



Quad Riders ATV Association of British Columbia

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Forest and Range Practices Act Improvement Initiative
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
PO Box 9391, Stn Prv Gov't
Victoria, BC
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The Quad Riders ATV Association of BC (ATVBC) is pleased to respond to the request for engagement on the Forest and Range Practices Act Improvement Initiative: Renewal and Resilience.

Upon review of the FRPA Improvement Initiative Discussion Paper and various Forest Practices Board Special Reports referenced below, ATVBC supports landscape-level planning and the Forest Practices Board recommendation that government adopt a tactical forest planning process of intermediate planning between strategic and operational plans throughout BC for a forward thinking, collaborative process that looks beyond individual cutblocks and considers the entire landscape, allowing for meaningful public consultation, while considering all values and planned activities, to proactively plan for the future, not just the immediate short term. ATVBC continues to support local and provincial stakeholder engagement and involvement at all levels of the planning process.

Resources roads are a valuable asset as not only do they provide access to recreational areas, they also have recreational value themselves, as off-road vehicles utilize these roads as routes for connecting trail networks as well as community connectivity for destination riding, so they aren't just a transportation route, they are the actual attraction, and as such are a sustainable tourism product that facilitates ORV tourism and economic development in rural communities (*see Appendix 1 – ORV Tourism Backgrounder*).

When planning resources roads, ATVBC suggests the following values are important to consider:

- new roads and road use - consider the impact on existing trails for recreation and tourism, identify opportunities to increase tourism opportunities by enhancing existing trail networks and resource road connections as part of the forest planning process and rural economic rejuvenation.
- road deactivation – when resource roads are deactivated it could disconnect backcountry recreation and tourism therefore would be beneficial to industry and the public in general for a process to revert a deactivated road back to trail status with less stringent maintenance requirements so that local government and/or user groups can be given the opportunity to enter into stewardship management agreements to maintain and manage it as a trail for recreation and tourism purposes. This would reduce deactivation costs for industry while preserving valuable recreational and tourism assets, allow industry's investment in road building to become a long-term investment in sustainable recreation, tourism, and rural economic development.

The Province could improve transparency and timelines of information regarding proposed plans and objectives by improving the current referral process as currently the Province forwards information to the Outdoor

Recreation Council of BC which in turn distributes the information to their provincial/regional member organizations which in turn distributes to their local members and clubs. This can be a lengthy process to ensure the information is funneled down to the user groups and stakeholders and often the notices aren't distributed by FrontCounterBC until 30 days or less before the response deadline which does not give enough time for meaningful stakeholder consultation.

There has also been circumstances where FrontCounterBC hasn't forwarded any referral information and instead the ORC has been updated by one of its member organizations about an application or project they are working on, and if not for the information provided by the member organization, the ORC would not have been aware of the land tenure application therefore unable to distribute the referral info to the various stakeholders.

The information that would help inform feedback on plans would be maps of cutblocks and roads planned, wildlife habitat areas, trail networks and recreation resource values, broad objectives and desired outcomes.

FRPA sets out objectives and/or regulations for 11 resource values, including recreation however recreation is a somewhat "orphaned" value under FRPA as it is a forest resource however not part of forestry or range activities and does not have its own legislation and government program to fully manage is diverse activities therefore ATVBC suggests legislation be developed to better manage recreation and tourism values.

ATVBC supports improved planning for recreation resource values to mitigate and improve the impacts of forestry activities on recreation resources and looks forward to the findings in the Forest Practices Board Managing Forest Recreation Resources Values Under FRPA Special Report.

With the BC Trails Strategy identifying trails as economic drivers for communities, and the framework of the ORV Act designed to better connect communities, ORV recreation and tourism is creating new and viable economic opportunities for rural communities, which further supports the Province of BC as the leading province in Canadian tourism therefore we feel it is imperative to place a higher priority on forest recreation values so that it is recognized as a vital economic driver for rural communities.

We would like to thank the Province of BC for the opportunity to provide feedback on the sustainable management of BC's forest and range resources and look forward to improved forest and range management for the benefit of all British Columbians.

Sincerely,



Ralph Matthews, President
Quad Riders ATV Association of BC (ATVBC)

Forest Practices Board Tactical Forest Planning: The Missing Link Between Strategic Planning and Operational Planning in BC
<https://www.bcfpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SR58-Tactical-Forest-Planning.pdf>

Forest Practices Board Terms of Reference for a Special Report, Managing Forest Recreation Resources Values under FRPA
<https://www.bcfpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ToR-Managing-Forest-Recreation-Resources-Values-under-FRPA-1.pdf>

Forest Practices Board, Special Report: Opportunities to Improve the Forest and Range Practices Act
<https://www.bcfpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/SR55-Forest-and-Range-Practices-Act.pdf>

ORV Tourism Backgrounder
<https://conta.cc/2I5W19i>

APPENDIX 1

ORV TOURISM BACKGROUNDER

ORV Tourism: Changing Social & Economic Trends for Rural Communities

Properly managed ATV destination tourism utilizes existing infrastructure and sustainable trail networks to maximize the economic development benefits for the whole community while respecting environmental and cultural values.

