

**Minnesota Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
Resolution Regarding Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use
On Public Lands.**



Whereas use of off-highway vehicles (OHV) in Minnesota has greatly increased over the past decade; and

Whereas OHVs are used for both work and recreational purposes; and

Whereas OHVs can be useful tools where and when they are appropriately used; and

Whereas OHV use can have detrimental impacts on vegetation and soil leading to erosion, habitat destruction and increased risk of spreading invasive species; and

Whereas public owned lands frequently exhibit high biodiversity including rare plant and animal species; and

Whereas soil erosion can degrade water quality and fish habitat through increased sedimentation; and

Whereas use of OHVs within a floodplain can lead to increased erosion; and

Whereas the use of OHVs directly in stream beds can damage habitat, such as riffles, which are important for many fishes and invertebrates; and

Whereas evidence strongly indicates that in-stream crossings promote local downstream geomorphic degradation: and

Whereas design criteria exist for constructing bridges and crossings that maintain stream geomorphology; and

Whereas enforcement of current OHV regulations is inadequate to protect Minnesota's natural resources from degradation by illegal OHV use.

Therefore be it resolved, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Fisheries Society recommends that off-highway vehicle use on public lands must be restricted to designated trails which are appropriately sited and designed to minimize impacts to the lands and waters within Minnesota. Off-highway vehicle trails must not be planned to follow watercourses and must be prohibited from watercourse floodplains except at crossings. Off-highway vehicle trails that cross watercourses must be designed with bridges that span at least the bankfull channel width, and must be used in conjunction with barriers that prevent OHVs from accessing watercourses. OHV enforcement must be increased and adequate funds made available for effective enforcement.

Signed: _____ Chapter President.
Approved by the membership at the 39th Annual Meeting.

Date: March 20, 2007