

NORTH DAKOTA OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV) PROGRAM STRATEGIC SUMMARY

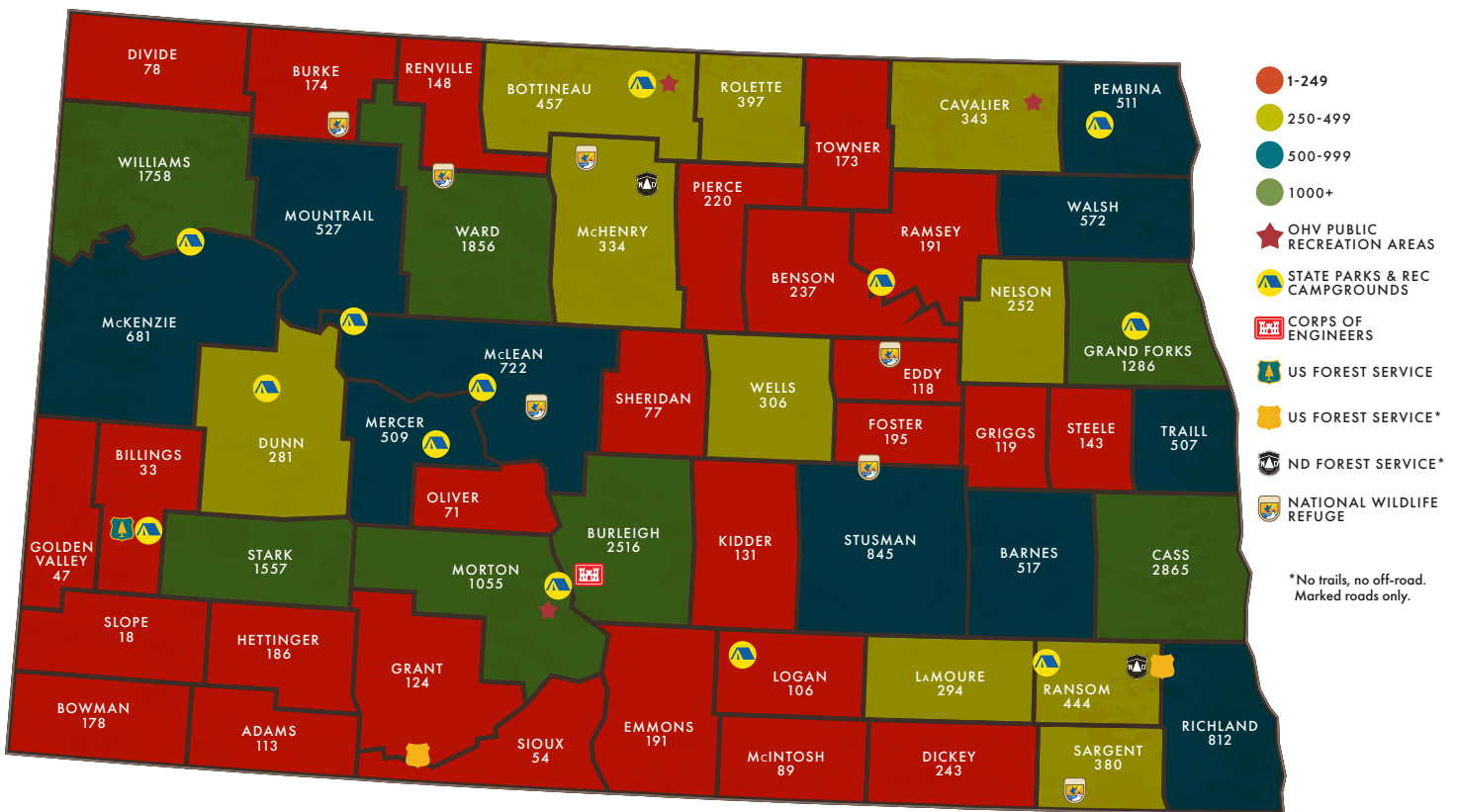
Off-highway vehicle (OHV) ownership and recreation continues to grow, not only in North Dakota (ND), but throughout the United States (US). In fact, numerous global trend reports indicate expected rising recreational spending on OHVs as the market expands to include increased riding areas, advanced equipment in multiple price ranges and the growing youth market that includes OHV events and sport competition.

