

Comment Form
Ghost Waiparous Access Management Plan
Saturday October 29, 2005 – Information Session

1. Are there any trails not currently identified on the draft GAMP map that are important destination routes? If so, what is the interest in this particular destination?

Response; From a review of the April, 2005 draft GAMP map, barely adequate coverage was provided of quad trails and completely inadequate coverage of motorcycle single track trails was provided (only about 40-60 km of motorcycle only trails were included – total!). **It is completely unacceptable to both user groups.** There were so many trails left out it would be impossible to list all the important destination routes here. **No updated “Draft 2” GAMP map was provided, so it is impossible to answer this question other than from the perspective of the original map. This is a serious deficiency of this process. We are being asked to comment on material that will be submitted for ministerial approval that we have not even seen.**

A lot of new mapping was completed over the summer by SRD and by the motorcycle community (Second Gear Club and RMDRA). The motorcycle community provided 300 – 400 km of important trails. These trails were on a map at the Oct 29 meeting, but we have no idea how they will translate into the final plan recommended to the minister. **The OHV community will provide no endorsement or sign-off of the map until we have seen a second draft.**

The OHV community provided numerous comments on the Draft GAMP Operational Plan. The AOHVA and RMDRA together provided a 10 page document highlighting some serious concerns with the plan. **Since no “Draft 2” Operational Plan has been submitted to stakeholders for review, no endorsement can be provided.**

2. Are there any trails not currently identified on the draft GAMP map that are important travel loops? If so why is this travel loop important to you?

Response; The April draft map certainly does not include the important travel loops for the reasons provided above. Ask me this question again after SRD has provided an updated map and operational plan for review.

3. Are there any trails not currently identified on the draft GAMP map that provide access to important routes? If so, why is this particular route necessary to obtain access to identified trails?

Response; The April draft map certainly does not include access to important routes for the reasons provided above. Ask me this question again after SRD has provided an updated map and operational plan for review.

4. Does the draft GAMP map provide opportunities for the development of a sustainable trail system that will be environmentally and socially acceptable as well as satisfy you? Explain.

Response; The April draft map certainly does not for the reasons provided above. Ask me this question again after SRD has provided an updated map and operational plan for review.

It is not socially or environmentally acceptable to take away thousands of kilometers of existing Ghost trails and replace that with a few hundred. The collateral pressure that GAMP will place on adjacent OHV areas such as McLean Creek will be enormous and no plan is in place to address the issues. **No maintenance plan, no funding plan and no enforcement plan was included in the Draft GAMP Operational Plan, so we would conclude that the few trails on the April map are not in the least sustainable.**

5. Has the Planning Team overlooked any important information, issues or ideas with development trail criteria that could influence trails selected on the draft map? Explain.

Response; Without seeing how the trail criteria will be applied to all the new trail mapping provided, it is not possible to comment on this question in a meaningful way. **“Draft 2” must be provided.** For instance, we have no idea what trails or areas will be impacted by the new inclusion of the Cuthroat Trout in the Canadian Endangered Species database. We have no idea how the 2 years of water quality data collected in one of the wettest periods in history will be interpreted. We have no idea how the Grizzly bear habitat will impact the trail system. Conversations with the SRD biological officer indicated very little impact would be caused to trails in most areas. How will this data be interpreted and translated onto the final map?

South Ghost is an area that many OHV users hold dear and most of trails in that area were almost completely absent on the April draft GAMP map. OHV users are very concerned that this area will not contain many additional trails in the second iteration of the map. How can we know without seeing the second draft map?

Comments provided by the ranching interests and the group camp operator interests on Oct 29 would indicate that they have many unanswered issues. When

will their issues be heard? How will SRD's response to them be vetted by the other stakeholders?

6. Are there any other comments you would like to offer?

Response;

- a. Funding of GAMP must be addressed in the plan and not shuffled off as a recommendation or handed off to another department to contend with later. The OHV community would like to see GAMP succeed, but it will be a dismal failure without a funding plan. SRD cannot even afford signs for the trails. They cannot enforce today's lax rules much less the complicated enforcement issues a designated trail system will create.
- b. Due to the number of unanswered issues and the sheer complexity of converting an undesignated trail system into a designated trail system, we propose a middle ground to improve chances of success. With increased funding and enforcement, trails should remain open unless otherwise closed for all OHV's. Challenge parks are a good idea and so are enforced vehicle specs everywhere outside of the Challenge Parks (ie BAMP). After the gross abuses are stopped with enforcement, education, and funding, Ghost can be slowly and methodically moved towards the designated trail system we all desire.
- c. User Fees. The OHV community is strongly in favor of having the Alberta Government set up a DAO to provide a funding mechanism for the desired programs at Ghost. Government can provide bridging funds until the DAO is in place. The OHV community has been a proponent of user fees for close to a decade, but the provincial government lacks the will to make it a reality. The time is now. Without funding GAMP and every subsequent Area Management Plan will not have a chance to implement all the excellent ideas put forth by SRD and the various stakeholder groups.

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Representing OHV interests of Mountain Toys Polaris and Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders