



Off-Road Vehicle Report and Recommendations

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Date February 2011

Project Scope



- ❖ History and Trends of ORV use in North America and Maryland
- ❖ Morbidity and Mortality of ORV use in Maryland
- ❖ Inventory and assessment of all authorized ORV trails on DNR land.
- ❖ Inventory and assessment of known unauthorized ORV trails on DNR and nearby private land.
- ❖ Regional and Statewide Recommendations

Types of ORVs



Other Off-Road “Vehicles”



Nationwide ORV Sales and Use

1. From 1997-2001,

⌘ 4-wheeled ATV riders rose 36 percent from 12.0 to 16.3 million and soared to nearly 43 million in 2007;

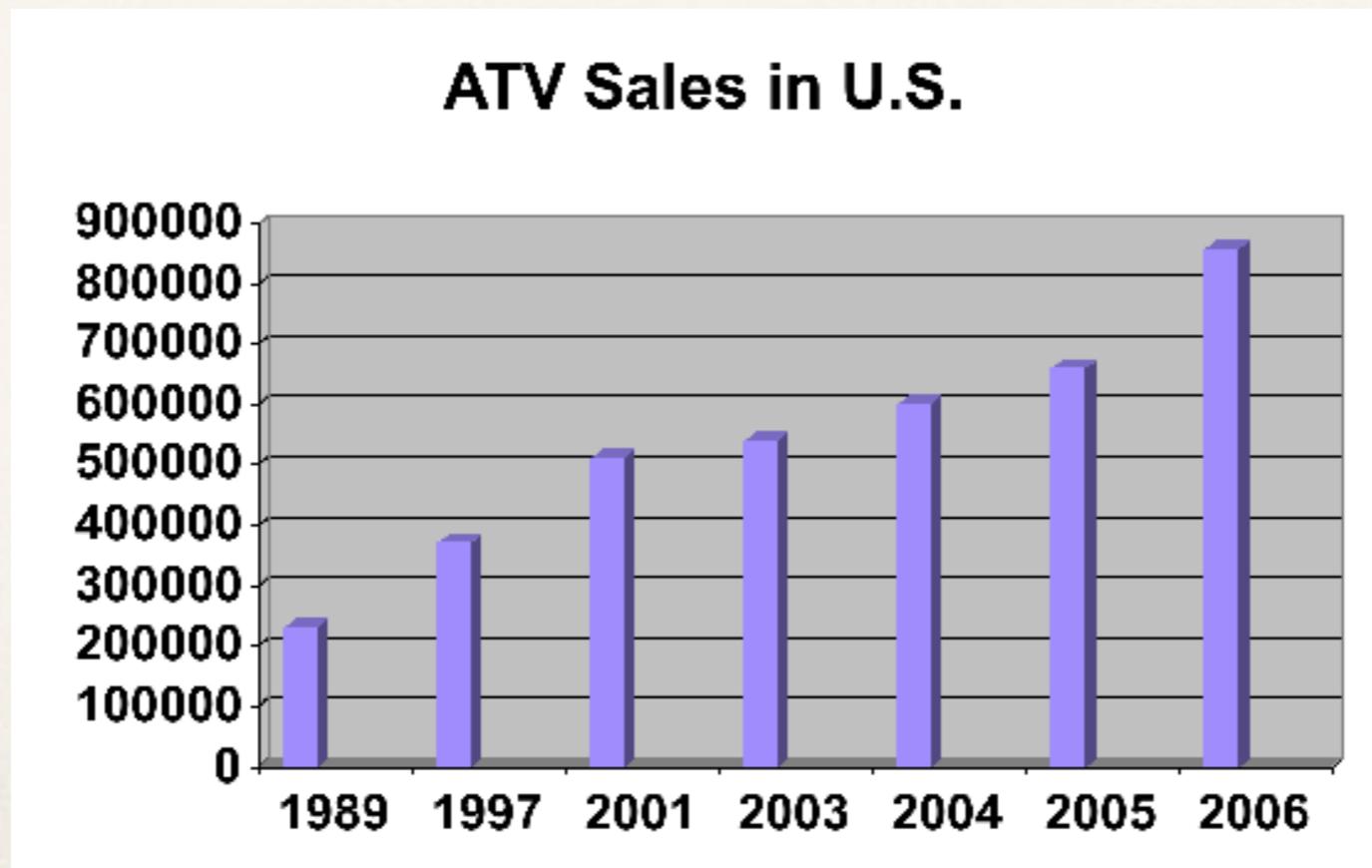
⌘ Riding hours rose 50 percent from 1,575 to 2,364 million; and

⌘ Number of ATVs sold rose 40 percent from 4.0 to 5.6 million.

2. From 1975-2005,

⌘ ORV visits to U.S. National Forests grew from 5 million in 1975 to 51 million in 2005 (92% increase).

