

Subject Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trails

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Overview

As amended, this bill would make a number of changes to the state's off-highway vehicle (OHV) laws, including limiting the use of OHVs on state lands administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to only roads and trails designated and posted for their use by the DNR; placing restrictions on where future OHV trails may be located; establishing OHV trail planning requirements; and requiring an environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) for OHV trails with certain exemptions. It would also raise registration and pass fees for certain all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and establish a new ATV surcharge on ATVs registered for public use.

Summary

Section	Description
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1	Off-highway vehicles and snowmobiles; use of public lands restricted.
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Subd. 1. Designated trails. Paragraph (a) prohibits a person from using an OHV on state lands administered by the DNR except on roads and trails specifically designated and posted for their use by the DNR by removing reference to certain exemptions currently in law and rule which are being removed/modified under the bill.

Paragraph (b) extends the exemption from the provisions under paragraph (a) to township administered land within a state forest when a resolution modifying restrictions is adopted by the township board (currently allowed for county-administered land).

Paragraph (c) states that an OHV trail or designated OHV route on a state forest road or trail, township road or trail, county road or trail, or other state road or trail must not include: (1) Tribal lands or Ceded Territory unless the Tribal government approves of the trail or route; (2) an unpaved trail that crosses over waters designated under Pollution Control Agency (PCA) water quality rules as outstanding resource value waters or exceptional habitat waters; (3) land designated by the Department of Agriculture (MDA) or county as containing

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certain noxious weeds; (4) an unpaved trail that is less than 200 feet from a public water that supports aquatic life; or (5) an unpaved trail that is less than 150 feet from a public water that does not support aquatic life.

Paragraph (d) states that paragraph (c) must not be construed to affect roads or trails constructed or authorized before the effective date of the paragraph.

Paragraph (e) provides a definition for “unpaved trail,” “Ceded Territory,” and “Tribal Lands” for purposes of the subdivision.

Subd. 2. Seasonal restrictions. No change.

Subd. 3. Mapped trails. Removes exemptions for land north of U.S. Highway 2 from restrictions on operating an OHV on state land that is not mapped for the type of OHV. Also removes a provision stating that forest access routes will not be signed or maintained and will not be included on public user maps of the forest.

Subd. 4. Rulemaking exemption. No change.

Subd. 5. Legislative findings. States that the legislature finds that OHF use on roads and trails should be similarly managed statewide.

Effective date. States that subd. 1, para. (c), cl. (1), is effective the day following final enactment. The rest of the section is effective August 1, 2025.

2 **State and grant-in-aid trail planning.**

Requires the DNR or county board, when planning for a state or grant-in-aid OHF trail or route, to provide written notice to the city, county, township, or road authority where the trail or route may be located once alignment has been proposed and to consult with them as part of the planning process.

Effective date. States that the section is effective the day following final enactment.

3 **Fees.**

Increases the three-year registration fee for ATVs that are for private use (used exclusively for private/agricultural use or used exclusively on private property) from \$6 to \$20, and the fee for duplicate or transferred registrations from \$4 to \$15. Increases the total one-year registration fees for ATVs used for demonstration and testing purposes by ATV dealers and manufacturers (from \$50 to \$100 for dealers, and from \$150 to \$200 for manufacturers). Also increases the registration fee for collector ATVs (vehicles at least 25 years old) from \$6 to \$20.

Section	Description
	Establishes a new ATV surcharge of \$45 for vehicles registered for public use and requires the revenue from the surcharge to be used for grant-in-aid programs.
4	Pass required; fee. Increases the annual ATV trail pass fee from \$30 to \$45. The pass is required for Tribal members exempt from ATV registration requirements and nonresidents, with certain exemptions, in order to operate on state or grant-in-aid ATV trails.
5	Conforming changes to rule; forest classifications. Requires the DNR to amend rules to require that the use of OHV vehicles is prohibited on DNR administered lands and on county-administered lands within state forests except as provided under Minn. Stat. § 84.777 (which is amended in section 1).
6	Mandatory environmental assessment worksheet preparation for off-highway vehicle trails. Requires the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to amend its rules to require an EAW for any OHV trail construction or expansion except for rerouting of one mile or less of an existing OHV trail.
7	Appropriation. Provides an unspecified appropriation in fiscal year 2026 from the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) account to the DNR to implement this bill.
8	Repealer. Paragraph (a) repeals Minn. Laws 2003, ch. 128, art. 1, § 167, subd. 1 (requiring DNR to review and classify forest lands with certain restrictions applicable to forests north of U.S. Highway 2). Paragraph (b) repeals Minn. Rules. part 6100.0500, subp. 8d (definition of scramble area).



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