



# TRAIL TALK

## Newsletter of the Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association

Spring 2009 Edition

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Well we are now into another year and hopefully all of you will have lots of opportunity to get out and ride on the great trails Alberta has to offer us.

The Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association has been busy and more initiatives are coming to the table. One of the most important will be the Federal Government's new trails program. This program will bring twenty five million dollars to trail maintenance and trail development in Canada. It will be a co-funded project and will be available only to the members of the National Trails Coalition and that means AOHVA and its member clubs. All projects will have to be approved by the coalition and will require matching funding from somewhere. I urge all of the clubs to look at this very seriously as it will begin April 1, 2009 and the projects must be completed by March 31, 2010. A very short time line.

Another federal grant that will be helping develop trails was also delivered to Alberta recently. Two projects were identified and one of those – the Crowsnest area – is certainly beneficial to our members. The Crowsnest Pass

Quad Squad will be the administrator of the grant funds in that area and as they have done so often in the past I am sure that you will see some significant upgrading of the trail network in the area. The other project will be the Athabasca Landing Trail, but most of that will not be motorised although a new trail for motorised use is being discussed.

Your association has been consulting with Alberta Transportation for some time about some safety issues. The Alberta government is very concerned with ATV injuries that seem to be increasing and particularly with those affecting younger riders. We are meeting continuously with many safety groups, health agencies, and enforcement agencies to develop some programs to reduce these injuries. Shortly, the government will be introducing a new regulation for mandatory helmet use by off highway vehicles.

It should be noted that the pilot school education project that AOHVA in conjunction with CNPQS has been delivering to Alberta schools over the last two years has been very successful. I believe the program has now reached almost 10,000 students. We have been

encouraged to continue this program and are now in the process of finding additional funding to continue for the balance of 2009 and into 2010.

AOHVA is also very involved with a new provincial mapping project that came about due to the success of the pilot project that AOHVA, ASA, and Alberta Trailnet in conjunction with Sustainable Resources and the Tourism, Parks and Recreation departments completed last winter. You can look forward to this being fast tracked. Three new maps are being developed currently with many more to come.

Our Technical Director, Cal Rakach, has also been incredibly busy. Cal is very involved with the Land Use Framework, Recreational Corridors, Parks, water management committees, and more. I am sure he will use this opportunity to bring you up to date on these items.

By the way, we need to congratulate Cal as he was selected to represent the interests of all off highway enthusiasts in Alberta as a partner with the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC). AOHVA is proud to have brought NOHVCC into Canada and been part of the formal agreements that are now in place with our national bodies : the ATV Quad Council of Canada and the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada. NOHVCC has brought some needed training and consultation into Alberta over the last few years and I expect we will see more as time moves on. With partners in all 50 states and now each Canadian province this has become a centre for off highway information that can be used to build better trails and more environmentally friendly trails.

The AOHVA annual meeting will be announced shortly. To be held near the end of April, this is a time for all members to contribute by nominating and electing a visionary and effective board of directors. I urge every club to make an effort to nominate someone to represent your part of the province. A strong board will lead to a stronger association and that is good for all of us.

Remind all of our members that it is membership renewal time. All 2008 memberships expired on Dec 31, 2008. If you have not sent in your renewal yet, please do not hesitate. And remember to have all of your friends and their friends join as well. The association can do more for our sport when we have large numbers in our membership.

Governments and others take those numbers much more seriously when they are increasing. They know that AOHVA members are passionate about the sport and that they vote. What they don't really know is how many people really are out on the trails and they depend upon our membership numbers more than you might imagine to determine the need for improvements, etc.

Finally, I would like to give my personal thanks to all of those members that volunteered to work on trails, help at shows, sell memberships and in general make all of our lives better by being involved. You know who you are, and to each and everyone of you – Thanks!!

Bob Smith - President

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## **NOTICE OF AOHVA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Date: April 26, 2009 at

Place:

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### **THE COMPLEXITY OF SAVING A HISTORIC TRAIL**

I fell in love with this trail back in 1984 after just moving to Cold Lake. My first trip on it was on a brand new shiny Ski Doo 447. The following year with the eagerness to explore all this bush around my new home, I was talked out of buying a dirt bike and into trying out one of these goofy, balloon tired 3-wheelers. Back then it was a trail seemingly designed for a sport quad with its smooth sweeping route from Cold Lake to May Lake.

Of course that was 25 years ago and the world has changed...except for me, I still love my sport quads. It's the usual story; as population expands and popularity of OHVing hits an all time high, the impact on the May Lake Trail was becoming ever more evident. On top of the need for a management program to address the user issues, a far greater threat was looming.