Today North Dakota OHV ownership exceeds 42,500 registered units, but that number is likely double when consideration is given to non-registered units that are used on private property or for farm or business-related work. OHV destination riders tend to spend \$100 per riding day. In simple numbers, that could mean that 5,200 North Dakotans would be regularly poised to **Ride ND First** and have a significant financial impact on local economies around OHV locations.

The OHV program – as part of North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) – must identify with both the state and organizational initiatives while seeking to meet the needs of the program, and recommends the following mission:

The mission of the North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department Off-Highway Vehicle program is to facilitate partnerships and provide programs that encourage people to ride in North Dakota first.

REGISTERED OHVS BY COUNTY



The 2018-2022 North Dakota Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan noted that the outdoor recreation economy generates 30,000 direct jobs that result in \$3.1 billion in consumer spending and that generates \$179 million in state and local tax revenues, according to the Outdoor Recreation Foundation. There is no doubt that parks and recreation provide a vital role in North Dakota's future, supporting economic vitality, workforce recruitment and retention and improving community health.

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A fundamental problem associated with the OHV program in North Dakota is **not access to OHV riding areas, but lack of information about OHV riding locations**, creating a noteworthy opportunity to build awareness through marketing. In two separate surveys in 2020 of OHV enthusiasts and registered OHV users, data indicated significant lack of use and/or familiarity with designated OHV riding areas.

Two opportunities to achieve the goal to ride North Dakota first include:

1. Provide more information about OHV riding areas in ND.
2. Expand access to expanded trails and riding areas throughout the state that provide more riders with proximity and destination experiences that increase their time on ND trails.

To strengthen continued growth of the program some of the most important next steps will be:

- Building relationships with OHV clubs and enthusiasts to develop more volunteer support for trail maintenance and outreach.
- Increase awareness of ND OHV programs and riding areas to promote Ride ND First.
- Utilize trail counters and stakeholder surveys as key performance metrics to gauge industry growth and awareness.

Designated OHV Areas

Pembina Gorge State Recreation

Area: The Pembina Gorge has over 15 miles of trails designed to accommodate non-motorized and motorized trail users, including the three classes of OHVs – dirt bikes, four-wheelers, and side-by-sides – which are 60 inches wide or less.

Roughrider OHV Trail: The trail begins at the Fort Rice Campground, travels north for 16 miles on an old railroad bed, and ends at Little Heart Bottoms.

Turtle Mountain State Recreation

Area: The hilly terrain and heavy woodland cover provide a unique landscape in North Dakota. This 10-mile trail is open to motorized vehicles like dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles, and side-by-sides as well as non-motorized trail users and sportsmen.

OHV Areas Managed By Other Agencies

Kimball Bottoms Recreations Area: Also known as, The Desert, is a 400-acre play area is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Little Missouri National Grassland: Managed by the US Forest Service, this area includes miles of roads and trails open to scenic touring and motorized recreation.

Tyler Grant Memorial Trail:

Managed by Bureau of Indian Affairs and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, this multi-use trail covers a variety of scenic trails through public and private lands in the Turtle Mountains.

Organizational Background

The NDPRD has responsibility for state recreation programming, planning, maintenance and management along with statewide off-highway vehicle planning and safety programming, snowmobile safety programs and trails, Nature Preserves Act and outdoor recreation grants. This includes nearly 17,000 acres made up of 13 state parks and 4 state recreations areas which include three designated OHV recreation areas. Currently only one NDPRD employee is dedicated to the OHV program.

At its core, the NDPRD has a mission to “offer a diversity of recreation opportunities and sustainably manage resources” under a vision that “enriches generations through experiences that connect people and places.”

It is important to acknowledge that although NDPRD is a cabinet agency with its own directives it still works as part of the greater whole to advance additional state strategic initiatives as established by the Office of the Governor. These strategic initiatives include:

- Main Street Initiative
- Behavioral Health and Addiction
- Transforming Education
- Tribal Partnerships and
- Reinventing Government

OHV Program Mission & Values

The mission of the North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department Off-Highway Vehicle program is to facilitate partnerships and provide programs that encourage people to ride in North Dakota first.

The program vision is an aspirational view on what the program could become when all values and initiatives are aligned to capture opportunity and leverage organizational strengths. It is with this forward view in mind that the NDPRD OHV program has established the following vision:

Create meaningful OHV destinations that continue to connect people and places while celebrating and protecting our diverse natural resources.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

OHV ownership and recreation continues to grow, not only in ND, but throughout the United States. All internal and external surveys, as well as sales, indicate that OHV recreation is on the rise and shows no signs of slowing down.

