

August 2017

Submission to the
Southwest Alberta
Recreation Advisory Group
(SARAG)

Part 1 of 2



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Upon the completion of the first phase of the Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group (SARAG), the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association (AOHVA) has developed this document to provide important insight and feedback on the process and the impending draft recreation management plan for Porcupine Hills and Livingstone; highlighting the organization's position on a number of issues.

First and foremost, it is important to re-state that AOHVA strongly believes a successful solution is derived through trust, mutual respect, open discussion, transparency and the input of diverse user groups. In order to move forward and achieve sustainable, environmentally responsible recreation, including OHV use, on Alberta's public lands, our collective next steps must be thoughtful, balanced and action-oriented.

As such, AOHVA provided details of the AOHVA 4-POINT PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE OHV USE as direct input to the Recreation Management Plan for Porcupine Hills and Livingstone, a plan that has previously been provided to the Government of Alberta, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) on numerous occasions. The key elements of this plan address specific issues raised by the stakeholder groups participating in the SARAG meetings. These specific issues include: environmental concerns, user pay, enforcement and education. Details included in the AOHVA 4-Point Plan identify some of the requirements to develop a sound plan, namely, the identification, communication and validation of constraints, the creation of standards as well as the identification, inventory and assessment of existing trails, open camping nodes and associated infrastructure – also identified by AEP as requirements of the plan.

AOHVA came to the realization early on in the process that the function and intent of SARAG was more for optics and less for earnest collaboration.

Respecting the Terms of Reference developed and presented by SARAG, AOHVA contributed to the process in good faith, openly and honestly in an environment that was heavily influenced by the disproportionately high representation of certain sectors, namely ranchers and ENGOs. The focus of the meetings and messaging, the tone of the meetings and messaging, the attitude of the participants, the input received and the decisions made were all influenced by the loud and plentiful voices from certain sectors.

This disproportionate representation had a definite impact on the direction SARAG took, turning the process into one focused on environmental protection and property rights rather than recreation planning and management.



Equally important is the observation by AOHVA representatives that participant comments and discussions were not accurately reflected in the materials sent out to the group - further influencing participant perspectives and future positions. In light of specific observations and discussions with AEP staff, this may be due to SARAG facilitators not capturing the comments in the first place or due to the review and summarization (sanitization) of discussion notes after the fact.

AOHVA finds it curious that comments and information provided by SARAG participants at the SARAG meetings, documented by professional facilitators and AEP staff were required to be reviewed and approved by Minister Phillips before being released to SARAG participants.

As such, it has been noted that the input of and questions asked by AOHVA have been rarely reflected in the SARAG updates of meeting documentation and maps — causing us to believe that the SARAG process had been initiated simply to achieve predetermined outcomes. AOHVA has identified a number of aspects of the SARAG project which, when one delves into the details, are determined to have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the process and on the validity of the outcomes. AOHVA agrees with the comments of other SARAG participants, including AEP staff that the process is rushed. The consequences of a rushed process are inadequate information gathering and assessment, and compromised decision-making. Throughout the SARAG process, participants have voiced concerns about the lack of information available for review and reference, yet they are asked to make sound judgements and decisions. Trail inventory, capacity, demand, science-based and socio-economic considerations.

SARAG was mistakenly named as a Recreation Advisory Group. Rather, it really functioned as an Environmental Protection Advisory Group with a footnote to Recreation. A recreational Advisory Group should be focused on the recreational aspects of the region. As a result, the SARAG process is seen to be politically driven

For these and many other reasons identified in the AOHVA Submission to SARAG, AOHVA deems the process as flawed and the outcomes as indefensible. As such, AOHVA will not endorse any actions or recommendations made by SARAG or Minister Phillips and Premier Notley relating to recreation on Alberta's Public Lands.

Truth be told, OHV users across the province are being treated unfairly. They have been targeted by Minister Phillips: they have been bullied, vilified, ostracized and lied to.

It would serve everyone well to remember that OHV users are Albertans who love the natural landscape as much as anyone. They have contributed thousands and thousands of volunteer hours and millions of dollars building, refurbishing and maintaining trails and infrastructure accessible for the enjoyment of all Albertans.



INTRODUCTION

AOHVA has worked openly, diligently and in collaboration with the provincial government and ministry officials for more than 7 years. AOHVA has promoted and endorsed safety regulations (helmet usage) and supported restrictions on OHV use during times of extreme fire conditions the past two years. AOHVA has worked tirelessly to establish a dedicated and focused organization to ensure the appropriate development, enhancement and maintenance of user-funded, designated trails for all off-highway recreation enthusiasts in Alberta.

All of these efforts link directly to the work now being undertaken by the Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group (SARAG).

Our understanding of and appreciation for the over-arching outdoor experience OHV users and their families seek in combination with our expertise in developing, managing and sustaining shared trail networks positions AOHVA as a key contributor to the SARAG process and as a strong partner for the government to deliver a comprehensive Recreation Management Plan for the Porcupine Hills and Livingstone regions.

AOHVA strongly believes that a successful solution is derived through trust, mutual respect, open discussion, transparency and the input of diverse user groups who recognize that there can be environmentally responsible OHV use as part of an effective recreation management plan such as that currently being sought by AEP / SARAG.

Through ongoing participation in the SARAG process (via large stakeholder meetings, smaller meetings between AOHVA representatives and AEP staff, email and telephone communications) questions have been asked, comments have been made and input has been provided to help create a viable recreation management plan for Porcupine Hills and Livingstone.

This document will serve as a recap of the SARAG Process from the AOHVA perspective – our input, observations and insights.



