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ADOPT-A-TRAIL PROGRAM

GUIDE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Welcome and thank you for volunteering for the OF4WD's adopt-a-trail program. The following guide will assist you in understanding the programs initiative and history of development and why the OF4WD need people just like you.

The Adopt-a-trail program is an important stewardship initiative to help ensure the continued availability of public lands for the off-road enthusiast. The program is basically a monitoring and maintenance program for trails.

To be successful, this program will require significant resources in terms of time and manpower. The only way the Adopt A Trail program can be successful is by relying on volunteer effort. Again, thank you for volunteering. You are making a valuable contribution to ensure trails stay open now and in the future.

As the name suggests the focus of this program is for clubs, groups or individuals to focus their efforts in smaller geographical areas, generally a single trail. The hope is that this focused approach makes the greater task more manageable for everyone and allows OF4WD member's greater direct involvement and opportunity to see the rewards for their efforts.

Providing the OF4WD with a regular periodic report on trail conditions and issues, in particular trail damage or environmental damage, will provide the board of directors the data it needs to do its job. We use this information to help us determine where to allocate or raise funds on a priority basis for repairs and potentially have the trail coordinator organize a larger volunteer work force effort focusing attention to one particularly troubled area. Also, the data is invaluable in making the case to MNR and others that the trails are indeed being used and maintained in a sustainable fashion.

Clubs adopting a trail(s) will need to complete the expectations below. Members of OF4WD who are not in a club can also volunteer to adopt a trail, and at their request can be matched up with other individual volunteers to the program.

New for 2019

A group/club that had adopted a trail the previous season will have until the AGM to re-adopt the same trail, by emailing trails@of4wd.com. A list of currently adopted trails will be published at the AGM and on social media after the AGM.

After the AGM any club/group who want to volunteer to adopt a trail will be assigned a trail on a first come first served basis. New groups/clubs wishing to adopt a trail should list their top three trail requests in an email to trails@of4wd.com.

EXPECTATIONS

1. The club/group/individual member will ride the trail a minimum of twice a year, ideally at the start and end of the season.
2. An in depth trail report form will be submitted to the trail coordinator after each ride.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Information will be gathered via a website trail report and pictures taken during the ride. This is a very useful data for the OF4WD. The information obtained can be utilized to statistics on trail use, provides a historical record of trail conditions and provides a record of the involvement and work performed on the trail.

Things to look for and report on:

- Trail surface condition: Is there any significant rutting? Is the rutting getting worse? Can the ruts be filled?
- Rock climb conditions: Is there a lot of erosion? Are the rocks coming apart? Are the rocks becoming so exposed that other user groups could not use the trail?
- Water crossings: are there culverts, bridges or underwater log bridges? What is their condition? Do they need repair? If you have to ford the water, is the bottom hard packed/surfaced or are you churning up sediment?
- Vegetation: are there fallen trees/branches across the trail? Does it look like someone has cut it down or is likely natural storm damage/dead fall? Is the trail becoming over grown?
- Detours: Are detours being created around obstacles, e.g. water holes, fallen trees etc? Can this be fixed to get users back in the trail?
- Garbage: Is there a lot of garbage? If so, is it from trail users such as oil containers or food wrapping or has the area become a dumping ground for locals?
- Will your group need more people to fix a problem area?
- Alterations: Is there alterations of the trail/landscape that could be viewed as damage? Can you tell if the alteration is due to natural effects or is due to trail usage?

Pictures are worth a thousand words take lots and submit them with report.

Submitting a report

Anyone can submit a report. The "Submit a Trail Report" link is on the OF4WD website under the "trails" menu.

CORRECTING CONDITIONS

During any trail ride it will be a good idea to bring shovels and a chain saw. Many trees come down during summer storms. The shovels can be used to fill in holes and ruts as you pass through the trail. If you do any trail remediation you are encouraged to take pictures of your work, as this strengthens our position for fair trail usage.

If a condition is a larger job than your group can handle you can report that to the trail coordinator by emailing trails@of4wd.com. For example, rutting may require the need for us to bring in aggregate or other materials to make the area more durable.

The coordinator discusses with the OF4WD board if funds are needed and potentially put a call out to all adopt-a-trail volunteers requesting assistance and coordinate an effort or plan to correct the problem. Other groups such as the OFSC and other ATV and motorcycle organizations may also become involved in the solution which will take more time however the result will be much better for all users.

Again we thank you for your participation in the Adopt-a-Trail Program and assisting with the OF4WD primary mandate of ensuring the sustainability of 4-wheel drive-based recreational activities in Ontario.

