

Environmental Impacts of All-Terrain Vehicles and Off-Road Vehicles

Well All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) appeal to many people most riders do not fully understand the potential environmental impacts that may occur. With the growing popularity of ATVs and ORVs also come increased concerns to the environment. ATVs and ORVs can be extremely fun and provide a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. However, well enjoying time outdoors it is important to embrace environmental stewardship. ATVs and ORVs have the potential to cause substantial damage to stream-banks, rivers and wetlands. Often riders leave behind flattened vegetation, malformed stream banks, eroded soils, deep ruts as well as murky and sediment-loaded water. Both uplands and lowlands have the potential to be impacted by ATVs. Both areas have increased erosion of soil/sediment and the increased risk of pollution of source water. There is also increased air and noise pollution that also comes along with off-roading.



ATVs and ORVs provide a great opportunity to spend time outdoors and enjoy nature. It is important to consider the impacts that you may have on the environment and take the necessary measures to ensure that environmental damage is limited.



It is important for ATV users to avoid wetlands and wet areas. Riding in these can have detrimental impacts on the vegetation and species that depend on the area.

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ATVs and ORVs have the potential to negatively effect the environment in a variety of ways. Potential impacts on the

environment include:

- Increased bare ground
- Impacted or decreased vegetation
- Increased erosion
- Damage to wetlands and low lying areas
- Increased siltation of lakes, rivers, streams, etc.
- Spread of noxious and invasive species
- Pollution of source water
- Garbage and Waste



It is important for ATV and ORV riders to adopt environmentally friendly riding. Joining an ATV club can be a good way to meet fellow ATV enthusiasts, spend time outdoors and respect the environment.

Potential solutions include:

- Riding on official designated trails
 - Stay on trails and try to avoid widening of trails
- Get permission from land owners before riding
- Avoid damage to wetlands and streams
 - Cross streams carefully and slowly to avoid damages
- Avoid muddy areas of trails and wetlands
- Join or form an ATV club in your area
- Following a ride be sure to wash your ATV to avoid the spread of noxious and invasive weeds
- Ensure all garbage is disposed of properly
- Spread the word on respecting the environment

Sources:

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