



OFATV

Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs

PO Box 38, Ingersoll, Ontario N5C 3K1
Ph. (705) 797-0797 Fax (519) 513-0212
Email: info@ofatv.org Web: www.ofatv.org

INTRODUCTION

Why should I start a club?

The sport of ATVing is experiencing unprecedented enthusiasm and growth. ATV clubs are an integral part of this sport — and with good reason. From fun to safety, the combined efforts of ATVers can accomplish far more than one ATV rider can individually. In fact, only the collective imagination and talent of a club's members limit the possibilities. Moreover, the club can pool together volunteer work forces and increase the pleasure of ATV use by spreading the work required to organize events or to build and maintain marked trails among many hands. A club can have more fun, more safely, with less effort and less cost.

What kinds of activities do ATV clubs engage in?

A listing of actual ATV club activities would cover many pages. It would include development of trail networks and use areas, organized competitive events, trail rides, safety workshops, fund raising for charity, camping trips, rescue work, maintenance workshops, newsletter publications and work with private and public landowners and other ATV clubs. Club activities are mostly family oriented, so that all ages may join in the fun, and share in the work.

ATV Users and the Local Club

Each club will inevitably play many roles. It can be the most effective way to maximize the enjoyment of ATV riding while simultaneously building up a reputable public image for the sport. For club members, many benefits occur, including:

1. Association with active people having similar interests for groups activities, such as:
 - a. picnics and barbecues,
 - b. weekend tours,
 - c. rallies of all sorts,
 - d. moonlight tours,
 - e. competitive events
 - f. community functions;
2. Sharing of knowledge and experience about the machines and user areas;
3. Expanded opportunities to work with local landowners;
4. Person power to plan, construct, mark, groom and otherwise maintain trails;
5. An organization to sponsor safety workshops and host equipment demonstrations;

6. A potent force to explain the needs of ATV users to government officials at the local and regional levels, particularly with regards to land use planning and regulatory decisions.

ATV riders also benefit indirectly because the club becomes an identifiable, permanent entity, with which local officials and landowners can deal both in emergencies and in long-term decision-making. To accentuate this permanence, each club should maintain a fixed mailing address, usually a local post office box, to facilitate communications with these groups. Continuing consideration of others by club members will enable the many responsible ATV users to avoid categorization with the discourteous few.

FAQ:

I am most concerned about securing areas to use and enjoy my ATV. Can clubs help?

The importance of ATV clubs is most evident in providing for management of riding areas and their maintenance by the club. One individual is hardly capable of providing similar assurances. The club's role in governmental land-use decision-making is extremely important. The club provides public land managers with a permanent contact and a responsible party to turn to for advice.

But many laws which affect me are passed at the Provincial and Federal Levels. How can a club help me here?

Most active clubs specialize in community-level activities and link their resources with those of other clubs in their province through an association or federation of provincial ATV riders. Again, the added numbers of ATVers and the aggregate talents of the clubs ensure the best representation of each ATV users' interests.

ROLE OF A CLUB

While ATV riding should be fun, its very nature demands compliance with certain standards of operation to ensure personal safety. Through the OFATV, members and potential members can take a Canada Safety Council rider safety course ([CASI](#)). The day program highlights safe riding practices and environmental ethics when riding the trails. Insurance benefits could be derived from taking this course. Clubs are encouraged to have some members take an extended instructors' course in order to stage these courses in their own areas.

Similarly, the operation of ATV's must conform to certain laws and codes to avoid unnecessary infringements on the rights of others. In order for ATVer's to expect the right to use their All-Terrain Vehicles on both public and private lands, they must be willing to respect the needs and desires of other outdoor recreational users. The future of ATVer's is dependent in large measure upon the actions of responsible operators to control these abuses. Here's where ATV clubs can exert a positive influence through education and peer pressure. The Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicle Clubs (OFATV) strongly suggests that each ATVer and ATV Club adopt its code of ethics.

