

The Pine Runners ATV Club.

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Good Day,

The Van Buren ATV Club is asking for your help in stopping LD 19 and LD 276 from becoming law. If either of these pass the Maine ATV trail system faces the real possibility of becoming fractured beyond repair. Maine Woodland Owners Board of Directors has voted to close its property to public ATV use if any changes in size and weight restrictions are made. The Maine Forest Product Council strongly opposes LD 19. Warning that a weight increase could lead to significant private trail closures and damage to the ATV trail system. Last year Irving Woodlands also opposed any increase in size and weight. On 2-19-26, I had the opportunity to speak with Dick Howlett, the President of ATV Maine, about our concerns. I found his answers very troubling. When asked if ATV Maine had spoken to Ked Coffin at Irving Woodlands about an increase in weight his answer was "NO". Dick Howlett went on to say he feels the best way to handle Irving Woodlands is to "Roll the Dice" and taking a chance that Irving will just go along with the state recommendation to increase in order to avoid bad publicity. Think about that, this is the President of ATV Maine, the organization we are FORCED to join in order to use Irving Woodlands properties. Is this just his opinion, or is it ATV Maine's? Does ATV Maine believe Maine Woodland Owners, the Maine Forest Product Council and all the other land owners will do as they're told? Dick Howlett said he is concerned if it doesn't pass, because of a petition started by the John Deere dealership in Presque Isle, Maine, he will lose the right to use one farmer's property. This is absolutely outrageous! The state stands to lose miles of trails, but that's okay as long as the John Deere dealership and one farmer are happy. Is this why ATV Maine won't take a position on this issue? We maintain 17 miles of track bed. In the early spring and late fall there are sections that won't be able to handle the increase in weight. Do we really believe a sign will stop anyone in an oversize ATV from using the trail? This would leave us with two choices; delayed openings/earlier closures, or leave it open knowing the cost to maintain the track bed will drastically increase. In 2023 the estimate for grading and repairing 7 miles of track bed was \$18,500. In 2024 to do a different 7-mile section, the estimate was \$19,550. This doesn't include the yearly cost of gravel and grading our volunteers do. The frequency of major repair will increase driving up cost. Not to mention the loss of our secondary trail system if riders fail to obey posted signs.

For these reasons, The Van Buren ATV Club opposes any increase to the ATV trail system. We thank you for your time and ask for your support in stopping the passage of LD 19, LD 276 and another legislation that would increase the weight on the ATV's trail system.

Sincerely,
James Ward

President of the Van Buren ATV Club