



Central Oswego County Riders, Inc.

Trail Maintenance & Development Manual

1. Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance and establish standardized procedures for developing, maintaining, and managing ATV trails in Oswego County, ensuring safety, sustainability, legal compliance under New York State law and local landowner agreements., and enjoyable trail systems for riders while respecting the environment and landowner agreements.

2. Objectives

- Maintain safe and well-marked trails.
 - Develop new trail segments that comply with local, state, and federal laws.
 - Preserve landowner relationships and protect natural resources.
 - Involve club members and volunteers in stewardship efforts.
 - Coordinate with town, county, and private land stakeholders.
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3. Trail Maintenance Guidelines

3.1 Routine Inspection Schedule

- Spring: Clear fallen trees, check for erosion, repair damage from winter.
- Mid-Summer: Brush back overgrowth, check signage, inspect bridges and culverts.
- Fall: Prepare trails for winter (drainage, signage), remove debris. Repair dual use trails

- After Major Weather Events: Emergency inspections and quick repairs.

3.2 Common Maintenance Tasks

- **Brushing/Trimming:** Maintain 6-8 ft trail width, 10-12 ft height clearance.
 - **Drainage:** Clean culverts, ditches; install water bars if needed.
 - **Surface Repairs:** Fill ruts and washouts with gravel or hardpack.
 - **Bridge Maintenance:** Tighten bolts, replace rotting wood, ensure structural safety.
 - **Signage:** Replace missing/damaged signs; maintain clear directional, hazard, and landowner signage.
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4. Trail Development Process

4.1 Planning

- Identify potential routes using topographic maps and landowner consultation.
- Assess environmental impact and potential user safety risks.
- Submit proposals to local towns and county planning boards if applicable.

4.2 Landowner Agreements

- Secure **written permission** from all private landowners.
- Clearly mark boundaries and “No Trespassing” zones.
- Respect land use restrictions, including seasonal closures or crop protection areas.

4.3 Construction Standards

- Follow **DEC** and **New York State Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Guidelines**.
- Trails should be:
 - **Graded and sloped** for drainage (3-5% outslope recommended).
 - **Reinforced** in wet areas using gravel, geotextile fabric, or puncheon bridges.
 - Designed to avoid sensitive habitats, wetlands, and steep slopes.
 - Use low impact equipment
- Use **signage** and **barriers** to control traffic at entrances and trailheads.

- Use emergency location markers per signing guidelines

4.4 Mapping

- GPS all roads and trails to apply to online trail maps ie: Polaris ride command
 - GPS is required for emergency locators.
 - GPS is required to develop paper maps accurately
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5. Environmental Protection

- Avoid stream crossings unless a properly constructed bridge or culvert is used.
 - Use erosion control methods: silt fencing, native plantings, water bars.
 - Limit disturbance in wildlife nesting or breeding seasons.
 - Leave no trace: remove litter and debris from work sites.
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6. Volunteer Engagement & Safety

6.1 Volunteer Program

- Volunteers must be members, sign volunteer waiver
- Hold monthly trail workdays (spring–fall).
- Offer training on safe equipment use, trail building, and erosion control.

6.2 Safety Protocols

- PPE required: gloves, eye protection, helmet, sturdy boots.
 - Chainsaw use restricted to certified individuals (NYS DEC or equivalent).
 - Use buddy system during maintenance activities.
 - Carry first aid kits and have a communication plan.
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7. Reporting & Documentation

- Maintain a **Trail Log**: document maintenance dates, issues found, actions taken.
- Report serious issues to club leadership and landowners within 48 hours.
- Photograph before/after repair efforts for insurance or grant reporting.

