Northern Lights

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"He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright, that spirits were riding the Northern Light." *Sir Walter Scott, 1802*

Disclaimer: This newsletter is published by The Northern Lights 4x4 Trailriders Association, PO Box 14, Ingersoll, Ontario, N5C 3K1. The comments and opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Association, Directors of the Association, or sponsors.

You can contact us at the address given or call 416-444-8231 and leave a message, we'll get back to you. Or send us an email at nl4x4@ibm.net.

Letters to the editor and submissions for the newsletters may be edited for context and space allotment. Published three times per year.

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Northern Lights 4X4 Trailriders Association

President's Message

Looking down the trail.

I find it hard to believe that it was just about a year ago that I started chatting with some concerned fellow four-wheelers on the internet about creating an Ontario Association. Quite honestly it was the fear of a government program called Lands for Life that started getting everyone's attention. Here was a program that would ultimately determine the future use of public lands in Ontario and the process was about half over by the time we found out about it. We later discovered that we were not alone and that a number of other land use groups had not heard of this process. This made it quite apparent that there was a need for an organization that could unite the four wheeling community in Ontario and ensure that our voice was heard.

Brenda Hackett had been in touch with the founders of a fairly new Association in Ohio. Both Nyle and Joyce Hillson, who have been involved in United Four Wheel Drive Association for many years had founded the Rustbelt 4x4 Trailriders Association only a few years before. We attended their annual meeting last April and also participated in a UFWDA 4WD Awareness Training session. I would like to thank both Nyle and Joyce for their support, encouragement and assistance throughout our early stages in forming Northern Lights and David Gough,

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International Vice President of UFWDA, for participating in our formation committee meetings.
Clearly we felt that the first step was to build a solid foundation which meant drafting by-laws, standard operating procedures and ultimately incorporation under the laws of Ontario as a not-for-profit corporation. After many trips along the 401 by members of the Formation Committee we achieved this in early August, about 3 months ahead of plan.
The next step was to solicit memberships. We are pleased that between the three member clubs and individual members we currently represent about 300 four-wheelers in Ontario. We continue to contact additional clubs, a process that will continue into the New Year. We will also continue to meet and make presentations to various clubs and to seek corporate sponsorship.
We will have our first Newsletter published and a web site established (www.nl4x4.com) by the first of the New Year and expect an article about Northern Lights to appear in the next edition of ***Canadian Four Wheel Drive Magazine*.**

I must point out that throughout the entire formation stage of this Association the Formation Committee members remained active members within their individual clubs as well as attending the Lands for Life Roundtable sessions and coordinating letter writing campaigns in an attempt to ensure that we remained part of the process. These same people also have family responsibilities and work for a living. I have to thank them for their time and efforts in making Northern Lights a reality.

I must also thank the Central Ontario 4x4 Club for their support in this initiative. They financed some of the start up costs and were the first Club to join Northern Lights.

Even with the accomplishments so far, we have had detractors. We have been accused of not moving forward fast enough and simply being a small clique of four-wheelers asking for money. These people appear to think that in nine months we should have been able to achieve the same level of prominence that it has taken UFWDA 20 years to achieve. We realized that when we started it would take time and that we must methodically move forward to establish credibility in order to do this right. The local, regional and national issues affecting recreational trailriding in Ontario are complex and multi-faceted.
Northern Lights plans to become a resource for member clubs in their ongoing efforts be it; education, local land use issues or resourceing materials from UFWDA or our own accumulating archives. We will also act as a conduit for information to the membership on the status of such programs as Lands for Life. To that end we would appreciate being kept advised by the membership of any activities that are taking place in the province with regard to land use, so that we can keep the rest of the membership informed.
We are now at the trailhead, and the real work is just beginning. I see our focus in 1999 to be continuing membership growth, the seeking of corporate sponsorship and continuation or organized recreational four-wheeling through encouraging and assiting in the formation of clubs and their ultimate incorporation.

I understand that many years ago an attempt was made to start an Ontario Association and it failed. We believe the time is right to try again, in fact, we may be a little late. With the heightened awareness of land use and the government focus on addressing these issues, we may not get another chance to state our views.

