of millions of people who use and enjoy the national forests while protecting the land's health and integrity.**

In addition to a new travel management policy that restricts travel on undesignated trails, the Forest Service studied previously unused trails to determine the effects of ATV traffic on the natural resource. The study's three main questions were:

- 1) Are natural resources being affected by ATV use;
- 2) to what degree are natural resources being affected;
- 3) and does the ATV's design make a difference in the effects?

To answer these questions on a nationwide scale, the study was performed at seven locations within representative ecoregions. The ecoregions included Desert, High- elevation Western Mountains, Gulf Coastal Plains, and Eastern Broadleaf. Yes, natural resources were affected by ATV traffic. **At all**

seven locations, some portion of the previously unused trail transitioned from a low to medium disturbance class *in 20 to 40 passes*. Medium-disturbance occurred when two of the following three conditions were present: sixty-percent loss of original ground cover, trail-width expansion to 72 inches, or wheel ruts up to 6 inches deep. **At each location some portion of the trail transitioned from medium to high disturbance in 40 to 120 passes.** High disturbance occurred when two of the following three conditions were present: more than 60-percent loss of original ground cover, trail width exceeding 72 inches, or wheel ruts deeper than 6 inches. Disturbance levels were caused by three independent variables: sites, trail features, and vehicles and tires.

There were no statistically significant differences for the sport and utility ATVs equipped with either original equipment manufacturer tires or after market tires with ¾-inch lugs. The study concluded that the impacts from the four combinations of vehicles and tires were indistinguishable.

Following any level of disturbance, **runoff and sediment generated on the ATV trails increased by 56 percent and 625 percent, respectively, compared to the undisturbed forest floor.** ATV trails are high runoff, high-sediment producing strips on a low-runoff, low-sediment producing landscape. Frequent diversions of the trail runoff onto the forest floor will reduce the amount of sediment and runoff as it infiltrates into the forest floor. **The study demonstrated that ATV traffic does have an impact on natural resources.**

(Selected Passages,below) Introduction:

The magnitude of effects varies depending on local characteristics of the landscape including slope, aspect, soil susceptibility to erosion, and vegetation type (Stokowski and LaPointe 2000). **The land may be able to rehabilitate itself after the effects from a few ATV rides across a meadow, but multiple passes across the same area often result in a reduced or complete loss in the capacity for natural rehabilitation.**

Evidence That Many Wildfire are Human Caused – But No Evidence of the Types of Causes: It is alarming that so many wildfires are human-caused, and this source has NO information on the percentage-breakdown of the human causes, but they include cigarettes, arson, vehicles on- and off-road, recreational cooking, etc.

Source: Quinault Division of Natural Resources

<http://qlandandwater.org/increased-wildfire-risks/>

This year, 88 percent of Washington wildfires have been human-caused. As of Aug. 28, 2017, DNR has responded to 598 wildfires this year. Here is a comparison of the last 5 years:

- **2012** – 476 fires for 15,181 acres
- **2013** – 87 fires for 89,992 acres
- **2014** – 676 fires for 191,431 acres
- **2015** – 873 fires for 326,231 acres
- **2016** – 676 fires for 14,246 acres

Evidence That Many Wildfire are Human Caused – But No Evidence of the Types of Causes:

Source: US Fire Administration <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/>