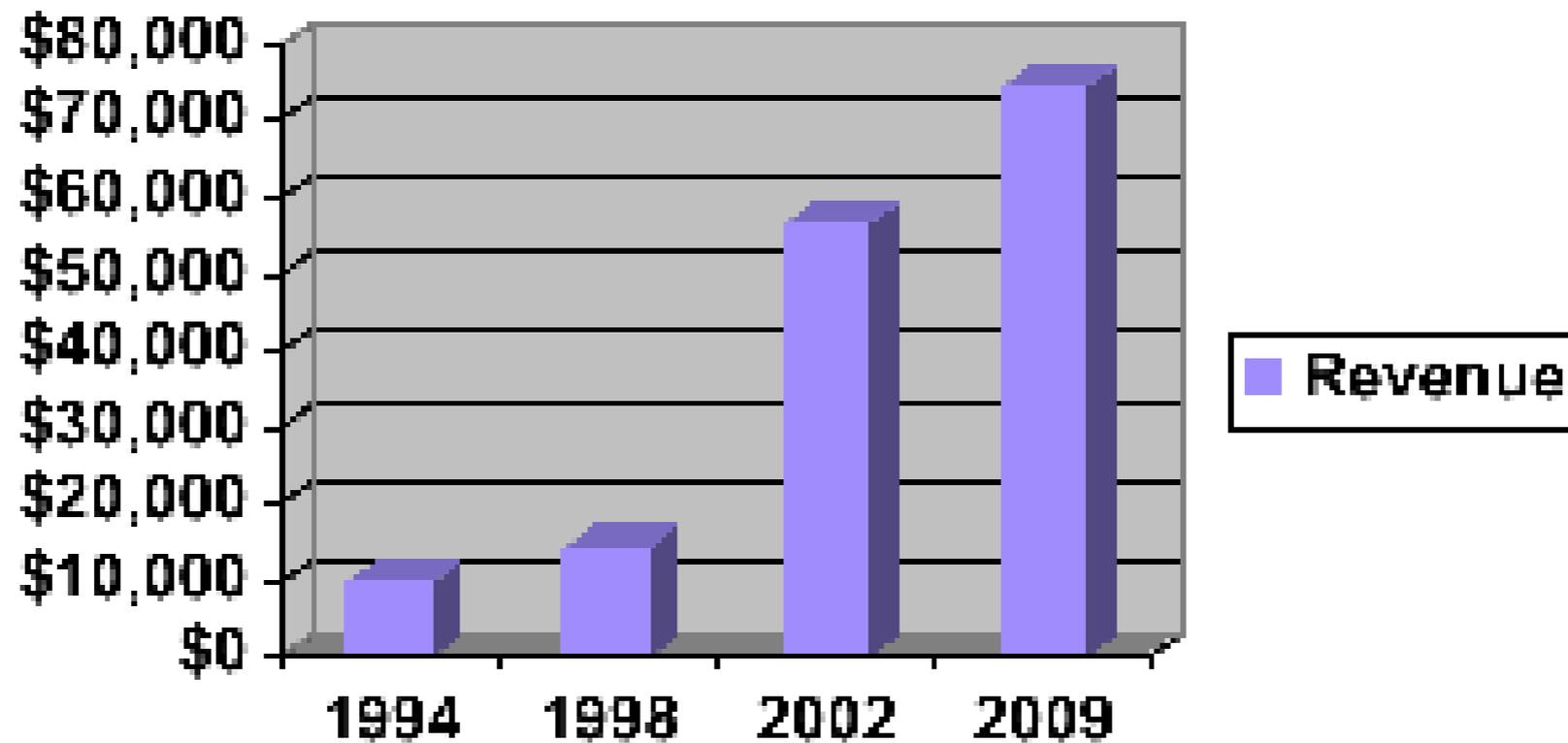
3. In 2006, ATV sales reached 856,000 units in the U.S. – a 200% increase in the ten years prior and a 350% increase in less than twenty years (see below).