At the end of the day, if we are not heard or simply dismissed and all the land we enjoy today is closed to public use, then we will at least be able to look back and know that we tried.

I would like to wish everyone a healthy and prosperous 1999.

Wayne Groom
President
Northern Lights 4x4 Trailriders Association

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Lands for Life

The consolidated report, from the three Lands For Life Roundtables, recently submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources, was made public last month. It contains about 225 recommendations for the future management of public lands in Ontario.

At first cut the recommendations do not look bad for the future of organized four wheeling in Ontario. Perhaps the biggest issue is that while snowmobiling is well recognized and ATV access is consistently mentioned and encouraged, 4x4 trailriding in SUVs is not acknowledged. Is this included under ATVs? We hope so. We are currently in contact with the MNR to try to determine this. (This is an 88 page document and if you are only going to peruse it pay close attention to recommendations 135 through 149 and take a close look at the beginning of chapter 5).

So does this mean everything is OK?

If you look over the recommendations you will notice a trend towards organized group trail maintenance, a permit system and other opportunities to negotiate land use. All of which are not bad things but all issues that require a higher level of organization to represent our common interests.

The government was taking comments from the public until November 30. The Minister, John Snobelen is planing to announce the results of the Lands For Life process before Christmas and after reviewing the two thousand public comment responses received. We are hopeful that our reply, among the two thousand received by the ministers office, will impact to the Minister that there are more than two sides to this coin. More than industry and environmentalists. There are people who fit somewhere in the middle, in tourism or tourism related activities. These people would like to see their basic right to enjoy Crown Land endure.

This is the reason that Northern Lights 4x4 Trailriders Association was formed, to create a common response to four wheelers concerns in Ontario.

***Corey Sanderson* Co-Editor**

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North Hastings Cleans Up!

The North Hastings Four Wheel Drive Club is planning a spring clean up trail run of the Lingham Lake Trail located west of Madoc, in Cooper, Ontario. Anglers, Campers, Hunters, and ATV, Snowmobile and Four-Wheel Drive Enthusiasts have used this trail for many years. Unfortunately over time the trail has also been misused. I'm convinced that for every vehicle we take on this run, there will be the same number that come back loaded with garbage. I've seen everything from beer cans to whole vehicles left in there and, as conscientious four-wheelers, our club feel strongly that this trail clean up is very important. In the face of proposed land/trail closures it is evident that we

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must all do our part. I know this does not seem exactly fair but it is reality.

We, as conscientious four-wheelers, must clean up after those who are less respectful of the trails. Only by doing our part and by setting a good example for future users, will we get our point across. Pack out what you pack in!

A tentative date has been set for the weekend following the long weekend in May, 1999. We have concerns that the trail will most likely get misused over the long weekend thus making it a great time for a clean up. We would encourage and appreciate the help of any other group of people, or individuals interested in lending a hand for this trail clean up. Come on people. We have to work together. It should be noted that all club rules and regulations apply and participants must sign a liability waiver. For more information about this event please feel free to contact me.
(613)395-5037 or (613)477-2349 or by e mail at corymorgan@hotmail.com
Cory Morgan

Land Use Representative North Hastings Four Wheel Drive Club

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UFWDA

Northern Light's First Delegate's Report.

Hello, my name is John Carroll and I have accepted the United Four Wheel Drive association 1st delegate position for Northern Lights 4x4 Trailriders Association. Len Bink, another director from Northern Lights will be working along with me as 2nd delegate. I have been following the many issues that UFWDA has been dealing with over the past year as well as keeping myself up to date and informed about the ongoing Ontario government Lands For Life process. I am currently assembling and cataloguing a resource database that will be available for members. In this way I am hoping to be able to provide members with up to the minute, as well as, archival information.

