



ATV Minnesota

"Your Voice For ATV Recreation in Minnesota"

Member Newsletter

February 15, 2026

523 new members in 2025...welcome!



A 2026 Legislative Update for ATV Minnesota Members

By Jeff Anderson, ATV MN lobbyist

"ATV Minnesota continues working diligently on your behalf – professionally, passionately, and strategically."

As Minnesota's 2026 Legislative Session gets underway (February 17th), I want to take a moment to step back from the bill numbers and committee hearings and talk plainly about where things stand, both politically and for ATV Minnesota.

The short version? It's going to be a challenging session. The good news? We're ready.

Much of the most important work in advocacy happens when the Legislature is not in session. Over the past several months, we've been meeting with legislators from both parties, engaging agency officials, refining bill language, reviewing



fiscal impacts, and laying the groundwork necessary to move our priorities forward when session begins. Relationships matter. Preparation matters. And in a divided Legislature, they matter even more.

Before diving into the political environment, let's start with what matters most: your priorities.

ATV Minnesota's 2026 Legislative Priorities

At our Legislative Summit, you outlined a clear and focused agenda.

Priority #1: Core Legislative Initiatives

•ATV Registration Fee Increase

We support a reasonable increase in registration fees to strengthen the dedicated ATV account. Trails do not maintain themselves. If we want sustainable, well-maintained riding opportunities across Minnesota, we must ensure stable funding.

•Updating the ATV Definition

We are pursuing modernization of Minnesota's ATV definition to include machines with pneumatic tires and weighing up to 3,000 pounds. Equipment has evolved. The law should reflect today's machines, not yesterday's.

•C.J. Ramstad / North Shore State Trail Master Plan Update

We are working to ensure ATV use is considered where feasible and appropriate as the Master Plan is updated. We are seeking a \$25,000 appropriation from the dedicated account to the DNR and a clear completion timeline. Planning matters and riders deserve a seat at the table.

•Bonding: Trail Infrastructure Investments

One of the biggest opportunities this year lies in capital bonding. We are supporting:



- Voyageur Country ATV – \$1,000,000 in state bonding to begin rehabilitation of 38 miles of the Blue Ox railroad corridor (MnDOT Railbank Program)
- Cass County – \$750,000 to repair the Soo Line grade
- Aitkin County – \$880,000 to repair the Rum River bridge

These projects are about safety, preservation of infrastructure, and long-term trail sustainability. Bonding bills require bipartisan supermajorities. That means

OHV DEFINITIONS

Off-highway vehicle (OHV)
The term off-highway vehicle (OHV) includes all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles (OHMs), and off-road vehicles (ORVs).

All-terrain vehicle (ATV)
ATVs have at least three, but no more than six, low-pressure or nonpneumatic tires (not filled with or containing compressed air) with a total dry weight less than 2,000 pounds and a total width from outside of tire rim to outside of tire rim that is 65 inches or less. ATVs include Class 1 and Class 2. Dry weight is normally the weight of the vehicle without fluids. Vehicles not considered ATVs includes electric-assisted bicycles, golf carts, mini-trucks, dune buggies, go carts, or a vehicle designed and used specifically for lawn maintenance, agriculture, logging,

Class 1 ATVs Width 50 inches or less.		Class 2 ATVs Width greater than 50 inches but not more than 65 inches.	
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coalition building and steady relationship work, which we are actively engaged in.

•**Highway Access Reform**

We are also advocating for opening state highways with speed limits of 45 mph or less to allow ATV access into towns. This is about economic development for Greater Minnesota communities and responsible connectivity for riders.



A Closely Divided Legislature

Minnesota enters 2026 with one of the tightest political balances in modern history:

- House: 67 DFL/67 Republican (tied)
- Senate: Narrow DFL majority
- Governor: DFL

That means no major bill moves without bipartisan cooperation. Bonding requires a supermajority under the Minnesota Constitution. In short, both parties must agree.

For ATV Minnesota, this reinforces something we've long believed: our issues are not partisan. Trail access, infrastructure, safety, and rural economic vitality resonate across party lines. We continue to work with supporters on both sides of the aisle to move our agenda forward.

