

The following information was collected from the sources quoted from the VMUTS website (which has since been updated for format etc. links still work)...and explain the current climate according to the ATV advocates in the area from Mattawa to Renfrew County...

For more information go to their site at <https://www.vmutts.ca/> or Renfrew County ATV Club site at <http://www.renfrewcountyatv.ca/>

Mattawa's awe-inspiring Voyageur Multi-Use Trail System is the newest member of the Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicles.

By [Dave Baker](#)

Dave Baker is president of the Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs.

<https://www.northernontario.travel/atving/vmutts-of-mattawa-joins-the-ofatv>

Big news: on February 8, 2018, the [Voyageur Multi-Use Trail System](#) voted unanimously to join and become a member club of the [Ontario Federation of All-Terrain Vehicles](#)! This is exciting news for [ATVers across the province](#).

What it means - OFATV members will now be able to take advantage of visiting [Mattawa](#) and touring their beautiful trails and scenery with their OFATV permit without the need for a separate permit for the area! For readers/riders outside of Ontario (this includes you, American riders) or those just getting started—[permits currently cost \\$150 per year, \\$50 for a three-day pass, or \\$20 for a single day of riding](#). Local VMUTS members will also now find more value in their permit. It allows them to take advantage of all 16 OFATV clubs trail systems and can expand their ATVing adventures to Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick with their OFATV permit!

Change comes to Mattawa - VMUTS and the Mattawa area should see an increase in tourism from OFATV members taking advantage of this change, as well as visitors from other provinces that have reciprocity agreements with the OFATV. More motorsports enthusiasts headed to the area is good for everyone—there are more connections to be made, more businesses catering to motorheads, and [Mattawa becoming even more of a rider's paradise](#).

OFATV & Mattawa: Then and Now - The OFATV has a great history in the Mattawa area. It was founded right there in 1999 by then-president of the association, Phil Bangs. The original office was located in Bangs' family business, a mechanic shop called the Bangs Brothers Garage, from 1999 to 2002.

VMUTS coming on board with the OFATV will be a great value to VMUTS and OFATV members across the province and beyond, as we work together to further the sport of ATVing in Ontario. This change was made possible with the assistance of the [Ontario Trails Council](#), an organization always working hard to further trail development around the Province of Ontario.

I myself have a history in Mattawa and the Voyageur Multi-Use Trail System. The Viking-style horned helmet I wear that many ATVers recognize me by was first christened in 2009 at a VMUTS Rally in none other than Mattawa, Ontario.

It was fresh out of the box then and has seen many miles of ATV trails across Ontario in the years since, but I never forget that it all started in Mattawa. I am looking forward to the horned helmet seeing many more miles of travel in beautiful Mattawa, Ontario with the Voyageur Multi-Use Trail system—hopefully with even more ATV-riders to meet there!

The partnership is fresh off the presses and VMUTS is currently working on relaunching their webpage and transitioning to the OFATV. In the interim, as things are being set up, [an OFATV permit for the VMUTS can be purchased here](#).

To Be or Not to Be? the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail A proposed 296-km corridor will connect communities from Smith Falls all the way over to Mattawa, creating a whole new world of opportunities for ATVing and snowmobiling in Ontario. But will it actually happen?

By [Adam Columbus](#)

Adam Columbus is a avid ATVer and a director and webmaster for the Algonquin West ATV club.

<https://www.northernontario.travel/atving/ottawa-valley-rail-trail-creates-atv-and-snowmobile-route-from-mattawa-to-smith-falls>

Photos courtesy of the [Friends of Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail](#).

The recent announcement of the approval and opening of some sections of the 296-km Ottawa Valley Rail Trail, connecting [Smiths Falls](#) to [Mattawa Ontario](#), is exciting news for ATV and snowmobile users as it's been designated a multi-use trail, meaning it will be available for most trail users, pedestrians, bikes, dog sleds, horses, and best of all, ATVs and snowmobiles.

Towns concerned about ATVs and snowmobiles are being given the option to create "bypass" trails to go around their towns, which they can use to divert motorized traffic around certain areas, but the townships will need to build and pay for the alterations themselves. This will allow for the continuity of the trail, end to end for most users, and allow for pedestrian and bike trails in denser areas. A decent compromise for those affected.

Some of the trail should be officially open in 2017. There are areas that need grading, modifications and bridge reconstruction first, much of which is expected to be completed in 2018 and 2019. This trail will provide a welcome connection between several ATV clubs: [VMUTS in Mattawa](#), [Renfrew County ATV Club](#), [Rideau Lakes ATV Club](#), [Ottawa Valley ATV Club](#) and the [Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance](#) which is also linked with the Renfrew County ATV Club.

