

OHV Advisory Committee Meeting
September 5th, 2017

Meeting time: 10:00 AM

Location: 198 Purgatory Rd, Sutton, MA 01590

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs: (EoEEA): Kurt Gaertner

Mr. Gaertner briefed the committee on OHV fund expenditures, as well as future expenditures, which would be needed in order to fulfill the mandated 25 percent requirement for riding opportunities. The approximate expenditures required to meet the 25 percent requirement figure to be \$600,000.00 over the next two years. Mr. Gaertner also announced revenue from OHV registration in Massachusetts, and what we might project to be registration revenue moving forward. Committee members voiced the need for more riding opportunities and Mr. McCray, the representative for MA Trail Riders, stated that people were purchasing vehicles in other States due to a lack of places to ride in Massachusetts, especially UTV's, and that would impact revenue from registrations. Mr. Gaertner also announced the successful hire of EoEEA's new OHV Coordinator, Scott Morrill. Mr. Gaertner also noted hopes of backfilling Mr. Morrill's old position as OHV Coordinator for DCR as soon as possible due to the importance of the position in how it contributes to OHV operations within the State.

Department of Conservation and Recreation: (DCR) Update: Scott Morrill

In lieu of a DCR representative, Mr. Morrill updated the Committee on DCR activity. Permitting is in its final stages at Pittsfield State Forest and work will hopefully begin early next year. The contractor has given a work date on Skypeak Bridge located in Beartown State Forest and the repairs should be complete by the end of September, 2017. It was also announced that the OHV crew's season will end on October 5th.

Massachusetts Environmental Police: (MEP) Major David Loos

Major Loos advised the Committee on upcoming events, specifically the 2017 Sled Expo to be held at the Eastern States Expo. Major Loos stated that MEP would have both officers and the registration van in attendance. MEP has also successfully sent 3 officers to UTV training. As municipal agencies deploy UTV's for search and rescue, patrol, and emergency response use, there is a growing need for training offered for those vehicles. Due to municipality interest in UTV training, MEP is exploring the creation of a UTV safety course here in Massachusetts. MEP is also drafting a new "Out of State registration exemption form" in order to simplify the process for event coordinators.

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission: (CMRPC) Trish Settles

Ms. Settles gave a presentation which outlined the role of CMRPC, as well as describing some of their current projects. CMRPC oversees Worcester and 39 surrounding municipalities. Some of the aspects CMRPC assist with are: transportation, open space planning, and economic development. One of their current projects is the coordination of multiple trail maps into one, region-wide master copy. Ms. Settles also described some municipalities that were in need of, and soliciting, economic development opportunities; OHV use perhaps being one.

Introductory Address from Scott Morrill: (EoEEA)

Mr. Morrill highlighted what he feels to be of primary importance to the improvement of OHV use in Massachusetts. He stressed the importance of organizing OHV enthusiasts into more clubs in order to improve communication between the OHV user group and Government Agencies. Mr. Morrill stated that an organized riding community would also improve user compliance with State policies, locate possible riding opportunities, promote stewardship of riding trails, and offer resources to clubs that are in need of assistance or guidance. Mr. Morrill also discussed the hopes of creating a grant system which could provide assistance to organized clubs in their contribution to stewardship and improvement upon OHV use in Massachusetts.

Other Comments: Committee Members

Raffi Peterson (NETRA) Commented on the lack of year round positions in DCR and the loss of knowledge from year to year in some areas. It can be difficult to communicate and re-permit annual events, even if nothing has changed.

Robert Gubala (Stateline Riders) commented on the willingness of Riders to help. Mr. Gubala mentioned enthusiasts are willing to help if there is a place for them to volunteer.

Also brought up was the loss in DCR riding areas in the past and the desire for DCR to explore areas they could reopen to OHV use as they are one of the only landowners that permit limited OHV use.

Scott Morrill mentioned the upcoming Massachusetts Trail Conference on November 2nd-4th and the multiple OHV workshops being offered during the event. This would be a great gathering point for OHV enthusiasts to discuss opportunities.