PRESENTING A SOLUTION: THE AOHVA 4-POINT PLAN

In order to move forward and achieve sustainable, environmentally responsible OHV use on Alberta's public lands, our collective next steps must be thoughtful, balanced and action-oriented. As such, AOHVA would like to provide details of the AOHVA 4-POINT PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE OHV USE as direct input to the Recreation Management Plan for Porcupine Hills and Livingstone. In doing so, it is our expectation that this information will be shared with all stakeholder participants in the SARAG process — as a demonstration of AOHVA's transparency.

This plan has previously been provided to the Government of Alberta, Alberta Environment and Parks on numerous occasions including the March 28, 2017 meeting with Deputy Minister Andre Corbould and AEP staff, on April 18, 2017 as part of the AOHVA Castle Parks Draft Management Plan submission, on May 9, 2017 emailed to and discussed with Chief of Staff, Brent Dancey, and on July 5 as input to the SARAG Partnerships and Stewardship workbook.

The key elements of this plan address specific issues raised by the stakeholder groups participating in the SARAG meetings. These specific issues include: environmental concerns, user pay, enforcement and education.

Important to the SARAG process, details included in the AOHVA 4-Point Plan identify some of the requirements to develop a sound plan, namely, the identification, communication and validation of constraints, the creation of standards as well as the identification, inventory and assessment of existing trails, open camping nodes and associated infrastructure.



THE AOHVA 4-POINT PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE OHV USE

1. Working with the Government of Alberta, Land Use Framework staff and our own experts in designing and developing trails, trail heads and camping nodes that are sustainable and environmentally-sound and repairing damaged trails.

By incorporating best practices from across North America and by implementing innovative approaches to developing, managing and sustaining shared trail networks we can make Alberta the model for shared recreational trail development and management.

Designing, developing, managing and sustaining shared trail networks and camping nodes

		GoA; AEP	AOHVA
	Requirements for successful implementation	Recreational	Service
		Trail Group	Delivery Org.
1.	Establish a new recreation trail disposition	S	S
2.	Establish standards for trail building	S	S
3.	Establish standards for camping nodes S		
4.	Establish standards for linear footprint	S	S
5.	Establish a formal, streamlined provincial trail	S	S
	approval process and workflow; see NOTE below		
6.	Establish streamlined open camping permit process	Р	I
7.	Identify, inventory and assess existing trails	S	S
8.	Identify, inventory and assess existing staging areas	S	S
9.	Identify, inventory and assess existing camping nodes	S	S
10.	Identify, inventory and assess existing open camping	S	S
11.	Identify, inventory and assess existing infrastructure	S	S
12.	Identify requirements for new trails	S	S
13.	Identify requirements for new staging areas	S	S
14.	Identify requirements for new camping nodes	S	S
		GoA; AEP	AOHVA
	Requirements for successful implementation	Recreational	Service
		Trail Group	Delivery Org.
15.	Identify requirements for new open camping	S	S



16.	Identify requirements for new infrastructure	S	S
17.	Establish a long term sustainable funding process	S	S
18.	Establish an implementation process	S	S
19.	Establish a conflict resolution process	S	S

Primary Responsibility – P Input Required – I Shared Responsibility – S

2. Dedicating 100% of an increase in OHV registration fees to tackling important issues like habitat protection and proper trail construction and maintenance in partnership with government under an accountable, transparent and arms-length management structure.

This approach to user fees will be a win-win for both AEP and AOHVA as it represents a collaborative approach to undertaking important work and shared responsibility, and importantly, there is minimal overlap.

AOHVA proposes an annual OHV user fee.

- The fees will be collected through the existing OHV registration process.
- For every OHV registration, AOHVA recommends that an open camping permit be included for a period of three years; on an annual basis.

Open Camping is closely tied to the OHV user outdoor experience and associated issues. AOHVA recommends the following:

- An open camping permit will be required for all people that open camp in Alberta.
 - Registered OHV users will receive one open camping permit per OHV registered for an interim period.
 - Other recreational campers will be required to purchase an open camping permit.
- Other recreational campers could follow a process similar to that currently in place for the WIN Cards; possibly through the same process and platform.
- The annual fee for open camping will be determined by the Government of Alberta.
- We envision a sticker that is applied to the window of a trailer which stays with that unit for the year. Important data can be gathered through various means.



Dedicating 100% of an increase in OHV registration fees to tackling important issues

	Requirements for successful implementation	GoA; AEP Recreational Trail Group	AOHVA Service Delivery Org.
1.	\$54 current fee, (dedicated to Law Enforcement)	100% - general	
	Linorcementy	revenues	
2.	\$100 fee, new	50%	50%
3.	Reclamation	P+S	S
4.	DevelopmentTrailsTrail HeadsCamping Nodes	S	P+S
5.	Infrastructure Maintenance	S	Р
6.	Assumption of Liability	S	P+S
7.	Education	S	P+S

Primary Responsibility – P Input Required – I Shared Responsibility – S



3. Giving law enforcement agencies the tools and mandate to fully enforce the law.

Law enforcement related initiatives could be funded by the current \$54 OHV registration fees.

Giving Law Enforcement the required tools and mandate

	Requirements for successful implementation	GoA; AEP Recreational Trail Group	AOHVA Service Delivery Org.
1.	Review current laws	Р	I
2.	Evaluate current results	Р	I
3.	Identify required changes	S	S
4.	Pass New Legislation: Trails Act	Р	I
5.	Develop standards as required	Р	I
6.	Develop common, consistent OHV user information	S	S
7.	Distribute OHV user information	S	S
8.	Prepare law enforcement agencies	Р	

Primary Responsibility – P Input Required – I Shared Responsibility - S

4. Building a better environmental and trail experience. Alberta can lead the way in OHV trail development by putting the onus on organizations like the AOHVA and its like-minded partners to be responsible for environmental stewardship as a means of eliminating improper use of the back country.