Bonding and Budget Adjustments

The second year of the biennium is traditionally known as the “bonding year.” There is significant interest in passing an infrastructure-focused bill. Whether leaders can reach agreement will be a key test of cooperation. There will also likely be a supplemental budget bill addressing revenue forecast changes, workforce development, public safety, and federal funding shifts. Tax policy discussions may occur, though likely on a more incremental basis.

2026 Elections

This fall, Minnesota voters will elect:

- Governor & Lieutenant Governor
- Attorney General, Secretary of State, and State Auditor
- One U.S. Senator
- All eight U.S. House members
- The entire Minnesota Legislature

Governor Tim Walz is not seeking re-election. Senator Tina Smith is also not running again, creating open statewide races. Legislative retirements are significant as well, which means new members and new relationships in 2027.

For ATV Minnesota, engagement matters. Whether attending precinct caucuses, meeting candidates, or participating in forums, members have an opportunity to educate policymakers about the importance of responsible ATV recreation.

Capitol Security Changes

Beginning in 2026, weapons screening will be in place at the State Capitol. If you are visiting the Capitol or participating in ATV Minnesota's lobby day on Wednesday, March 11th, plan extra time for security procedures.

LCCMR Funding Opportunity

The Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) is accepting proposals for its 2027 funding cycle. This is a valuable opportunity for trail, conservation, and outdoor recreation projects. If your club has an idea, reach out early so we can assess competitiveness and eligibility. You can find out more at: <https://www.lccmr.mn.gov>

Looking Ahead

2026 promises uncertainty, but also opportunity. A divided Legislature means negotiation. An election year means heightened attention to local priorities. Infrastructure interest creates openings for trail investment. Through it all, ATV Minnesota will continue working diligently on your behalf – professionally, passionately, and strategically.

2024

WISCONSIN
ALL-TERRAIN /
UTILITY TERRAIN
VEHICLE LAWS



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | DNR.WI.GOV

WISCONSIN RAISES MAXIMUM UTV WEIGHT TO 3,500 POUNDS

On February 6, 2026, Wisconsin Gov. Evers signed Senate Bill 339, changing the definition of a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV, includes ATVs and SxSs) from being up to 3,000 pounds (dry weight), to up to 3,500 pounds.

Bill co-sponsor Senator Mary Felkowski said in a hearing last fall: "By aligning our regulations with those of our neighboring states, such as Michigan, who do not impose statutory weight limits for UTVs, we can ensure Wisconsin remains a competitive and attractive destination for off-road enthusiasts."

Said Governor Evers upon signing the bill into law: "I'm glad there was bipartisan support to get this bill passed today so we can make sure more UTVs are being registered and legally operated while also continuing to support both our state's manufacturing industry and our already-booming outdoor recreation industry."

In 2021, Wisconsin raised the maximum UTV weight limit from 2,000 to 3,000 pounds. Meanwhile, ATV Minnesota continues to lobby State Legislators and the Minnesota DNR to raise the allowable maximum weight for ATVs in Minnesota, currently at 2,000 pounds.

The MN DNR Enforcement division reports that its Conservation Officers are not currently writing citations for ATVs over 2,000 pounds, awaiting new legislation, but at their discretion are writing citations for vehicles wider than the maximum allowed 65 inches.



Save The Dates!

March 11, 2026: ATV MN Legislative Reception, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Radisson St. Paul (161 Saint Anthony Avenue), on the second floor, in the Sibley Room. It's an opportunity for our members and members of the State Legislature to network and discuss issues affecting our recreational activity. Soup, sandwiches, and refreshments will be served. **Link to register:**

<https://membership.atvmn.org/dayatcapitol/>

March 28-29, 2026: ATV MN Vision Conference at Appeldoorn's Sunset Bay Resort, Isle. Main meeting with the DNR and others is Saturday, statewide board meeting on Sunday morning. **Link to register:**

<https://membership.atvmn.org/vision/>

May 16, 2026: ATV MN Ride & Roast: Hosted by Alborn Dirt Devils, at the community center in Meadowlands, Minn. Guided rides, food and fun, kicking off the riding season. More details and registration now open at atvmn.org, tap the Events tab.

