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Bruno Delesalle
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Dear Bruno,

Re: The Coalition for Licensing and Registration of Off Road Vehicles

I write to provide a brief, summary report on findings from the National Conference of Provincial ATV Federations held in Kelowna during the week-end of September 26-28, 2003.

Who attended the conference:

The meeting was attended by representatives of ATV Federations from the provinces of BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as representatives from the Canadian All-Terrain Vehicle Distributors Council (CATV - the association that represents distributors, manufacturers and retailers of ATVs). There were no representatives in attendance from Saskatchewan, Yukon, NWT or Nunavut.

The consultants/legal counsel for the Coalition for Licensing and Registration of Off Road Vehicles also attended as observers.

Overview of agenda:

On Saturday, delegates provided provincial updates that touched on hot provincial issues, legislative developments, federation developments and so on. This was an opportunity to hear first-hand about such issues as the status of licensing and registration, organization-building, administrative challenges and successes, trails and access, management of

environmental impacts, and safety and enforcement issues - across all of the provinces in attendance.

On Sunday, the agenda items included the following topics: generating positive public relations, government relations strategies, and a round-table of items such as club development and other shared issues of interest.

General observations:

The conference was a good opportunity to hear from people involved with ATV issues in other provinces. The conference attendees talked about their experiences, concerns and aspirations and shared their “lessons learned”. Being able to make acquaintance and converse with knowledgeable, experienced people from other jurisdictions was a useful outcome of attending the conference.

Of all of the provinces, Québec and New Brunswick are the most organized, seem to have studied the issues the most, and have the most comprehensive legislation and program for regulation. Perhaps understandably, the sport also appears to be more active in these two provinces than it is in the other provinces.

Of those in attendance, Manitoba appears to be the least advanced in terms of organizational development, still very much in the early stages.

The rest of the provinces fall somewhere in the middle, both in terms of organization and in terms of government regulation.

Licensing and registration were not prominent discussion topics at the conference, since all provinces (except BC) already have a licensing and registration requirement in place (meaning there are many examples of licensing and registration systems around the country). From the comments that I heard around the table, I *loosely* gauged that the delegates in attendance support mandatory registration; support annual licensing; understand the need (for enforcement purposes) to display a plate or a sticker; and prefer/want to have established a system that returns some of the registration/licensing funds to users for investment into trails, clubs and so forth.

Topics that were discussed frequently were access to land, trails and land use laws, arrangements and agreements, the availability and pricing of third party liability insurance, safety practices and equipment, access to funding for the development of the sport and public relations. Other topics that were discussed with some frequency were environmental impacts, strategies/programs for reducing impacts, trail warden programs, interacting with other stakeholder groups and economic impact studies which have been carried out to prove the economic benefits of ATVing. All of the discussions were couched in the general backdrop of delegates wanting to see the sport grow, and be better supported in each of the jurisdictions.

Conference notes (not in any particular order):

- New Brunswick provides an interesting example of funding collected from registrations and licensing being returned to users via a trust fund, tagged for a variety of purposes (education 5%, operations 19% (office, mtgs), clubs 24%, membership 24%, region 28%).
- Delegates noted that currently the percentage for environment is not very high because New Brunswick still doesn't have ATV trails; apparently, this percentage will be revisited later once trails are established.
- Out of \$535,000, general administration gets \$100,000; safety, enforcement and environment gets \$30,000; the rest is disbursed to clubs according to memberships % - for trails, trail equipment, signage and trail development, safety and awareness, local club development.
- Re: \$30,000 for enforcement, safety, environment - the government puts proposals to the federation (doing radio and TV ads, newspaper ads, brochures re: better practices, NatureWatch).
- The New Brunswick federation employs a credit system for funds disbursement and accountability. The proportions to the clubs are allocated in accordance with a formula related to membership numbers. Funds are disbursed after invoices are submitted for review re: approved trail; guidelines are in place re: what's eligible. At the end of the year any monies remain as a credit. The federation has retained an accountant to oversee the trust and their own fiscal responsibility.
- New Brunswick has established a multi-stakeholder technical committee to develop trail development standards (the standards should be reviewed to see how transferable the process or standards are). The committee consists of members from the Dept. of Transport, Natural Resources, the Snowmobile Federation, ATV Federation, Legislative Services and Business New Brunswick (Tourism). The committee has met every 2 weeks for 10 months - quite remarkable frequency - addressing issues like setbacks, stream crossings and signage. The guidelines and requirements will be followed when money is disbursed for trails. The committee is also developing standards for highway usage permits (HUPs), e.g. where need to use road for a short distance between trails - so applies to specific roads and have specific signage to tell others about the usage.
- Québec has also developed a trail planning guide - for better planning, better responsibility and public image.
- Nova Scotia has recently launched a Task Force study into off-highway vehicle use; the Nova Scotia ATV federation is participating in the consultation. The Task Force is being led by a body called Voluntary Planning (a citizens' policy forum that is funded by government but operated at arm's length in a non-partisan way, and provides policy advice to the Premier and Cabinet). The federation distributed a hand-out regarding the Task Force study.
- Safety issues: there was a lot of discussion at the meeting about appropriate age levels for riding; the need for training; the question of where children should be allowed to ride; helmets; and equipment such as lights fore and aft and power brakes (Ontario - trails are 12+; road is 16 with license; kids age 12-16 don't have to be

