

Massachusetts Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council Meeting #45
Saturday, June 11, 2022
Venue: Notch Visitor Center
1500 West St, Amherst, MA

In Attendance: (* Indicates OHVAC member or sitting in for a member)

Scott Morrill (EoEEA / MA OHV Coordinator)

*Thomas Galvin - MA Law Enforcement representative

*Randy Toth – SAM representative

Richard Janness – New England Outbackers

*Michael White – Mohawk 4x4 / OHV user representative

Susan Smiley – SAM

Terry Sinclair – OHV user / Maine ATV

Chris Hajjar – DCR

Kurt Gaertner – EoEEA

*Michael Toomey – Friends group representative

Jim Caffrey – Not for profit representative

Nick Vanderheld – DCR

Robert Gubala – Patriots ATV

Meeting #45 was chaired by Scott Morrill from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). The meeting was held in the conference room at the DCR Notch Visitor Center in Amherst, MA from 10 AM to 2:00 PM. There were 13 attendees; 4 official committee members. Two other attendees were from EOEEA, 2 were from DCR, 3 were interested OHV users, and 1 was from the DCR Stewardship Council.

EOEEA, Scott Morrill, announced that the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) would provide a free trail building workshop on April, 29, 2023 for 25 participants. This multiday event will be by invitation only. This workshop is primarily for representatives from various OHV Groups, NETRA, SAM, and DCR. Scott expects to invite some legislators and the press as nonparticipating observers. This workshop would allocate perhaps 6 spots to the various organizations. More details will be forthcoming at a later date.

EOEEA will rerelease an updated version of a large community grant program for communities who wish to develop an OHV riding park. Interest has been expressed by some forward looking communities hoping to capitalize on OHV Tourism. These parks would include side-by-sides thereby greatly increasing OHV rider interest.

OHV user groups were reminded of the need to have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to perform trail maintenance on state lands. Randy Toth , the SAM representative, reminded the committee that it took a few years but SAM was finally granted one.

The governor's environmental bond bill was submitted with an amendment to permit a tax break for allowing motorized trails on one's property. It passed the House; but was rejected by the Senate. It will go to a conference committee for resolution.

The SAM representative then gave a briefing covering Tail News, Trail Passes, The Upcoming Sled-Expo, RTP News, Legislation/Government Affairs News, Annual Meeting News and National News (Yellowstone access and the International Snowmobile Congress).

Nick VanderHeld (DCR western Mass OHV Trail Coordinator) reported he had a trail crew assigned to him from April to October to work on OHV trails; many of which would be in Pittsfield State Forest. A few trails would be relocated onto less sensitive areas. He also mentioned that a couple of DCR employees had received a license to operate heavy equipment (i.e., excavators).

The Trustees of Reservations (Notchview Cross Country Ski Area) pointed out that the cheaper easy trail fixes of yesteryear no longer work in today's climate environment. Weather extremes are forcing them to utilize heavy equipment (excavators) to make much more permanent repairs to their trail system. Notchview has grown from a simple cross country ski area into a \$200,000 plus yearly business.

A discussion ensued concerning the possible introduction of a state wide Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) OHV license plate as a method to increase OHV funds. (Perhaps "Save the OHV Trails" vs "Save the Whales"?).

Mike Toomy of the Friends Network pointed out that there was a Resource Management Plan (RMP) underway for the entire DCR south Coastal Zone with email comments to be accepted thru 6/23/2022. There was concern that folks should respond and ask for more and better OHV trails wherever appropriate or they may be forever locked out. He stressed the importance of getting these service requests into the state's system of inputs where they will be preserved.

The next OHVAC meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Tuesday 09-06-2023 at a location TBD.