

On-Road OHRV Safety Report for Coos County



A summary of current regulatory trends, and concerns from each municipality in Coos County

Report by North Country Council, funded by The Neil & Louise Tillotson Fund, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development, and USDA Rural Development

Introduction: This report is a summary of municipal regulations, state regulations, and usage data for off highway recreational vehicle (OHRV) use in Coos County with a focus on on-road usage. In recent years communities across the North Country have seen OHRV use on existing trail systems grow exponentially. Many communities in the region have chosen to permit OHRV use on selected roads in their municipality, a few have opened up all roads, and some have limited OHRV use to trails only. As each community considers how to best address these changes within their boundaries, the importance of sharing information between communities grows. The goal of this report is bring information regarding OHRV use in Coos County to decision makers in each community to increase awareness of what neighboring communities are doing, and collaboration between municipalities.

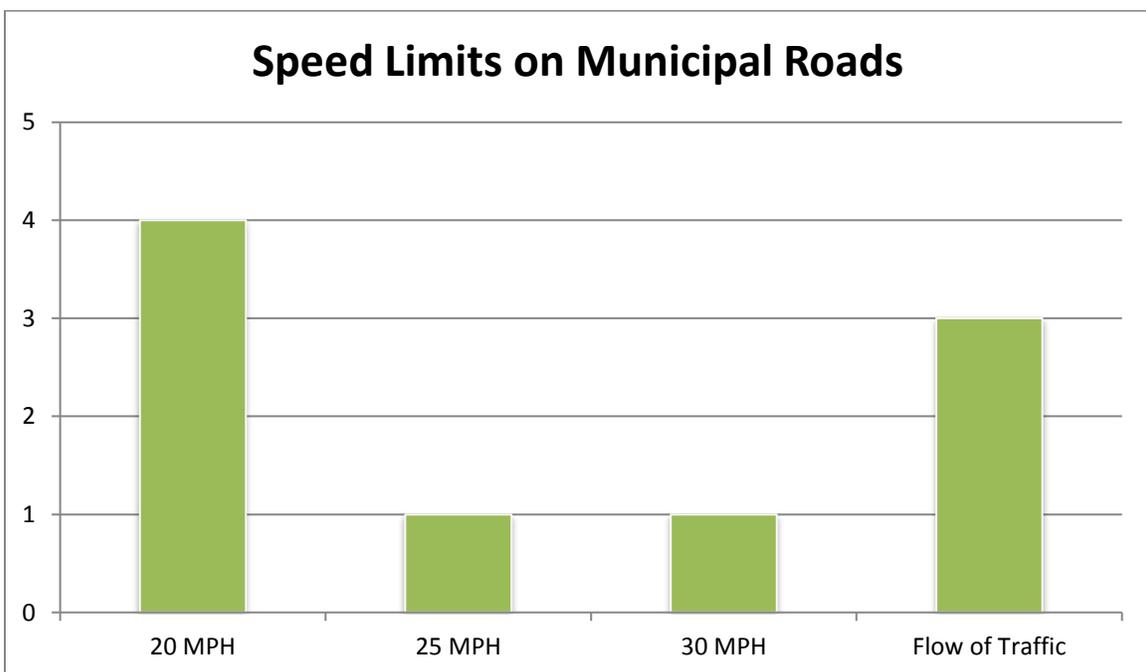
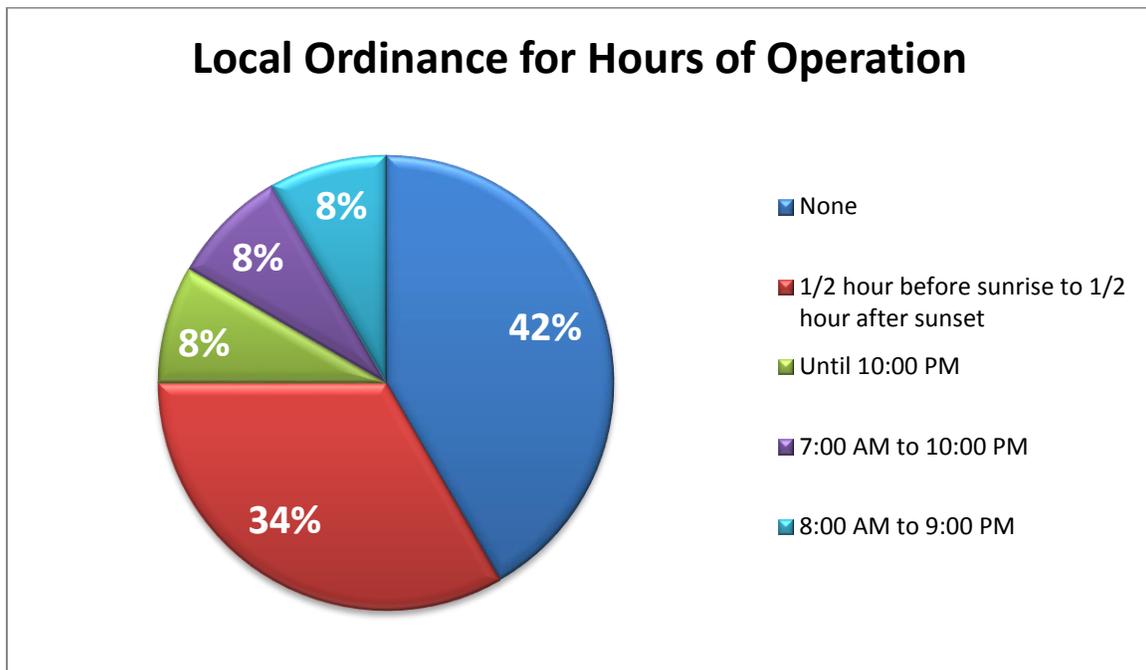
Local

