

# NE REGIONAL ATV MASTER PLAN

Northeast Regional  
Joint Powers Board

March 17, 2025



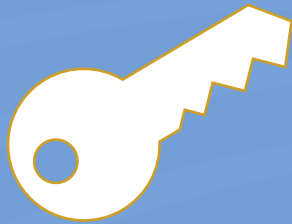
# Executive Summary



This plan serves as a comprehensive guide for planning, permitting, designing, and constructing ATV trail systems in St. Louis, Lake, and Koochiching counties in northeastern Minnesota.

Developed by the Northeastern Regional ATV Joint Powers Board (JPB) in collaboration with regional ATV clubs, state and federal agencies, and local government units, it aims to improve trail connectivity, sustainability, and economic impact.

# Key Objectives



- 1. Stakeholder Collaboration:** Engaging local ATV clubs, government agencies, and community members for coordinated trail planning, maintenance, and funding.
- 2. Enhancing Trail Connectivity:** Expanding and improving the ATV trail network to better connect communities and existing trail networks.
- 3. Sustainable Trail Development:** Implementing environmentally responsible design and construction practices.
- 4. Economic Impact:** Developing a trail system that enhances economic activity and provides efficient connections between riding areas and service areas.

# Planning Process



The planning process was divided into five phases:

1. **Inventory:** Creating a GIS database of ATV trail alignments and attributes.
2. **Engagement:** Gathering qualitative and quantitative information from stakeholders.
3. **Documentation:** Using GIS data and mapping to facilitate planning.
4. **Master Plan Development:** Interactive and iterative process informed by input from JPB, ATV clubs, and public landowners.
5. **Environmental Considerations:** Evaluating environmental impacts and compliance with regulations.

# EXISTING ATV SYSTEM



**ATV Registrations:** High registration rates in Northeastern Minnesota, indicating the region's popularity for ATV riding.

**ATV Organizations:** State and national organizations play crucial roles in trail development and maintenance.

**Northeastern Regional ATV Trail Offerings:** Includes a detailed inventory of trails in the region, including natural surface trails and designated on-road routes.

| County             | ATV Trails   | Designated On-Road Routes | US Forest Service Trails |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Koochiching County | 202          | 13                        | 0                        |
| Lake County        | 327          | 37                        | 43                       |
| St. Louis County   | 826          | 120                       | 55                       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>1,355</b> | <b>170</b>                | <b>98</b>                |

# ATV ECONOMIC IMPACT



**A statewide economic impact study estimated that ATV-related activities generate significant economic output and tax revenue**



ATV trips, purchases, and vehicle maintenance generates \$1.2 billion in total economic output, and \$225 million in federal, state, county, and sub-county tax revenue annually.



In 2024, the Department of Community Development at the U of M conducted a study in St. Louis, Lake, and Koochiching counties. The study found that ATV riders contribute an estimated \$36.1 million in annual economic activity in those counties.



# TRAIL DEVELOPMENT



Stakeholder Engagement included meetings with ATV clubs to understand existing trail systems and desired improvements.



**Desired Connections**



**Land Manager Feedback Summary**



**Trail Construction and Route Development**



**Trail Maintenance**



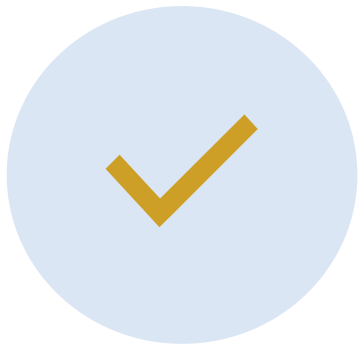
**Statewide Plan Consistency**



**Environmental Considerations and Review**



**Desired Connections:** Proposed trail corridors to enhance connectivity between existing trails and towns, including opportunities for more loops, connections to key destinations such as restaurants, campgrounds, and scenic viewpoints, as well as generally longer riding opportunities.



**Land Manager Feedback Summary:** Adjustments were made based on ideal conditions and removing alignments that were infeasible. Additionally, feedback included the process for engaging with Parks and Trails, Land and Minerals, snowmobiles clubs, and ensuring management of existing motorized trails were well understood.





