

LETTERS

Get feedback on impact of ATV traffic

To the editor:
I recently submitted the following letter to the Berlin City Council, along with Mayor Paul Grenier and City Manager James Wheeler, with regards to the ordinance allowing ATV traffic on city streets:

Dear Mr. Wheeler, Mayor Grenier and council members:

Is the time right to undertake a survey to get feedback from Berlin residents regarding the passage of the ordinance allowing ATV traffic on city streets?

In reading the multitude of letters to editors, as well as other articles in various publications, it appears that the impact from the development of the Ride the Wilds campaign has been negative for many Coos County residents. Just looking to our neighbors in the Town of Gorham where a group of residents has felt the need to resort to legal measures as a result of the ATV frenzy, we can see that the impact of this recreational activity has also had negative effects on the people who live in the community.

When encouraging recreational activity that drastically changes the neighborhoods by causing excessive noise and severe dusty conditions, it's critical that quality of life issues be addressed. Residents whose quality of life has been compromised should be encouraged to contact their government officials and voice their concerns.

I hear constantly how the ATVs are a tremendous boon to the economy. The local businesses are said to have benefited from the ATV traf-

fic. I do wonder if there are actually some businesses that have suffered from the change in the character of Berlin and the surrounding towns. The above-mentioned survey could also include businesses so that they too have the opportunity to give their opinions.

It's been several years since the passage of the ordinance allowing ATV traffic on city streets. I am not certain that allowing the ATVs on the streets is necessary to reap any economic benefit from the ATV groups. Even without riding on city streets, the riders can access businesses by trailering their machines or leaving the machines at the trailheads and driving their pickups to the business they want to visit.

By asking for feedback from Berlin residents and businesses, this would demonstrate that, as a community, the leaders are not focusing strictly on economic growth with no regard for the impact on its residents.

I request that consideration be given to conducting the survey, which could provide a good vehicle for residents to voice their concerns or, if applicable, express their satisfaction with the OHRV ordinance.

I would urge Berlin residents to contact any of the public officials mentioned above to inform them of the impact, positive or negative, the passage of this ordinance has had on them. In order for our city officials to provide the best service they can to the entire community, they require feedback from the residents.

Claire Stiles
Berlin

LETTERS

Rail Trail abutters speak out about noise

To the editor:
I'd like to add to the article about DRED Commissioner Rose's meetings in Gorham at the end of April. Representative Bill Hatch arranged a meeting preceding the selectman's with the Commissioner, so that Rose could hear directly from the Rail Trail abutters who are not feeling heard or represented by the Gorham selectmen in their unanimous push for ATV expansion along the Rail Trail to Jimtown Rd. These abutters spoke eloquently about their loss of peace and quiet in their yards and homes since the previously non-motorized trail has been opened to summer OHRV use. They described loud, racing engines with decibel levels well above local ordinances, dust clouds that require residents to keep their windows closed on otherwise beautiful summer days, uri-

nation in their yards, trash thrown along their yards, and the need to leave their homes on the weekends to find peace and quiet. Because these complaints have gone unanswered by officials for 4 seasons, it seems that OHRV trails do not belong running through residential neighborhoods. As one resident said - "you can put your ATV on a trailer and drive to a trailhead, but I can't put my home on a trailer and go anywhere." The local ATV club has acknowledged problems and have made some changes along the parking area this spring, but would you want 100s of ATVs traveling by your back yard all summer long? Our neighbors deserve better. Let's work together to find ATV trail access away from our neighborhoods.

Abby Evankow,
Gorham

LETTERS

OHRV's don't belong in residential areas

To the editor:
We appreciate everything the Gorham Police Department did RZR weekend to address the chronic issues in our neighborhood from OHRV traffic. But, even with this visible police presence, the disturbance of the peace to our Lancaster Road/Crestwood Drive neighborhood was still overwhelming.

Many of us had to leave our homes for the weekend, again, just to get away from it. If you can imagine several hundred loud off-highway recreational vehicles that make multiple trips riding up and down your street past your home and on trails next to your backyard from sun up to after sundown, day after day, all summer and

fall long, then you will begin to get the picture.

This is too much disturbance to subject any neighborhood to and it is not just festival weekends-it's every weekend and increasingly the weekdays too.

OHRV's do not belong in a residential neighborhood.

Joel and Diane Fortier,
Gorham

Diane Holmes, Gorham
Michael Pelchat, Gorham
Sandy Lemire, Gorham
Audrey and Guid Albert,
Gorham

Mark and Heather Malia,
Gorham

Court and Lois Stearns,
Gorham

Nancy and Bruce Neil,
Gorham