September 18-20, 2026: ATV MN State Convention/Ride & Rally: Held this year in Park Rapids at the Hubbard County Fairgrounds, hosted by local ATV clubs. New, signed ATV routes through town will allow access to and from the hotels and trails. More details, including lodging options, are at atvmn.org, with registration coming soon.

YOUR FEEDBACK NEEDED!

Help shape the future of Itasca County trails.



The Itasca County Land Department, in partnership with the University of Minnesota and The PLUM Catalyst, is conducting a two-year comprehensive trails study from December 2025 through November 2027.

This study will measure the true economic impact of the county's trail systems and collect data on how, when, and why people use motorized and non-motorized trails.

Why Your Voice Matters

Every response helps paint a clearer picture of how people across Itasca County experience the trail network — from snowmobilers and cyclists to hikers and equestrians. Your input ensures all trail users are represented in future decisions about maintenance, funding, and new trail opportunities.

Your feedback will help guide:

- Future trail maintenance & investment
- Funding strategies for new projects
- Long-term recreation & tourism planning

Share this flyer with your club members, friends, and local riders — every response helps strengthen the data and impact of this study.



Take Survey

Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://z.umn.edu/ItascaTrails>

All survey responses are anonymous and kept confidential.



ITASCA COUNTY TRAIL SURVEY

Itasca County is conducting a trails survey. Some of the Itasca County trails connect directly into the Northwoods Regional ATV Trail System, including the Emily Outing and Emily Blind Lake Trails. Follow the link below or tap the QR code to take the survey, providing feedback on your trail experiences in Itasca County.

From Itasca County: Thank you for using Itasca County's trail systems! By completing this survey, you will help shape the future of the county's trail system. Your input will ensure all trail users are represented in future decisions about maintenance, funding, and new trail opportunities. Please click on the link below to access the survey.

<https://z.umn.edu/ItascaTrails>

Please Share Your Club's News & Events -- We want to promote your club rides and future events, and share your club's success stories about new trails, charity rides/events, and more. They can be short articles with a few photos, or just a photo and caption (include the who, what, when where details). Send them to David Halsey, ATV MN communications director: d.halsey@atvmn.org. Thanks!



ATV MINNESOTA

*"Your Voice To Ride"
(And Have Fun!)*

Seventy-two dedicated ATV clubs and their volunteers, building and maintaining fun, sustainable ATV trails for the riding public (and bridges, boardwalks, kiosks, parking, selfie stations and more).

**Invite friends and family to
join today.
Gift memberships available!**

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Mudslide McWheele 1234 Mudtrack Lane RoughRider Falls, MN 56789	

See the mailing label on your Minnesota Wheelin magazine for your membership renewal date. Be sure to include your email address on the renewal form we send you to receive our

twice-monthly newsletter. Send renewals to ATV MN, PO Box 300, Stacy, MN 55079. You can also join/renew at atvmn.org.

Belonging to ATV Minnesota, you join thousands of riders throughout the state, have fun, and help create a positive future for ATV riding in Minnesota.



As a family or individual member, for \$30, you receive:

- A subscription to Minnesota Wheelin magazine (published times 6 a year).
- Twice-monthly newsletter by email with the latest news.
- Membership card and ATV MN logo sticker for your ATV.
- Invitations to events, including our Legislative Summit, Vision Conference, Ride & Roast in the spring, and State Convention "Ride & Rally" in the fall, as well as membership meetings.
- A full-time lobbyist at the State Capitol, helping create pro-ATV legislation, and moving forward bills to provide funding for new trail systems.

As a business member, for \$90 you

receive:

All of the above, plus:

- Your business name and contact information listed in our Minnesota Wheelin magazine and on the ATV Minnesota website.
- Discounts on advertising in Minnesota Wheelin. For details on rates and deadlines, send an email to Creston Dorothy at Pro Print in Duluth: cdorothy@proprintus.com.**

-Opportunities to reach more customers by sponsoring or donating to our events.

To join, contact **ATVAM** or call (800) 442-8826.



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Financial support from businesses large and small are helping ensure a positive future for ATV recreation in Minnesota.
Four levels: \$2,500 Bronze / \$5,000 Silver / \$10,000 Gold / \$25,000 Platinum
Each includes ads in Minnesota Wheelin magazine, and publicity of your business, organization or club at ATV MN events, on websites, social media and more!
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