Maryland ORV Data

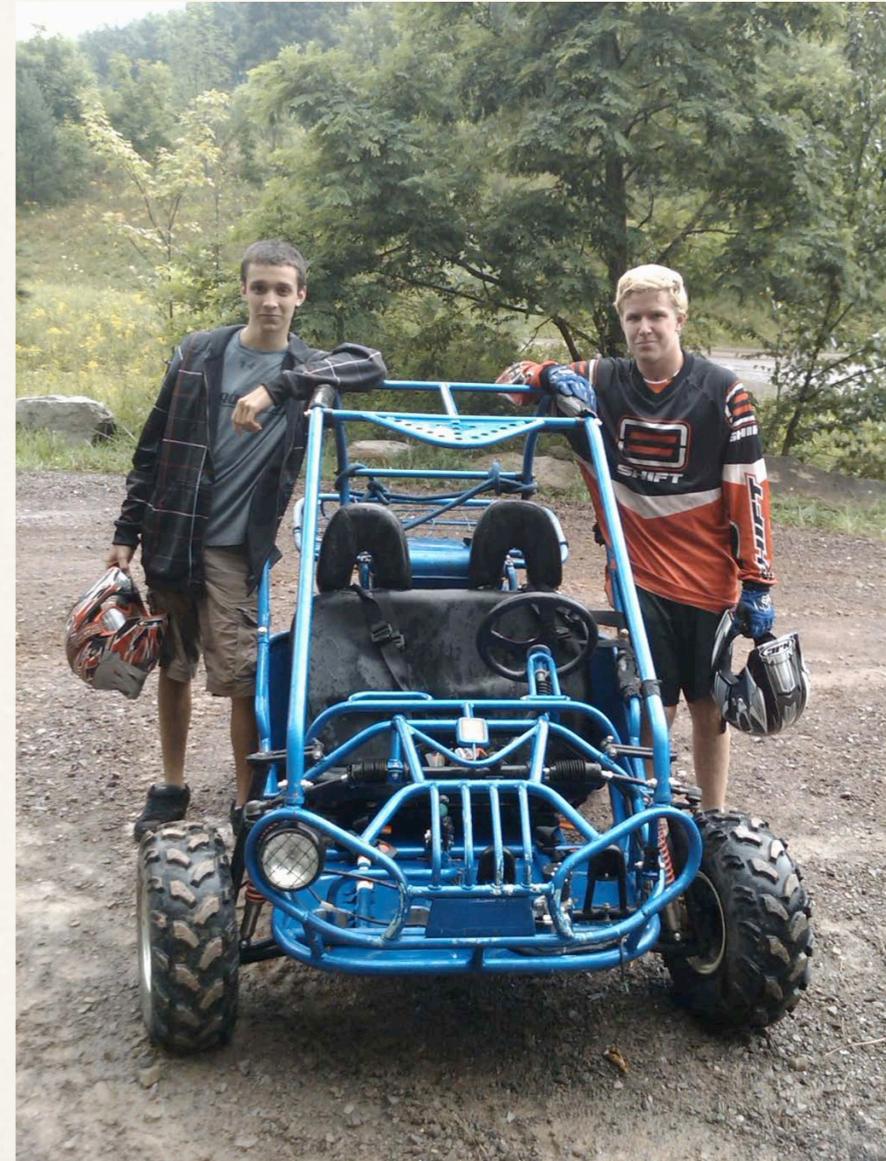
~1,000 to 5,000 in 10 yrs

Figure 5 - Statewide ORV Permit Revenue

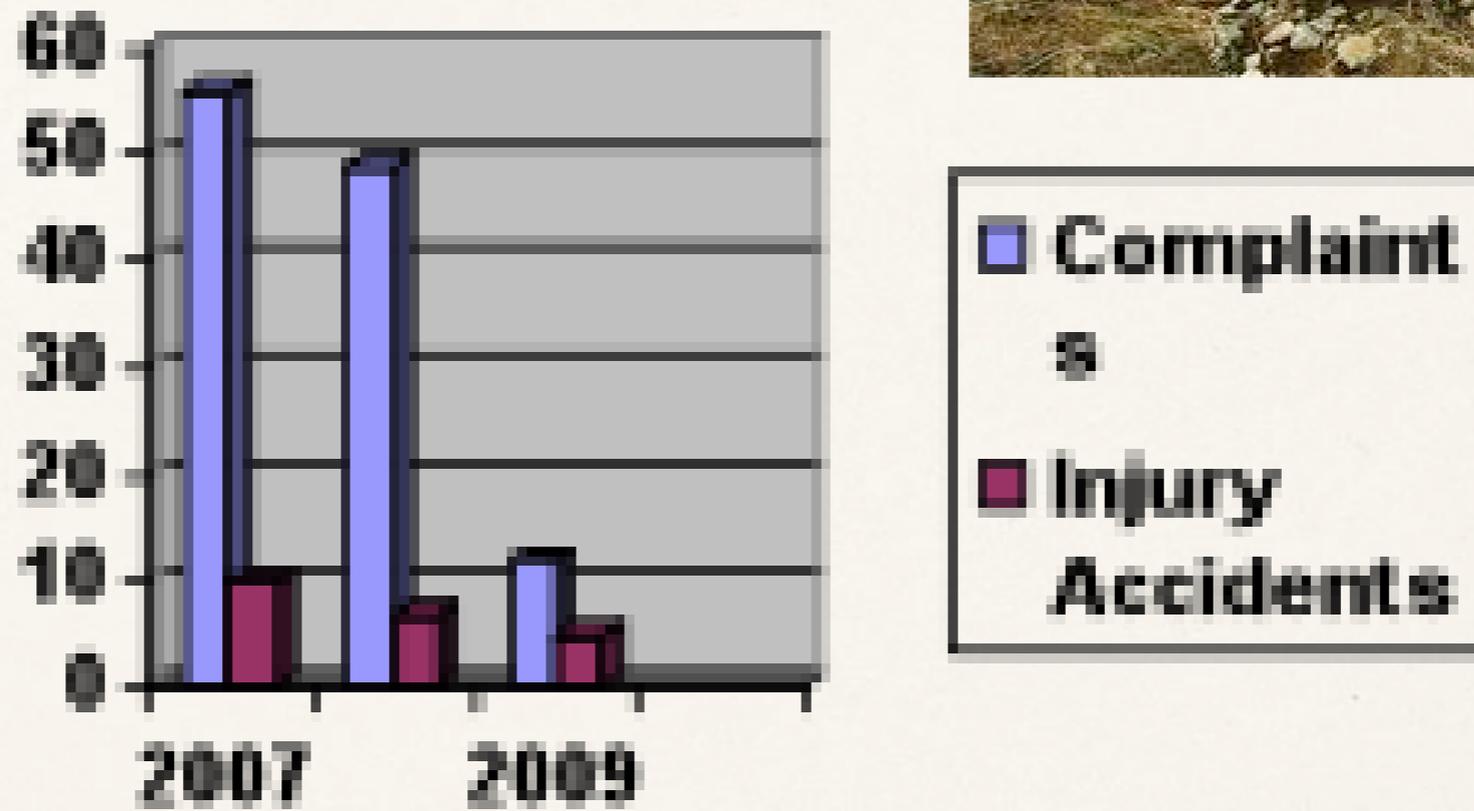


Greenridge and Pocomoke Users

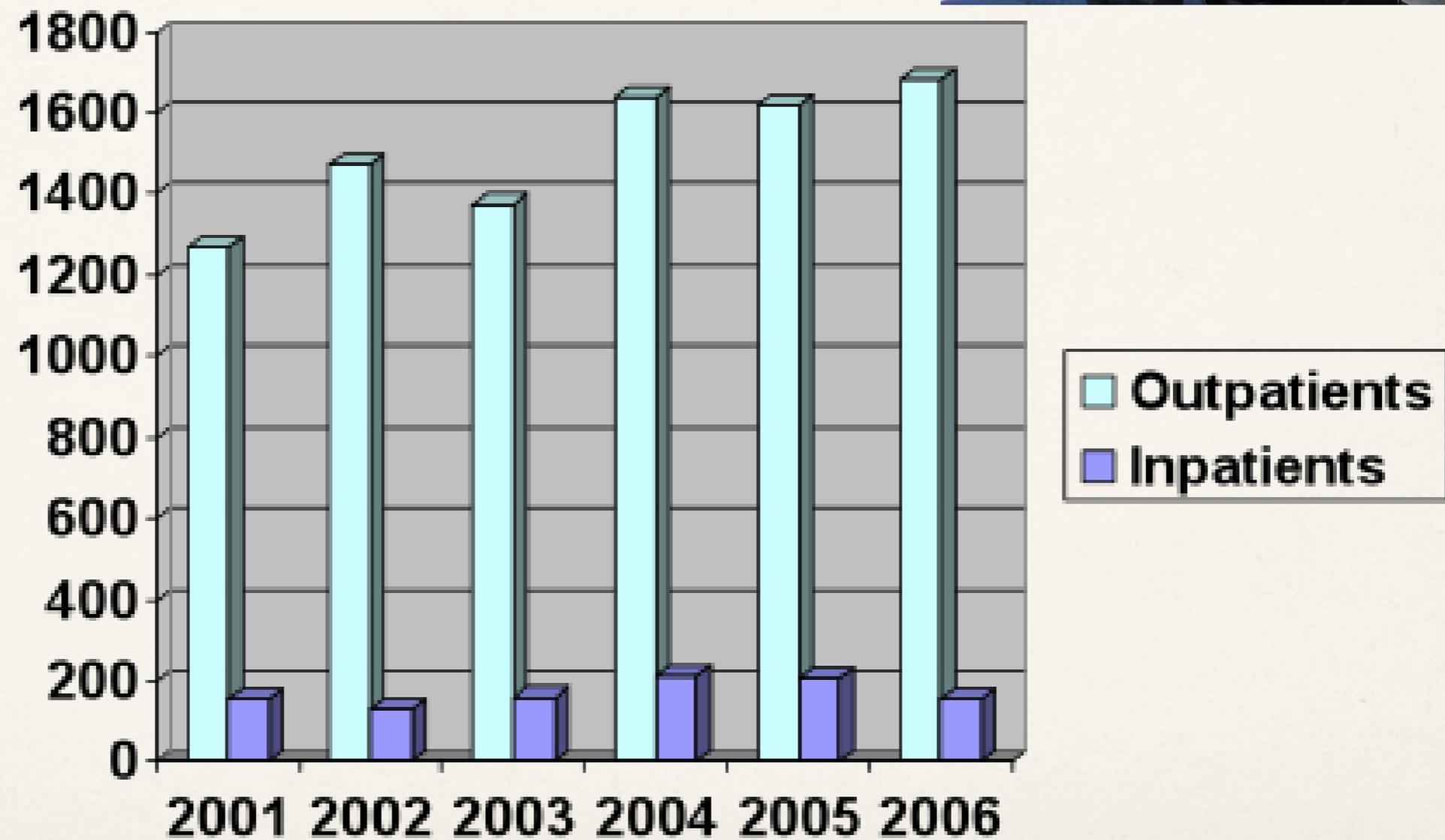
- ❖ Greenridge State Forest Trail:
 - ❖ 1992 - 502 Permits
 - ❖ 2008 - 2182 +400%
- ❖ Pocomoke State Forest Trail:
 - ❖ 2000 - 450 riders
 - ❖ 2007 - 900 riders



ATV Complaints & Injuries on DNR Land



Hospital Visits from ORV Accidents in Maryland



Data Collection - The PIT in Action

- ❖ 221 Trail Records Captured by Team
- ❖ 17 State Parks, 11 State Forests, 28 WMAs
- ❖ Locations catalogued in project-specific ACCESS file
- ❖ Each location photo-documented
- ❖ Each location rated as Low, Medium or High Impact
- ❖ Regional Recommended Actions
- ❖ Near-Term and Long-Term Statewide Recommended Actions



Sample Trail Record

Trail Name:

