

Kittitas ORV riders - you lose, we lose again

I am on the Teanaway Forest Committee, and have bad news for dirt bike/dual sport motorcyclists, and ATV/UTV owners, quads and Razors. We were "excluded" from the "Interim Recreation Plan" a few weeks ago, and after working with Rick Roeder at the Department of Natural Resources, putting forth a proposal to "include" us through June 2015, I was told we would not be included.

On the 20 person committee, I am the only member who has had what they represent, and were put on the committee for, be excluded, officially. ORV riding is what I represent, but I also hike a lot, and lead an 800 plus hiking group. I fish, rode mountain bikes for 15 years, and grew up on a thoroughbred farm. Hiking, mountain biking on horseback riding we're not excluded! The sport I represent was the only one that was.

I also have a long history in this area, because my great-grandfather arrived in Roslyn in 1886. My dad and grandfather were born in Roslyn. My great grandfather what significant in the early development of this area, being the Mayor and one of the first federal politicians out of this County. I care about this county and that they do the right thing for the community.

This is the wrong thing for a recreation community, that mostly snowmobiles and rides ORV's, and has been for over four decades.

I ride dirt bikes and dual sport motorcycles, and have my whole life. I have been riding in the now called "Teanaway Community Forest" for over 35 years, whether officially open, or closed. Nothing in the last 40 years has stopped us ORV users from riding in this area.

I also worked hard with Undersheriff Clayton Myers to get HB 1632 adopted in the county, allowing ATV/UTV use on county roads under 35 miles per hour.

Because of the fact that the national forest service roads in our county are now closed to ATV/UTV use, and the Teanaway Community Forest is now closed officially for all ORV, the only place for UTV/ATVs to ride is on PAVEMENT in their neighborhoods. No dirt legally available, if wanting to ride from Cle Elum, Roslyn or Ronald. The only thing to ride dirt on are the NFS roads and the Teanaway Community Forest. Both are now officially closed so there is no dirt available unless you trailer your vehicle somewhere else. Probably out of the county.

Way to go Kittitas! Kick the sport out that brings in the most revenue besides snowmobiling. Real smart, and absolutely against the true nature of recreation in this county. And the Teanaway Community Forest is absolutely not going to be about the community, but in my opinion, about a predetermined agenda that is already shown itself to me. I've also been told by many local neighbors or business owners there is no chance of getting ORV riding legally in the forest. Does that tell you anything about the leadership we have in this county?

Is that what you want in your neighborhoods? ATV/UTV's riding around your neighborhood on pavement, because there is no dirt? Or do you want them out in the forest where they belong? Because right now the only place to ride is pavement, until at least June 2015, when the DNR makes up their mind on what to do with the forest.

If you want to get involved and let them know what you think, there is a public open house at the Teanaway Grange on June 26. Please be there if you want to try and rescue recreation we've been doing for four decades here locally, that is on a trajectory of being eliminated.

Steve Justham – Ronald