



MASSLAND E-NEWS

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

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***ACTION ALERT! Stop Illegal Off-Highway Vehicles!
Call your State Senators TODAY! Debate starts Thursday!***

MASS. LAND TRUSTS! Please distribute this Alert to your members and encourage them to act.

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"Machines are domineering, exclusive, destructive and costly; it is they and their operators who would deny the enjoyment of the back country to the rest of us. About 98% of the land surface of the contiguous USA already belongs to heavy metal and heavy equipment. Let us save the 2% - that saving remnant."

-- Edward Paul Abbey (1927-1989), American author and essayist --

1) ACTION ALERT - STOP ILLEGAL OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES!

Senate Bill 2251, An Act to regulate the use of off-highway and recreation vehicles, is scheduled for debate on Thursday, January 28th in the Massachusetts Senate. This critical bill will give enforcement officers the tools they need to stop illegal and destructive riding on public and private lands. It also provides funding for the development of public trails in the right places. Download the bill:

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/senate/186/st02pdf/st02251.pdf>

To move the bill through the Senate it is critical that you CALL YOUR STATE SENATOR!

Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use is growing in Massachusetts. Sales of all terrain vehicles increased by more than 300% in the past decade, but fines are back in the 1970's - it's only \$25 if you're caught riding illegally and officers can't impound vehicles. There's no motivation or funding for enforcement. Lack of enforcement leads to extensive and long-term environmental damage on private and public land and unsafe conditions; on the 160,000 acres owned by the Department of Fish and Game alone there are close to 300 miles of illegal trails. There are miles of illegal trails on both land-trust and other private holdings. Illegal riding on public lands, often unique and sensitive areas protected with public dollars for wildlife and sensitive ecosystems, damages public property and degrades the public trust.

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition has co-signed a letter to the Senate signed with other statewide conservation organizations in support of Senate Bill 2251. Read the letter here:

http://web.massaudubon.org/site/DocServer/SB2251_OHV_Environmental_Joint_Letter_Senate_Jan_2010.pdf?docID=2981.

TAKE THREE MINUTES AND CALL YOUR STATE SENATOR NOW AND ASK THEM TO VOTE FOR SENATE BILL 2251! DEBATE IS ON THURSDAY.

Locate the name and contact information of your state senator, if you do not already know, by visiting:

<http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>
or www.mass.gov/legis

SAMPLE MESSAGE

- * Give your name and town.
- * Ask to speak to the Senator. If they are not available, ask to speak to a staff member.
- * Let them know that their vote for Senate Bill 2251 is important to you.

The legislation would:

- * Expand law enforcement capacity to provide consistent and effective enforcement of OHV laws and regulations.
- * Strengthen fines and penalties for OHV offenses, including trespassing.
- * Provide funding for enforcement through sharing of penalty revenue with municipal and state enforcement officials.
- * Require registration and simplify the registration process for most OHVs.
- * Create a revenue source for public OHV trail acquisition and maintenance, using a portion of registration and penalty revenues.
- * Require safety and responsibility training for all OHV operators eighteen (18) years of age and younger.
- * Strengthen communication among riders, land managers, conservation organizations, enforcement agencies and other stakeholders by establishing an OHV Advisory Group similar to those in other states.

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