Date:

Observer/data collector:

Describe location/extent of ORV trail/use:

Map provided:

ORV type:

Authorized/Illegal trail:

Access point	Latitude	Longitude
Access point1	39.81281	-79.02411
Access point2	39.80930	-79.03888
Access point3	39.89980	-79.04815
Access point4	0.00000	0.00000
Access point5	0.00000	0.00000
Access point6	0.00000	0.00000

RTE sp directly impacted: # RTE sp directly impacted: List RTE sp directly impacted:

RTE sp indirectly impacted: # RTE sp indirectly impacted: List RTE sp indirectly impacted:

Significant nongame wildlife impacts: Nongame comments:

Significant natural community/habitat impacts: Natural/habitat comments:

State Wildland:

NTWSSC:

Class III Trout Waters:

Invasive plant sp encroachment:

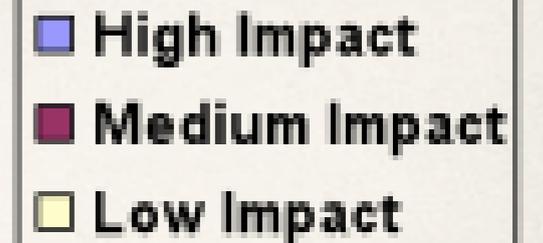
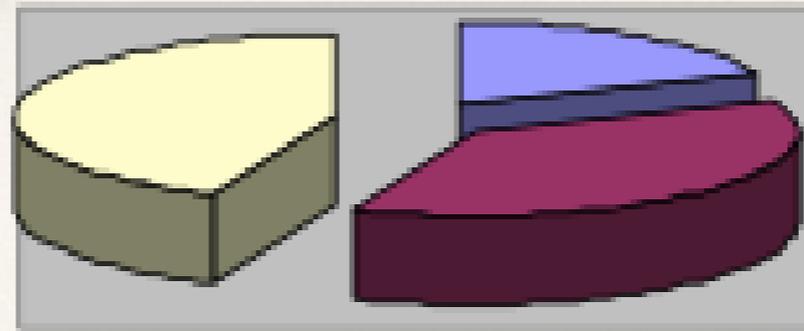
Overall impacts: Overall impacts comments:

Recommendations, if authorized ORV trail:

Recommendations, if illegal trail:

Misc Comments:

Trail Impacts



- ❖ 221 trail records (most unauthorized) impacts as follows:
 - ❖ **High:** 41 sites (18%); **Medium:** 83 sites (37%); **Low:** 97 sites (41%)
 - ❖ Twenty-one (~10%) locations with direct impacts on RTE species
 - ❖ Twenty locations (9%) had impacts on class III trout waters.

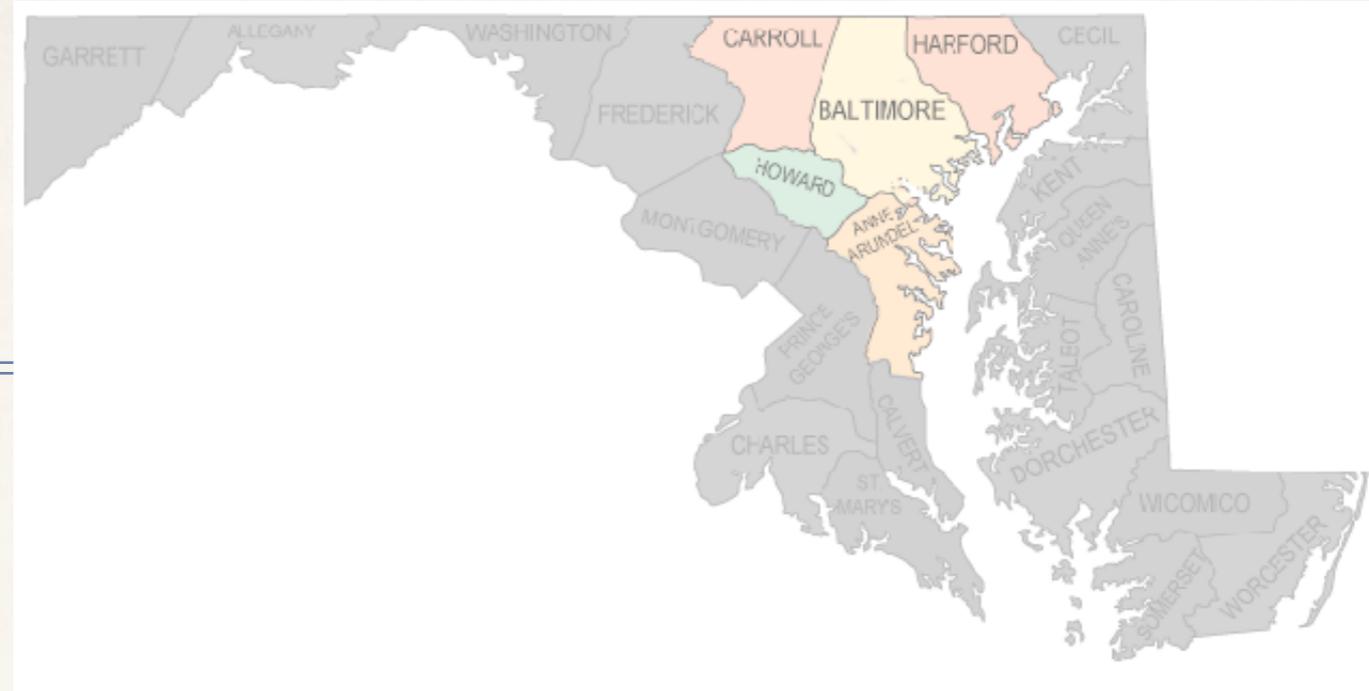


Regional Assessments

- ❖ The following details four regional assessments conducted by PIT members across DNR lands & other private and public lands. Each team utilized identical methods and a centralized database.
- ❖ February 2008 to March 2009 data were collected and recorded in the ORV Database