As early as 2005, a master trail plan was evaluated for the Turtle Mountain and Pembina Gorge regions that included comprehensive development and expansion plans for OHV recreation. Throughout the research and analysis phase of the strategic planning process a variety of opportunities were identified to advance jobs and revenue with the expansion of OHV programming in ND. Interviews with NDPRD staff, stakeholders and enthusiasts throughout the state continued to reiterate the interest in creating more riding areas and offering full destination riding experiences that allowed more visitors to get outside and think **Ride ND First**.

General OHV research says that OHV enthusiasts are willing to travel up to six hours to partake in OHV riding. That would put 100% of OHV riders within the radius of a designated OHV recreation area with an opportunity to **Ride ND First**. The data would suggest that up to 10,000+ registered riders may be interested in accessing ND OHV recreation areas.



Many users still report that private property, ditches and low-maintenance roads are some of their only riding access points. Priorities should be placed on trail expansion to include maintenance, development, and land acquisition to develop new OHV areas including long mileage trails and destination experiences.

70% OF REGISTERED OHV USERS INDICATE THAT ANY INCREASED REGISTRATION FEES SHOULD GO TOWARD TRAIL EXPANSION

Based on feedback from online surveys of registered OHV owners and OHV enthusiasts, the areas with the most interest in development include Fort Ransom region, Sheyenne River Grasslands area, Lake Tschida area, northwest North Dakota, southeast North Dakota and south-central North Dakota.

Competitive Review

Other State OHV Programs

In a 2020 survey of registered North Dakota OHV users, 47% (173 respondents) indicated the majority of their riding was outside of North Dakota. Most competition comes from the neighboring states of Montana, South Dakota and Minnesota who each have expansive OHV trail systems and proximity to key areas of North Dakota that have underserved OHV populations.

Internal Trail Users

Internal competition for resources continues to be “multi-use” trail interest, as well as hiking, canoeing and kayaking. Both paved and unpaved trails for walking, jogging, biking, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding are more common in state and federal parks and recreation areas and see the greatest degree of public interest for use and development.

OHV User Demographics

A review of demographic profiles from internal survey data and manufacturer reports indicates the following demographic profile of the most frequent user.

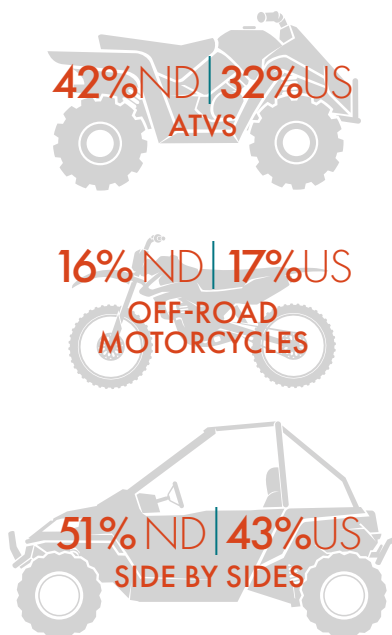
38-45
AGE

90%
MALE

10%
FEMALE

\$73,000
ANNUAL
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

PENETRATION BY PRODUCT



Sources: North Dakota OHV Enthusiast Survey, Fall 2020;
Global Market Insights' U.S. Off-Road Vehicle
Market Report, 2026

In most cases, internal survey data indicates if a user falls into the Recreation or Sport profile (explained below) multiple family members, both adults and children in the household will participate in OHV recreation.

As a demographic profile it is also important to note that youth riders continue to be part of a growing segment, either as individual riders or as passengers as part of family recreation. It is also important to note that 70% of enthusiasts surveyed indicated the youth riders in their household had not taken safety training.

OHV User Psychographic Profile

For this plan we have categorized ND OHV users as recreation enthusiasts, sportsmen, sport enthusiasts and utility users. Many of these psychographic users may crossover into any of the other categories at some time in their OHV use pattern but they tend to most heavily fall into one of the four categories for classification purposes.

Recreational Enthusiasts

- Recreation enthusiasts use their OHV for personal enjoyment (no other purpose).
- These consumers are most likely to appreciate the quality of the trail, amenities on (or close to) the trail (such as access to camp sites and/or recreation trails), or trail head communication about the details of the trail (signage, maps, etc.).

