

Tread Lightly!'s Tips for Responsible ATV RIDING

Travel and recreate with minimum impact
Respect the environment and the rights of others
Educate yourself plan and prepare before you go
Allow for future use of the outdoors, leave it
better than you found it
Discover the rewards of responsible recreation



© 2005 Tread Lightly!, Inc.

TRAVEL & RECREATE WITH MINIMUM IMPACT

Negotiating Terrain

- Stay on established and/or designated routes.
- Travel only in areas open to ATV use.
- On slick trails, moderate the throttle and use the clutch to gain maximum traction with minimum tailspin.
- On switchbacks, avoid roosting around the apex of the turn when climbing or brake-sliding during descent, both of which gouge the trail.
- When negotiating ruts, stay relaxed to allow for sudden direction changes. Look ahead and exercise smooth throttle control.
- Ride loose rocks with your rear end slightly off the seat, looking ahead, in one gear higher than normal and remember to be easy on the throttle.
- Cross streams only at designated fording points, where the trail crosses the stream. Approach the stream slowly, at a 90-degree angle.
- Avoid riding in meadows and marshy areas. The damage you cause is long term.

Winching

- Winches can pull your vehicle or another vehicle out if stuck, remove large obstacles such as trees and rocks from your path and upright an overturned vehicle.
- A good, secure anchor is critical for winching. Make sure the anchor is strong enough to hold while winching. Never winch with less than five wraps of wire rope around the drum.
- Use the right equipment for your situation. Know how much your winch can handle and never exceed that limit.

- Inspect all your winching equipment before and after each winching operation. If the wire rope has become frayed or kinked, it needs to be replaced.
- Properly place winch straps on the anchor. When using live trees as an anchor use tree straps to protect the trunk.

Minimizing Other Impacts

- Practice minimum impact camping. Use existing campsites when possible. Camp 200 feet from trails and water resources. Avoid building campfires except in well-established fire rings. Use a portable camp stove for cooking.
- Observe proper sanitary waste disposal. Bury your waste at least 6 inches deep and camouflage the hole or pack out your waste.
- Protect the soundscape by avoiding unnecessary noise created by your vehicle. Avoid overstaying your welcome in high-traffic areas.



RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

- Be considerate of others on the road or trail.
- Ride only where permitted.
- Leave gates as you find them. Respect private land.
- Yield the right of way to those passing you or traveling uphill. Yield to mountain bikers, hikers, and horses.
- Keep the noise and dust down. Others will appreciate it.
- Pack out what you pack in. Please don't litter.



EDUCATE YOURSELF, PLAN AND PREPARE BEFORE YOU GO

Education

The *ATV RiderCourse*SM provides a fast-paced, half-day hands-on training session that includes pre-ride inspection, starting and stopping, quick turns; hill riding, emergency stopping and swerving, and riding over obstacles. You'll also learn about protective gear, local regulations, places to ride and environmental concerns.

Preparation

- Obtain a map of your destination and determine which areas are open to ATVs. Make a realistic plan, and stick to it. Always tell someone where you are going and your expected return time.
- Contact the land manager for area restrictions, closures, and permit requirements. If you need to cross private property, be sure to ask permission from the landowner.
- Check the weather forecast before you go.
- Make sure your vehicle is mechanically up to task. Be prepared with tools, supplies, and spares for trailside repairs.
- Prepare for the unexpected by packing a small backpack full of emergency items.

On The Trail

- Wear a helmet, eye protection, and other safety gear.
- Buddy up with two or three riders. Riding solo can leave you vulnerable if you have an accident or breakdown. Designate meeting areas in case of separation.
- Know your limitations. Watch your time, your fuel, and your energy.
- Don't mix riding with alcohol and/or drugs.
- Understand how to operate your vehicle and its controls.

ALLOW FOR FUTURE USE OF THE OUTDOORS, LEAVE IT BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT

- Carry a trash bag on your vehicle and pick up litter left by others.
- Avoid "spooking" livestock and wildlife you encounter.
- Avoid sensitive wildlife habitats, wetlands, steams, and meadows.
- Following a ride, wash your ATV and support vehicle to reduce the spread of noxious weeds the next time you ride.
- Remember, designated wilderness areas are reserved for the most primitive outdoor adventure. Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not allowed.

DISCOVER THE REWARDS OF RESPONSIBLE RECREATION

- ATV riding provides the opportunity to get away from the rush of everyday life and builds family traditions.
- Remember—if you abuse it, you'll probably lose it! Careless operation of your off-highway vehicle can cause damage and may result in closing ATV areas.
- Respect the environment and other trail users. By using common sense and common courtesy, what is available today will be here to enjoy tomorrow.

Download *The Tread Lightly! Guide to Responsible ATV Riding* for more detailed information when riding in the great outdoors at www.treadlightly.org.