

Commission to Study OHRV Use in New Hampshire
MEETING Minutes Friday March 13, 2026, 10:00 AM
DNCR
172 Pembroke Rd, Concord, NH

Present:

Mike Ouellet, Chairman, Representative, Coos County District 3
 Abby Evankow, Clerk, NHRTC remote
 Arnie Davis, Representative, RRD Committee
 Mike Eastman, NH F&G
 Craig Rennie, BOT
 Susan Klasen, PE Director of Operations DOT
 Gary Newfield, NHACC
 Claude Pigeon, NCC
 Steven Wilkie, NHOHVA
 Ray Gorman, NHMA
 Dan Bennett, NHADA
 Jasen Stock, NH TOA, NH FB

Excused:

Ann Davis, NH TOA / NH FBF
 Senator Rochefort, District 1
 Allison Knab, Representative, RRD Committee

Absent:

George Sykes, Representative, House Transportation Committee
 Matthew Amatucci, NH State Police

Vacant:

Forest Society/AMC/TNC representative

Guests – remote: Richard Parsons, NHOHVA lobbyist; Jay O’Leary, NHADA lobbyist; Jeff Lemoine, Chief Police Berlin; Tom Parsol, Kalkomey; Dr. Michael Osborne cardiologist, MGH, noise research

Action Items to Carry Forward:

1. Commission’s 2025 Annual Report
2. Abutter notification language
3. Develop Best Management Practices for tire pressure

Call to Order 10:00**Pledge of Allegiance**

Introduction of new members and Guests: Susan Klasen, PE Director of Operations for DOT. Rick Dube, Chief of Pittsburg Police department will be NHACP’s representative to replace Dan Buteau.

Approval of Minutes from January 16, 2026. Mr. Gorman motions to accept; 2nd by Mr. Newfield; all in favor; Mr. Stock abstains.

Guest: Dr. Osborne, How Noise Exposure Contributes to Cardiovascular disease.

Studies have established links between noise exposure and advancement of cardiovascular disease. More vulnerable populations, those with pre-existing conditions of diabetes, heart disease, metabolic disease, anxiety, depression are even more susceptible to the negative impacts of repeated loud noise exposure, which accelerates their disease progression.

Noise is an environmental stressor whether recognized or not consciously by the listener. Three of the pathways are:

- A) Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis-release of stress hormones like cortisol
- B) Sympathetic nervous system ("fight or flight")
- C) Inflammation

Individuals with chronic levels of loud noise have more trouble regulating amygdala response - leading to inflammation of artery walls, blood vessel dysfunction, worse blood pressure and sugar metabolism.

Frequent, loud transportation noise is associated with heart and metabolism disease. Such environment corresponds can with air traffic routes, poorer communities.

Studies show that even for healthy individuals, exposures to noise events prime individuals for more adverse responses from future exposures.

Loud noise alters the structure and activity of the brain. Unpredictability increases the adverse response/impacts.

The higher the noise level, the more brain activity seen and the more inflammation found in the heart and arteries.

Those living with aircraft noise are found to have impacted heart structure & function: stiffer, thicker hearts with impaired heart function.

Mr. Newfield: any studies for health outcomes for riders? Dr. Osborne - by extrapolating from occupational studies, which shows increased risk for workers, noise exposure is harmful even if not causing annoyance. Riders are still getting these adverse physiological affects.

Mr. Pigeon: people who are creating the noise are not immune to the impacts of the noise they create, but probably impacts are more drastic for the abutters, bystanders it is intermittent and unexpected so they can not brace for it. Dr. Osborne: Abutters do not adjust to loud noise levels, but rather the opposite - research shows worsening impacts on cardiovascular health over time. For these reasons airports have changed flight patterns.

Rep. Davis: Rte 2. used to have active rail road, still has trucks, tractor trailers, heavy traffic area - other things creating noise. He would move if he were bothered by noise. Claims OHRV bringing up property values, hikers don't spend money, ATV riders do. Every meeting is consumed by negativity. Mr. Bennett objects to these generalizations. He and his family and friends also ride mountain bikes and spend a lot of money on lodging, food and drinks.

Dr. Osborne: recommends considering the adverse affects of noise as part of the picture; looking at how the cumulative noise burden affects the community. The air traffic industry has responded by changing air traffic; auto industry has made cars quieter; we can make roads quieter.

Rep. Ouellet: if noise impacts cardiac health, what is outcome for truck driver over 50 years? Dr. Osborne: occupational noise has been shown to be unhealthy. Workers exposed to louder noises are at greater risk for adverse cardiac. People in their homes that don't have recourse to get away. Loud noise on top of cardiac disease, diabetes, depression/anxiety = multiple hits = more unhealthy. Many people might not have option to move if family and work are near by or they may not have the means to move.

Mr. Wilkie: short term noise not studied. NH OHRV is just daytime use. Season = 21 weekends. 42 days of annoyance throughout year. Doesn't see how it accumulates. Snowmobiles allow late night riding.

Dr. Osborne: Evidence suggests that short term noise is still unhealthy. Studies show intermittent noise still shows cardiac response; blood pressure affects. A few days does not mean it is safe.

Ms. Evankow points out that abutters to the railroad got an abatement and these abutters would much prefer a few daily trains to hundred of OHRVs roaring by abatement or not. Anll recreation brings in money and hiking, biking, birding have longer seasons than OHRVs.

Mr. Newfield - would like to build on Dr. Osborne's presentation. He used a generator when working on construction sites; he didn't realize it was stressful until he turned it off at the end of the day. He pointed out that Rep Davis came onto the commission after multiple meetings in which the OHRV clubs, businesses, rentals presented. OHRVs are added stressors onto road traffic, It is important for abutters to be notified.