The route of the trail dissects the extensive Imperial Oil heavy oil Mineral Surface Lease (MSL) and to date their operations had been to the west of the trail. I knew the day would come when Imperial's development would extend eastward, threatening the trail's existence. This was back in 2004, this realization came to me and saving the May Lake Trail became a priority.

My work began with conducting a trail inventory to document its current

location and state. With this information I was able to secure incredible support from my local Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) land manager, Dave Lind. Dave went through the arduous process of putting a Consultative Notation (CNT) on the trail which created the requirement for any industrial activities planned to occur in the vicinity of the trail to inform the CNT holder of the proposed development. The CNT does not prevent the industrial development but does flag the trail existence and creates a notification mechanism.

Further work needed to be done to enter dialogue with Imperial Oil which turned out to be extremely fruitful and a win-win for both parties. For me working with Imperial provided water quality and sound data that Imperial was required to monitor for their operating licences, and it gave Imperial an opportunity to work with the local community to address the trail management issues they had to deal with by virtue of the trail being on their MSL.

Next on the list was to connect up with the local municipalities, local landowners, trappers and trail advocates. This community gave me unprecedented level of support to work towards saving this trail. The May Lake Trail has deep roots with the people of this region and all felt strongly about it.

So where are we today? Imperial Oil's engineers are busy at their computers drawing up plans for their new Nabiye production facility which will involve the construction of roads, power lines and pipelines crossing the trail. Because of the upfront work building relationships and putting into place the

disposition recognizing (CNT) the trail, all parties are going to be sitting down to discuss how best to cross the trail minimizing impacts and avoiding further conflicts.

What is important about all this is here in Alberta we have very few mechanisms to protect the trail infrastructure from a rapidly developing landscape. Without these protections, trail volunteer groups stand to lose all the effort and expense they have put into trail projects, all of their work may have been in vain. This lack of security is a huge dis-incentive for trail groups to continue in their efforts.

Recognition of the importance trail infrastructure to Albertans is just now starting to be realized at the political level and hard work is being done to put in trail guideline, disposition mechanisms, liability coverage and stewardship program through the Recreation Corridor and Trails Designation Program. The program is being designed to provide that security and build a strong volunteer stewardship sector to take on trail projects.

The program has yet to hit the ground running and hopefully not before we lose too many May Lake Trails. It was vision, cooperation and hard work that at least got us to the table to discuss possible positive outcomes but it's not over yet. Indications are the May Lake Trail should be with us for generations to come.

Cal Rakach  
AOHVA – Technical Director

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**THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA  
INVESTS \$25 MILLION TO  
INCREASE  
RECREATIONAL TRAILS AND  
SITES ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

**NORTH VANCOUVER, March 6, 2009** – The Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of State (Sport), today announced that the Government of Canada will invest \$25 million in Canada's trail infrastructure as part of the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

Funding will be used by the National Trails Coalition to build and renew multi-purpose trails for walking, running, cross country skiing, biking, ATVs, and snowmobiles. This will create jobs and leaving a lasting legacy of pristine trails that will benefit Canadians for years to come.

“Our Government sees this investment as a win for our national trails system, a win for everyone that uses healthy living space, and a win for job creation and investment in communities,” said Minister of State Lunn. “By providing safe and easy access to healthy living sites, like biking, walking, and snowmobiling trails, our Government is working to ensure that all Canadians benefit from their natural surroundings and have the opportunity to engage in an active and healthy lifestyle.”

Today's announcement will provide funding to projects that are ready to break ground in the 2009–2010 construction seasons. These projects will invest money in local and rural regions, create jobs, and increase opportunities for tourism, at a time when the need for economic stimulus is greatest.

The Government's contribution will be matched by the National Trails Coalition, a joint venture, made up of the following non-profit organizations: Canadian Trails Foundation, Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations and the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council.

"Together the National Trails Coalition represents thousands of Canadians who enjoy the outdoors. Thanks to the support of our Federal Government, all Canadians will be able to enjoy safe, well-maintained trails right across the country," said Terry Norman, spokesperson for the National Trails Coalition.

## CONTACT US

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### RESPONSIBLE RIDING MESSAGING HITS THE AIRWAYS AGAIN FOR 2009

For a second year, the message of responsible OHV use is hitting the airways. With funding from Canadian National Sportsman Shows and Motorcycle & Moped Industry Council, there are weekly spots on Michael Short's *'Let's Go Outdoors'* radio show heard on stations across Alberta. Along with this 5 TV spots will be produced and aired on WildTV this summer.

"This is the second year we have been able to get this messaging out' says Cal Rakach, AOHVA Technical Director.

"We have had incredible support from Mike Short and Scott Stirling's gang at WildTV in helping us out."

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