

Retired RCMP officer calling for less restrictions on ATVs

Better access to restaurants, hotels could be boon for Nova Scotia

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A petition to ease restrictions on off highway vehicle users in the province recently gained support (from left) from Cumberland North PC candidate Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin and riding association president Kathy Wells. The petition was created by retired RCMP officer Glen Hudson and echoes a sentiment James Moore, owner of Moore's Automotive Recreation and Sport, says he's hearing from customers.

Amherst – A retired RCMP officer wants more off-highway vehicles on the road – safely.

Nova Scotia is one of two provinces left in the country who do not legally allow some form of safe road access for off-highway vehicles [OHV], Glen Hudson, a 35-year law enforcement veteran, says.

“The research I’ve done... indicates the only provinces we know that does not allow some access to roads is Nova Scotia and P.E.I.,” Hudson said. “[Elsewhere] it’s not only common, it’s welcome.”

Motorists are allowed to cross roads in some circumstances in Nova Scotia, but only if it's to continue on the trail. Going on the road to avoid manmade or natural obstacles, or using an overpass to cross a 100-series highway are illegal. Motorists are also limited to the gas stations, hotels and restaurants they can access immediately from the trails, otherwise, they are breaking the law.

“You can’t invite tourism in and then say ‘Take this trail, but you’re breaking the law of the province.’ They’ll want to access gas stations and restaurants and there are so many places where it can’t be done unless you drive a little ways along the side of the road.”

Hudson says he wants a safe option for the province because the industry is growing.

One could assume Nova Scotia, with its extensive trail system and small rural communities, would be a leader on the issue but Hudson says best practices are found in Central Canada.

“Ontario is one of the best examples we have in Canada because they have one of the largest trail systems, they have the highest density of population and they’ve been doing this since 2003,” Hudson said.

Hudson’s sentiments on lifting restrictions are shared with the OHV community.

“We hear it often,” James Moore, owner of Moore’s Automotive Recreation and Sport [M.A.R.S.] in Amherst, says. “When people are travelling on the trail they have their destination in mind for the day, so when they come to a road they basically have to illegally cross in order to carry on with the trail. All of those trails intersect with not just our county, but everywhere.”

The second component to Hudson’s quest is to ease its restrictions on motorists between the ages of 6 and 15. Right now those motorists are restricted to only using closed courses in the province

under direct adult supervision. Hudson says he would like to see changes to the legislation allowing them to access the provincial trail system within a line of sight of adult supervision.

Hudson is circulating a petition asking the province to make changes to the existing laws. Copies can be found at M.A.R.S., Roy Duguay Sales in East Amherst, and Cobequid Mountain Sport in Collingwood.

christopher.gooding@tc.tc

Twitter: [ADNchris](#)