**Trail Construction and Route Development:** Trails are designed to provide safe and sustainable routes for ATV use, following ecological sustainability principles. Construction methods include earth moving, installation of stormwater controls, and erosion prevention measures, with processes for preserving sensitive ecological areas.



**Trail Maintenance:** Maintenance is monitored through the MNDNR's Off-highway Vehicle Trails Assistance Program, involving collaboration between the DNR, LGUs, and ATV clubs. The Trail Ambassador program also plays a role in promoting safe and responsible ATV use.



**Statewide Plan Consistency:** The plan aligns with the Minnesota ATV Strategic Master Plan, emphasizing trail connectivity, communication, and information sharing between clubs, LGUs, and the DNR.



**Environmental Considerations and Review:** Environmental considerations include impacts on aquatic resources, wetlands, soils, invasive species, noise, and wildlife. The plan outlines potential environmental review requirements under MEPA and NEPA.

# ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW



## **Alborn Dirt Devils:**

Planning approximately 10 miles of trails, including improvements to existing routes. No mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) required.

## **Head of the Lakes ATV Club:**

Future trails near Duluth and Carlton County. Mileages undefined. Environmental review depends on coordination with the City of Duluth and other land administrators.

## **Northern Traxx ATV Club:**

Planning approximately 57 miles of trails, including improvements to existing routes. Environmental review depends on whether routes are formalized.

## **Prospector ATV Club:**

Two-phase trail system addition. Phase 1 completed; Phase 2 under review with no significant environmental effects found. Approximately 45 miles in planning and permitting stages.

**Ranger Snowmobile & ATV Club:** Planning approximately 10 miles of trails and managing 11.3 miles of the Bird Lake trail segment. No mandatory EAW required.

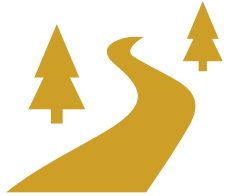
**Twig Area Trail Riders:** Planning approximately 229 miles of trails, including improvements to over 25 miles of existing trails. Exceeds threshold for mandatory EAW.

**Voyageur Country ATV Club:** Two-phase trail system addition. Phase 1 in planning and permitting stages; Phase 2 under review with an expected decision in April 2025.

**Wild Country ATV Club:** Planning approximately 29 miles of trails, including improvements to over 25 miles of existing trails. Exceeds threshold for mandatory EAW.

The remaining seven ATV clubs in the JPB planning area do not have new trails or segments that would require environmental review.

# COST ESTIMATES BY COUNTY



## Koochiching County

Length to be improved: **67.41 Miles**  
Total Cost (Low): \$11.4M  
Cost Per Mile (Low): \$190K  
Total Cost (High): \$17.6M  
Cost Per Mile (High): \$277K



## Lake County

Length to be improved: **68.06 Miles**  
Total Cost (Low): \$11.3M  
Cost Per Mile (Low): \$226K  
Total Cost (High): \$14.9M  
Cost Per Mile (High): \$287K



## St. Louis County

Length to be improved: **189.95 Miles**  
Total Cost (Low): \$35.4M  
Cost Per Mile (Low): \$228K  
Total Cost (High): \$47.0M  
Cost Per Mile (High): \$298K

# FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS



**ATV trail development can be a costly venture; therefore, securing funding is a crucial step. Often, these projects can acquire funding from various sources, such as state or federal resources, public grants, and private investments.**

**State Grants:** New Project Capital Improvement Grants and ATV Dedicated Account Funds are typically, available for ATV trail development projects on an annual basis and administered through the Department of Natural Resources.

**Federal Funding:** The Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds for trail entities to develop and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreation.

**Corporate Grants:** Local government entities and ATV Clubs can apply for trail grant programs such as those offered by ATV Manufacturers such as Polaris and Yamaha.

# SUMMARY

This plan aims to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities, increase the economic impact of ATV recreation, and create a well-connected ATV trail system in northeastern Minnesota.

This will create additional recreation opportunities for the region while also generating additional economic activity.

The Master Plan will be posted here:  
<https://www.sehinc.com/online/northeastern-regional-atv-joint-powers-board>