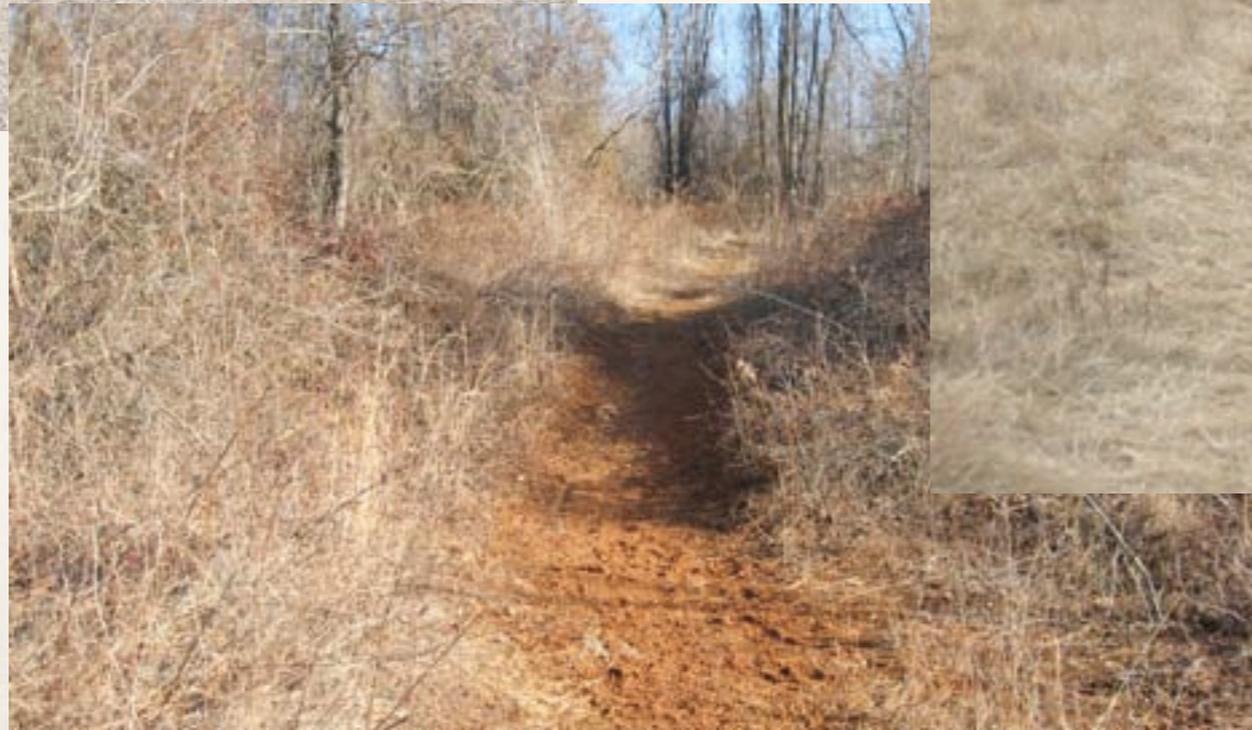
Central Region



- ❖ There are no authorized ORV trails on DNR land in the Central Region. As a result, all of the records documented illegal activity.
- ❖ 64 sites: seven had a very high amount of damage, 34 had moderate or medium impact and 23 had little or low impact.
- ❖ Extensive network of unauthorized mountain bike and equestrian use also documented in this region.

Central Region

Patapsco & SDNEA



Eastern Region



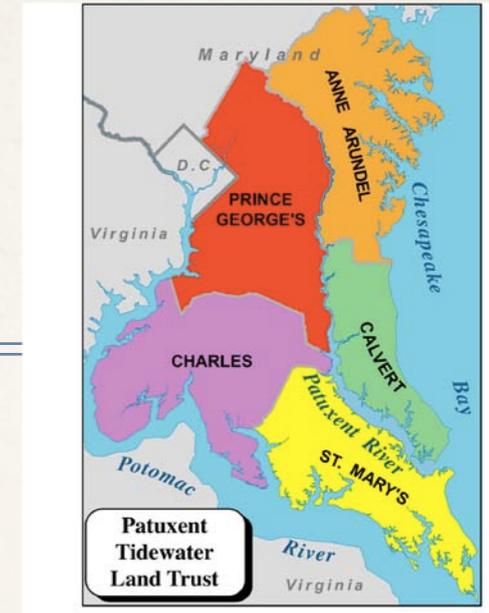
- ❖ 67 Trail Records - 2 State Parks, 8 State Forests, 25 WMA's and 2 NHA's; and 29 Chesapeake Forest sites
- ❖ One ORV trail in region - Chandler Trail (plus ADA & CFL sites)
 - ❖ 8% High Impact, 22% Medium, 70% Low
 - ❖ 22% RTE Impacts
- ❖ Survey of CFL hunting clubs -
 - ❖ 79% responded (134 of 168 clubs)
 - ❖ 64% of clubs used ORV's, 24% indicated illegal use - 89% "Low Impact"