Many rural communities are interested in making it legally permissible to ride ATVs/SxS on a designated route in town to access fuel/food/lodging to facilitate tourism. The implementation of the Provincial ORV Management Framework, licensing, regulations and operation permits have made this possible.

The Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Act was intended to create safe and more convenient incidental access to public roads and highways to better connect BC's rural communities and support a first-rate ORV trail network, and to allow local governments to expand their trail networks to take advantage of economic development opportunities by way of tourism.

The ORV Management Framework developed by the Province of BC is a cross-government initiative, consisting primarily of the Off Road Vehicle Act, which includes changes to the Motor Vehicle Act to provide safe, convenient, incidental access to highways including free police-issued operation permits.

As intended the ORV Act is creating significant economic opportunities for rural communities to establish inter-community ORV tourism. In BC we have vast crown land and trail networks connecting our rural communities that easily allow communities to establish a designated ORV trail network that has the potential to connect thousands of kilometers of trails and communities.

For an ORV trail network to be a viable tourism product, it must provide riders the ability to access food, fuel, and lodging for extended trips, which means riders must have ride-in access to services in communities along the route. Many rural communities are now issuing the operation permits required to access these services along a designated route.

The ATV rider demographic includes family folks and mature adults, with above average income that enjoys outdoor recreation, cultural activities, dining out, with preference to camping near lakes and rivers, plans trips around specific destinations and are willing to travel. In short, they are they perfect tourist, as many are retired with lots of time to travel, utilizing all four seasons in many areas.

ATV tourism contributes hundreds of millions to the BC economy through product and service purchase from fuel, gear, accessories, to food, accommodation and more. There are roughly 125,000 ATV riders in BC with an additional 495,000 estimated to be within a one day drive of the province. A 2015 economic impact study indicates the combined investment and operating expenditure of ATV/SxS activities in BC has an annual impact of \$502 million.

Vera Vukelich, the Manager Responsible for ORVs, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, issued a [letter dated July 2016](#) advising:

“I would also encourage your members to continue to work collaboratively with local staff from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and local governments on proposals for ORV trails/routes that provide safe incidental access to highways (i.e. ORV travels along portions of the highway right-of-way to access a trail, ability to access gas stations and signage is in place for ORVs that may need to travel on the road for a short distance – of course, local circumstances will vary)”

ORV Tourism: Aligning with Provincial Strategies & Legislation

The Province of BC recognizes that ORVs are increasingly popular across British Columbia prompting development of the Off-Road Vehicle Management Framework for safe and responsible use of ORVs on Crown land.

“Safe and more convenient incidental access to public roads and highways is key to the ORV Management Framework”

ORV tourism is supported by the Province of BC’s ORV Management Framework with improved incidental public road access to better connect BC’s rural communities in support of a first-rate ORV trail network. The BC government continues to implement improved road and highway crossings, in stages, under the Motor Vehicle Act.¹

ORV tourism aligns with the Province of BC Trails Strategy vision of a world-renowned, sustainable network of trails, with opportunities for all, which provides benefits for trail users, communities and the province.²

ORV tourism allows rural communities to embrace the 2019-2021 Strategic Framework for Tourism in BC *“Welcoming Visitors – Benefiting Locals – Working Together”*³ by allowing communities to utilize existing infrastructure and trail networks to support sustainable tourism growth.

ORV tourism supports people and improves the quality of life in rural communities by increasing the economic benefits for the whole community (direct and indirect spending) and enhances communities by establishing trails systems and community connectivity on designated routes to ensure users stay on trails to protect nature and respect the environment.

Based on an independent economic impact study completed by Smith Gunther Associates Ltd in 2015, **Canadians spent \$6.9 billion on activities directly involving ATVs and SxS**, and the ATV/SxS recreation economy in BC generated **\$502 million in consumer spending, 6,000 jobs, \$260 million in labour force income, and \$149 million in tax revenue annually**⁴ (note: 2015 study based on 100,000 machines; ICBC 2019 registration data indicates 20% plus increase, with over 120,000 ATV/SxS’s registered in BC)

¹Province of BC, Off Road Vehicles, ORV Management Framework, Improved Road Access for ORVs
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/crown-land-water/crown-land/crown-land-uses/off-road-vehicles/improved-road-access>

²Province of BC, Trails Strategy for British Columbia
http://www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca/documents/Trail-Strategy-for-BC_V6_Nov2012.pdf

³Province of BC, Strategic Framework for Tourism in BC
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/tourism-immigration/tourism-resources/bcs-tourism-framework>

⁴Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Manufacturers Council, Economic Impact Study of ATVs and SxS
<https://www.cohv.ca/press-releases/canadians-spent-6-9-billion-on-direct-activities-involving-atvs-and-rov-s-in-2015/>
<https://www.cohv.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Reduced-Two-Total-Economic-Impacts-of-ATVs-and-Side-Final-Report.pdf>