The delivery of education-related initiatives will be funded through the new OHV fees. Such initiatives include:

- OHV user training
- Safety education
- Environmental education
- Member Club support



Building a better environmental and trail experience

	Requirements for successful implementation	GoA; AEP Recreational Trail Group	AOHVA Service Delivery Org.
1.	Review education efforts	S	S
2.	Identify required changes	S	S
3.	Develop materials	S	S
4.	Distribute materials	S	S
5.	Promote education initiatives	S	S
6.	Deliver education and training		Р

Primary Responsibility – P Input Required – I Shared Responsibility – S

Through the implementation of this plan and in partnership, AOHVA and the Government of Alberta, Environment and Parks will establish a foundation from which to fortify Alberta's parks and public spaces, ensuring they are places all Albertans can enjoy.

We are certain that the AOHVA 4-Point Plan will work. OHV users will fund it – not taxpayers. It will involve 100% participation by the users – who will be motivated to make it work - the one caveat being that OHV users will continue to enjoy similar trail access as is available today. In fact, we expect that the volunteer base will be reinvigorated to actively contribute to achieving the benefits expected from the plan through this approach.

The Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association and its member clubs are well positioned to meet the public's demand for more and better recreational trails. We have the expertise to work with government staff at building and maintaining trails suitable for all OHV trail users. We need sustainable revenue to undertake this important work, which can be achieved through Point 2 of the plan.

Through the AOHVA Plan, Albertans will realize three major benefits:

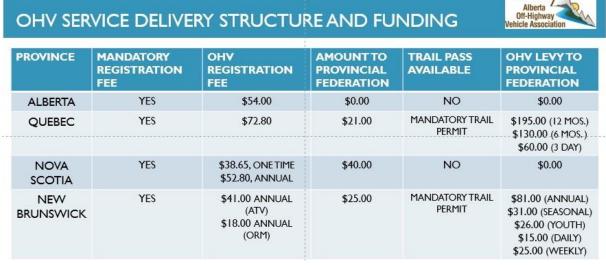
- 1. Financially sustainable, user funded trail development and maintenance facilitated by the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association and its member clubs will alleviate any burden on taxpayers.
- 2. Trail users of all types will have access to a network of enhanced multi-use, managed recreational trails.
- 3. Designated trail systems mitigate environmental concerns, offer safe, high quality experiences for users, provide links between communities and reduce or eliminate conflicts with neighboring landowners.



AOHVA has received overwhelming support from the summer motorized recreation sector for this plan. As part of this submission we are including signed Letters of Support from organized clubs on behalf of their respective members and visiting OHV users. See Appendix G.

Models from other Jurisdictions

The following table provides a snapshot of OHV user fee structures in three of the most progressive jurisdictions in Canada with regards to managed trail systems.



Information provided by COHV

Recognized outcomes from these jurisdictions include:

Quebec:

- Backcountry trail usage is rare. Instead trails are managed by rider federations.
- As a result environmental damage is limited even though there are 7 times more trails in use.
- Trails are interconnected in a rational manner that encourages tourism.
- There are over 14,000 km of maintained trails.
- As a result, organized OHV trail usage contributes over \$2 billion per year in economic activity in Quebec. This includes thousands of international tourists as well as local residents.

New Brunswick:

- Unauthorised private land use by OHV users is rare.
- Interconnected trail system being developed with an eye towards regional and international tourism.
- There are almost 11,000 km of trails.
- There has been improved safety through enhanced enforcement.

Nova Scotia:

- There are over 3,500 km of maintained designated trails.
- There are four regional trail systems.
- Environmental damage is rare due to strong enforcement.



ACESS RECOMMENDATIONS TO SARAG RECREATION TRAIL PLANNING

AOHVA, through the Alberta Committee for Eastern Slopes Stewardship (ACESS), offered observations, comments and recommendations supporting our objectives for both the preservation and the designation of trails in Porcupine Hills and Livingstone as well as for the intent and framework of the AOHVA 4-Point Plan.

A complete copy of the ACESS input is included in Appendix C. Key points ACESS identified are included here:

There is a total of 496 parks (including National Parks), reserves, protected and public land areas in Alberta. Together, they total over 10 million hectares in size. Of those areas, only 35 (7% +/-) allow Motorized OHV as a permitted use. Recreational planning in these areas allows for the distribution of different recreational users so as to provide access to their valued experiences and mitigate conflicts. At a high level, true collaborative input and planning with recreational users as a group - can provide quality recreational opportunities without sacrificing one type for the other in each area while still balancing the considerations of environment, social and economic values and outcomes.

Although it is recognized that the existing trail network within the Livingstone-Porcupine PLUZ was not derived from linear developments intended for recreational use, there is a long legacy of use that points to the value that the existing network provides for family recreation for all Albertans.

ACESS's recommendations for the initial planning activity is as follows:

- Categorize and name routes. Presently the data consists of linear fragments which inhibit further analysis. Trail management should consider overall routes and not the fragments themselves.
- Identify and highlight trail segments using the Alberta Environment and Parks Recreation Opportunities Management (ROM) model as a preliminary identification of the mitigation sites that are required on the landscape for review/discussion with local and provincial recreation organizations.
- Compile and generate a GIS data set that captures existing mitigation measures which are currently in place (e.g., bridges installed for OHV, quad cattle ramp).
- Rank routes using a recreational user valuation such as the suggested model provided herein. To support this, an accurate 'points of interest' type data set, that captures the linked recreational opportunities that are desirable in the local setting (e.g., viewpoints, look outs, geological features such as Window Mountain, old cabins & historical remnants, fishing holes, waterfalls etc).
- Analyses/review for discussion and input.

In addition to compiling user information on the trail, ACESS has been working towards compiling data on points of interest and is vested in aiding and collaborating with all recreational users and with AEP to develop a more complete data set with respect to this project. In this aspect, ACESS believes that a user driven identification of key points of recreation value would provide meaningful input into the planning process.



