

START YOUR OWN ATV CLUB

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL
CLUB DEVELOPMENT



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It only takes one person to operate an ATV, but it's certainly more fun when friends get together to ride. It is a lot easier to get out of those trouble spots when you have friends to give you a hand. The same thing applies when ATV owners work together in a club. Much can be accomplished through an organization when everyone takes an active part working together to make the club a success.

Why should I start or join an ATV club?

- ✓ To encourage a concern for the environment
- ✓ To encourage respect for public and private land
- ✓ To establish/develop places to ride
- ✓ To improve the image of ATVers
- ✓ To encourage the safe use of ATVs
- ✓ To organize and promote group ATV trips
- ✓ To promote the use of ATVs as a family sport
- ✓ To help local police/fire Depts. with emergency response
- ✓ To be eligible for help from the ATV Program

What is the ATV Program & how can it help?

The ATV Program is a part of the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office of the Bureau of Parks and Lands. In Addition to providing a variety of information and technical assistance, we have the following resources available to help ATV clubs:

- ◆ Trail insurance providing liability protection for landowners and clubs with authorized ATV trails;
- ◆ A trail grant program providing money to help defray the cost of trail development and maintenance;
- ◆ Trail signs and guidelines for clubs to properly mark their trails so people will know where ATV use is authorized.

Is there a cost to the clubs for these services?

No. The ATV Program is funded through a portion of the ATV registration fees and gas tax payments.

Is it hard to start an ATV Club?

No, however it does require work. You will need to gather a group of interested people together, organize yourselves, and complete the necessary paperwork.

How many people does it take to start a club?

While there is no set number needed to establish a club, you should have a nucleus of at least a half dozen interested persons. It is important to remember the old saying: “Many hands make light work”.

How do I get started?

Once you have secured the interest and support of a nucleus of people who are willing to take an active part in the development of a local club, you should hold an informational meeting. Many times your local school, fire dept., town hall, or community center will allow free use of their facilities for nonprofit groups. At this meeting discuss and determine the purposes of the club, and the reasons for its formation. Write down the specific objectives of the club. It's important to get input from everyone. At this per-organizational meeting, determine when and where the first public meeting will be held. Also, decide the method to be used in notifying potential club members, e.g. word of mouth, phone calls, fliers, public service announcements, mailing etc. (The ATV Program can supply lists of registered ATV owners in your area.)

How should the first public meeting be run?

- ◆ Inform those in attendance of the background activity which led to this meeting.
- ◆ Elect a temporary chairman to preside over the meeting.
- ◆ Take a vote of those present to determine if they are in agreement that an ATV Club should be formed in the area or town.
- ◆ Ask for suggestions regarding the election of necessary officers. We would recommend the following: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. There should also be a Board of Directors (usually seven or nine people), which should include the elected officers.
- ◆ After the above steps have been taken, elect the slate of officers decided upon by the group. Take nominations from the floor, and vote separately on each candidate for each office. It is not necessary to elect the entire Board of Directors at this initial meeting. It might be advisable to wait until the next meeting and in the meantime get the names of persons interested in being a Director who was unable to attend the first meeting.
- ◆ You can decide on a club name. The name could reflect the spirit of your organization, the geographical area, or many other factors. You should avoid names that landowners may find offensive or suggest improper use such as “Mud Slingers”. It is not wise to use the brand name of a machine in the club name as this could hinder prospective members who own a different brand. Be sure to pick a club name that hasn’t already been used. A current ATV club list is available from the ATV Program.

- ◆ A By-laws Committee should be either appointed by the President or elected by the group at the first meeting. The ATV Program has sample by-laws available upon request. Committee members should review and make changes to adapt the by-laws to your particular group. Ideally revisions can be completed and distributed at the second meeting. By-laws need to be approved by the membership.
- ◆ Some suggestions for additional committees your group may want to appoint are as follows: Membership, Legislative, Entertainment, Special Events, & Publicity.
- ◆ Agree on the frequency of meetings. You should consider meeting once a month. Some clubs even meet twice a month, but you must be careful to avoid burnout resulting from too many meetings. Club dinners are a good way to keep the membership interested. You may want to suspend meetings during the winter months or meet only informally to discuss plans for the coming season.
- ◆ A determination should be made regarding club dues. The amount clubs charge varies depending upon the size of the group and the extent of the intended activities, etc. You should also discuss the benefits of affiliation with the statewide group and its cost before deciding on your dues structure.
- ◆ After this “business” is concluded you should open the meeting for general discussion. Topics for discussion typically include possible club-sponsored activities such as rides, cookouts, community projects, development of a trails system, and development of a safety education program.

What paperwork is required?

All clubs must have a Federal ID number (EIN) to receive grant money or conduct business. Obtain and complete an SS-4 form. The form can be obtained by calling 1-800-829-3676. (One was also included in the ATV “start-up” packet.)

Once you have the form completed, call the IRS at 1-800-829-4933 and they will assign a number over the phone. Write this number on the upper right hand corner of the form and retain it for your records. If you prefer you can mail or Fax the completed SS-4 form to IRS and they will issue a number and send this number to you in the mail.

(This process can take 4 weeks.) Their fax number is: 631-447-8960.

NOTE:

SS-4 Line 5a, Street address would be: Physical location of club

SS-4 Line 8a, type of entity would be: other – ATV Club

SS-4 Line 14, principal activity of business would be: Non Profit

SS-4 Line 15, service provided would be: Recreational Club

Once you have the club’s Federal ID number, register your club with the ATV Program by completing both sides of the ATV Club Information Form*. It should be mailed to the ATV Program. This will make your club eligible for the resources available from the ATV Program.

*ATV Club Information Form is obtained from ATV Program.

Does the club have to be incorporated?

Yes, clubs have to be incorporated in order to receive grant money. An incorporated club has limited liability that protects its members from being personally responsible for the debts or activities of the club. It also has a separate legal existence, and, as a result, can exercise most of the powers that are available to individual persons. The club can own property, contract mortgages, and remains in existence regardless of what happens to individual members. Contact Secretary of State, Bureau of Corporations and Elections at 207-624-7752 for more information on becoming incorporated (non-profit) and an application for non-profit Articles of Incorporation. The application is also available on their web site: www.maine.gov/sos.

REMEMBER TO ASK FIRST !!

Please only ride where landowners allow!



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