

OHV Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

September 14th, 2018

Meeting time: 10:00 AM

Location: John W Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St, Greenfield, MA

Opening Presentation: Jackie Mahoney: Director of Recreation, Forestry and Parks for Lewis County, NY: Ms. Mahoney's presentation discussed the challenges, successes and benefits of having a county-wide OHV trail system. Ms. Mahoney noted that Lewis County is the fourth least populated county in New York and its economy relies heavily upon OHV revenue.

New England Trail Riders Association Update: Raffi Peterson: The first event of the year, held by the Pilgrim Sands Riding Club, was "Clarkie's Enduro". The event was low impact due to just one lap, and was very successful. DCR park staff, Freetown PD and MEP worked very well with organizers and the event could serve as a template for successful event planning. The only problem encountered was MEP and NETRA had to wait too long for approval on the special use permit from DCR. The permit was approved only three days before the event. Mr. Peterson stated that from April 11th to the day of the event, Pilgrim Sands RC had logged more than 269 hours of volunteer time in clearing trails. Mr. Peterson also stated that during trail work, volunteers saw smoke and discovered a small forest fire on DCR lands. Mr. Peterson stated that the fire was reported, emergency vehicles responded, and the fire was contained. Pilgrim Sands Riding Club also had a successful grant application to the RTP program and will be repairing an OHV parking area at Freetown State Forest.

Department of Conservation and Recreation Update: Nick Vanderheld Mr. Vanderheld discussed that there were a few, brief delayed OHV trail openings at DCR locations due to wet, muddy conditions. Mr. Vanderheld also stated that the DCR trail crew have been pulling in material back onto the trails that had been pushed off, are looking at some new equipment in an effort to increase tread repair capabilities, and hope to hire three more, RTP-funded crew members within the next two weeks.

Massachusetts Environmental Police: (MEP) Captain Merri Walker Captain Walker supplied handouts displaying OHV registration numbers, OHV citations issued, OHV accident reports, and OHV safety classes held from January 1st to May 31st. There was a discussion on some of the prominent trends in serious OHV crashes, which were no helmet and the presence of alcohol. A concern was addressed on whether there was an "outlaw" mentality of some riders because there are not enough designated riding opportunities and if they are already "riding illegally"

then there is no point in following the rest of the laws and regulations. A similar issue was referenced regarding dog owners not cleaning up or leashing dogs near Worcester because there was a lack of dog parks.

Other Comments: Committee Members and Public Input Terry Sinclair raised the suggestion of Massachusetts providing a map of the state with all of the OHV trails highlighted providing a better understanding of the places available to ride.

Michael White of Mohawk 4x4 stated that the website for the state is difficult to navigate and there exists a problem of people being able to find relevant information such as riding areas, grants available and maps.

Colin Novick of Greater Worcester Land trust suggested EEA create a grant, similar to the one which exists for municipalities, where there is funding available to non-profits interested in purchasing land to protect which permits OHV use.