ATV Code of Ethics:

1. I will be a good sportsperson. I recognize that many people will judge all ATV owners by my actions. I will use my influence with other ATV owners to promote responsible conduct.
2. I will maintain clean trails and use areas. I will work to safeguard clean and pure streams and lakes. I will ensure my ATV use has the lowest possible impact on the environment. I will safeguard living trees, shrubs, and other natural features.
3. I will respect other people's property and rights.
4. I will lend a helping hand when I see someone in distress.
5. I will make my vehicle and myself available to assist in emergency situations.
6. I will recognize the rights of other user groups.
7. I will energetically strive to bring other recreation participants to recognize and respect my rights as an ATVer by explaining my needs and, at the same time, listening to their needs.
8. I will learn and obey all federal, provincial, and municipal rules regulating the operation of ATVs in areas where I use my vehicle. I will inform public officials, as required, when using public lands.
9. I will not harass wildlife, and will become aware of protected or sensitive areas.
10. I will use marked trails, and areas open to ATV's. I will not travel where prohibited.

ORGANIZING A CLUB

If no club exists in your immediate area, or if the club has failed to become active, don't be discouraged. Many of the most dynamic ATV clubs have been started by a handful of enthusiasts who decided that a few hours of their time were well worth the benefits to be derived from club membership. If you know of ten or more ATV enthusiasts in your area not belonging to another, potentially competitive club, the chances are good that the necessary ingredients for an active club are present. A common love of ATVing is likely to be more than adequate cement for this group bond.

If you feel the opportunity exists, here are some of the steps we recommend:

1. Talk to your friends who are active ATVers. Also, identify and approach local community figures who regularly ride ATVs. Avoid the temptation to become overly restrictive in identifying the prospective membership of your organization.
2. Form a working committee of three or four enthusiastic individuals to plan the initial meeting and to divide the necessary work during the early stages of the club. Regular and frequent work sessions should be planned.
3. Visit your local ATV dealers. They are very likely to provide assistance of many kinds, from "technical" advice to meeting space.
4. Compile a card file on ATV owners in your area. Local dealers, police and public officials may be able to assist you through their records.
5. Establish contact with local newspapers and television and radio stations. Alert them to your plans.

INITIAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

At this point, you are ready to plan your first meeting to guide the creation of a local club. It's important that most arrangements be made far enough in advance, preferably one month. This should include securing a meeting room, chairs, ashtrays, refreshments, pads and pencils. Take the following steps:

- Select a meeting date with great care. Obtain a community calendar, and check with major local organizations to discover serious conflicts with other community events. Ultimately, the date should be chosen approximately three weeks in advance.
- Once the date of the meeting is selected, rapid action becomes essential. Printed or mimeographed announcements should be mailed to all known ATV owners in your files.
- Notify the news media by letter and in person. Arrange interviews if possible. Photographs are also a desirable device to increase community interest.
- Arrange to be placed on any community activity calendars and place notices at strategic locations in your community (such as gas stations, ATV dealers, post offices, and other high-visibility public places).
- Apportion groups of cards from your files to the working committee members and a handful of other enthusiastic people. Each person should call the names on the cards assigned approximately four days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- Discuss the purposes of your prospective club. Prepare a handout for the meeting listing these purposes. Among those you may wish to consider are:
 1. To promote greater interest in ATV use
 2. To work for new and improved ATV laws, including those which would ensure the use of registration fees and gasoline tax revenues for ATV trail use and development.
 3. To promote the development of ATV trails, campsites and other facilities;
 4. To improve the public image of ATV users by educating and encouraging users in the safe, considerate and courteous use of ATV's.
 5. To work with government officials and others toward mutually satisfactory rules for broader use by ATVs of government lands;
 6. To promote the use of ATV's as family sports vehicles;
 7. To promote properly organized ATV trips, rallies and competitions;
 8. To promote friendliness and good fellowship among ATV owners.
 9. To cooperate with police, fire, and Civil Defense officials, and other community organizations by providing ATV's for emergency duty;
 10. To promote the healthful benefits of ATVing as a recreational activity.
 11. To promote responsible use of the environment.

- Be sure to have attendance sheets filled out at the meeting and name tags to be worn by all in attendance. If possible, folders should be prepared for all who attend with information on ATV products and area facilities. A supply can be maintained for use at later meetings as well.
- Plan to designate five committee chairpersons at the meeting. These individuals should be selected prior to the session from among those showing the most interest in forming a club. The five committees suggested are:
 1. **Organizational Committee** – to develop bylaws and to plan for initial meetings;
 2. **Objectives Committee** - to recommend specific goals , policies, and purposes;
 3. **Nominating Committee** – to select a slate of directors at the first formal meeting of the club.
 4. **Membership Committee** – to maintain the membership files, send out notices of meetings, and plan a membership drive at the first meeting;
 5. **Publicity Committee** - to work with all other committees and publicize their efforts and to select a recommended name for the club to be presented at the first official meeting.

Background information is given for each committee later in this document. All committee members should receive copies of this information.

The membership of these committees should be left open to volunteers at the initial organizational meeting. Your club will be much more successful if virtually all members are allowed and encouraged to participate in its initial design and subsequent operation.

Of all the five initial committees, the first three will operate regularly only for a short time. The membership and publicity committees, in contrast, will continue to function indefinitely. The members of the first three committees might well be encouraged at a later date to transfer their energies to the activities committee, which should be formed at the initial club meeting.

- The working committees should select a temporary presiding officer. He or she must be enthusiastic about the club and forceful enough to lead the organizational meeting, while at the same time being fair-minded and responsive to the audience. The single most important characteristic of an effective chairperson is adequate preparation. The working committee and those designated to serve as committee chairperson should meet with the temporary presiding officer several days prior to the actual meeting to review all issues in detail, and plan a date for the second meeting.
- Finally, the temporary presiding officer should prepare an agenda for the meeting in consultation with the members of the working committee. Although the meeting should be kept short, several critical issues must be resolved. A basic recommended agenda follows:

1. Presiding officer calls the meeting to order;
2. Presiding officer reads a statement of purposes of the meeting and some specific objectives for the proposed club (*these should be carefully prepared in writing*);
3. Presiding officer calls on a number of people to speak about the club (*this is your selling job, so select your speakers from your most prominent and enthusiastic supporters. Plan this part carefully in advance*);
4. Presiding officer calls for a motion to organize a local ATV club (*here, timing is important and the call should come as interest peaks. Someone should have been assigned in advance to make this motion and another person readied to second it. Allow for brief discussion of the specific motion and then call for a vote by the audience*);
5. Presiding officer appoints the committees previously discussed (*Again, have someone selected in advance to make a proper motion and someone to second it. Allow for brief discussion on this motion, specifically, and then call for a vote*);
6. Presiding officer designates the five chairpersons previously selected and calls for volunteers for each committee (*Five sign-up sheets can be placed in various parts of the room, and the appointed chairperson can then proceed to the appropriate areas*);
7. Presiding officer opens the meeting to general discussion, comments and suggestions (*The necessary business of the initial organizational meeting has been accomplished. During this open period, the meeting should continue to move briskly; longwinded aimless discussion will diminish interest. At this point you may wish to discuss names for the club. Often, however, a contest for this purpose, run by the publicity committee, is a better mechanism to stir interest*).
8. Presiding officer calls for adjournment (*This should occur as soon as discussion begins to lag. Someone should be prepared to offer a motion, which includes the date for the next meeting, as previously selected by the working committee*).

THE FIRST FORMAL MEETING

At this point, your club is well on the way to becoming an active reality. The difficult, time demanding organization phase of your club's history is drawing to a close, and each member will begin to receive direct benefits.

