

OHV Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

June 5th, 2018

Meeting time: 10:00 AM

Location: 198 Purgatory Rd, Sutton, MA 01590

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs: (EOEEA): Scott Morrill: Announced the September 14th OHV Advisory Committee meeting will be held at the Olver Transit Center in Greenfield, MA, and feature guest speakers: Jackie Mahoney, Director of Recreation, Forestry and Parks, from Lewis County, New York; and Matthew House, President of COREC from Connecticut. Mr. Morrill discussed outreach and possible messages to attach to mailers for registered OHV users in Massachusetts. One possibility is to “highlight” a riding area in Massachusetts to increase awareness of the existing riding locations in the state. Another suggestion for outreach was to create videos on OHV safety to send out to local police departments that they could post to their Facebook pages. Mike Toomey of the Friends Network suggested reaching out to student film makers in order save money on production. Chief Galvin, the rep for Mass police chiefs, stated that most local police department pages have a high number of subscribers and visitation. There was also interest in the creation of an OHV Advisory Committee Facebook page.

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 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.