



February 12, 2010

Attn: All Atvans Member Clubs.

I was invited to attend a meeting in December 2009 with the staff from the NS Department of Transportation to discuss OHV travel across the restricted 100 series highways in NS. Specifically the topic of discussion was the section of Highway 103 between Exit 5 and Exit 6 from Halifax to Yarmouth.

The DOT attendees included the Highway Planning Engineer, representatives from Highway Engineering Services and staff from the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal.

I was originally invited as a president of the local ATV club. At the start of the meeting I informed the DOT representatives that I am now the president of ATVANS, which they viewed as a plus since the meeting would have the potential to affect all off-highway operators across Nova Scotia.

The meeting was to discuss initial plans to twin the section road from Tantallon to Hubbards. We reviewed where OHVs are crossing the highway now, attempted to identify where safe crossings could be located and looked at developing a process to manage crossing sites.

On their map, crossings used on a regular basis were identified and it was determined there were no existing approved safe crossings that could be used at this time. We choose two spots that could be incorporated into their plans with minimal cost.

One spot near Hubbards, on an existing access road not maintained by DOT for many years, had already been identified as a site for a tunnel that would span both lanes.

The other was at Ingramport River. OHVs can pass under the existing bridge but cannot get over to the other side of road because of flooding and steep banks. To allow them to get onto their ditch right of way the consensus was, when putting the second bridge in for the other lane, they would design it so OHVs could use the highway ditch(right of way) cross under the 103 for a safe crossing in this area.

This would require a club to map a trail on both sides that could use the existing right of way.

The proposal has gone from the engineers to upper management to seek approval to implement. At this time no one knows if it will go further, but it is a great step forward after many years of getting no acknowledgement from this senior level of the highway department.

Liability was their main concern and they would like to see no travel across restricted highways. Would putting these sites in stop all the illegal travel on these hi-ways? The honest answer was not likely, but since we have not had any legal way to cross at all, that maybe the majority would use a safe, legal crossing site if available. As well as, in our case (local club), we now could safely run club events using this crossing 100% of the time. And, the new access would accommodate all OHVs, including Side X Sides. This would greatly decrease their liability percentage wise and if some riders cross elsewhere that it would be a small number. Enforcement or the clubs/associations will never have any way to completely prevent some riders from doing this.

We recommend ATVANS and the Member Clubs in Nova Scotia keep these trails /crossings open and signed. We also promised to promote their use to all OHV operators in the province.

Engineers indicate the best criteria for crossing the 100 series highways is by going under. Options include tunnels, using existing overpasses, utilizing secondary roads in some cases, and of course being involved in the process well before work begins. The first planning stages are approx 2-5 years before actual construction starts. It is recommended sites be worked into drawings and budgets from the start.

I have been asked to send in a letter to the department outlining the importance of this preliminary meeting, outlining the need for proper/safe places to cross highways all over Nova Scotia and the commitment of ATVANS member clubs to facilitate choosing sites, plan trails, management, and maintenance.

This letter to the clubs is to ask that if you have comments on why we need a policy in Nova Scotia. We need you to identify OHV crossings in your area and then send them to me. I will include them with my follow up letter to let them know it is important to clubs all over Nova Scotia.

If you know of any trail access locations under the 100 series highways in your area that are possible to modify at little cost send that as well and we will include with our presentation.

We now have the eyes and ears of senior employees of this government department and although there is discussion of this issue at other levels and organizations, I believe we should keep pressure directly from our association to signify the importance of this issue. To meet my commitment to respond to the DOT, please send your comments by March 12th. Any additional comments may be sent over the next few months to be forwarded as follow up material.

Your president,



Mike Marriott