Recently an Individual member, who is also a member of CO 4x4, called upon Northern Lights 4x4 for documentation of the positive effects of 4WD events on communities. With the assistance of the Northern Lights directors and UFWDA we were able to supply this member with articles that he could take back to his community. He has plans to utilize them as part of a presentation designed to stimulate interest in his locality towards establishment of a 4x4 Trail system. In the future I will endeavour to keep you informed of issues impacting UFWDA. and important features such as trail/road closures and pending restrictions as well as events scheduled for our general area. I am presently researching the proposed rate increases for UFWDA. If you have any questions or comments pertaining to UFWDA and Northern Lights 4x4 Trailriders Association please feel free to call and I will work on getting answers for you promptly and accurately. You can reach me by telephone at: 416-444-8231 or send me an E mail at nl4x4@ibm.net

John Carroll
Director Northern Lights 4x4 Trailriders Association UFWDA 1st Delegate

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Robert R. Maddocks
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Coldwater Trail CLOSURE...

Central Ontario 4x4 Club has closed this trail to it's membership and anyone wanting to run this trail had better be taking a large wallet with them. The Ministry of Natural Resources is now enforcing this trail closure. New signs have been posted at the entrance to the trail. One of the locals is an avid 4 wheeler and let our club know of the closure. The unofficial story is that " a bunch of BIG TRUCKS" went in and tore up an area which was filled in by the cottagers a few months earlier. They reportedly spent $5,000 fixing it up. Now a further $2,000. is needed before the Snowmobile clubs can use it this winter. The Ministry is considering totally closing this area to every type of access. As CO 4x4 is a large club, we are very sensitive about our public image. ***We are always trying to find ways to Promote Responsible Off-Roading, but as usual a small number of 4x4's make it harder for us and now their actions might have led to another trail closure.***

Trail permits appear to be the only way to control these *"Quality People*". In the Lands for Life consolidated report there is a section concerning this concept. I have to agree that it is about time this is regulated. Too many people are buying 4x4's and are seen wailing down the trails just like in the TV ad's.

"Northern Lights is our future if <u>organized</u> 4 Wheeling is going to survive."

Thankyou for taking the time to read this.

Of Interest to Four Wheelers!

The Canadian Jeep List.
Craig Hastings
CDN-Jeep Administrator

I created the Canadian Jeep List because I thought the Jeep-L was way too noisy and sometimes down-right unfriendly**.** As there was no list covering Canadian issues I decided to create one with the support of @Trends.ca. This list really has no fixed direction at this time (sounds 4x4 like). Messages should relate to issues regarding 4x4's, and off road usage. Idle conversation is encouraged and things should be kept informal.

To subscribe, send any message to: <cdn-jeep-subscribe@mjrdom.else.net>

Remember, although this list is "The Canadian List" you do not need a passport to join. All are welcome to join and take part. I thought it would be an idea to create a CDN list because we tend to have issues that differ from our friends south of the border. Enjoy!

New Canadian 4x4 Magazine!

Finally a four wheel drive magazine devoted to the Canadian four wheeler. This magazine is packed with anything from product reviews, Club events and listings, Truck of The Month, trail fixes and 4x4 modifications. Of course it also has the 4wd advertising that we all like to drool over. Kudos to Pam and Al, at APV Publishing for producing a Canadian 4WD Magazine of excellent quality. In my opinion this is one of the best bathroom readers currently available! For further information or for a subscription to this very Canadian, very interesting magazine please contact:

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Canadian Four Wheel Drive Magazine
P.O. Box 27118750 Coldstream

Ave. Victoria, B.C. V9B 5S4

Subscription cost beginning next year will be $16.00 as they are moving to a bi-monthly format. Please make cheques payable to APV Publishing Inc. Visa and Mastercard also accepted. The Canadian Four Wheel Drive Magazine web page will be up and running sometime in the spring it is, like everything else, currently under construction.

By Brenda Hackett Co-Editor

We would like to thank our Charter Members!

Len Bink
John & Chris Carroll
Mark Coles
David Gough
Wayne Groom
Brenda Hackett
Phil Hackett
Wes McNeil
Robert Redshaw
Lynda Redshaw
Kris Schattmann
Sheryl & Phil Whyte

Membership information:

Individual $10.00 Charter $20.00 Club $100.00 Associate $20.00 International $25.00 Supporting (as able)

For more information contact:
Northern Lights 4x4 Trailriders Association. PO Box 14, Ingersoll, Ont. N5C 3K1 416-444-8231 by e mail at nl4x4@ibm.net

Or check out our web site www.nl4x4.com (under major construction ***Thanks Tim***!)