

[December 13, 2006]

Senator Breske,

I am writing to provide you the benefit of 31 years of public outdoor recreation management experience, 20 years of which have been in your backyard, Marathon County. As you know, I am the Director of the Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department. Prior to this position I worked in recreation management and Forest planning for the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in Michigan, Minnesota, and California. All of these jobs entailed significant motorized and non-motorized trail activities.

The single most important policy to follow in providing quality trail recreation experiences is: DO NOT MIX MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL USES! The desires and expectations of neither user group will be met not only if the uses are mixed on the same trail tread, but also if they are mixed to any significant extent within a management area. The best practice is to keep the two uses out of the sight and sound of each other as much as possible.

Motorized and non-motorized trail use are both legitimate uses of public trail resources. Years of experience have shown that motorized uses have a significantly greater ability to negatively impact both the physical environment and the recreation experiences of others. This is primarily due to the speed, power, and noise of the machines, even when used by responsible recreationists. This translates to higher costs per capita in developing, maintaining, and regulating motorized trails.

There is a need to provide more motorized trail facilities in Wisconsin. However, despite rapid growth in ATV sales, motorized recreationists are still nowhere near as numerous as non-motorized recreationists and their commercial influence may be growing but it is still far behind that of non-motorized. It would be unwise to not assist the growing legitimate motorized trails users. It would be more unwise to significantly compromise the quality and availability of established non-motorized recreation opportunities in the process.

William Duncanson

Director

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department