AOHVA agrees with the recommendations laid out by ACESS that SARAG undertake the important due diligence required to develop a viable trail system for Porcupine Hills and Livingstone Public Land Use Zones at this time. Echoing various stakeholders in the SARAG process - we must get this right.

AOHVA has constantly stressed the need to get this right from the get go for two reasons:

- 1) to fully demonstrate transparency and integrity, particularly important as we look ahead to public consultations; and
- 2) from the experiences in other regions like the Ghost and other management areas where deferred trails have not become a reality.

While the uncertainty and frustration of various stakeholders groups was evident at the meetings, AOHVA recommends that SARAG act on the input of ACESS to provide a higher degree of clarity and certainty regarding the current trail network and constraints in Porcupine Hills and Livingstone...with the ultimate goal being to aid implementation of best possible outcomes for recreational maps and opportunities in the anticipated PLUZs.

Included in the ACESS submission were shapefiles reflecting the significant work undertaken to illustrate the current state of recreation trails. AOHVA requested that those shapefiles be run through the Recreation Opportunities Mapping (ROM) tool and that the results be sent back to ACESS for further analysis, allowing the team to develop a mitigated and recommended trail plan as input to SARAG.

NOTE: This request was deferred by SARAG

Recreation Trail Planning

Successful planning of trails (and recreational planning in general) recognizes that there is no human activity that does not influence or affect the environment. Some have less impact, some have more impact.

The significance of these effects, and the potential residual effects, varies depending on the nature (e.g., permanence, intensity, and frequency) of the activity and the sensitivity of the receiving environment. The planning model should reflect these variations in environmental sensitivity and the recognition that some integrations of user activities with environmental components of ecosystems is acceptable. Land based recreation is important to a healthy society. Building cement skateboard parks, paved walkways and trails along beaches and in urban parks are not 'bad' even though they impact the environment. They provide healthy recreation. In the same manner, mountain biking, hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, OHV riding, or any other recreational activity is not necessarily bad by their very nature. These activities are valued by participants, and it is this valuation that needs to be captured by the planning models to facilitate inclusiveness and desired user experiences. If properly designed and managed to mitigate negative residuals all of these activities can have successful environmental outcomes and sustainability.

ACESS understands from previous land use meetings, as well as stated references in the amended 2017 South Saskatchewan Regional Plan for recreation, that the Livingstone-Porcupines PLUZ area is an appropriate and as such identified area for motorized recreational use.



With the intended closure of Castle for this recreation, adjacent recreationists both local and regional will create increased volume on Livingstone-Porcupine Hills PLUZ area.

As such, planning for this use with a framework that does not explicitly capture recreational values will not provide for a successful and sustainable outcome, likely creating unintended and unnecessary public and political backlash. It is very well known that poor or limited trail designations that do not provide the user experiences desired on a trail, will prompt these users to fulfill these experiences off trail – requiring increased enforcement and unnecessary funding due to poor implementation and designation.

Designation of trails that provide these experiences reduces enforcement requirements through design and understanding, delivering the experiences recreationalists' desire.

Proven successful in many other jurisdictions - this promotes compliance, volunteerism, and stewardship while reducing vandalism and off-trail environmental impacts.

The trail proposal implemented thus far appears to be highly focused on the application of ROM on ground conditions without incorporating relative valuations between environmental, social/recreational and economic considerations, providing mitigation measures.

As such, the framework is totally weighted to environmental constraints and suggests only environmental considerations to be important and greater in terms of value as compared to existing social/recreation and economic drivers.

If a planning process characterizes environmental constraints as un-mitigatable, the model and structure do not accurately account for numerous mitigation measures which can address and eliminate negative continual or residual effects - therefore unnecessarily sacrificing any social and economic benefits currently derived from the recreation activity.

ACESS also observed that the SARAG framework did not provide an existing inventory of the current recreational usage to the stakeholders first, and that the first round of proposed maps were substantially reduced from current usage based analysis. The rationale and criteria were not disclosed to the recreational stakeholders.

Without prior release of a base map showing the existing usage and inventory (which would have been discussed and reviewed by all stakeholders) this can create false impression of the current usage of land, and creates unintended conflict. Each individual user group, environmental NGOs, industry, ranching, and recreationalists all have an inherent sense of ownership of the entire PLUZ planning area. As a result, each future visualization of a user on a map for one group (which in this case, happens to be the motorized use first, as an artefact of the PLUZ designation process), is now viewed as an infringement on other users perceived 'ownership' of the area. Without a meaningful initial view of the actual spatial extent and overlap of uses as they exist on the landscape as currently, all following processes typically focus on conflicts and not successes of the existing integration of use on the landscape.



Livingston/Crowsnest

Trail / LD Classification	Existing/Current Use	AEP Proposed	% of Existing Use
OHV	932.7 km	286.7 km	30.7%
OHV – 4X4	250.6 km	6.6 km	2.6 %
Single Track	259.1 km	54.0 km	20.8%
Total OHV	1442.4 km	347.3 km	24.0%
Not OHV Utilized LD	2149.1 km		
Total LD Identified	3591.6 km		

Porcupine Hills

Trail / LD Classification	Existing/Current Use	AEP Proposed	% of Existing Use
OUN	120.0 km	44 F luna	20.6%
OHV	139.8 km	41.5 km	29.6%
OHV – 4X4	49.9 km	6.3 km	12.6%
Single Track	224.7 km	59.5 km	26.5%
Total OHV	414.4 km	107.3 km	25.8 %
Not OHV Utilized LD	767.7 km	107.5 KIII	25.6 //
Total LD Identified	1182.1 km		

AOHVA APPROACH TO COLLABORATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP

PARTNERSHIP

The AOHVA 4-Point Plan (referred to earlier in this document) was built upon the premise of a partnership between the government and AOHVA - being established and supported fully by both parties.