[OFSC clubs](#) will also welcome the opening of the OVRT, as rail trails make great connector or "backbone" trails that connect clubs and lead to more challenging forest trails if desired.

RCATVC is the biggest benefactor of the new trail, with 217 km (a huge addition of trails to any club!) within the Renfrew county borders. I spoke at length with Teresa Gamble, the president

of the Renfrew County ATV Club, who was very helpful with background and details of this new project and provided me with various documents that helped immensely. There's a good [article about this development on the RCATVC website](#). Thanks for your help Teresa!

The involvement of local powersports clubs, while not welcomed by all, particularly in a few towns that the trail goes right through, are a very important part of creating trails like this. They are the ones with the volunteer base willing to go out and fix trail problems, clear felled trees, etc. They also have real funds to contribute to making the whole thing work. No other trail user group is able to contribute to the trail system like they are, and they have been very clear that they're more than willing to co-operate with any other trail user group on any issue. That includes event coordination and support, even for non-powersports events such as dogsledding, which requires extra attention and clear trails. This is an important benefit for users of the trail no matter how they use it.

I look forward to riding this new trail when it's finished. Check back here for updates on which sections are open and any other issues that arise with this massive and undertaking.

For more information, [read the County of Renfrew's overview of the plan](#) or the [Renfrew County ATV Club's response and feedback regarding the Ottawa Valley Rail Trail](#).

ONTARIO LAW CHANGE ALLOWS ALL OFF-ROAD VEHICLES ACCESS TO PUBLIC ROADS

While it's still up to the local municipality to decide, the Ontario government has given the go-ahead for Side by Sides and UTV's to receive the same privileges that apply to ATVs.

By [Adam Columbus](#)

Adam Columbus is a avid ATVer and a director and webmaster for the Algonquin West ATV club.

<https://www.northernontario.travel/atving/ontario-law-change-allows-all-off-road-vehicles-to-ride-public-roads>

Update (June 17th, 2015):

More useful information has recently been published by the Ontario government regarding the use of UTV and SxS equipment in Ontario. [Follow this link to Ontario Reg. 134/15 here](#). It details exactly the roads and highways in the province that UTV operation is permitted and the ones that do not. Ontario Reg. 135/15 clearly describes exactly what type of equipment falls within this classification, [read all about it here](#).

The one thing that needs to be clearly spelled out is that this designation simply changes what the definition of an ATV is to include UTV and SxS equipment. It DOES NOT supersede any municipal regulations that may be in place. If you could previously ride an ATV on the shoulder of the road in your area, you can now ride a SxS with a passenger(s) in the same fashion, and in accordance with the legal design of the vehicle, as long as you follow the regulations as linked above.

This is great news for our sport and the tourism industry for sure, but we can also be sure there are those that will not like these new regulations and they may well try to fight this at the municipal level which could result in the loss of road riding privileges for all types of ATV equipment in a particular area.

What all of us need to do is be absolute ambassadors for our sport and ride well below our speed limits, especially within any town or residential type areas, wear all mandatory safety equipment, show extreme respect for cars and pedestrians, signal our turns, keep our bikes quiet and never even blip the throttle where it might bother anybody. Rear view mirrors, while not mandatory for all types of equipment, are a real safety asset when riding on the road, they are a great, and cheap addition to any bike riding on our roads. Follow the law, and don't be a dummy, or even accommodate the few idiots that have the ability to wreck it for all of us.

See you on the trails! Legally. - This is the single most important news to benefit ATV / UTV riders in Ontario basically since the inception of the sport! The provincial government has finally legalized (as of July 1, 2015) all of the varieties of ATV, that goes for all 2-ups, all UTV's and Side-by-Sides that were, until now, illegal to ride on any public road in Ontario. [Read the Ontario government news release here](#), and [my fall 2014 article here](#).

This applies to any municipality that has previously approved the riding of single passenger ATVs on the road in their catchment areas, and local rules still apply, such as not on certain roads, divided four lane highways, etc. Helmets, seat belts (where applicable) must be worn at all times, speed limits must be obeyed (generally, 20 km in a 50 km speed limit or less, and 50 km in posted areas over 50 km), insurance, plates, all the normal rules apply.

Riders will still need to know the local regulations, particularly in southern Ontario where many areas do not permit riding on any public road, and this legislation changes nothing for them, leaving local governments to permit or deny access as they see fit.

