Support for MV1815 Operation Permits: A Path to Safe and Accessible ORV Riding in BC Communities

Under the Motor Vehicle Act, Division 24 allows for ATV and UTV use on designated roads through MV1815 operational permits. The Quad Riders Association of BC (ATVBC), with its 43 affiliated clubs across British Columbia, is committed to promoting responsible off-road vehicle (ORV) use and enhancing tourism opportunities in rural communities. Many clubs are actively working with local governments to create designated ORV routes, allowing riders access to essential services such as fuel, food, and lodging. Already, 22 communities across BC have adopted bylaws and issued MV1815 permits, adjusting local regulations to address speed, noise, route safety, and other community-specific concerns.

Creating accessible ORV routes has the potential to attract tourism, as seen in many Southern U.S. states where similar systems have boosted local economies. ATVBC strongly supports expanding this model to British Columbia, benefiting residents and visitors alike while promoting safety and accessibility.

Benefits of ORV Access in Rural Communities

Designating ORV access routes and issuing MV1815 permits brings substantial advantages to communities, including:

- **Increased Accessibility:** Enables seniors and individuals with mobility issues to enjoy ORV recreation and access local services.
- **Enhanced Safety:** Establishing designated routes allows for safer, controlled access in and out of communities.
- **Compliance and Education Opportunities:** Routes promote education on safe, respectful riding and foster compliance with local laws.
- **Economic Growth through Tourism:** ORV tourism can boost local economies by drawing in visitors who support local businesses.
- **Indigenous Community Inclusion:** Encourages partnerships with Indigenous communities, promoting local history and respect for traditional territories.
- **Improved Law Enforcement Relations:** Clearer regulations and designated routes help reduce illegal riding and foster positive interactions between riders and RCMP.

Potential Challenges and Solutions

Implementing MV1815 operational permits and expanding ORV access does bring certain challenges. Below are some key considerations along with proposed solutions:

- **Bylaw Enforcement Capacity:** Addressing capacity issues by streamlining processes with the help of local clubs to promote compliance and reduce policing burden.
- **Administrative Load:** Simplifying permit renewal processes, reducing record-keeping requirements, and engaging clubs in communication efforts.

- **Policing Costs:** Reduced costs as designated routes lead to fewer instances of riders fleeing law enforcement.
- **Liability Concerns:** MV1815 permits require a minimum of $200,000 liability insurance, addressing most liability concerns. Riders are subject to fines and restrictions, including minimum age requirements.
- **Noise Complaints:** By incorporating noise reducers and speed control measures, noise issues can be managed within city limits. You could also provide DB testing for machines to ensure they are within the requirements.
- **Community Concerns:** Addressing varying resident interests through local surveys and engagement to balance the desires for increased access with concerns about noise and road inclusion.
- **Infrastructure Capacity:** Manage an increase of riders into communities by rolling out the program in collaboration with the business community to find ways to meet the needs of the visitors(hotels, services, staging areas, campgrounds).

Examples of Communities That Could Benefit

- Communities along the Gold Rush Snowmobile Trail
- Communities along the Island 1000 Route
- Rural Communities with nearby trail systems

Insurance and Liability

Motor Vehicle Act Division 24 outlines insurance and liability requirements for ORV operations. Key points include:

- **Insurance Requirements:** A minimum $200,000 liability coverage is required from ICBC for MV1815 permits.
- **ORV Registration:** With ORV licensing, riders receive a license plate and decal, granting permission to cross highways at controlled crossings and designated routes.
- **FSR Liability:** Additional $200,000 liability insurance is required for operation on Forest Service Roads.

Options for Bylaw Development

Local governments have flexibility in creating bylaws that best suit their community's needs. Potential bylaw provisions include:

- **Time Limits:** Restricting riding to daylight hours for added safety.
- **Speed Restrictions:** Setting speed limits within community boundaries.

- **Route Designations:** Allowing ORV access on selected streets or only from residences to trailheads.
- **Permit Conditions:** Annual permit expiration, with options to suspend the program if misuse occurs.
- **Noise Control:** Setting noise limits for ORVs within city limits.
- **Youth Training:** Consider a requirement for youth to complete basic online or in person ORV safety training.
- **Insurance Liability:** Increase the amount of required insurance to satisfy RCMP concerns regarding liability. Currently ORV act requires a minimum $200K, this could be increased in the bylaw to $1million or $2million, providing additional coverage for the rider.
- **Local Club support:** Consider adding a membership to the local ATV Club as a requirement, this ensures riders are abiding by a minimum code of conduct and builds support for the local club that is assisting with trail building and maintenance.

Recommended Steps for Implementation

To establish safe and beneficial ORV access routes, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Collaborate with RCMP** to discuss potential MV1815 routes and enforcement measures.
2. **Engage with Local Stakeholders** including local government, First Nations, Conservation Officers, tourism groups, and business associations. Consider local ranchers and property owners that could be effected and other outdoor recreation user groups.
3. **Work with Local ATV Clubs** to assist with public awareness and help address enforcement concerns.
4. **Conduct Community Surveys** to gauge support and gather input from residents and riders, both local and visiting.
5. **Coordinate with Transportation Authorities** to ensure safe crossings on highways and thoroughfares.
6. **Public Engagement and Awareness** through meetings, social media, and other platforms to foster community and rider buy-in.
7. **Draft and Finalize Bylaws** that reflect community and stakeholder input, addressing safety and local concerns.
8. **Roll Out a Communications Plan** with clear signage, updates in community guides, and outreach materials to inform residents and visitors of new ORV routes and regulations.

ATVBC is committed to working with communities across BC to create safe, sustainable, and accessible ORV routes. Expanding MV1815 permit usage not only supports tourism but also builds stronger, more connected communities across British Columbia.

Need more information or support? Contact us at executivedirector@atvbc.ca