AOHVA has worked diligently for the past 7 years to establish a dedicated and focused organization to ensure the appropriate development, enhancement and maintenance of sustainable, designated trails for all off-highway recreation enthusiasts in Alberta. All of the trail development, restoration and revitalization can be done with no cost to the public but rather, completed through the proposed user fee as outlined in the AOHVA 4-Point Plan.

The plan also proposes that AOHVA work in partnership with government under an accountable, transparent and arms-length management structure – a concept supported by the sector.

OHV users have told AOHVA that while they may support an OHV user fee dedicated to OHV trail management, they absolutely do not want to see those fees to go into general revenues or into government initiatives.



As such, an arms-length structure is critical to the success of motorized trail development and management in the province and any associated partnerships.

Participants of SARAG have continually raised the issue of a user fee. They also recognize that the existing annual OHV registration fees have gone to the government for over 20 years with no tangible or measureable benefit directly back to the users (through either proper trail development, management, enforcement or education) or indirectly to other recreationalists.

It is important for everyone to fully understand the issues, the impacts and the options in providing outdoor recreation opportunities for all Albertans. AOHVA and its members are willing to take an active role in:

- Assisting the government in identifying, evaluating and either closing or reclaiming and converting illegal trails to acceptable multi-use trails.
- Working together to return areas showing the effects of over use to an acceptable condition.
- Continuing our work educating the OHV community about acceptable riding practices, rider safety and environmental consideration

AOHVA recommends an OHV Service Delivery Structure and Sustainable OHV User Funding:

- To engage and utilize a positively-motivated rider federation (AOHVA), clubs and represented users.
- To develop and maintain designated trail systems with effective stewardship.
- To significantly improve environmental outcomes.
- To improve safety through engineered trails and rider education.
- To help facilitate greater compliance / enforcement.
- To enhance tourism through improved quality of experience and more accessible trails.

STEWARDSHIP

OHV users love and do care for Alberta's natural landscapes and healthy environment.

Over the past 30 years, responsible user groups such as the AOHVA and members clubs have invested millions of dollars and tens of thousands of volunteer hours to build and maintain multi-use trails for motorized and non-motorized recreation in Alberta.

"We have hauled material, built bridges and created a sustainable trail network to ensure that responsible trail users have a safe place to ride, hike, mountain-bike and generally enjoy the wilderness of our great province."

Brent Hodgson, President AOHVA



Stewardship is a cornerstone of the AOHVA 4-Point Plan for Environmentally Responsible OHV Use. AOHVA's recommendations incorporate key learnings from across North America, where various jurisdictions have implemented innovative approaches to creating, managing and sustaining shared trail networks. AOHVA and its member organizations follow internationally recognized trail building best practices to mitigate environmental impact, protect animal habitat and ensure places to ride are safe.

A HISTORY OF AOHVA PARTICIPATION

AOHVA has worked diligently and in collaboration with the government for many years. AOHVA volunteers have attended more than a hundred meetings with Government of Alberta ministers and staff over the years...and while there have been different ministers and staff, AOHVA was a constant at the table - along with local OHV club colleagues.

AOHVA has been an active participant throughout the Land Use Framework and Regional Planning Processes including:

- Lower Athabasca Regional Plan
 - o Representation Biodiversity Management Plan Meetings
 - Representation at Linear Footprint Planning Meetings
 - o Representation at Preliminary Recreation Planning Meetings
- North Saskatchewan Regional Plan
 - Representation at Introductory planning process
- South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
 - Representation at all 57 public consultation process
 - Representation at Biodiversity Management Plan meetings
 - Representation at Linear Footprint Management meetings
 - Representation at Recreation Planning Meetings Porcupine Hills/ Livingstone
 - o Representation at Castle Park Management Plan Consultations
- Ghost Area Management Plan
- Eagle Point Blue Rapids Park Council
- Castle Special Management Area Plan and Access Plan
- Bighorn Backcountry Access Management Plan
- Secondee in the Integrated Land Management Project
- Land Use Framework Planning Working Groups
- Richardson Backcountry Access Plan
- Redwater Natural Area Recreational planning
- Coal Branch Land Use Planning
- Alberta Recreational Corridors Coordinating Committee
- AOHVA clubs supporting the Bighorn Standing Committee
- AOHVA clubs supporting the Clearwater Trails Initiative



In addition to attending meetings and public consultations, AOHVA has developed and provided documentation to the government for their review and consideration. Such documentation includes but is not limited to the following items; details of which are available for reference at aohva.com:

LAND USE FRAMEWORK

- a. AOHVA December 2016 Linear Footprint Management Plan Clarification Questions
- b. AOHVA January 2014 Submission to Land Use Secretariat, SSRP
- AOHVA November 2016 Castle Park Management Plan OHV Trail Input, including Budget; document provided to Quad Squad for submission to the Castle advisory committee
- d. AOHVA April 2017 Submission to Castle Park Draft Management Plan OHV Trail MANAGEMENT
 - a. AOHVA September 2015 Updated Establishment of a DAO for a Designated OHV
 Trail System, updated from 2010
 - b. AOHVA April 2014 Trail ESRD Approval Process (Trail Disposition for Recreation)
 - c. AOHVA March 2017 4-Point Plan for Environmentally Responsible OHV Use

OPEN / RANDOM CAMPING

- a. AOHVA September 2015 Position On Open / Random camping
- b. AOHVA January 2017 Summary of Distribution
- c. ACESS April 2017 Submission to Castle Park Draft Management Plan

PUBLIC CONSULTATION OBSERVATIONS

a. AOHVA – September 2016 - Observations on public participation process and collaboration approach that is currently being used in the Land Use Framework

We believed the government agreed with our aim of limiting environmental impacts while encouraging safety and economic diversity. We believed that responsible trail usage in the Castle could continue. We believed these things because the Alberta government told us and member clubs so, repeatedly and in writing.