accompanies but federation is encouraging it; under 12 you must be on private land or on an undeveloped trail). Many provincial federations (Nova Scotia, BC, Ontario, Manitoba, New Brunswick) indicated that they were very focused on safety training - e.g. training instructors and also users.

- On environmental issues - noise is recognized as an issue of concern, both for users and for other recreationalists. In Québec, currently they are focusing on safety and noise from straight pipes; they have even created posters addressing this issue. The conference delegates made only minimal reference to the issue of spark arresters. It was argued repeatedly that having trails will lead to lessened environmental impact because the majority of users will use the trail system. It was noted that building proper trails with appropriate water crossings etc. is the environmentally responsible way to go; but, it was acknowledged that building good trails costs money; hence the need for funding for building and maintaining trails.
- Several federations referred to ways to encourage environmental responsibility: e.g. the CATV has adopted an environmental program that sounds similar in concept to the American TreadLightly! program called ATV Nature Watch; Nova Scotia also mentioned implementation of the NatureWatch program; Newfoundland and Labrador are also interested in this program.
- Other enforcement and compliance matters: several federations spoke favourably of success with self-monitoring programs - in most cases this is in the nature of record and report, rather than deputied officers. Newfoundland has a trail monitor program that is currently operating in cooperation with local police (monitors radio the police re: infractions); the program uses education first (pamphlets, rules of trail, warnings) then ticketing later. Nova Scotia also has a trail warden program; the wardens wear reflective vests; and the main message is education, not enforcement (e.g. warden picks up the gum wrapper that someone else dropped and talks to them about it). Other programs: Ontario has a STOP program; New Brunswick is also looking at Ontario STOP program.
- On finding solutions to address the concerns of other stakeholders, BC gave the example of having developed (with the Cattlemen's Association) an "upside-down-V" modified cattle guard to address the problem of users not closing gates and allowing cattle to escape.
- A recurring question that came up was how clubs and trails are related. In some jurisdictions you have to join the club in order to use the trails, so there is an incentive to join the club; in other jurisdictions there is no need to join the club in order to use the trails, so it is more difficult to recruit people to clubs. In Ontario they have looked at the possibility of legislating making getting a federation trail pass mandatory (this recently happened with Bill 101 for the snowmobiles in Ontario) - they are waiting and watching what happens with that.
- The "2-up" vehicle (an ATV that is designed to have two riders) needs to be considered in any definition of ATVs.
- Federations reported that their clubs are enjoying more widespread, early consultation in land use planning processes - e.g. Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and perhaps Ontario. Early consultation is appreciated, especially when compared to

years past when consultation was nil or belated. Federations feel that struggles on this issue have paid off.

- In Québec each user group (ATVs, snowmobiles, skiers, hikers, horseback riders, etc.) has their own exclusive trail system; this contrasts with many other jurisdictions in terms of how trails are planned and managed.
- Several of the provincial ATV federations are now considering the benefits of entering into cooperative agreements vis-à-vis trail usage - e.g. at the Kelowna conference, the Québec and New Brunswick federations signed a cooperation agreement.
- Nova Scotia reported that 9/10 accidents in Nova Scotia were alcohol-related.
- Alberta is very focused on access issues and is trying to develop management agreements and regulations. One of the reps there is carrying out a detailed GPS inventory of existing trails.
- Alberta, Québec, New Brunswick and BC all referred to the economic benefits/spin-off associated with quadding and related tourist industry opportunities.
- Bob Ramsay of the CATV mentioned the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council website, a US site that has studies re: impacts, noise etc. : www.nohvcc.org

This concludes my summary report on the conference. Please call me, if you have any questions about anything set out in this report.

Yours truly,

(signed)

Susan Rutherford