Certainly much work remains. Each of the committees must diligently address its tasks prior to the next meeting, but the necessary efforts have been spread among more individuals, and your club has developed its own momentum. The organizational committee should develop an agenda for the second meeting, which will then be circulated among all other committees well in advance of the second meeting. A suitable agenda might be:

1. Presiding officer calls the meeting to order and calls for the reading of the minutes from the previous meeting (*Any changes should be called for*);
2. The Organizational Committee reports a suggested set of bylaws (*Printed copies should be made available to all attending the meeting. We recommend establishing a Board of Directors to manage the general business elected by the entire active membership of the club. This gives a broader base for representatives of various groups and interests within the club to have a voice in its management. This should be fully explained by the committee chairperson to all present. Any proposed changes should be discussed and voted upon*);
3. The bylaws are then offered to the body of attending persons for approval;
4. The Objectives Committee reports on its work, to be followed by discussion of its recommendations; subsequently, the committee should offer a formal "statement of objectives" for approval by all present;
5. The Membership Committee next formally offers charter membership in the club in return for payment of the annual dues (*The amount of the dues should be jointly determined by this committee prior to the meeting. Once all have been offered this opportunity, the business session shall resume*);
6. The Nominating Committee offers to the club a recommendation slate of officers as called for in the bylaws; subsequently, all present who have formally joined the club shall be allowed to vote by secret ballot (*Ballots listing the committee's choices and providing ample space for write-in nominations should be carefully distributed. Two uninterested parties should do tallying. Following tabulation, the results should be announced, and an initial executive meeting should be scheduled*);
7. The Publicity Committee reports on its activities (*A suggestion for naming the club should be made. The members may then either approve or select from the committee recommendation*);
8. The presiding officer then thanks the members of the committees, and announces the formation of an Activity Committee to coordinate and plan local and regional events;

9. The meeting then should be opened for general discussion (*Possible topics of consideration include:*
 - a. *Various projects for the club,*
 - b. *Cooperation with local authorities, Civil Defense, and other civic and service groups on community problems and in emergencies,*
 - c. *Development of authorized ATV trails, use areas, and campsites,*
 - d. *Affiliation with other clubs and regional ATV associations for exchange of information on all phases of ATVing.*
 - e. *Development of Safety Education Program encouraging the proper use of ATV's.);*
10. The club discusses and adopts a regular meeting schedule;
11. The presiding officer then calls for a motion to adjourn.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

As initial organizational demands diminish, the realm of possible activities for club members greatly increases. While planned club events represent one possible focus of attention, your club will soon find that it will also inspire more spontaneous undertakings. It is also likely that your club could benefit by contacting neighboring clubs, exchanging ideas and scheduling joint activities. Trail development has been most successful in areas where several clubs have assumed responsibility for specific trail segments. Ideally, trails to adjoining communities should be planned, for this can establish safe user areas while still providing new terrain and scenery. Many clubs have found that a great deal of productivity is evident if each month and meeting has a specialized focus.

One suggested schedule follows:

Month (1) One	Review of the previous year; review of existing ATV legislation; development of club position on desired changes.
Month (2) Two	Trail development efforts—local and provincial.
Month (3) Three	Discussion of new ATV improvements and developments.
Month (4) Four	Club trail rides and other activities
Month (5) Five	Community service activities.
Month (6) Six	Legislation action—federal and provincial
Month (7) Seven	Club promotion; non-member activities.
Month (8) Eight	Machine maintenance and storage clinics.
Month (9) Nine	Club elections; annual banquet.
Month (10) Ten & (11) Eleven	Committee activities; preparations for new season programs; summer social activities.

In addition to this schedule of events there are a number of fixed events that occur in the OFATV that clubs must be prepared for. These events will occur in a specific month each year regardless of when a club joined the OFATV.

March	Club Renewal fee and Insurance renewal. Clubs that joined the OFATV less than six months prior to March do not need to renew until next year.
May	District General Meeting. At this meeting all clubs in a district come together to discuss items of importance and select a Director to represent them on the OFATV Board.
June	OFATV Annual General Meeting is held.