Then, with the stroke of a pen, Premier Notley and Minister Phillips decided certain Albertans could not use any of the trails in the Castle area. Just like that OHV owners and their families were told that these land use parameters are to be the template for the rest of Alberta.

This is deeply disappointing, because many OHV users optimistically and perhaps foolishly believed that this would be the government that would work with us to build a more interconnected, environmentally sustainable and safer trail network, not just in the Castle, but throughout Alberta.

Looking back on many years of participation in government-led initiatives and processes, AOHVA is acutely aware of things often said or inferred NOT being what is actually done or meant.

AOHVA offers a compilation of observations and issues specific to the SARAG process to provide insight to the inner workings of government-led processes.



DEFICIENCIES OF THE OVERALL SARAG LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS

This section addresses deficiencies of the overall planning process, speaking to issues that have been raised with members of the SARAG team verbally and in writing through individual and group discussions, during scheduled meetings between AOHVA and AEP staff, in the larger scheduled SARAG group meetings and smaller roundtable discussions.

Specific shortcomings are addressed in Appendix A.

Representation

AOHVA believes that the disproportionate representation by ranchers / grazers / landowners and environmentalists being too high and representation by true recreationalists being too low has had a significant negative impact on the effectiveness of the SARAG process.

The focus of the meetings and messaging, the tone of the meetings and messaging, the attitude of the participants, the input received and the decisions made were all influenced by the loud and plentiful voices from certain sectors.

This disproportionate representation had a definite impact on the direction SARAG took, turning the process into one focused on environmental protection rather than recreation planning and management.

Public Participation

AOHVA came to the realization early on in the process that the function and intent of SARAG was more for optics and less for earnest collaboration.

Understanding that according to the TOR, "The Department of Environment and Parks will chair the advisory group; will have final decision-making authority about the designated trail system for 2017 and the content of the Recreation Management Plan and associated maps, etc," AOHVA contributed to the process in good faith, openly and honestly representing the summer motorized recreation sector.

That said, the input of and questions asked by AOHVA have been rarely reflected in the SARAG updates for meeting documentation and maps.

Information Capture and Sharing

AOHVA submits that participant comments and discussions are not accurately reflected in the materials sent out to the group; influencing participant perspectives and future positions. This may be due to SARAG facilitators not capturing the comments in the first place or due to the review and summarization (sanitization) of discussion notes after the fact.

It is of great concern to AOHVA that Minister Phillips herself reviewed and approved the meeting "notes" before they were shared with SARAG participants.



Decision-making

AOHVA has identified a number of aspects of the SARAG project which have had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the process and on the validity of the outcomes; primarily relating to lack of time and lack of information.

Agreeing with the comments of other SARAG participants, including AEP staff, that the process is rushed, AOHVA believes the impacts to be inadequate information gathering and assessment, and compromised decision-making.

Throughout the SARAG process, participants have voiced concerns about the lack of information available for review and reference while being asked to make sound judgements and decisions. AOHVA has identified certain topic areas about which information has been requested and not received, either because it is not available or is being withheld. These topic areas include: trail inventory, capacity, science-based considerations and socio-economic information.

Trail Inventory: Based on pointed discussions at SARAG meetings, verbal and written requests for relevant information and specific comments made by AEP staff, AOHVA has come to the conclusion that the government is not in possession of a true inventory of OHV trails in Porcupine Hills and Livingstone. The government is not is possession of one of the most crucial pieces of information to developing a viable trail system or producing a meaningful trail map for motorized recreation.

Capacity: SARAG participants have expressed the need to quantify and understand the factors related to capacity: demand, intensity, frequency, intermittent use, increasing participation in the activity and population growth; and the implications they have on the decisions being made. However, no such information has been provided. That said, AOHVA asserts that the Porcupine Hills and Livingstone Recreation management Plan must logically make accommodations for the increased organic demand and migration of OHV users from the Castle.

Science-based Considerations: AOHVA believes that all Albertans have the right to understand how science is being used to guide important decisions affecting their opportunity to enjoy the province's outdoor spaces; and the government has the responsibility to be upfront and open with Albertans in that regard. AOHVA, along with other SARAG participants are awaiting the report of the Chief Scientist, expected the end of July. Additionally, AOHVA echoes the concern and comments of various SARAG participants questioning the validity of making such important decisions in the absence of relevant, validated ecological literature / facts.

Socio-economic Considerations: AOHVA agrees with comments of various SARAG participants that there is a need to understand and consider the economic implications of decisions made about recreation in Porcupine Hills and Livingstone. It behooves the government to fully explore the impact of these decisions, particularly in light of government statements promoting economic diversity. As such, AOHVA recommends that the government undertake specific efforts to assess, truly understand and publicly share anticipated effects said decisions will have on local business.



THE SARAG RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLAN DEFICIENCIES

This section addresses deficiencies of the overall recreation management framework, speaking to issues that have been raised with members of the SARAG team verbally and in writing through individual and group discussions, during scheduled meetings between AOHVA and AEP staff, in the larger scheduled SARAG group meetings and smaller roundtable discussions.

Specific shortcomings are addressed in Appendix B.

Vision

It became apparent very early on that this group was mistakenly named as a Recreation Advisory Group. Rather, it really is an Environmental Protection Advisory Group with a footnote to Recreation. That was reinforced and is evident in the second vision statement that was created and presented to the group at the June 21 meeting and a third on August 8.

Principles

Recreation resource planning requires the consideration of many inputs such as an inventory of existing plans and policies, current type and amount of recreation use (supply and demand), recreation trends, public issues, management concerns, regional supply of recreation opportunities, visitor and stakeholder preferences, economic impact of recreation participation, best available science, environmental conditions, and available information from recreation and resource monitoring.