Access: Each municipality's selectboard (or City Council) is able to grant access to OHRVs as they choose on town roads. Access to state roads is allowed by NHDOT by request of the legislative body of a municipality, in areas where the speed limit is 35 MPH or lower. The table below groups communities by the amount of on-road OHRV travel they allow.

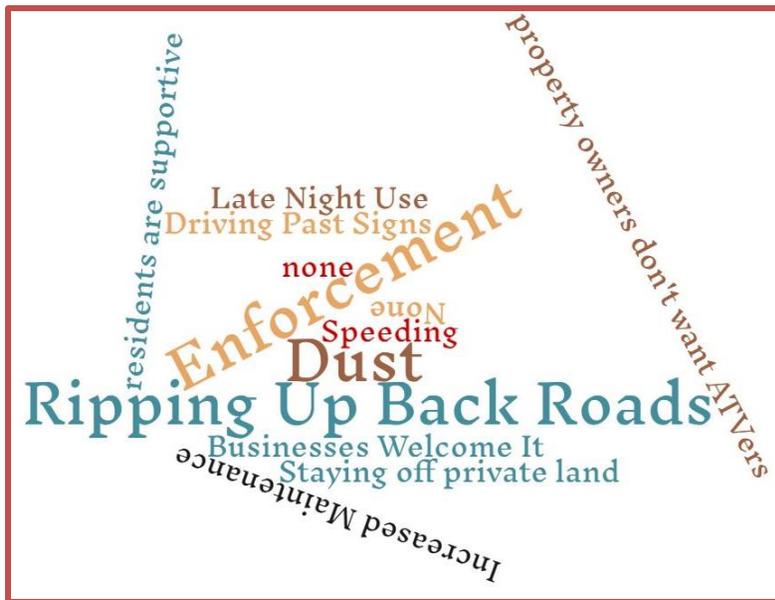
Not Permitted	Limited Usage & Trail Connection	Wide Access & Business Area
Carroll	Clarksville	Berlin
Dalton	Columbia	Colebrook
Errol	Northumberland	Dummer
Jefferson	Milan	Gorham
Randolph	Stark	Lancaster
Shelburne	Stewartstown	Pittsburg
Whitefield	Stratford	
Unincorporated Places (County)		

Ordinances & Restrictions: As is the case with access, the restrictions that a community places on on-road usage vary widely across the region. Ordinances and use restrictions are most often related to the hours of operation for OHRVs and the speed limits OHRVs are allowed to travel at.

- Municipalities that do not specify in local regulations: (5) *Clarksville, Lancaster, Milan, Stewartstown, Stratford*
- Municipalities that restrict hours of operation in local ordinance: (7) *Berlin, Colebrook, Columbia, Dummer, Northumberland, Pittsburg, Stark*



- Municipalities that do not specify speed limits in local ordinances: (5) *Clarksville, Milan, Northumberland, Stewartstown, Stratford*
- Municipalities that do limit speeds of on-road travel: (7) *Berlin, Colebrook, Columbia, Dummer, Lancaster, Pittsburg, Stark*



Local Issues or Concerns: A staff person from each municipality was asked by North Country Council if they were having any issues with their current regulations. The most common answers are shown in the word cloud graphic to the left. Some towns noted “feeling lucky” that they have not had more issues. However the most commonly reported issues from town staff were enforcement concerns, dust, and damage to dirt roads where OHRVs are permitted.

