

Help Protect Our State Parks, Forests, and Conservation Areas from ATVs

Please write to your Illinois Senator and Representative to Oppose SB 1521 & 1804; HB 2816 & 2273

Dirt-bikes, 4-wheelers and other all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) can cause major damage to trails and natural areas, pose dangerous safety threats to riders and bystanders, and produce high levels of noise. Now, ATV riders want these dangerous, noisy facilities built in our state parks. They also want the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to have severely limited law enforcement capabilities counteracting laws that protect people and wildlife at ATV facilities and events.

ATV riders are pushing two legislative proposals that jeopardize our state recreation areas, safety, and wildlife. Both proposals deal with how funds from the Off Highway Vehicle Trust Fund are spent by the IDNR. Both proposals put our parks and natural areas at risk.

- SB 1521 and HB 2816 would promote ATV facilities in our state parks, forests, and recreation areas, and remove a long-standing prohibition against using funds from the Off Highway Vehicle Trust Fund to build ATV facilities on land owned by the IDNR. Currently, these funds are only used for ATV facilities on private land.
- SB 1804 and HB 2273 would cap annual expenditures from the Fund for enforcement and administration at only 15%. Such limited funding jeopardizes public safety and the environment. If limited to 15% this level would only fund one conservation officer statewide to regulate and enforce laws for all of Illinois' ATVs.

Our state parks and other IDNR lands should be safe, quiet places for families to relax and recreate, as well as for protected wildlife habitat. Allowing ATVs to roar through our state parks is inconsistent with these uses.

SB 1804 & HB 2273 WOULD LIMIT ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS FOR ATVs

Illegal ATV use is a major problem throughout the state. Burial mounds at Cahokia Mounds (an Illinois World Heritage Site), have been irreparably damaged by illegal ATV use. Illegal ATV use has also irreparably damaged some Illinois Nature Preserves. Landowners throughout the State are having nightmares dealing with property damage and the loss of peace and quiet caused by illegal ATV use. In addition, river levees, such as the ones along the Mississippi River in Madison County, have been damaged by illegal ATV use. Illegal ATV riders are very difficult to catch since they can speed away and are hard to identify. Public land managers do not have the law enforcement resources they need to protect our lands. When citizens try to get help to protect their private property, they are typically told there are not enough law enforcement resources to catch the illegal ATV users.

HOW ATVs THREATEN OUR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

- Human Health Impacts: Noise generated by ATVs does more than annoy people. Scientific research has shown that relatively continuous exposure to sound levels exceeding 70 decibels (e.g. freeway traffic), can be harmful to hearing. ATVs routinely produce between 81-111 decibels. This is roughly the equal to a rock concert or busy street. Long term health impacts include altered movement patterns, behavioral changes, and stress related health problems. One study found that small mammals became unusually aggressive and disoriented after exposure to a motorcycle race.
- Environmental Impacts: Like humans, exposure to ATV noise can result in hearing damage or even loss. This has severe consequences for animals dependent on their hearing for finding prey, avoiding predators, and breeding. Noise also can cause increases in heart rate, blood pressure and blood cholesterol, as well as have negative impacts on the digestive and respiratory systems. Persistent, unrelenting noise exposure could cause these temporary stress reactions to become chronic stress diseases, such as high blood pressure or ulcers. The elderly, young, and individuals with existing health problems are at greatest risk. In a quiet forest or countryside, the noise from the average motorcycle can be heard from up to 7,000 feet away. The louder engines can be heard from over 11,500 feet, which is a distance of over two miles.

Please write or call your Illinois Senator and Representative ASAP! Tell them to oppose both of the ATV bills cited above.

Rep. Mike Bost	(618) 457-5787	(217) 782-0387	632 Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Gary Forby	(618) 439-2504	(217) 782-1051	257-S Stratton, Springfield, IL, 62706
Senator Leuchtefeld	(618) 243-9013	(217) 782-8137	103B Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Brendan Phelps	(618) 253-4189	(217) 782-5131	265-S Stratton, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Dan Reitz	(618) 443-5757	(217) 782-1018	200-9S Stratton; Springfield, IL, 62706
Senator Larry Woolard	(618) 985-5559	(217) 782-5509	M115 Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706 #

Submitted by Barb McKasson