NorthWoods Regional ATV Trail Alliance Meeting (NWRATA)

- When: October 7, 2026
- Where: The 40 Club, 950 2nd St NW, Aitkin MN 56431
- Time: Social Hour Beginning at 5:00pm, Meeting starts at 6:00pm
- Call-In: Dial 605-313-5798, Enter Access Code 3337593#

Minutes

Pledge of Allegiance

- Welcome / Introduction of New Attendees - Alliance Chair Harlan Kingsley.
  - 26 people in attendance including 1 on call.
- Secretary Report of July 8, 2026 - Becky Tuckenhagen.
  - Steve Ferraro 1st, Janet Donner 2nd, approved.
- Treasurer Report – Ed Schulze
  - Darlene Turnock 1st, Steve Ferraro 2nd, approved.

2026 Northwoods Regional ATV Trail Alliance Treasurer							
Data	Amount		Transactions	Amount	Check	Date	Info
Beginning Balance 7/1/2026	$ 3,023.14		Central Lakes ATV Club	$ 190.00	Cash	7/23/2026	Dues & Expo ($40)
Total additions	$ 220.00		Axtell Donation	$ 30.00	Cash	9/26/2026	Axtell Donation
Total subtractions	$ (315.70)		Ukura's	$ (285.70)	5036	9/28/2026	Axtell Food
Ending Balance 9/30/2026	$ 2,927.44		Ukura's	$ (30.00)	Cash	9/28/2026	Axtell Food

- MN DNR Update (no DNR attended) GIA training in St. Paul on dates of October 9-10. Perry May provided some info about upcoming workshop and the recent ATVMN/DNR Seasonal meeting.
  - Mark Larson of Security State Insurance in Aitkin will be a guest speaker about liability insurance.
  - May be 2 new changes possibly coming.
  - July 1st, DNR came out with new reimbursement values. Raised due to higher cost of fuel, etc. Look for some updates.
  - Photos – either too many photos or photo files too big to send. Just need before and after. DNR looking for a solution.

- Question came up about grants at Ride and Rally. Perry to work with DNR to show all the different grants out there besides GIA.
- GIA budget projected to be a deficit in the next few years. Registrations are down 30k vehicles. From 2024 to 2025. Heavier machines are not registered as OHV but ORV so the dedicated fund does not get money from those fees. However, all still running on our trails. Weight limits – ATV definition

- County Commissioners. Pat Murphy (running for County Commissioner District 3) attended.

Discussion Points:

1. **Aitkin County policy on ornaments / wood carvings placed on trail**. Blind Lake ATV Club received a letter from ACLD to take all such attractions off the trail.
    a. Chris Johnson ACLD recreation specialist. From a recreation standpoint there didn't seem to be a problem with having gnomes, silhouettes of Sasquatch, butterflies, etc. on trail. However, according to Land Commissioner Denny Thompson, an Aitkin County forestry statute and a personal opinion of a certain Aitkin County employee, items on trail are considered litter and not natural.
    b. Some items have been on trails for years with no complaints until this year.
    c. Perry May suggested finding a way to get a working compromise - possibly change the ordinance. Maybe bet up a formal agreement between Sponsor and Club. Chris Johnson is working on arranging a meeting with Blind Lake ATV Club and other pertinent people involved.
    d. It was noted that this situation was not handled very well from the beginning, little communication to the club until the letter.
    e. Changes Blind Lake ATV trail identity. People travel to see what is on the Trails. Pat Murphy – numbers matter. Having attractions that brings people to trail also benefits Aitkin and Aitkin County.
    f. It was noted that a former land commissioner encouraged Geocaching items on trail. Will county contact the geocaching community to remove those items?
    g. Deadline of October 31st for club to remove items, then up to county to remove. Question came up about non-club items that have been left in the woods also.
2. **Axtell Jamboree Summary on September 26, 2026**. Chris Johnson. 52 people in attendance. Bret Sample (Aitkin County Commissioner) showed up with a guest from another County. Possibly look at earlier summer date, maybe August, due to all the Fall rides going on at the same time.
3. **New ATVMN** Congratulations to President-Elect Perry May, and VP-Elect Dean Schliek. Including Erv Kleinschmidt as ATVMN Treasurer, this makes 3 NWRATA members on E-board. Perry – Answer this question -- what ATVMN doing for me? That's what people want to or need to know.
    a. ATVMN: is an advocate for the sport, safety leaders.

