

One suggestion from a number at the workshop to better integrate one aspect of ORV use on public lands with land management responsibilities, was to link some ORV motorcycle event locations to the timber sale program. Such events involve temporary trail that is used in a single ride or a series of rides over a week or less. Then the temporary trail is decommissioned and hopefully effaced. The suggestion was to have event trail sited at locations for near future (1-3 years out) timber harvest. The concept being that the harvest would effectively efface the trail after the event was concluded and the course would be laid out within the confines of the sale area.

Marquette Workshop

Only FMFM employees attended the Marquette workshop. They tended to see more positive links between the ORV program and the rest of the DNR mission. In particular, they saw positive links among ORV routes, which benefit ORV users and snowmobilers and timber and fire efforts.

There was also support for long distance point-to-point and major loop trails to promote ORV tourism in the UP. Many had heard from constituents about local support for such venues and believed it could be a valuable part of the tourism economy and be managed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

There was concern expressed about illegal ORV use at specific sites, such as near streams where ORV users were creating illegal access to promote fishing and camping locations. Some were supporters of a “closed unless open” approach in the UP, but this was a minority opinion.

As in the Lower Peninsula, there was very strong support for management unit level personnel solely dedicated to recreation. It was envisioned that these employees would have responsibilities regarding motorized and non-motorized trails, campgrounds and water access sites. They acknowledged a year-round workload in this area and current and potential funding available for this purpose.

US Forest Service ORV Policy

On July 15, 2004 the Forest Service published proposed regulations regarding ORVs (they characterize as off-highway vehicles or OHVs) in the Federal Register. It was prompted by Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth citing unmanaged recreation, including impacts from OHVs, as one of the four key threats facing national forests and grasslands.

The Forest Service notes the following highlights of the proposed rule on their website www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/index.html.

- The proposed rule would require designation of those roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicles.
- Designation would include class of vehicle and, if appropriate, time of year for motor vehicle use. A given route, for example, could be designated for use by motorcycles, ATV's, or street-legal vehicles.