Perhaps the most important possibilities for action by mature clubs, however, are those which allow them to shape the development of the sport. For example, club members can work with local legislators and enforcement officials in a mutually beneficial fashion. Club members can also work in their communities to introduce people to fun of ATVing.

In closing, remember that clubs can and should be politically active locally. This represents just a start, however, for overall effectiveness can be markedly improved by joint efforts with other clubs through provincial associations and federations. Just as a club can provide a political voice more powerful than that of any of its individual members, a provincial ATV federation can increase the effectiveness of its constituent clubs. Moreover, by banding together, clubs can work to achieve a uniform governmental role in trail development, as well as other positive steps by the province to encourage safe and enjoyable ATV use.

Finally, provincial federations are excellent conduits for the exchange of ideas. Equipped with good ideas and enthusiastic members, any ATV club is assured of organizational success and many pleasant experiences for its membership.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

This section is intended to provide additional, in depth information for use by club organizers and members of specialized committees during the early portion of the club's development. It contains committee assignments and supportive materials for the organizational committee, objectives committee, nominating committee, membership committee and publicity committee.

Organizational Committee

The primary objective of the Organizational Committee is to formulate a workable set of bylaws for your club. Among other items, this committee must examine such issues as:

- Advantages/disadvantages of formal incorporation;
- Types of memberships and amount of annual dues, in conjunction with the membership committee;
- Advantages/disadvantages of a Board of Directors;
- Frequency of meetings, and election procedures.

The committee presents the following guidelines for consideration:

Article I: Purpose and Names

Section 1. The name of the club shall be “-----.”

Section 2. The purpose of the “-----.” is to stimulate and advance the general welfare and safety of ATV riding; to serve the interests of ATV owners; to defend such owners against discriminatory legislation, regulations and burdensome taxation; to develop a fraternal spirit among local ATV and other sport enthusiasts; to provide a medium for the exchange of ATV information; to own or lease property for club uses and to perform all desirable and lawful functions for the successful operation of the club and in the general public interest.

Article II: Membership

Section 1. Membership in the club shall consist of the following class(es):

- a. Active members
- b. Associate and Honorary Members (Optional)

Section 2. Active membership is available to all ATV owners in _____
(Designate the area limits. This can be broadened to include others interested in ATVing or other recreational activities in general, or associate memberships can be set up to accommodate other interested persons.).

Section 3. Each active member shall be entitled to one vote.

Section 4. The Board of Directors may establish the qualifications and rights of Associate Members (Optional).

Section 5. Applications for membership shall be made in writing addressed to the secretary of the club on the appropriate form containing an agreement by the applicant to abide by the bylaws of the club. The secretary shall refer each application for membership to the Membership Committee for consideration, and then, if approved, to the Board of Directors for final approval and election to the club upon payment of the required dues (*The referral to the membership committee can be*

eliminated, if desired, and the application referred directly to the board by the secretary. Normally, Board action would be taken on groups of pending applications, rather than upon each one individually.) A favourable vote of the majority of the Board shall be required to elect applicants to membership. Board action may be taken by mail ballot.

Section 6. A member may resign from the club at any time upon written notice to the secretary.

Section 7. Membership in the club may be terminated by majority vote by the Board of Directors in the event of non-payment of dues or for other reasons consistent with the club's best interests. Termination of the membership of any member shall not release said members from the obligation to pay all dues and other amounts owed to the end of the period of membership.

Article III Management

The management of the club shall be voted in the Board of Directors.

