

Comments to Bluewater Planning Committee on All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) on Public (Municipal) Property - June 23, 2008

- Presented by Jan Purvis on behalf of the Board of the [Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association](#)

As the Bluewater Municipal Council develops a policy to control and regulate ATV's on municipal property, the Council should consider not only the issue of allowing ATV's to travel on municipal roads *but also* the issue of allowing ATV's to travel on municipal property *and* the beaches in Bluewater.

For the shoreline residents of Stanley West and Hay West, the issue of ATV's on the beach is a significant one. BSRA Board Members receive frequent calls expressing concern about ATV's on the beach.

Residents' concerns about ATV's on the beach centre on these major points:

1. Irresponsible driving. The ATV's present a concern for the safety of children and others who use the beach. Often we see a group of ATV's moving down the beaches (both public and private) at significant speeds with little apparent care for others on or near the beach.
2. Environmental damage. Some drivers have no respect for the dunes or the beach vegetation. We are pleased that our beaches increasingly are being protected with dune grass – some of which has been planted by residents and some of which is naturally growing as a result of lower water levels. It is sad to see these natural improvements ripped apart by ATV operators.
3. Noise pollution. Sometimes we find that the noise generated by ATV's on the beaches impairs the enjoyment of a peaceful afternoon or evening on the beach. At night, the noise from ATV's is particularly irritating.

Additional factors to consider:

1. Provincial Legislation: Ontario's regulations regarding ATV's clearly state that "no person shall operate an ORV in such a way as to disrupt or destroy the natural environment, including fish habitat, property and flora or fauna.
2. The Pinery Provincial Park: This provincial park does not allow for the use of ATV's in the park – due to the environmental damage they cause. If it is appropriate there to restrict the use of ATV's, it is also appropriate for Bluewater's public and private beaches.
3. Blue Flag Program: Blue Flag criterion #17 is clear on the matter of vehicles of any kind on the beach. "On the beach there will be no unauthorized camping or *driving* and no dumping."
4. Green Ribbon Beach Program: this program is still in its "pilot" stage but it clearly advocates that access of vehicles of any kind to the beach not be permitted.
5. The Township of Huron-Kinloss: this municipality has passed a By-Law stating: "The use of motorized vehicles is not permitted on the beach." (By-Law 2008-62)

6. Special circumstances: we recognize that there may be certain circumstances in which ATV use on the beach might be acceptable. These situations could be handled through a “special permit” process.

RECOMMENDATION: that the Municipality of Bluewater adopt a By-Law that prohibits the use of ATV's on its municipal properties and on the beaches in Bluewater.