Name

Address

Date

Salutation

As a a member of the Pine Creek Preservation Association (PCPA), I am writing to express my opposition to the “full Northcentral Pennsylvania ATV initiative and . . . network of ATV trails connecting Clinton County to the New York border. . .” as well as the establishment of a Regional ATV Pilot Program for State Forests and Parks as mandated by the Pennsylvania State Legislature through the 2018 and 2020 Fiscal Codes.

PCPA has over 1100 members. Over fifty percent (50%) of the entire watershed is comprised of State lands, including the Tiadaghton State Forest.

Since 1978, PCPA has worked with government entities and other organizations to develop conservation plans. Most recently, “Pine Creek Valley - Early Action Recommendations,” a 2005 report done for DCNR, features an overwhelming message: “that protection of the character of Pine Creek is critical. The people that live and work here want to keep it a special place” – one in which they can find peace, solitude, clean air and water, and a vast, healthy forest ecosystem away from traffic, noise, and the effects of development. The defining recommendation was for “a low impact, low volume, high yield tourism model one traveler at a time.” (Add your own comments/experience here.)

In 1985, DER and now DCNR was mandated to register ATVs and develop ATV trails. In 1986, DER was mandated to approve two hundred twenty-two (222) miles of ATV trails that had been created primarily by ATV users. Subsequently, the eighteen (18) mile Haneyville ATV Trail System, Tiadaghton State Forest, was developed, questionably adjacent to the Miller Run Natural Area. In 2001, DCNR imposed a moratorium on development of new ATV trails on State land.

(Add your own experience with ATV use here.)

The 2018 and 2020 Fiscal Code mandates are open-ended, with no real constraints to trail development or evaluation of environmental and safety impacts to the forests, the communities they pass through, or the public at large. Economic development and the desire for speed and distance seem to be the driving factors. But in the nearly twenty (20) years the Bloody Skillet ATV Trail in the Sproul State Forest has been in use, ***not one commercial business is visible today in either of the gateway communities of Orviston or Monument.*** ***On the contrary, Pine Creek businesses have thrived for decades on “low impact, low volume, high yield tourism,”*** where people can find respite from the detrimental and damaging effects brought by ATVs and similar “high-impact recreational vehicles.”

Initiated in the summer of 2021 and *without benefit or even courtesy of environmental impact study*, the ATV Pilot Program continues to be expanded throughout the Northcentral Region. In the Pine Creek Watershed, impacted areas include Colton Point State Park and the Tiadaghton State Forest from Haneyville to Slate Run (Tiadaghton Pilot Connector). ATVs in this area will cause unprecedented damage, detrimental to the quality of the forest experience. What will be the impact of joint use of public and State Forest roads? What will be the impact of ATVs in private camps throughout the State Forest? Who or what is to keep ATVers from traveling off trail to the many other roads and trails throughout the State Forest? Has money adequately been allocated to police and maintain trails wherever the ATVers go, authorized or not? What is the real, long-term cost of not only the Tiadaghton Pilot Connector but of ***all*** DCNR ATV trails?

***None of these trails in their relation to the health of the Northcentral Pennsylvania State Forest System can be considered as solitary but must be evaluated in terms of their cumulative impact on the ecology and biological diversity of the forest as a whole.*** (Add personal comments on the Pilot Program here.)

I believe ATV trails to be contrary to a healthy forest ecosystem, harmful to State Forest roads, and contrary to the rights of the people guaranteed under Article 1 Section 27 of our State Constitution. For these reasons, I oppose the Northcentral Pennsylvania ATV Initiative and the establishment of a Regional ATV Pilot Program for State Forests and Parks and urge you to take the necessary steps to abolish this program.

Sincerely,