OHRV On-Road Volume Counts

Crossing Counts: During the summer season of 2016 North Country Council staff conducted 15 crossing counts and 5 intersection counts around Coos Country. Crossing counts provide an indication of the volume of potential conflicts possible between OHRVs crossing roads and traditional vehicles traveling along roads. As numbers of riders crossing public roads increase the number of potential conflicts also rise.

Trail Crossing Count Location	Dates	Average Daily	Peak Count	Peak Date
Stratford Big Rock CG crossing Rt. 3	8/31 to 9/08	34	100	Saturday 9/3
Stratford Old Mill Road (South End)	8/31 to 9/08	89	281	Sunday 9/4
Stratford Old Mill Road (North End)	8/31 to 9/08	43	134	Sunday 9/4
Stewartstown Railroad Bridge & Rt. 3	9/09 to 9/21	45	138	Saturday 9/10
Colebrook Blakely Farm Road & Rt. 26	9/01 to 9/08	156	383	Sunday 9/4
Colebrook Hughes Road ATV Crossing	8/03 to 8/31	97	333	Saturday 8/20
Dixville Rt. 26 ATV Crossing	8/03 to 9/01	46	184	Saturday 8/20
Errol Rt. 16 (South of Village)	9/01 to 9/08	133	333	Sunday 9/4
Errol Rt. 26 at 7 Islands Bridge	9/01 to 9/08	48	108	Sunday 9/4
Pittsburg Rt. 3 & Fern Road	9/09 to 9/21	91	345	Saturday 9/17
Pittsburg Back Lake Road "Main Trail"	9/09 to 9/21	41	97	Saturday 9/17
Pittsburg Back Lake Road "Side Trail"	9/09 to 9/21	34	126	Saturday 9/17
*Gorham Pikes Pit Intersection to Berlin	8/01 to 8/08	273	853	Saturday 8/6
*Gorham Pikes Pit Intersection to Jericho State Park	8/01 to 8/08	601	1359	Saturday 8/6
*Gorham Rt. 2 Trailhead Parking Area	7/19 to 8/07	290	1511	Saturday 8/6

**Indicates Count Includes an OHRV Event Weekend. Counts are generally higher than non-event dates.*

Intersection Counts: Five Intersections were identified for OHRV Count Data Collection during the summer based on local input. Municipal staff had expressed concerns about safety as usage continues to grow. Three of these count locations were selected within the Berlin-Gorham area during the Jericho ATV Festival. Numbers from these locations show the peak usage of on-road ATVs. These counts show a more standard level of use during a weekend.

Berlin & Gorham Area Peak Use: Event Weekend

Mason Unity Hutchins: 1,213 OHRVs traveled through the intersection from 9:30AM to 3:45PM
 Glen Ave & Mason Street: 1,115 OHRVs traveled through the intersection from 9:30 AM to 3:15PM
 1st Ave & Hillside Ave: 1,765 OHRVs traveled through the intersection from 9:30AM to 3:45PM

Errol & Pittsburg: Average (Non-Event) Weekend

Rt. 26 & Rt. 16, Errol: 12 OHRVs traveled through the intersection from 8:15AM to 3:45PM
 Back Lake Road & Rt. 3, Pittsburg: 115 OHRVs traveled through the intersection from 8:30AM to 2:45PM

For detailed turning count reports for each intersection count location please contact North Country Council staff at 603-444-6303, or by email at kgray@nccouncil.org.

New Hampshire State Regulations

In areas where local regulations are not in place, New Hampshire Fish & Game has provided rules and regulations for OHRV usage across the state.

Fish & Game Speed Limits for OHRV

10 MPH	Within 150 FT of a bobhouse or fishing hole On sidewalks & bridges posted open to OHRVs At trail junctions, in parking lots, and passing groomers
20 MPH	On Approved Roads Open to OHRV use On plowed roads on DRED property
25 MPH	When posted on trails owned or leased by DRED
35 MPH	On all trail connectors At night on Back Lake Road (Pittsburg) On all trails without a posted speed limit

Age & License Requirements

The image to the left was taken from the 2016/2017 OHRV & Snowmobile Digest of Regulations Produced by the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department. To download the full digest visit:

http://www.eregulations.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/16NHATV_LR1.pdf

It is important to note that the New Hampshire Fish & Game regulations for OHRV use apply to both

trail riders and road riders. While established speed limits and license requirements are applicable to towns that have opened roads to OHRV travel, there are topics where separate regulations for on-road use are not established. One such topic is hours of operation, in particular night riding. State regulations do not limit the hours of the day riders can be out. The statewide requirement only specifies that working headlights and taillights are needed for OHRVs operating at night (½ an hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise). Municipalities must establish independent regulations to limit night riding if that is an area of concern.

OHRV/WHEELED VEHICLES						
OPERATING ON PERSONALLY OWNED & PUBLIC PROPERTY			OPERATING ON PRIVATE AND/OR PUBLIC PROPERTY			
AGE	HELMET & EYE PROTECTION	CARRY PASSENGERS ON ATV	ACCOMPANIED BY LICENSED ADULT OVER 18	DRIVER'S LICENSE OR SAFETY CERTIFICATE	OPERATE ACROSS ROADS	OPERATE ALONG DESIGNATED ROADS*
UNDER 12	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
12 OR 13	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES*
14 OR 15	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES*
16 OR 17	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES*
18 AND OVER	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES*

* To operate along approved roads, must possess a valid driver's license OR must possess valid safety certificate and must be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age who possesses a valid driver's license.

OHRV/WHEELED VEHICLE YOUTH OPERATOR REQUIREMENTS				
UNDER AGE 12	AGE 12 OR 13	AGE 14 OR 15	AGE 16 OR 17	18 OR OLDER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While operating on personal property or trails (other than public property) and trails must have helmet and eye protection and cannot carry passengers on an ATV or ride along or across any public road. While operating on public property or trails (other than personal property) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be accompanied by a licensed adult over 18 years of age at all times. Cannot operate across or along public roads. May take an OHRV Safety class but cannot be certified (11 year olds may take class and receive card — becomes valid on 12th birthday). Go to Ride.NH.gov for more information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While operating on their own personal property or other public property and trails must have helmet and eye protection and cannot carry passengers on an ATV. Must possess an OHRV Safety Certificate if off of personal property. While operating on public property or trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be accompanied by a licensed adult over 18 years of age at all times. May cross roads. May operate along approved roads but must be accompanied by a licensed adult over 18 years of age at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While operating on personal property or other public property and trails must have helmet and eye protection and cannot carry passengers on an ATV. Must possess an OHRV Safety Certificate if off of personal property. While operating on public property or trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not required to be accompanied. May cross roads. May operate along approved roads but must be accompanied by a licensed adult over 18 years of age at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While operating on personal property or other public property and trails must have helmet and eye protection and cannot carry passengers on an ATV. Must possess an OHRV Safety Certificate if off of personal property or must possess a valid motor vehicle driver's license. While operating on public property or trails: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not required to be accompanied. May cross roads. If not licensed to drive a motor vehicle, may operate along approved roads but must be accompanied by a licensed adult over 18 years of age at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While operating on personal property or other public property and trails must have helmet and eye protection recommended. May carry passengers on an ATV. Must possess an OHRV Safety Certificate if off of personal property or must possess a valid motor vehicle driver's license. May cross roads. If not licensed to drive a motor vehicle, may operate along approved roads but must be accompanied by a licensed adult at least 18 years of age at all times.

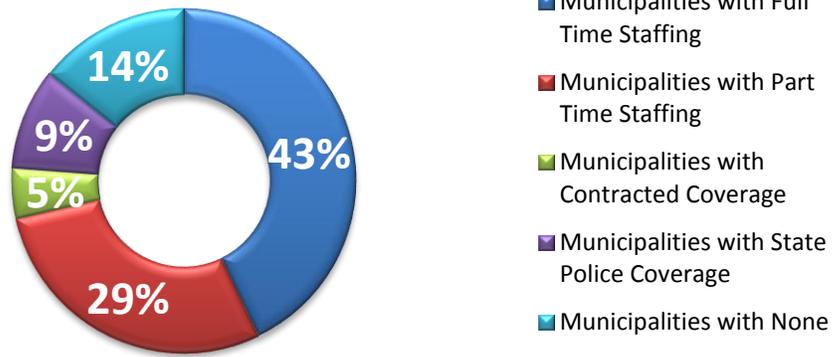
Enforcement & Patrol

Police Department staffing speaks to the community's ability and capacity to respond to concerns, patrol, and to enforce OHRV on road regulations in a consistent and reliable manner.

