

# ATVs and their Impact

- The ATV, an admirable piece of technology
- But some key features have drawbacks resulting in
  - ▶ Damage to Nature
  - ▶ Unpleasantness to other users
- Consequences to Protected Area Planning

# The ATV, an admirable piece of technology

- ATVs can go anywhere
- ATVs are both work horse and fun machine
- ATVs have matured: capable, reliable, safe, and affordable

# But some **ATV** features have drawbacks

- coarse tire tread
- high torque
- ability to carry stuff
- engine creates noise and exhaust

# ATVs on Ski Trails

- example from the Sudbury area

# Example - Damage to Ski Trail

- Trail before ATV use



# Example - Damage to Ski Trail

- Trail after ATV use



# Example - Damage to Ski Trail

- Hills erode - same place in fall and in winter



# Example - Damage to Ski Trail

- Low spots become mud pools
- Danger to skier and groomer alike



# Example - Damage to Ski Trail

- The Mud Pools are not benign ;-)



# ATVs on Canoe Portages

- example from the Kawarthas

# Example - ATVs on Portages

- Here's the original trail condition



# Example - ATVs on Portages

□ Canoe (going straight), Snowmobile (to left) and  
ATV (to right)



# Example - ATVs on Portages

- The surface of the path is destroyed (pictured at an early stage)



# Example - ATVs on Portages

- **Low spots become mini ponds** (a real problem when you carry canoe and gear)



# Example - ATVs on Portages

- Hills start to erode and look like creek beds



# Example - ATVs on Portages

- **Road work becomes necessary** (in this case the ATVers brought in concrete to improve an eroded hill section)



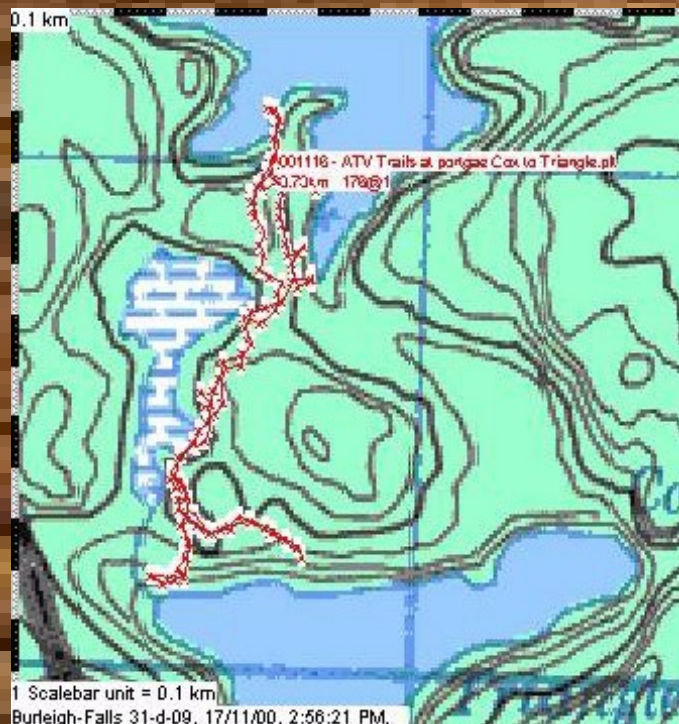
# Example - ATVs on Portages

- Trails widen (to width of vehicle) and drivers create multiple tracks



# Example - ATVs on Portages

- Trails multiply and chew into the forest (once a single trail, image created by walking all new trails with GPS)



# Example - ATVs on Portages

- ATVs spawn heavy duty use with heavy duty garbage



# Example - ATVs on Portages

- Off-Trail ATV use
  - ▶ destroys wetland
  - ▶ and vegetation

□ note: "ATV in swamp"  
□ image found on internet,  
□ location unknown



# ATVs in Protected Areas...

- ...they do not belong!

# Summary: ATVs damage existing trails

- ATVs destroy the trail's surface
  - ▶ hills: smooth trail erodes into stream beds
  - ▶ low spots turn into mud pools
- ATVs degrade the character of the trail
  - ▶ widen
  - ▶ multiply into a weave
  - ▶ breed more trails
  - ▶ tempt larger vehicles to enter

# Summary: ATVs damage the forest ecology

- damage to soil:
  - ▶ wetlands
  - ▶ forest floor
  - ▶ erosion on grades
- damage to the character of the forest:
  - ▶ erosion consequences
  - ▶ destroyed vegetation on new trails
  - ▶ opening of canopy makes it a different forest
  - ▶ chance for alien species to invade

# Summary: ATVs impact other users

- All other users suffer:
  - ▶ Noise spoils quiet enjoyment of nature
  - ▶ Pollution (air, fuel, oil), increasing with growing use
  - ▶ Garbage starts to show
- Skiers encounter ruined trails, and the season shortens for them
- Canoeists carry across Portages that have become unpleasant, confusing and hazardous
- Snowmobiler suffer from erosion created by ATV use

# What is the OLL Vision for Protected Areas?

- "...develop natural resources in a sustainable way to meet today's needs and to ensure these resources are available for future generations"

□(OLL Land Use Strategy 1999, P.2)

# Planning for Protected Areas

- recognize **ATV traffic is incompatible** with the area's designation
- if ATV traffic is granted,
  - ▶ insist on **fortified trail surfaces** to prevent erosion
  - ▶ **classify the "trail" as a "road"** to reflect the true impact on the environment
- **educate** the ATV community on the damaging effects of ATV traffic
- encourage the ATV user to **demand gentler machines** from the manufacturer

# Thanks for listening, and do enjoy the outdoors!

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