

CLUBS: BACKBONE of the SPORT

The great thing about riding the trails is that every trail ride is different. Trail riding can be whatever you want it to be, whether that is exploring new areas on a slow and relaxing ride, or a fast passed, exhilarating dash through the forest. None of that is possible without building the trail first, however. Few trail riders ever consider the tough work of clearing the trail one foot at a time, often with nothing more than a saw, a shovel, and lots of back breaking, manual labor.

While state sponsored organizations like Hatfield-McCoy are excellent and have done a fantastic job of creating an organized, well managed trail system, that model is not the norm in most areas. It's groups like upper Michigan's Keweenaw ATV Club, The Moose Alley Riders ATV Club of Maine, and countless other grassroots organizations across the country with highly motivated, deeply dedicated club members that are the catalyst, and most often the labor, for trail building and ongoing trail maintenance. They all deserve a lot of thanks. Whether you're a once-a-year trail rider, or an organized guide group, never forget those dedicated club members who made your fun, and in some cases, your business possible.

The great thing about clubs like the Moose Alley and Keweenaw ATV club and riding clubs across the country is that they are chock full of enthusiasts. Motivated enthusiasts can often accomplish the impossible because they are not afraid to dig in and get started, and once set in motion, it's about impossible to distract them from



their goal. Club members are the ones who negotiate with the landowners, meet with officials, build and maintain the trails, and unfortunately sometimes clean up the mess left by somebody else. In Maine 99% of the 6500 miles of trails are on private land, which makes riding there a privilege and not a right. That privilege is the result of dedicated club member efforts. Guide companies would do well to remember their business is possible thanks to the dedicated hard work of non-paying volunteers who built the system, and it's not too much to expect a nice tip of the visor or a thank you when encountering club members digging in and maintaining a section of trail. They're actually keeping the trail safe, passable, protecting sensitive areas, and keeping the guide from being a hiker.

Clubs rely on the strength in numbers, and even if you can't attend every meeting, work party or rally, simply joining a club adds strength to the trail riding community as a whole. If you love the trails and trail riding, joining a club is a great

way to protect your rights and ride areas, not only for you but for future riders as well. A few dollars toward a membership fee goes a long way for clubs, and it's a bargain investment for all the joy trail riding has ever, and will ever give back to you. Besides, you'll be part of a larger group of people that love to ride as much as you do, and you're bound to make some new friends. Whether you ride a couple times a year or every weekend,



we advise finding a club near you and becoming a member. Our application is going in the mail today.

See you on the trails!

ENJOY YOUR SPORT and YOUR LIFE – GO OUT AND LIVE IT!

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p.s.: Send me a pic of you, your friends, and your riding adventure. I would love to see them and there is a great chance you'll end up here as part of our riding family!