Upon review and consideration of the SARAG planning principles, AOHVA had identified some areas of concern that have been raised as participants have engaged in the process and suggests further support and clarification may be required, expressing concern that "We don't know how decisions are being made; we don't have the information." AOHVA asserts that the principles simply don't align with the action that has been taken throughout the process.

Outcomes

According to the SARAG Terms of Reference: The primary outcome of the process was to enable both Albertans and visitors to safely enjoy the natural environment by establishing diverse, high quality motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities on public lands.

However, it is overwhelmingly evident that the priorities of SARAG are environmentally focused and weighted heavily to the needs and concerns of adjacent land owners.

AOHVA believes that a recreational Advisory Group should be focused on the recreational aspects of the region while the environmental perspective is delivered through the SSRP and Land Footprint Management Plans and landowner rights are addressed under *The Alberta Land Stewardship Act*.

As a result, the SARAG process is seen to be politically driven.



High-Quality Experience

"A key point that cannot be over-emphasized is that if riders get the experience they want ON the trail, they will not look for it OFF the trail." (NOHVCC 2015)

Prior to and throughout the SARAG process, AOHVA has provided insight and specific information about creating a high-quality OHV experience. It is puzzling how the most recent maps presented at the July 12 meeting did not incorporate even the most basic principles of interconnectivity, looping and trail access.

Interim vs Future State

AOHVA stresses the need to get this right from the get go for two reasons:

- 1) to fully demonstrate transparency and integrity, particularly important as we look ahead to public consultations; and
- 2) drawing from the experiences in other regions like the Ghost and other management areas where deferred trails have not become a reality; where interim actually becomes the future state

CONCLUSIONS

As the provincially recognized representative for ATV, off road motorcycle and recreational side by side vehicle trail riding and recreation, AOHVA's input to SARAG is a reflection of not only the organization's views, but of the interaction with local OHV clubs within the specific regions identified and beyond.

AOHVA came to the realization early on in the process that the function and intent of SARAG was more for optics and less for earnest collaboration.

AOHVA believes that the disproportionate representation by ranchers / grazers / landowners and environmentalists being too high and representation by true recreationalists being too low has had a significant negative impact on the effectiveness of the SARAG process. The focus of the meetings and messaging, the tone of the meetings and messaging, the attitude of the participants, the input received and the decisions made were all influenced by the loud and plentiful voices from certain sectors. This disproportionate representation had a definite impact on the direction SARAG took, turning the process into one focused on environmental protection rather than recreation planning and management.

Equally important is the observation that participant comments and discussions were not accurately reflected in the materials sent out to the group; influencing participant perspectives and future positions. This may be due to SARAG facilitators not capturing the comments in the first place or due to the review and summarization (sanitization) of discussion notes after the fact.

As such, the input of and questions asked by AOHVA have been rarely reflected in the SARAG updates of meeting documentation and maps – causing us to believe that the SARAG process had been initiated to achieve predetermined outcomes.



For these and many other reasons identified in the AOHVA Submission to SARAG, AOHVA deems the process as flawed and the outcomes as indefensible. As such, AOHVA will not endorse any actions or recommendations made by SARAG or Minister Phillips and Premier Notley relating to recreation on Alberta's Public Lands.

Respecting the Terms of Reference developed and presented by SARAG, AOHVA contributed to the process in good faith, openly and honestly in an environment that was heavily influenced by the disproportionate representation of certain sectors, namely ranchers and ENGOs.

We, the executive of the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association, submit this document on behalf of the summer motorized recreation sector.

Observations contained herein, were documented by AOHVA designated representatives specific to the SARAG process. Positions and perspectives are those of AOHVA as the recognized provincial representative for OHV users across Alberta.

Signatures

Brent Hodgson
AOHVA President
Brent Hodgson

AOHVA Vice President

agreen Baren

Aaron Bauer

AOHVA Treasurer Garry Salekin

210-

AOHVA Secretary

Peter Reed



AOHVA 4-POINT PLAN, LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Date: JULY 25/2017

To: Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group (SARAG)
Government of Alberta

Re: SUPPORT OF ALBERTA OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ASSOCIATION 4-POINT PLAN

This correspondence is to confirm our support for the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association 4-Point Plan for Environmentally Responsible OHV Use presented to Alberta Environment and Parks.

AOHVA and its members are committed to:

- Working with the Government of Alberta, Land Use Framework staff and our own experts in designing and developing trails that are sustainable and environmentally sound and repairing damaged trails.
- Dedicating 100% of an increase in OHV registration fees to tackling important issues like habitat
 protection and proper trail construction and maintenance in partnership with government under
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 directly towards trail development, management and upgrades not into Government of Alberta
 General Revenue.
- Giving law enforcement agencies the tools and mandate to fully enforce the law.
- Building a better environmental and trail experience. Alberta can lead the way in OHV trail
 development by putting the onus on organizations like the AOHVA and its like-minded partners
 to be responsible for environmental stewardship as a means of eliminating improper use of the
 back country.

Through the implementation of this plan and in partnership, AOHVA and the Government of Alberta, Environment and Parks will establish a foundation from which to fortify Alberta's parks and public spaces, ensuring they are places all Albertans can enjoy.

We are certain that the AOHVA 4-Point Plan will work as OHV users, not taxpayers, will fund it. It will involve 100% participation by the users – who will be motivated to make it work. In fact, we expect that the volunteer base will be reinvigorated to actively contribute to achieving the benefits expected from the plan through this approach.

The Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association and its member clubs are well positioned to meet the public's demand for more and better recreational trails. We have the expertise to work with government staff at building and maintaining trails suitable for all trail users. We need sustainable revenue to undertake this important work, which can be achieved through Point 2 of the plan.