Sport Enthusiasts

- Sport enthusiasts are likely advanced riders that take part in competition-related sport at both OHV recreation destinations and OHV parks and enjoy the "extreme" aspects of OHV use.
- Sport enthusiasts are also likely recreational users with multiple OHVs and are well connected in the OHV community eager to support organizational and recreational growth for all audiences

Sportsmen

- Sportsmen primarily use OHVs to transport them to a location where they can enjoy a different outdoor activity such as hunting or fishing.

Utility Users

- These individuals use their OHV as a tool and tend to operate their OHV on their own private property.
- Some Utility users with private lands may be open to public partnerships if liability issues were addressed.

The recreation, sportsman and sport enthusiast are all looking for access and more of it. That access may be a combination of public and/or private lands but each user wants clearly marked information or maps that provide information on where they can and cannot ride.

Stakeholder Assessment

Audience ID is critical in understanding the user profile of OHV enthusiasts and recreational users, but it is equally important to identify and understand key stakeholder groups and how they are impacted by OHV recreation. These stakeholder groups may include law enforcement, OHV dealers, partner agencies and collaborators who are impacted by OHV recreation. These stakeholders may also be important advocates when it comes to lobbying for new regulations or funding needed for OHV recreation and program expansion.

There is a real opportunity to leverage the spirit and vision of these different organizations, combined with the motivation of OHV enthusiasts, dealers and clubs, to create a program that enhances existing OHV trail infrastructure, and supports future plans and visions of NDPR OHV programs.

Key Stakeholders

- OHV Dealers
- Law Enforcement
- Clubs & Collaborating Organizations
- Tribal Governments
- Government Agencies
- Legislative Leadership
- Private Landowners

State of North Dakota

Doug Burgum, Governor

North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department

Andrea Travnicek, Ph.D. – Director

Jolene Rieck – Chief of Planning
and Programs

Anton Hillig, PLA – Motorized
Recreation Coordinator

MISSION STATEMENT

We offer a diversity of recreation opportunities and sustainably manage resources.

VISION

Enriching generations through experiences that connect people and places.

VALUES

Stewardship · Service · Experiences
Leadership · Partnerships

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This document reflects a summary of the "North Dakota Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program Strategic Plan, 2021 - 2026." A full copy of this document, along with all reference and survey data is available from the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department.

Strategic Action Plan

- 1 Connect people and places in ways that support main street communities, foster business, and encourage tourism and economic development
- 2 Cultivate partnerships with diverse groups and stakeholders who can help embrace opportunities, create equity, and sustain resources while connecting generations through experiences.
- 3 Strengthen tools and resources that improve accessibility and communications for all stakeholders.
- 4 Build a framework of tools and resources that expand awareness of ND OHV programming and recreation and attract users to the ND trail systems to promote Ride ND First.
- 5 Establish planning systems that allow for resource expansion and master planning for staffing and infrastructure driven by a culture of continuous improvement.
- 6 Provide a process to evaluate rules and regulations and plan for ongoing updates as needed.
- 7 Foster a culture of safety balanced with enforcement that continues to promote education and safety training that reduces or eliminates accidents and fatalities among OHV riders.

As part of a tactical plan these organizational objectives will fall into the categories of education, enforcement, marketing and promotion, partnerships, and infrastructure to make up the actionable categories for implementation.

CONCLUSION

With the OHV market continually growing, North Dakota OHV riders are eager to find more trails and more miles to ride. Internal data indicates that approximately 75% of North Dakota OHV enthusiasts will ride 10-20+ days per year. 40% of ND riders may ride 20 or more days per year and take both day trips and extended trips of 2-3 days of destination riding, often times in Montana, South Dakota and Minnesota. OHV destination riders tend to spend \$100 per riding day. In simple numbers, that could mean that 5,200 North Dakotans would be regularly poised to "Ride ND First" and have a significant financial impact on local economies around OHV locations. Further trail expansion, as well as promoting OHV recreation areas can impact North Dakota economic development – including main street initiatives and tourism revenue, creating opportunities for new businesses and jobs if resources and planning are invested in OHV recreation and programming.

The OHV program seeks to create meaningful OHV destinations that continue to connect people and places while celebrating and protecting our diverse natural resources. This will be achieved by facilitating partnerships and providing programs that encourage people to **Ride ND First**.