Eastern Region

Millington WMA



Southern Region



- ❖ No Legal Public Trails in Southern Region
- ❖ 44 Sites Assessed - majority associated with inholding or adjacent landowners
- ❖ All sites deemed Low Impact
- ❖ Concerns indicated for other “Impacts” - horses and bikes

Southern Region

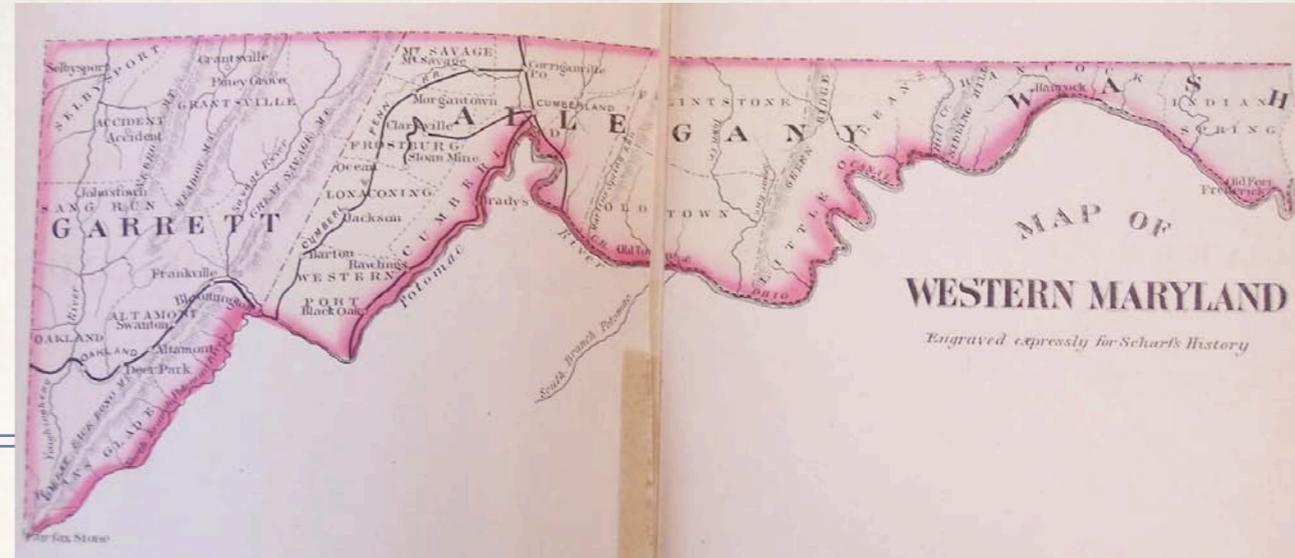
Myrtle Grove Sewer Line – ATVs - Charles County

Rosaryville State Park – Horses – Prince George's County

Rosaryville State Park Mt. Bikes – Prince George's County



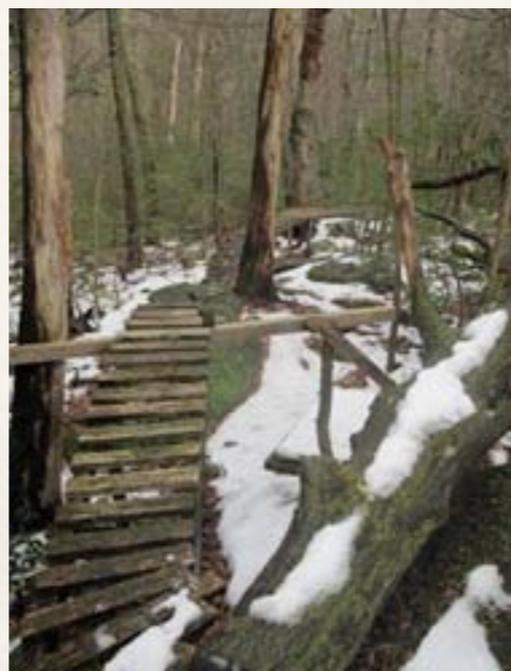
Western Region



- ❖ 78 trail records: High-23 trails, Medium-35 trails, Low-20 trails.
- ❖ Eight authorized trails, overall impact high on 2 trails, and medium on one. The remaining five authorized trail impacts were rated as low.
- ❖ Thirty-four ORV trails (44%) had direct or indirect RTE impacts.
- ❖ Twenty ORV trails (26%) had impacts on class III trout waters.
- ❖ Rogue Mt. Bike Features: Frederick City Watershed Coop WMA

Western Region

Frederick City Watershed Cooperative WMA – Illegal Mountain Bike Technical Trail Features – Winter 2009



