

Lewis County New York

ATV FAQs

(Frequently Asked Questions)

Why do I have to buy a permit to ride my ATV on the County's Trail System?

The County implemented the permit system as a means of paying for the cost of establishing and maintaining the ATV Trail System, which includes County reforestation lands, private land-owner trails, and an ATV play area. The Lewis County ATV Trail system is the first of its kind in New York State and we believe will provide ATV enthusiasts with a riding experience that is second to none. The development and maintenance of this system, however, is not without cost. A permit system is the most appropriate mechanism to ensure that those who benefit the most from the Trail System pay for the cost to operate it.

How much does a permit cost?

The Family Plan discount remains in effect and available to anyone purchasing or renewing multiple ATV permits for their household for the 2011 ATV riding season. Proof of Registration is also required.

For members of a club belonging to the Tug Hill Adirondack ATV Association club:

- \$40.00 for the first ATV, \$20.00 for each additional ATV (up to 4 additional ATVs).

For non-members:

- \$80.00 for the first ATV, \$40.00 for each additional ATV (up to 4 additional ATVs).

I don't belong to a club, but I want to take advantage of the discount offered to members.

How do I join a club?

You will be able to join a club when you purchase your permit.

Am I buying a permit for myself or for my ATV?

Permits for the Lewis County ATV trail system will be issued per machine, not per person. Each permit will include a decal that must be attached in a visible location on the front-driver's side of the permitted ATV.

Is there a map of the Trail System?

Yes, maps are available and updated every year with changes which depict all of the ATV riding available within the Lewis County ATV Trail System. (For more details, contact the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce at (315) 376-2213 or toll free at (800) 724-0242. Remember, the system is ever changing and expanding. Be sure to follow trail signs and stay on designated trails.

Where does my permit application money go?

All permit fees will be placed in a dedicated recreational trails fund and used exclusively for the establishment, enforcement, maintenance, and operation of the Trail System. This money will not go into the general fund and will only be spent on recreational trails in the County.

When does the ATV system open?

The trail system is scheduled to open May 1 and close the second Friday in October, the start of rifle season, but can change due to weather and trail conditions.

How old do I have to be to operate an ATV on the Trail System?

Children ages 10-17 must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older and must have successfully completed an ATV safety course. Riders 18 and up can ride without supervision.

What's the speed limit on the ATV trail system?

The speed limit for ATV's on the Trail System is 25mph, unless otherwise posted.

Where will the permit requirement be enforced?

Permits are required to ride ATV's on county and private land. However, ATV patrols will ride through the entire system to enforce all rules and regulations.

What are the fines for violating rules and regulations of the trail system?

For riding without a permit, fines are \$100 for the first offense and \$200 and a one-year permit revocation for the second offense. Other fines are for riding on land outside trails (\$250 for first offense, machine impounded thereafter), altering trails to create hazards (\$250 for first offense, \$500 thereafter), and violating traffic rules (\$100 for first offense, \$200 thereafter).

What about the Counties surrounding Lewis County?

Oneida, Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence are all in the process of creating an inter-connected Regional ATV trail system that will have connecting ATV trails from the Montezuma swamp in Wayne County, through Oswego County, to Brewerton, through the Winnona Forest into South Jefferson County, into Barnes Corners across Tug Hill, through Lewis County, to Highmarket, south to Boonville and Forestport, north through the Black River Valley, into Jefferson County and Carthage, back into Lewis County into Harrisville, and finally into St. Lawrence County, all the way to their pilot ATV trail system.

These counties are working together cooperatively towards the goal of establishing a unified regional permit system. However, there is a lot of work to be done yet, and achieving that goal may be some time to come. In the meantime, show your support to your local county officials and help us to build a trail system that is well managed, well maintained and most of all, safe to ride.

I am new to ATVing, are there any safety courses available?

Yes, the Lewis County Trails Coordinator is working with the Tug Hill Adirondack ATV Association to schedule safety and ATV education courses in local schools and at local clubs. Contact your club to schedule a safety class and to get more information.

NYS Vehicle and Traffic Laws:

§2409. ATV safety course and safety certificate.

1. Safety course or courses. The commissioner shall establish a curriculum or curricula for an ATV safety training course or courses. Any such curriculum may include, but not be limited to, on-vehicle training and safe riding practices. The commissioner may establish different courses and curricula for different types of all terrain vehicles. The commissioner may permit any such safety training course to be given by any private person, club, association or municipality which meets standards established by the commissioner. The commissioner may establish a reasonable fee which any such person or entity may charge for such course or courses.
2. Safety certificate. Upon successful completion of a safety course given in conformity with subdivision one of this section by a person ten years of age or over, the person or entity which gave the course shall notify the commissioner of such completion in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, the commissioner shall, upon receipt of such information, issue an ATV safety certificate to the person who has successfully completed the course. Such certificate may be limited to the type of vehicle for which the course was given.

§2410. Operation by minors.

1. Except as provided by subdivision two of this section, no person under the age of sixteen years shall operate an ATV except upon lands owned or leased by his parent or guardian, unless he is under general supervision of a person eighteen years of age or over or a person sixteen years of age or over who holds an ATV safety certificate. "Leased lands" as herein used shall not include lands leased by an organization of which said operator or his parent or guardian is a member.
2. A person ten years of age but less than sixteen years of age who has received safety training as prescribed by the commissioner and has received the appropriate ATV safety certificate issued by the commissioner may operate an ATV in the same manner as a person who is sixteen years of age or older.

3. The failure of a person to exhibit an ATV safety certificate upon demand to any magistrate or any other officer having authority to enforce the provisions of this article shall not be an offense, but shall be presumptive evidence that such person is not the holder of such certificate.
4. No parent or guardian shall authorize or knowingly permit his child or ward, if under sixteen years of age, to operate an ATV in violation of any provision of this article, any rules or regulations promulgated thereunder, or the provisions of any local law or ordinance.
5. No owner or other person in possession of any ATV shall authorize or knowingly permit any person under sixteen years of age to operate such an ATV in violation of any provision of this article, any rules or regulations promulgated thereunder, or the provisions of any local law or ordinance.