

For Immediate Release
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“Designation of First State-Owned Off-Road Vehicle Park Should Trigger New Requirements”

On Sunday, January 13, 2013, the first state-owned off-road vehicle (ORV) park will open in Woodbine, New Jersey. This designation comes three years after the law was passed in December 2009 to require the identification and registration of these vehicles and the designation of three state –owned ORV parks.

Senator Bob Gordon, prime sponsor of the legislation, comments, “The designation of the park is a welcome start to the ORV tagging and registration program, which will help fund new sites and also address damage that occurs from riders that trespass on private and public property. I want to thank DEP for following through on their commitment.”

According to the off-road vehicle legislation, the Motor Vehicle Commission is required to begin tagging and registering vehicles three months after the first designation. “The clock didn’t start ticking for the law until the first park designation was made. Now that it is official, the public and private landowners should be able to identify registered riders later in 2013,” stated **Jaclyn Rhoads, Ph.D., Pinelands Preservation Alliance**. “PPA and the other partner organizations that supported legislation are extremely grateful to the legislative sponsors for working so hard in making sure the law passed.”

“After working on this legislation for over 10 years, I am very pleased to see the elements implemented. The law will help to reduce fatalities in minors and create an opportunity for individuals to recreate safely. This legislation sought to balance the safety of the riders and pedestrians alike while conforming to proper environmental standards as well. I believe this law accomplishes just that with the opening of this first park,” said **Assemblyman Reed Gusciora**, prime sponsor of the legislation.

The number of human deaths and hospital emergency-room treated injuries caused by All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) is a national tragedy. The families of people killed while riding ATV's have created a website at <http://www.atvsafetynet.org/> where the public is able to find information about how dangerous this recreational activity really is. Since 1982, the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (US CPSC) has been collecting ATV death and injury data. Their current report is online at <http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia12/os/atv2010.pdf>.

Fred Akers from the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association follows the information produced by the US CPSC and notes, “With 74 ATV rider fatalities in New Jersey since 1982, including 11 in the last 4 years, New Jersey seriously needs the registration, tagging, and enforcement part of the legislation to kick in now to not only protect farmlands and natural lands from ATV damage, but to also save lives.”

“New Jersey Conservation Foundation applauds the NJDEP for working with riding enthusiasts and the local community to establish the Woodbine ORV Park. We now anticipate the timely

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implementation of the enforcement provisions of the ORV legislation, needed to protect New Jersey's state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, county and municipal parks, and non-profit nature preserves. We must strive to curtail natural resource damages occurring in streams, wetlands, forests, and rare species habitats statewide, when individual ORV riders choose to engage in unauthorized activities." **Dr. Emile DeVito, Manager of Science and Stewardship, New Jersey Conservation Foundation.**

"Illegal off-road vehicle riding has caused thousands of acres of damage to our state parks, preserved lands, and private property," said **Kelly Mooij of New Jersey Audubon**, "It has a devastating impact on sensitive ecosystems, compromising the overall ecological integrity of sensitive areas and harming rare plants and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. We look forward to the full implementation of this important legislation and the protection of public land and lives."

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For more information about off-road vehicles and the New Jersey law – visit www.pinelandsalliance.org.