Western Region ATV Impacts

Greenridge & Poplar Lick



Western Region Recommendations

- ❖ Close authorized ORV trails: Poplar Lick (SRSF), Green Ridge (GRSF). These trails are not sustainable at the current level of use. Note - closing impacts other users.
- ❖ Further evaluate Burkholder ORV & Negro Mountain Snowmobile Trails.
- ❖ Prioritize enforcement/improve barriers: Savage Ravines Wildland, Bear Creek, SB Casselman, Puzzley Run, Mt Aetna, Negro Mt (SRSF), Upper Sideling Hill Creek (Sideling Hill WMA), Dans Mtn - Toms Hollow/Mill Run (Dans Mtn WMA).
- ❖ I&E: DNR hunting & fishing guides, conspicuous signage, updated ORV trail guide.
- ❖ Evaluate ORV Permit fee structure to cover trail maintenance & publication of trail guide.
- ❖ Penalties: increase penalties, escalating penalties for repeat offenders & forfeiture of ORVs.
- ❖ Supplement this ecological assessment with surveys of other State Forest User Groups to determine interest and/or user conflict with ORVs.

Statewide Recommendations

Long-Term Needs



- ❖ Stakeholder Workgroup -
 - ❖ Meet periodically (~four x/yr) communicate & provide basis for informed-consent.
 - ❖ Minimal cost: small team of existing staff w/ trails coordinator, LAP, WHS, FS, MPS, Fisheries & E&C.
 - ❖ Seek informed consent on closures, mods &/or identification of new sustainable sites.
 - ❖ Identify partnerships & volunteerism: see Hatfield-McCoy in W. Va., Cycle Conservation Club in Michigan/Vermont, Iowa OHV partnership . . . & pending Spearhead system in S. VA.
- ❖ Funding -
 - ❖ POS statute clearly allows acquisition of land for ORV recreational use.
 - ❖ National Rec. Trails Grant - requires min. 30% state-side appropriation for Motorized ORV Trails (~\$250K)
 - ❖ Industry - Polaris & Yamaha annually award ~\$2M for development and maintenance of ORV trails.
 - ❖ User Fees - good-faith effort & users likely support increase in fees. Staff suggest increase from \$15 to \$50.
- ❖ Electronic Registration:
 - ❖ Permit accurate tracking of riders, assist enforcement & disseminate safety info, classes, trail updates, etc.
 - ❖ Reconcile with new MVA titling requirement and discrepancy in DNR regs (no “MVA registration”)

Statewide Recommendations

- *Immediate Outreach & Enforcement Needs*



- ❖ Outreach, Education and Enforcement Recommendations
 - ❖ Identify adjacent “illegal” landowners - NRP Outreach
 - ❖ Update NRP CAD to track ORV incidents by location for enforcement, education and restoration follow-up
 - ❖ Review penalty provisions, consider forfeiture options
 - ❖ Evaluate ORV Permit fee structure
 - ❖ I&E Campaign and Trail Guide



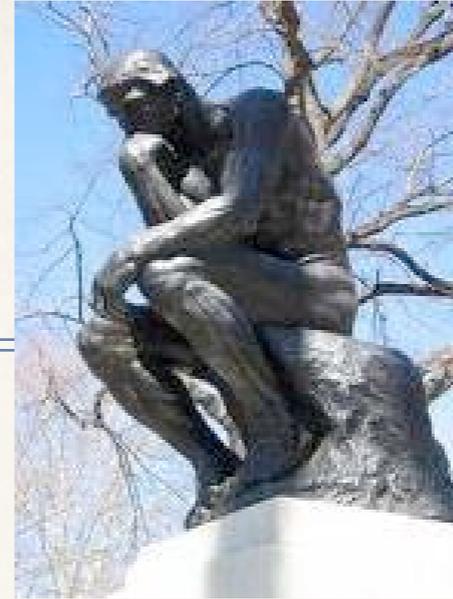
Statewide Recommendations

- *Immediate On-the-Ground Needs*



- ❖ Review and Secure “High-Impact” Sites - assess cost to restore
- ❖ **Chandler Trail (Pocomoke State Forest):** maintain trail closure - stakeholders to consider options.
- ❖ **Greenridge State Forest Trail:**
 - ❖ Stakeholder workgroup convened - announce planned closure/possible relocation of GSF trail.
 - ❖ Pilot program - small team of staff working with stakeholder group & GSF Citizen’s Advisory, to find alternative site for this trail.
- ❖ **Poplar Lick Trail (Savage River State Forest):**
 - ❖ Review impacts on stream system in context of extensive mitigation and upgrades added to the trail.
 - ❖ Improve signage, outreach and enforcement with users of this trail.
 - ❖ Note need to include other stakeholders in this discussion (passenger vehicles, bikers, hikers, equestrians, snowmobile riders and campers).

Final Thoughts



- ❖ Our Problem? Maybe not but can we distinguish ORV trails from the list of other activities DNR also manages? -- mountain bikers, equestrians, swimming pools, golf course and more.
- ❖ The Sole Culprit? Assessment demonstrates that equestrians, mountain bikers and street-legal passenger vehicles all play a role.
- ❖ What if? We abandon this user group and hope someone else will 'pick them up' -- will we force the ever-increasing number of users to already over-crowded DNR facilities or illegal private land?

Questions?

