

7. Protecting Your Privilege

Oregon's many great riding areas need respect and care. In some cases, it is simply a matter of treading lightly, staying on designated trails, packing out your own trash and being responsible. In other cases, trails need serious work. Below are a few ways you can keep ATV riding opportunities open.

7.1 Riding Responsibly

Riding responsibly is the best way to protect your ATV access in Oregon. Here are a few tips to ensure ATV continued access:

- Know where you are permitted to ride, and where you are not.
- Respect private property and closed areas. Oftentimes, private property or the private timberlands are located adjacent or within OHV riding areas.
- Riders should never operate their off-road vehicle on private lands unless they have permission from the land owner or the land is posted open for ATV use
- Impacts from OHV use can not be effectively managed and maintained on private lands, and reflect negatively on the perception of OHV users and the sport in general.
- Avoid wet areas and waterways. They are a vital resource for many plants and animals.
- If you must cross water, ride carefully and only at designated spots.
- Cutting switchbacks and taking shortcuts damages trails and causes erosion.
- Share the trails and make friends with other trail users. Respect their rights to the trail, too.
- Respect seasonal closures. They are needed to minimize damage to the trails and allow time for animals to reproduce undisturbed.
- View animals from a distance. They use valuable energy reserves when they flee.
- Know and respect the sound limits where you ride.
- Keep your RPMs and speed down and steady when you are around non-riders.
- Always use a spark arrester. It doesn't sacrifice power, but can save the forest from fires.
- Maintain your exhaust system. Remember, noise doesn't equal horsepower. Too little exhaust backpressure can actually cause less power and engine damage.
- If you "pack it in, pack it out." Trash is an eyesore that endangers wildlife.

Remember, even biodegradable materials such as food scraps take time to break down.

7.2 Tread Lightly!

To leave a good impression, you need the right information. In an age where outdoor recreation is the sport of choice, it is up to us to exercise responsible outdoor practices. Tread Lightly!® has a simple message: Conserve our environment! Make the commitment to follow and promote the Tread Lightly! principles:

Travel Responsibly on land by staying on designated roads, trails and areas. Go over, not around, obstacles to avoid widening the trails. Cross streams only at designated fords. When possible, avoid wet, muddy trails. On water, stay on designated waterways and launch your watercraft in designated areas

Respect the Rights of Others including private property owners, all recreational trail users, campers and others so they can enjoy their recreational activities undisturbed. Leave gates as you found them. Yield right of way to those passing you or going uphill. On water, respect anglers, swimmers skiers, boaters, and divers and those on or near shore.

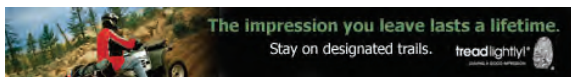
Educate Yourself prior to your trip by obtaining travel maps and regulations from public agencies, planning for your trip, taking recreation skills classes, and knowing how to operate your equipment safely.

Avoid Sensitive Areas on land such as meadows, lakeshores, wetlands and streams. Stay on designated routes. This protects wildlife habitats and sensitive soils from damage. Don't disturb historical, archeological or paleontological sites. On water, avoid operating your watercraft in shallow waters or near shorelines at high speeds.

Do Your Part by modeling appropriate behavior, leaving the area better than you found it, properly disposing of waste, minimizing the use of fire, avoiding the spread of invasive species, and repairing degraded areas.

For more information, contact Tread Lightly! At:

www.treadlightly.org



7.3 Volunteer Trail Work

Please do your part to maintain the trails. Many clubs and land managers organize volunteer trail work parties throughout the year. By participating, you can show your interest and dedication to ATV recreation; you can learn about terrain, soils and trail layout. Working on foot and “in the dirt” can also improve your riding skills. Most work parties end with rides for participants.

Contact your local club or riding area land manager to see what work parties are scheduled. They depend on volunteers like you.

7.4 Land Use — What You Can Do

As an ATV rider your involvement is the greatest resource to keeping land open to ATV recreation. Here are some ways to get involved:

- Attend meetings with OHV clubs, land use managers and legislators. Let the land managers and legislators know why we believe in enjoying our public lands.
- Write to your local state or federal land manager. A simple letter explaining how much you enjoy trail riding can have significant impact. Express your opinion and let your love of the sport be known.
- Write letters to your state and federal representatives. Let them know the importance of supporting motorized recreation opportunities.
- Attend trail maintenance work parties. Contact your local club or the OHV coordinator for more information on trail work parties.