Article IV Board of Directors

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of Directors, each of whom shall be an active member of the club. *(Any number of Directors can be specified, depending upon the size of the club. Nine frequently works well; as it avoids tie votes and permits five to constitute a quorum. It also allows for ongoing three-year terms, with a three year rotation expiring each year.)* Directors shall be elected prior to the Annual Meeting of the membership and shall take office at the close of the Annual Meeting for a term of ___ years *(The number of years in each term can be one, two, three or four, as the group may desire.)* No Director shall be elected to serve more than successive terms *(This provides an opportunity for broad involvement and lessens the tendency for the clubs to come under the control of a small group of individuals.)* At the election of the initial Board of Directors, ___ shall be elected for a term of one (1) year, ___ shall be elected for a term of two (2) years, and ___ shall be elected for a term of three (3) years *(This clause presumes a selection of a three-year term; changes should be made, as appropriate, if a different length for terms of Board members is selected.)*

Section 2. If vacancies on the Board of Directors should occur by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining Directors may, at their option, by majority vote, elect a successor for each unexpired term.

Section 3. A majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of club business.

Section 4. Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such time and place as may be fixed from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors, or by call of the President. The Board of Directors shall hold its regular annual meeting in conjunction with and at the place of the annual meeting of the membership. Upon the written request of a quorum of Board members, the secretary shall call a special meeting of the Board of Directors.

Section 5. The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, by the affirmative vote of a majority of the whole Board of Directors, appoint an executive committee of the Board to act in its stead in

emergencies (*such committees usually consist of the officers of the club and one of two other Directors. All must be members of the Board of Directors.*) The Board of Directors may appoint club committees, fill any vacancies or change the membership in club committees. The Board may, by resolution, delegate such authority to the club President. The Board of Directors shall have power at all times to abolish any committee.

Section 6. The Board of Directors may employ whatever personnel it deems necessary, and for which funds are available, to aid in the management and programs of the club and may authorize the expenditure of clubs funds in any other manner provided such actions are in the proper furtherance of the purpose of the club.

Article V: Dues

The amount of dues as well as the time for their payment shall be determined from time to time by action of the OFATV Board of Directors. Fees will be determined yearly at the annual general meeting (AGM). The portion of the membership fee that remains with the club will also be decided at the AGM, and ratified by club delegates.

Article VI: Officers

Section 1. The officers of the club shall be President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The same person may hold the offices of Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2. The officers shall be elected from the membership of the Board of Directors by plurality vote of the Directors at their regular annual meeting. (*This procedure is often a great help in holding the club together, as it avoids electioneering at general membership meetings, which can sometimes divide the Club into lasting factions.*) The Board of Directors may fill vacancies occurring between such elections for the unexpired term at any Board meeting or by mail ballot. Any officer may be removed from office by the affirmative voice of two-thirds of the whole Board of Directors.

Section 3. All officers shall take office immediately upon election and hold office for one year or until their successors shall have been elected and qualified. The President may not hold office for more than two successive terms (*Many clubs restrict the President to a single term, but sometimes with a small group you may have the President serve more than one term, at least initially.*)

Section 4. The President shall preside at all meetings of the club and of its Board of Directors, shall oversee and coordinate such committees as are authorized by the Board of Directors, shall be a member ex-officio of all such committees and shall carry on those other responsibilities assigned to him or her by the bylaws and by the Board of Directors.

Section 5. The Vice President, during the absence or temporary incapacity of the President, shall perform the duties and have the powers of the President.

Section 6. The Secretary shall keep all club records, except financial records, including minutes of meetings, roster of members, lists of committees and their members. He or she also sends out notices of meetings, receive applications for membership, and discharge all of the usual secretarial functions of the office required herein or by the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall also maintain a permanent mailing address, preferably a local post office box, for the club and direct incoming correspondence to the appropriate club official.

Section 7. The Treasurer shall keep all financial records of the club and have charge of its funds. He or she shall keep of the club's funds in a bank approved by the Board of Directors and in the name of the club. He or she shall disburse such funds of the club under the direction of the Board of Directors. Withdrawals shall be made by checks signed in such a manner as may be approved from time to time by the Board of Directors. A Treasurer's report shall be prepared and submitted at the annual meeting.

