



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Ron Danielson
(218) 259-5938

WILDERNESS WHEELERS ATV CLUB SECURES COVETED NATIONAL YAMAHA GRANT

Grant supports increased accessibility to safe, open ATV trails in Northern MN

Bigfork, MN – September 12, 2023---Wilderness Wheelers ATV Club was recently chosen as one of only 18 national recipients of the highly competitive Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OAI) Grant. This \$25,000 Yamaha OAI Grant award will further the Club's efforts to expand ATV trail access in Northern Minnesota through construction of the new 61-mile Wilderness Trail.

As part of an initiative to promote safe, responsible, and sustainable riding in open areas, Yamaha OIA Grant funds will help Wilderness Wheelers ATV Club forge connections to newly developing trails within Itasca County, MN, and the breathtaking Chippewa National Forest.

Projected to be completed by Fall 2024, the Wilderness Trail features a one-of-a-kind internal loop that affords two-way travel to established ATV trail systems to the east and west, and expanded access to Minnesota's Edge of Wilderness businesses that offer camping, lodging, food, fuel, and other amenities.

The mission of Yamaha's Outdoor Access Initiative is ***to provide practical support for efforts that promote safe, responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHV's), educate the public on proper recreational land use and wildlife conservation practices, and protect appropriate and sustainable access to public lands.***

Yamaha OIA Grant funds will be used to provide a trail connection through the town of Marcell, MN, which will facilitate a 40-mile loop for riders to experience the splendor of the Chippewa National Forest. This project includes a culvert crossing over a large drainage ditch, development of a new one-quarter mile trail through existing forest, and upgrades to 1,100 feet of existing snowmobile trails to make them ATV accessible. This specific corridor was chosen because it offers safe trail passage through the town of Marcell and greater access to the businesses that support ATV riders, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts.

"ATV use is on the rise, explained Ron Danielson, Wilderness Wheeler's Trail Coordinator. "The Wilderness Trail is designed to provide a safe, environmentally sustainable riding experience, while showcasing the Chippewa National Forest. It will also provide a significant and much-needed economic boost to our local Edge of the Wilderness tourism industry," he stated.

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www.wildernesswheelers.com

PO Box 319

Bigfork, MN 56628

(218) 259-5938



Benefits of this project include:

- Enhanced rider satisfaction through exploration of newly developed and interconnecting trails in Itasca County, MN.
- Greater access to safe, family-friendly recreation for people of all ages and abilities.
- Increased tourism support for Edge of Wilderness businesses (e.g., resorts, campgrounds, restaurants, convenience stores, etc.).
- Environmentally friendly motorized access to remote areas of the Chippewa National Forest.

“Wilderness Wheelers ATV Club is honored to receive this grant,” Danielson stated. “Our mission closely mirrors Yamaha’s interest in protecting, improving, expanding and/or maintaining access for safe, responsible and sustainable use by motorized off-road vehicles. The Yamaha OAI grant will help us complete construction of the Wilderness Trail in 2024 and create greater recreational access for thousands of ATV riders in our region,” Danielson concluded.

Based in Bigfork, MN, Wilderness Wheelers ATV Club organized as a nonprofit organization for the following purposes:

- ✓ To stimulate and advance the general welfare and safety of ATVing.
- ✓ To educate the public on ATV safety and regulations.
- ✓ To educate for the preservation of natural resources.
- ✓ To provide a medium for the exchange of ATVing information.
- ✓ To develop a fraternal spirit among local ATVers and other recreational interests.
- ✓ To service the interest of ATV owners.
- ✓ To own or lease property for club uses.
- ✓ To perform all desirable and lawful functions for the successful operation of the club in the general public’s interest.

For more information about Yamaha’s Outdoor Access Initiative visit: <http://YamahaOAI.com>.

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