b. Started the safety program, trail ambassadors program. ATVMN clubs take care of trails, all volunteers, not the DNR.
c. ATVMN started the GIA program. Challenges. GIA funding is a challenge. Have to find new revenue streams for budget. Not focus on fee based only, new revenue streams to go into GIA, maintaining trails etc. ATV definition has to change - ORV to another class.
d. ATVMN must reconnect to clubs across the state. We need more members. Educating our legislature, there could be a 50% change over this year.
e. Need new regional directors. ATVMN needs to reach out. Dean Schliek – go back to club meeting and ask members what ATVMN has done. Need feedback.
f. Frank Turnock - Evergreen Pac has had full membership to ATVMN since 2004. Encourage more clubs to have similar policy.
g. Big one - we don't talk about how much funds for a charity are raised by clubs. Dean S– Anti's have the numbers to fight us, what they don't have is the numbers of the funds ATV rides raise for charity. How to get that word out to everyone especially those outside the sport of ATVing

4. **Northern Off -Road Expo Summary** (Planning Team?) Dean Scnliek
    a. Same size booth, etc. no rise in cost for next year for Alliance. Planning committee. Per July meeting, want to have at least 1 person from each club to help plan the booth set-up. So far, the committee is Becky Tuckenhagen (Blind Lake ATV Club), Shawn Pehrson (Northwoods Quads), Steve Ferraro (Rapids Riders), Dave Rogowski (White Pine Riders). Each club should send Becky a name to be on the planning committee. Look for follow-up email.
5. **Selfie Station update** for Rapid Riders, White Pine Riders, Axtell, Evergreen PAC. Dean White Pine Riders – done. Evergreen PAC – mocked up - spring installation. Nothing for Axtell yet. Axtell trying to get a pavilion. Rapids Riders need a photo.
6. **ATV MN Ride & Roast – May 22, 2027**, hosted by Northwoods Quads & Trails Inn (Volunteer Request). Met with Ken Irish (ATVMN Ride and Roast Committee) chairing with Dean and Harlan, what going to do, working on club committees for all aspects and then summit to ATVMN. Ken Irish with Cuyuna Iron Ranges riders hosted first Ride and Roast in 2018. This is a FUN event – social gathering for the membership.
7. **Outdoor Industry Summit, September 24, 2026**, Summary. Dean Schliek attended representing Northern Expo & Perry attended representing NWRATA. Gets us noticed. What age group is the largest growing sector of outdoor recreation participants - 60 and over. Declining – age group 18 to 34. Need ways to get youth more involved. Networking and collaboration for leaders across Minnesota's outdoor recreation economy.
8. **ATVMN Legislative Summit at Tulibee's in Wahkon on December 5, 2026**. Focus on what policy(s) ATVMN can get through legislature this year and future actions items. 8am - 12pm. Meeting room at the Tulibee Tavern, 235 Main Street, Wahkon, MN **Online registration for event.**

9. **Ride and Rally 2027**. Need a host. 3 possible locations, 2 panned out. Good location is Aitkin. Near the largest interconnected trail system, there is a venue (Aitkin County Fairgrounds). City of Aitkin on board. Will work to establish temporary routes through city. It's hard to find a venue that has parking, camping, food place, etc. Access to trails Is less than what went on at Park Rapids 2026 Ride and Rally. Suggested the Alliance do it instead of individual clubs. Benefit to Alliance clubs. Frank Turnock made motion to do it. Jason Donner seconded it. Approved. Perry May (ATVMN President elect) will take this to the ATVAM board on Oct 20th, for approval.
   If approved, will form a planning committee asap. Please let your individual clubs know the proposal.

Aitkin County updates:

- Widseth Smith Nolting (WSN), and Mille Lacs East Side ATV Trail work. Chris Johnson. Down to site works on Cty Hwy 2 section. Cost up to 250k more than original scope. Dealing with 2018 funds allotment against 2026 prices. Overall, it's satisfactory, dealing with issues that come up. Puncheons are all done. Longest is 2400 feet with 2 pullouts. 8 foot wide with bumpers. Looking at sensors to notify if traffic on bridge. Doing some site clearing this winter. Weeds are already popping up thru puncheons. Lot of buckthorn in that country. Plans to finish by December. Phase 2 crossing State Hwy 65. Having some pushback on an already existing possible trail east of Hwy 65
- ATV Dedicated Fund Grants Summary. All wrapped up.