Section 8. All officers shall have such other powers and duties as law requires.

Article VII: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the club shall commence on the first day of _____ and end on the thirty-first day of _____ (*This can be the calendar year, January through December, or can begin with the month in which the club is organized and funds collected and end twelve months later.*)

Article VIII: Meetings

Section 1. The annual meeting of the members of the club shall be held at the time and place designated by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the members of the club shall be held monthly (*or quarterly, or bimonthly, to be selected depending upon particular club needs*) at the time and place fixed by resolution at the previous meeting or as designated by the President or by the Board of Directors. (*It is not absolutely necessary that this section is included, but it does serve as a spur to keep the club and membership active*).

Section 3. Written notices of the time and place of the annual and all other meetings of the membership shall be prepared and distributed to the membership by the Secretary.

Section 4. Special meetings of the club may be called by the Board of Directors, or by the President or by any group of _____ active members by giving adequate written notice of the time, place, and purpose of such special meetings (*This number may be a certain percentage of all active club members*).

Section 5. A majority of the active members shall constitute a quorum. Any formal action taken at any meeting of the membership shall require a majority vote of those active members present.

Article IX: Election Procedures

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee of at least three persons from the active members.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall place in nomination candidates for election to the Board of Directors for each prospective vacancy from among the names of the club's active members (*Some clubs require the nominating committee to select a slate of a least two candidates for each prospective vacancy*).

Section 3. The Nominating Committee's slate of candidates shall be shown on the official ballot, which also shall provide spaces for write-in candidates, together with the specific terms of years for which each candidate is nominated. The official ballots shall be distributed to the qualified voting members. For the club's initial election, distribution shall be made at the meeting among all those joining the organization. They shall then immediately mark the ballots and deposit them unsigned in the ballot box. Subsequently, the Secretary will make distribution to qualified voting members through the mail at least 30 days in advance of the annual meeting. Ballots must be returned to the Secretary no later than five days prior to the annual meeting. In each instance, a Tally Committee of two or three members shall be appointed to count the ballots and announce the names of those elected to the Board of Directors for the various terms. A run-off ballot will decide all ties.

Article X: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by the affirmative vote of a majority of the active members of the club at the annual membership meeting, by mail ballot or in such other form as may be approved by the Board of Directors.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON BYLAWS

Incorporation

Formal incorporation is not at all a necessity for clubs; however it is necessary to be an OFATV Member Club. This is a subject which must be discussed with a competent local lawyer. Both types of organization have advantages and disadvantages and provincial and local laws and regulations may warrant different decisions in different localities. Generally speaking, here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two types of organizations:

An unincorporated club

1. is a voluntary association that in the eyes of the law is not an entity or a person;
2. has no legal standing as an organization;
3. cannot own, convey or mortgage property;
4. is probably unable to borrow money or enter into any contract, and
5. means every member may be held personally liable for any act committed in the name of the club, even those who personally had nothing to do with the act or deed which gave rise to the debt or damage. Thus, if you are going to organize an unincorporated club, consult a competent local insurance representative. The representative may be able to offer a policy substantially reducing the liability of individual members.

An incorporated club

1. has limited liability which protects its members from being personally responsible for the debts or the deeds of the club;
2. has a separate legal existence;
3. can exercise most powers that are available to individual persons;
4. can own property, contract, mortgage, and sue in the courts;
5. can be sued as an entity but only to the extent of its limited liability;
6. can have its interests easily transferred, and
7. continue its existence regardless of what happens to individual members.

An incorporated club, however, has these general disadvantages:

1. initial costs of incorporation, as this must be done by a lawyer;
2. red tape, in that a corporation is required by the province to submit a variety of forms each year and to designate a registered agent in the province, among other things;
3. pay fees and licenses annually, and
4. may incur possible tax burdens on profits.