Mr. Pigeon: we have alternatives - it's not either / or. If this was OSHA - we'd be generating solutions to the noise. Let's look for solutions.

Mr. Wilkie: manufacturers are looking to reduce tire noise, incentive to get trails off roads, but don't want to lose roads for local access for residents and services.

Rep Ouellet: discussion of abutter notification will be back on May agenda.

Mr. Newfield asked to discuss Dr. Osborne's presentation. Chairman Ouellet wanted to move on the agenda and said we could discuss at next meeting.

NHOHVA Update: Mr. Wilkie

Maine has 2 associations: the 20+ year old ATV Maine Association (with paid member organizations - like NHOHVA) and the newer Maine ATV Coalition, with no paid membership. ATV Maine supports an increase to 2950 lbs. The two organizations do not get along. There is nasty on-line debate. There was surprise legislation to make 3 classes defined by width- 50", 60", 65" not weight. It was amended to be studied. Maine is watching what NH does.

There is an upcoming town meeting in which a NH town is voting on OHRV ordinance. The municipality is going against 215 A. Town wants to require helmet, headlights, tail lights, extra decal; this creates conflict. Captain Eastman: only town officers can enforce town ordinance - not F&G or State Police. Mr. Wilkie - town can not create ordinance out of line w/ 215-A wants NHMA to address. Rep Ouellet: NH is not a home rule state.

Legislative Update:

HB 113: to allow OHRV Operation Certain Highways in Windsor. Windsor Road from the Hillsborough town line to the intersection of Black Pond Road; Black Pond Road from the intersection of Windsor Road to Miller Road. Amended to provide for public hearing. Not through senate yet.

HB1095: Changing ATV weight definition: adopted by house, amended to 3499lbs. up from 3000 lbs. Daniel Carry from Polaris spoke at hearing. Another bill for 3500 lb failed. Passed 14:1. On consent calendar

HB1037: Extending the HB1188 commission: adopted by house. Vote next Wednesday, March 18th at the Senate, 9:30.

HB1058: Enabling the carrying of a firearm on an OHRV when such OHRV is being operated on private property. ITL'ed

HB1090: Subjecting certain motor vehicles to rooms & meals tax : no OHRV component. Electric bike & personal electric vehicle bills thrown into study. There is a lot of talk of Out of Class Vehicles. State Police doesn't have definitions to know what these vehicles are. Some are

bikes, some are not. if it has a pedal and goes over 28mph = OHRV by definition. Class I, II & III - are defined. Suggestion; rather than creating Out of Class - educate.

SB 505: repealing temporary OHRV registration. This will close loophole and bring more money into trail maintenance. Senate adopted w/ non-germane amendment to clean up who can be a hunting guide. Going to House.

On-line registration: Governor's Executive Council approved additional \$17,000 to F&G to update computer program so that riders don't have to wait for decal to arrive in mail. Riders will have receipt on phone to show officer. COs not going to chase down non-stickered OHRVs; it is unsafe. Mr. Bennett - worries about riders skipping out on buying registrations and losing registration money. There is \$248 penalty for riding an unregistered OHRV.

Law Enforcement Update, Captain Eastman:

Registrations have leveled off around to around 31,000/year.

Captain Eastman is working on new safety 29 minute video with Tom Parsol of Kalkomey. The target population for safety education are the people who are crashing - ages of 40-60. He is not impressed w/ the industry video - he wants safety + etiquette.

Required boating safety course is the success story to repeat. Other states looking to NH - so let's take the lead.

\$60 is a hard sell. \$49.95 is the suggested price. F&G needs \$15,000 to start the program. RTP grants are available for education. What about raising reg fees to cover cost? Snowmobile regs went up 4 years ago. ATVs not gone up in over 10 years. F&G has a line item in for education.

Governor Sununu called the first OHRV safety bill - the "no fun bill" 6-8 hour mandatory training. Do we start by talking to Governor Ayotte?

How do our accident/fatality rate compare w/ other states with / without training? There are a lot of factors - on-road use results in higher fatality rates. Utah was first state to require adult education ~ 4 years ago; just after one year, they started seeing real changes in behavior.

States that do have safety usage, have higher helmet use, better etiquette. Could help abutters.

How many of the accidents are rentals? Adding governors to the rentals has reduced their accident rate. Bear Rock Rental requires safety training, but not all rental agencies do.

Are registration stickers falling off? F&G is able to return to previous vendor, should stick.

OHRV PD grants open until April 1. Coos County Sheriff submitted theirs.

Trails Bureau Update

Mr. Rennie has been testifying on some of the bills. Etiquette is important. DNCR has new interim commissioner - Adam Crepe. He is preparing for Spring rounds of Grant in Aid and RTP - trainings coming up.

New Business

Rep Ouellet: Last year we planned to have OHRV at State House, but it did not happen. This year? Mr. Bennett - It depends. Logistically it is hard: trailer in, block off streets, special mats for machines to sit on. heavy work load and cost to dealers,. Has to be on a session day.

Legislature is split between locations. The last time it happened it was organized for specific legislation. Plan now for next year when House is back. NHSA is planning an event for early June.

Next Meetings:

May 8, 10:00 AM DNRC 172 Pembroke Road, Concord

July 10, 10:00 AM, DNRC Lancaster

September 11, 10:AM Lancaster

Motion to Adjourn: Rep Davis, 2nded by Mr. Stock. All vote in Favor.
Respectfully submitted, Abby Evankow, HB 1188 Clerk

Link for remote attendance, May 8:

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

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Meeting ID: 218 299 554 481 60

Passcode: em2nw222

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