Club / Trail Updates – All

- **Aitkin County** – (Rabey, Rat Lake, Soo Line, Axtell) Chris Johnson. All good.
- **Blind Lake Club** – (Blind Lake Loop & Connector) Bob Schaefer. IRRRB funds granted to finish the loop to Brown's Lake Shelter. Hope to complete this fall yet. Also part of snowmobile trail system.
- **Evergreen PAC** - (South & North Soo Line) Carlton County. Frank Turnock. Last Safety training - 25 kids. DNR doesn't want them to store props at General C Andrews and possibly no safety training there next year. (Chris Johnson– suggested Axtell.) Possible new culverts Soo line north
- **Up North Riders** - (Lawler Loops) Ed Schulze Fall ride on October 10th at Kirby's. Relatively easy year for maintenance. Got money for rebuilding some puncheons. All need some boards replaced or total overall.
- **White Pine Riders** - (Solana) Dave Rogowski Got bid for crushed gravel. Working on getting that spread. Puncheons look good after putting in really big screws. 10 went to 2026 Ride and Rally.
- **Mille Lacs Drift Skippers** - (Red Top, Foxy, South Soo Line) Steve Dubbs Have bridge inspections on Soo line, this fall or next spring. Trail magnet works. 200 pounds picked up so far.

- **Northwoods Quads** – (Hill City, Moose River Connector) Shawn Pehron 2027 Ride and Roast. Hauled in loads of red rock to the look out. Got a bid for replacing boardwalk. $440000. To do that update. Need to find grants. Saturday Oct 3rd had Meet and Greet Day at different places on trails. 100 wheelers in 3-hour period.
- **Over the Hills Gang** – (Emily/Outing/Moose River, Emily /Blind Lake) Perry May. Janet Donner - Ladies Only Ride, new records in participants, raised over 7K for pink ribbon riders. Log n Ride. Sold $3500 in tickets. Good money raiser. Puncheon south of Emily, put in a design for non-wooden (cement) puncheon with helical piers. Cost is 60% of wooden design. Pig slats for 80 ft bridge to start with.
    - Pig slats are 4 ft by 10 ft wide. Each weigh 1300 lbs. The helical piers are 2 7/8 diameter shaft with 10 inch helix. They are driven 15 ft deep on average. Pig slats are similar to what is used on boat ramps. Cheaper and longer lasting than wood. Readily available as pig producers have slats that must be replaced about every 18 months.
- **Eagle Country** - (North Soo Line /Cass County) Not present. New president. William Nihart, Kevin Switalla trail coordinator.
- **Milles Lacs Trails Inc** – (Mille Lacs East) See above
- **Rapid Riders** – UPM Blandin Trail. Jerry McKnight. Done with maintenance. Brushing out selfie area. Club ride Sunday 11th.
- **Cuyuna Iron Range Riders** – Miller Black Bear, Mississippi North woods. Andrew Suchla. Relatively quiet this year. Charity Rides (Kids with Cancer, Suicide Awareness and Because of Brandon) Still looking to get trails connected. Long game.
- **Central Lakes** - Crow Wing Southern Loop, Fort Ripley, Ripley Connection. Dean Schliek Loop unchanged. Clearing area for memorial bench for Larry Moses. 4-Wheelin for Kids with Cancer raised just over 11.3K, companies donated lots of prizes. Fort Ripley - looking to extend trails to Camp Ripley Museum 3.7 miles opened (Veteran's trail)
- **Pine Center Sportsman's Club** – Pine Center Trails Steve Alberg. Trails are good. Fixed some washouts. Challenges – townships rules and politics. Possible - hosting Halloween – Haunted trail ride October 24th. See Facebook for info. No longer have RedNeck ATV pull event, insurance issues.

<u>Open Forum</u>

- Questions from attendees
- Next Alliance meeting is January 13, 2027.

Adjourn: Becky Tuckenhagen 1st, Dean Schliek 2nd, adjourned.