Nonprofit Corporations

The non-profit corporation is available in most provinces for “not-for-profit” organizations. This type of incorporation avoids much of the financial burden of other types of incorporation. It is the type of organization most favored by clubs operated not for profit, but seeking protection from club liabilities for the individual members.

The Objectives Committee

The Objectives Committee will play an important role in determining both the types and the intensity of club activities. The mandates of this committee are:

- To identify major problems facing local ATV users and potential means to lessen pressures;
- To examine the role of the club in the local community and define its commitment to community activities, and
- To conduct an ambitious survey of prospective members to detect common interests.

It is suggested that, following the development of recommended priority objectives, the committee also prepares a listing of secondary objectives. Each of these lists should be fluid, and ideas voiced at later meetings should be incorporated to the desires of the club.

The Nominating Committee

The exact character of the slate of individuals to be presented by the Nominating Committee will vary according to the organizational scheme selected by your club. The criteria for selection of candidates remain the same. To be successful, the club officers need to blend leadership with empathy. Local ATV clubs cannot lose sight that they are by and for their members.

The Nominating Committee must also be conscious of the advantages of a well-rounded group of officers. These individuals should be representative of the ATVers in your area to the fullest possible extent. Occasionally, in the past, clubs have been overly “cliquish,” and have found this route invariably counter-productive. Such steps limit the attractiveness of club membership and thus decrease its potential.

Finally, while it is important to attract well-known community figures into the club, and even place them in leadership roles, it is mandatory that those nominated by the committee have sufficient time and interest to serve the club. If the club leadership fails to be energetic and industrious, regular club members hardly can be expected to remain enthusiastic.

The Membership Committee

The power of a club is not some mystical quality, but is rather the collective talents and ambitions of its members. Therefore, each club must devote significant energies to attracting and sustaining memberships.

During the initial stages of your club, this drive for members assumes extraordinary importance. A “critical mass” must be reached to sustain the club.

The secret to attracting members is simple; each prospective member must be convinced that they will derive sufficient benefits to outweigh his devotion of time and finances. A skillful strategy must be developed, stressing the positive attributes of club membership.

This committee should also work with the Organizational Committee in establishing a dues schedule. Obviously it takes money to run any sort of organization, so some charge for membership dues will be necessary. Usually it is advisable to start out with a small amount. These dues should be paid in advance with the application for the membership. In the future when more programs and activities are added, it may be necessary to increase the dues. At the very least, the dues collected should be sufficient to cover all regular expenses. Special events can be conducted so as to pay their own way and perhaps make a little “profit” for the club treasury, to be used to finance future club projects.

The Publicity Committee

Clubs require a “voice” to inform the surrounding community about their activities. Both the general good of the club and the success of individual programs are often linked to area residents outside the club as well as the members themselves. Thus, the Publicity Committee must serve as one of the club’s most active segments, on a continuing basis.

The Publicity Committee must cultivate contacts with local media representatives: radio, television, and press. Over time, the committee members will better understand the particular interests of these people, and your dealings with the media will grow more productive.

However, follow these simple rules at all times:

- Take advantage of community calendars and similar public services offered by the media for both regular and social events.
- If your club is planning an unusual activity, mail a “news release” to the local news media approximately one week prior to the scheduled date. Be sure to include the name of your club and the time and place of the event. Be concise! Include photographs whenever possible.
- A good, amateur photographer can be one of this committee’s most valuable members.
- Provide the name, address, and telephone number of a knowledgeable member who can act as a spokesperson for your club in every mailing to local news media.

Additionally, the Publicity Committee should support and coordinate all publicity for the programs of other club committees, such as the Membership Committee and the Activities Committee. Regular preparation of posters listing upcoming events and club newsletters are within the province of this committee, as well.

One of the most important measures of a club is its success in achieving community recognition. An interesting name and an attractive, eye-catching emblem are important steps in this drive. Once selected, the design should be employed on club patches, posters, and signs. In this way, the design becomes a continuing trademark for the club. The Publicity Committee should address this matter within the first months of the club’s development.