



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **All Terrain Vehicle Use in Simcoe County Forests**

**Midhurst/ May 11, 2007** – With the implementation of a new Simcoe County Forests Recreational Use Policy in January 2007, restrictions are now in place for All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and off-road motorcycles when they use Simcoe County Forests. Until this year, there were no restrictions for motorized vehicle use in County Forests (with the exception of gated properties).

With the restriction now in place, the new policy will permit Off-Road Motorized Vehicles (ORMV's) to use designated trails within County Forests only when agreements are in place with adequate insurance, a permit system and a trail maintenance program. This model has been successfully implemented by the snowmobile community and in use for many years and the County of Simcoe believes this system will be effective for ORMV's as well. The County of Simcoe will be installing new signs throughout County Forests as part of the strategy to ensure all users are aware of the changes.

Both the Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicles (OFATV) and the Ontario Federation of Trail Riders (OFTR) are working toward a province-wide permit system with designated trails, trail patrols and a maintenance program. Examples of successful ORMV trails are currently established in other areas of Ontario including areas of Eastern Ontario and the Ganaraska Forest.

The implementation of these use agreements will provide an opportunity to work co-operatively with interested and responsible groups to develop a process and system which will benefit all County Forest users. Designated trails will be developed over time with adjustments made as necessary to reduce conflict with other users and neighbouring property owners.

"The process is not yet complete," remarked Warden Tony Guergis. "But this step allows for trail advocates to come back to the County with a plan that conforms to the criteria set by County Council.

"The County is committed to work with local municipalities, volunteers, neighbouring land owners and other partners to ensure that a safe and successful trail system can be developed over time with user groups that are respectful of the County Forests and all other users. We recognize that off-road vehicle use is a growing local recreational sport and we know there are benefits from a tourism perspective to have a trail system established here in our Forests. We truly appreciate the efforts of the volunteers who are diligently working to create a safe and respectful trail system that all will be able to enjoy. "

Interested ORMV enthusiasts should contact the OFATV ([www.ofatv.org](http://www.ofatv.org)) and OFTR ([www.oftr.org](http://www.oftr.org)) directly for information on membership and the status of trail development.

The County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at [www.county.simcoe.on.ca](http://www.county.simcoe.on.ca).

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