Through the AOHVA Plan, Albertans will realize three major benefits:

Financially sustainable, user funded trail development and maintenance facilitated by the Alberta

Off-Highway Vehicle Association and its member clubs will alleviate any burden on taxpayers.

- Trail users of all types will have access to a network of enhanced multi-use, managed recreational trails.
- Designated trail systems mitigate environmental concerns, offer safe, high quality experiences for users, provide links between communities and reduce or eliminate conflicts with neighboring landowners.

As members of the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association, it is our intent to collectively work to protect and preserve Alberta's outdoor spaces alongside the outdoor pursuits enjoyed by all Albertans. We believe that the AOHVA 4-Point Plan for Environmentally Responsible OHV Use provides the means to do so.

Sincerely,

Bighom Heritage ATV Sackety (Club Name)

	(Signature)		(Signature)
	(Print Name)		(Print Name)
President		Treasurer	
	(Signature)		(Signature)
	(Print Name)		(Print Name)
Vice-President		Secretary	

Pres. - Dennis Scholer & Vise Pres - KEITH BACKS #

Secretary - Rich Paradis
Treasure - Douce Bours Doll.

Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association

500 Country Hills Blvd #725 Box 38017 Calgary, AB T3K 5G9

(403) 673-3332

office@aohva.com www.aohva.com

Date: August 14, 2014

To: Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group (SARAG)
Government of Alberta

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13	(Gr)	77	9.1	17.4	Brazeau	ATV	Club

DENIS POISSANT	(Signature)	Cyptal Okck	(Signature)
DENIS POISSANT	(Print Name)	Crystal Heck	(Print Name)
President		Treasurer	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Percy Canyshell	(Signature)	Vacant	(Signature)
Percy Campbell	(Print Name)		(Print Name)
Vice-President		Secretary	<u> </u>



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AOHVA - Designated Trail System with Effective Stewardship - Working to Keep You Riding

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Sincerely,

Calgary ATV Riders Association

Hon Dring	(Signature)	J. Maisonne	(Signature)
Ken Spring	(Print Name)	Louis Maisonneuve	(Print Name)
President		Treasurer	
	(Signature)	,	(Signature)
Kevin Dyck	(Print Name)		(Print Name)
Vice-President		Secretary	



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Sincerely.

(Club Name) CROWSNEST	- PASS QUAD SQUAD AUG	s. 9/17.
Mellast (Signature)	Bu P	(Signature)
GARY CLARK. (Print Name	e) KARL GIESLER Treasurer	_ (Print Name)
Jacy Sugusen (Signature)	Hugh Dewham	_ (Signature)
DARY FARGUSON (Print Name Vice-President	e) (1-19h) centam Secretary	(Print Name)

Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association

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(403) 673-3332

office@aohva.com www.aohva.com

Date: August 8, 2017

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Government of Alberta

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Sincerely,

Eastern Slopes ATV Society

Mary Solika	-		(Signature)
Garry Salekin President	(Print Name)	Treasurer	(Print Name)
	(Signature)		(Signature)
Vice-President	(Print Name)	Secretary	(Print Name)

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Sincerely,

(Club Name) Lethbridge Motorcycle Club

(Signature)

Scott Lawry (Print Name

President

(Signature)

Contowelson (Print Name

Vice-President

(Signature)

TEANETTE de GMAF (Print Name)

Treasurer

(Signature)

(Print Name)

Secretary

Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association

500 Country Hills Blvd #725 Box 38017 Calgary, AB T3K 5G9

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Sincerely,

Nordegg OHV Society

Jon Daiider	(Signature)	a Davids	(Signature)
Tom Davidson	(Print Name)	Jennifer Davidson	(Print Name)
President		Treasurer	
Woll-	(Sìgnature)	1 Davis	(Signature)
Jeff Huckle	(Print Name)	Jennifer Davidson	(Print Name)
Vice-President	***************************************	Secretary	

500 Country Hills Blvd #725 Box 38017 Calgary, AB T3K 5G9

(403) 673-3332

office@aohva.com www.aohva.com

Date:

To: Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group (SARAG)
Government of Alberta

Re: SUPPORT OF ALBERTA OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ASSOCIATION 4-POINT PLAN

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Through the implementation of this plan and in partnership, AOHVA and the Government of Alberta, Environment and Parks will establish a foundation from which to fortify Alberta's parks and public spaces, ensuring they are places all Albertans can enjoy.

We are certain that the AOHVA 4-Point Plan will work as OHV users, not taxpayers, will fund it. It will involve 100% participation by the users – who will be motivated to make it work. In fact, we expect that the volunteer base will be reinvigorated to actively contribute to achieving the benefits expected from the plan through this approach.

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(Club Name) ROCK	1 MOUNTAIN	DIRT K	L106(C)
MCHEAL DOBOR President LAND ADD	(Signature) Merint Name) OCACY OINCTOR	Treasurer	(Signature) (Print Name)
	(Signature)		(Signature)
Vice-President	(Print Name)	Secretary	(Print Name)



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AOHVA - Designated Trail System with Effective Stewardship - Working to Keep You Riding



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Sincerely,

Rocky Mountain Trail Blazers	
Burn July	(Signature)
Bryan Litchfield	(Print Name)
President	_ (Print Name)



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Sincerely,

Rocky Motorcycle Club.

(Club Name

(Signature)

Scian Kobertz (Print Name)

President

(Signature)

Amber Giroux (Print Name)

Vice-President

Emille Speignt (Print

Treasurer

(Signature)

arlene Kukowski (Print Name)

Secretary

AOHVA Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association

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Yellowhead Overlanders ATV Society

	(Signature)		(Signature)
Travis Joslin	(Print Name)	Eric Pedersen	(Print Name)
President		Treasurer	
Oled	(Signature)		(Signature)
Chad Wapshott Vice-President	(Print Name)	Cory young Secretary	(Print Name)