- Track hours for grant eligibility and reporting using Trail Maintenance Log. All work must be recorded for insurance purposes
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8. Coordination & Partnerships

- Work with:
 - **Town and county highway departments** (for road/trail crossings)
 - **Snowmobile clubs** (shared use planning and signage)
 - **DEC & State Parks** (regulatory compliance and conservation)
 - Attend regional ATV meetings to align development goals.
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9. Trail Signage Standards

- Use **reflective signs** for visibility.
 - Place at logical intervals:
 - Trailhead: rules, map, emergency contact
 - Intersections: directional arrows, mile markers
 - Hazards: steep grades, narrow bridges
 - Follow **NYS Town and County ATV signing guidelines**
 - Follow **NYS Parks & Rec Guidelines**
<https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/nysparks/snowmobiletrailsigning/index.php#/p/6> (shared trail signage standards when trails are dual-use.)
 - Follow **NYS DEC** Guidelines on any state land
https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/cesigntrailguidance.pdf
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10. Enforcement and Rider Education

- Clearly post club rules: speed limits, noise control, trail closures.
- Partner with law enforcement for patrols if necessary.

- Educate riders on respecting landowner property, proper etiquette, and environmental protection.
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11. Trail Closure Procedures

- Seasonal closures posted on website, social media, and signage.
 - Erect barricades at trail entrances when needed.
 - Monitor compliance and notify violators of consequences.
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12. Insurance & Liability

- All trail work must be conducted under active **club liability insurance**.
 - Volunteers must sign annual **waivers and hold harmless agreements**.
 - All equipment and vehicles must be insured and operated legally, including equipment owned by others who use on club trails
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This manual will be reviewed annually prior to trail openings

Appendices

- Landowner Agreement
- Volunteer Sign-In and Waiver Form
- Safety Checklist
- Trail Maintenance Log Template
- Trail Map Example



Central Oswego County Riders, Inc. Landowner Use Agreement

This agreement is made between:

Landowner Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

And the Oswego County ATV Club, a volunteer-run organization dedicated to responsible ATV recreation and trail stewardship.

Agreement Terms:

1. Property Location:

(Please describe parcel or attach a map)

2. Authorized Use:

The Oswego County ATV Club is permitted to construct, maintain, and operate an ATV trail on the above-referenced property. Trail work may include clearing, signage, surface repairs, and erosion control.

3. Liability and Indemnification:

The Club agrees to maintain liability coverage and agrees to indemnify the landowner for any Club related operations on the property.

4. Duration of Agreement:

This agreement shall remain in effect for:

1 year 3 years Indefinitely (until revoked in writing by either party with 30 days notice)

5. Special Provisions:

Signatures:

Landowner Signature: _____ Date: _____

Club Representative: _____ Date: _____



Central Oswego County Riders, Inc.
Volunteer Waiver & Release of Liability

I, the undersigned, wish to volunteer for trail maintenance, development, or cleanup activities with the Oswego County ATV Club.

I acknowledge:

- I am a member
- The physical nature of trail work, including potential hazards such as uneven terrain, tools, wildlife, and weather.
- I am participating voluntarily and accept all risks.
- I agree to follow all safety guidelines and instructions provided by the Club.

I hereby release and hold harmless the Oswego County ATV Club, its officers, landowners, and agents from any liability, claims, or damages arising from my participation.

Volunteer Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____

If under 18, parent/guardian signature required:

Parent Name: _____ Signature: _____



Central Oswego County Riders Inc.

Volunteer Safety Checklist

SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR TRAIL WORK

Before Work:

- PPE: gloves, eye protection, boots
- Tools inspected and operational
- First Aid Kit on site
- Communication plan in place

During Work:

- Work in pairs or teams
- Proper handling of equipment
- Awareness of surroundings

Post-Work:

- Tools cleaned and stored
- Area cleared of hazards
- Debrief and incident report (if needed)



Central Oswego County Riders, Inc.

Trail Maintenance Report

Trail Name/Section: _____

Volunteers: _____

Volunteers: _____

Date of Inspection/Maintenance: _____

Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Observations:

Drainage OK

Trees Down

Signage Missing/Damaged

Other: _____

Brushing Needed

Erosion/Ruts

Trail Obstruction

Actions Taken:

Additional Notes / Recommendations:

Photos Attached? Yes No

Submit completed forms to: [Club Trail Coordinator Email]

Map of Approved trails

Map of Proposed Expansion