Law Enforcement Staffing	Towns
Full Time Police Department	<i>Berlin, Carroll, Colebrook, Gorham, Lancaster, Pittsburg, Whitefield, Northumberland, the townships & Coos County (Sheriff)</i>
Part Time Police Department	<i>Clarksville, Dalton, Jefferson, Randolph, Stark, Stratford</i>
State Police	<i>Errol, Shelburne</i>
Contracted Out	<i>Milan</i>

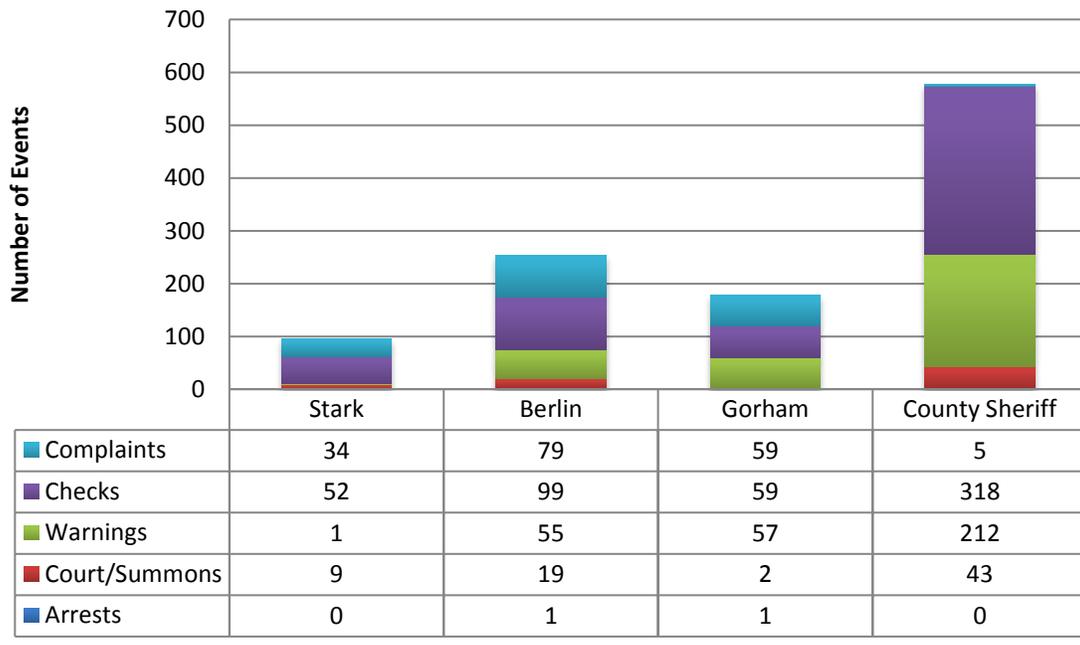
Information in this table was retrieved from New Hampshire Employment Security Community Profiles at www.nhes.gov/elmi

Law Enforcement Staffing Coos County



Requests for Patrol Support: In 2016 NH Fish & Game received four OHRV Patrol Requests from the municipalities in Coos County including Stark, Berlin, Gorham, and from the Coos Country Sheriff’s Office. Each application for patrol funds reported the number of law enforcement encounters regarding OHRVs from 2015. Those numbers are displayed in the chart below.

2015 OHRV Law Enforcement Activities



Crash Data & Responses: On-road crash data is a key measure to identify the safety impacts of on-road OHRV travel. North Country Council contacted each full time police department, the NH State Police Troop F, and the District 1 Fish & Game office to gather information on reported crashes and accidents that received a law enforcement response. From January 1, 2016 to October 23, 2016 records of two on-road ATV crashes were provided by the Troop-F of the State Police; these crashes included

one in Gorham, and one Milan. While NH Fish & Game responds to on-trail accidents of ATVs, they do not patrol any on-road activities, as such they were not able to provide up-to-date data. Full time police staff in Colebrook reported responding to one OHRV related crash during the 2016 riding season. Full Time municipal police offices were contacted in the towns of Berlin, Pittsburg, Gorham, and Lancaster however no information was provided.

For information on your municipalities on road crash reports contact your local law enforcement agency.

In Summary: This report was made possible with the cooperation from municipal staff from each municipality in Coos County. Information was gathered through email and phone conversations with staff available at each town or city office. To find out more about this report, or how your community can join the regional conversation around trail usage, please contact North Country Council.