



MEMORANDUM

TO: ANR Board of State Land Stewardship

THROUGH: Ed Leary, Chair *Ed Leary*

FROM: Kevin Bracey, *KB* Larry Garland, *LG* Kim Greenwood, *KG* Steve Sinclair, *AS* and Chuck Woessner, *CW*

DATE: December 1, 2000

SUBJECT: ATV Environmental Impacts Report

The ATV Committee submits the enclosed report entitled "*Environmental and Social Effects of ATV's and RV's: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Assessment*" for use as the ANR's required report to Legislature for an environmental assessment of ATV use on public land as mandated under H854.

The report was prepared under contract by Dr. Patricia A. Stokowski and Christopher B. LaPointe of the School of Natural Resources at the University of Vermont (UVM). Appended to the report are selected documents that supplement and expand on the report. Collectively, these documents capture the current level of knowledge on the environmental impacts of ATV's.

The sheer size of the report means that few can devote the time needed for a thorough reading, but we believe you will find it a comprehensive, valuable and convenient source of facts about ATV's, their uses and the environment.

We direct the busy reader to pages 3, 4, and 29-31 for a capsulization of key points. There is no environmental good news here. The studies described in this report paint a disturbing pattern of negative environmental impacts with few studies having neutral results and none having beneficial environmental outcomes. Recreationally, there are some benefits to those interested in motorized sport, but even these generally come at a "cost" to other recreationists who find their activity displaced or deteriorated.

More research is needed to focus on more Vermont-like environments and to assess user interests before informed public policy can be made. Pages 29-31 provide some detail in this area. **We believe that it would be prudent to not legislatively or administratively relax existing public lands regulations on ATV use until there is a sufficient knowledge base to assess whether Vermont's public land base can accommodate environmental protection demands and existing non-motorized and snowmobile usage before adding more.**

The Committee is available to meet with the Board to discuss this report in detail if desired.