I do suspect many smaller towns and tourist-oriented areas will take another look at this now, as many of us want to be able to get into, or at least close enough to towns so that we can get fuel, eat, [stay in local accommodations and generally support the local economies of areas that have trail systems](#), and even ones that don't. Farmers, for instance, have a lot of equipment like this and need to access their fields, etc. by using public roads to get there. Many of us have been bogged down with this issue for years, forcing us to risk a \$110 ticket to simply get from one trailhead to another because roads are the only way to make the connection, where notably, 1-up ATV's were already perfectly legal, as are 2-up snowmobiles in the areas that permit riding on the road.

The best part about this legislation is that it should (will) prove to enhance our sport in general. It will [increase sales for equipment dealers](#). Many of us who have been putting off getting a SxS because of the legal issues around them will be more likely to buy one

now. It will also help get those of us who can't, or would prefer not to drive, out into the bush to [enjoy our practically endless trail systems](#). The riders in our neighbouring provinces, and states will also be much more interested in spending their tourism dollars in Ontario now that it is becoming legal.

Don't forget to [support the local ATV clubs](#) who make all of this possible, by purchasing trail passes, memberships, and even volunteer to help out. The revenue is essential to maintain our awesome trail systems! This will also enhance the [resort and motel operators](#), restaurants, gas stations and others who supply, and support our sport. Great news for the tourism industry in Ontario and our sport in general!

Renfrew County ATV Club Website -

<http://www.renfrewcountyatv.ca/trails/ottawa-valley-recreation-trail-ovrt/>

Renfrew County ATV Club is proud to be a partner and stakeholder on the new Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail (formerly the CP Rail line) through Renfrew County. We continue to work with our other motorized and non-motorized trail user groups, landowners, and municipalities to help see a successful and respectful multi-use trail system.

This system is important to RCATV and local municipalities and towns. It will connect smaller trails, and bring tourism dollars generated by the ATV Community into areas of the county which are currently not providing trails. This trail will also enable local resident ATV enthusiasts to get on the trail closer to home, and head out to enjoy a day on the trails.

Quick Facts

- The corridor runs 296 km from Smiths Falls to Mattawa, with 218 km of that cutting through Renfrew County
- The trail will include 2,447 acres, 296 kms in length, +/- 90 feet width, 37 bridges and underpasses
- Involves the County's of Renfrew, Lanark and the Township of Papineau-Cameron
- The cash portion of the purchase is \$500,000.
- The corridor is split into three closings based on ability to produce transferable descriptions starting with the most easterly section. At the same time it is agreed that the Partners will lease the lands while the transfers are proceeding. The lease cost is \$10 per year and the corresponding municipal taxes, pending the completion of the phases.

RCATV Considerations

- The entire trail remain a safe multi-use and shared-user corridor from top to bottom which will bring the best benefit to both the County and its residents and businesses and encourage tourism
 - minimizes the risks and incidents of misinformed ATV users from trespassing or riding off-trail when trying to get from one location to another
 - minimizes the physical risks of ATV enthusiasts having to use roadways and tourists getting lost trying to get from one trail system to another or turned around on crown land.
- The entire trail is safely accessible to motorized vehicles
 - RCATV can enhance promotion of the trail and tourism through its existing ATV networks and social media
 - combined with the RCATV East-West main trail corridor – B Trail (RCATV leased CN rail line – passes required), it will enable local and visiting ATV enthusiasts to access trails across the County
 - brings ATV-related local and tourism dollars into parts of the County which are currently not benefitting from the ATV Tourism industry due to lack of trails, and not being connected to a main trail thoroughfare
 - enable RCATV to bring large guided ATV events into new regions, and spread the tourism dollars
- Renfrew County ATV, Eastern Ontario Trail Alliance (EOTA) trail passes (and reciprically Ontario Federation of ATV's – OFATV) be required by all ATV/UTV users on the trail
 - helps to ensure ATV's are plated and meet MTO ORV Safety Standards for ATV use, and that users are insured
 - provides maintenance funds via user-pay trail passes to help sustain the trails
 - RCATV can leverage other funds from EOTA, Ontario Trails Council, OFSC for increased maintenance dollars
- RCATV can provide trained Trail Wardens to act as ambassadors on the trail, spot and report hazards, welcome tourists and act as trail guides/navigators, provide trail maps, encourage safe trail use, enforce trail pass requirements, report unsafe/illegal practices such as trespassing and riding under the influence
- RCATV becomes a strong partner with the OVRT and can contribute in areas of consistent signing, suitable gating, amenities along the trail (outhouses) and safe-use considerations to provide fluid and consistent trail marking across RCATV and Ontario trails

[Review our full feedback submission to Renfrew County.](#)

If you have any questions about how ATV's can safely share the trail or how you can support ATV and economic interests in your municipality contact RCATV President at president@renfrewcountyatv.ca