



“Last one through shuts the gate. Easy.”

## FORTITUDE IS AN ATTITUDE

The spring weather this year has been nothing but challenging for trail riders across Ontario. Difficulties of some kind or another are pretty much a part of off-road motorcycle riding, so we live with it. Stompin' Tom made songs about mud, sloop and bugs, and so do we, sort of.

A good team manager would strategically use stay-at-home weather to get to maintenance duties and setup adjustments on their riding machinery. Just doing the simple stuff is good, because that's how we find things requiring a little closer scrutiny.

But it takes real fortitude to stay off woodland trails still soft with surface water and biologically sensitive riparian zones along waterways. Early season riding can be excellent on designated areas with sandy ground and quick drainage, typically the best time of year for these sites.

Since fortitude is an attitude, off-road riders recognize that we're best positioned to take care and responsibility for the long-term viability of single-track trails to ensure access and enjoyment. We all become better managers by taking ownership of trail sustainability exemplified by the ethic of 'last one through shuts the gate'. Easy.

## WORKING TOGETHER ON BEHALF OF RIDERS

Local off-road clubs are developing excellent relationships with land-use managers across Ontario based on long-term use and protection strategies that address ecological impact to ensure sustainability. Timing is everything, and good timing is even better. Clubs with progressive trails policies are finding open doors to access agreements and stewardship opportunities. Together we stand so we can ride tomorrow. Okay, well, it DOES work like that.

Working together province-wide is what the OFTR is about. Linking local and regional riding clubs might be easy to say, but the job itself depends on a dynamic of communicating ideas and information while presenting and promoting off-road riding — better known as preaching to the non-converted.

Fair enough, but the Ontario Federation of Trail Riders is about the riders. So, let's talk about member issues, too. Since details of all kinds do matter, the online membership system we adopted has worked well except for the times it has not. Ahem... not what we hoped for. Tracking and family

memberships are problematic with the new system that we adopted on the strengths of lower costs. We're doing the necessary data separation manually for this year, but will return to the more costly (yet obviously user-friendly) system for 2014.

Having somewhere safe and accessible to ride remains the top priority of needs and concerns to all off-road riders. Access grows increasingly challenging as development changes land physically and politically, while multi-user policies on public lands also require careful attention. Fundamental to the charm and pleasure of single-track motorcycling is the scope and range of trail characteristics; the level of difficulty keeps us motivated. After all, why work at learning skills unless we actually use them?

The thing is, the more challenging trails are often endowed with management challenges that often seem to exceed the physical realities. But ecological integrity is subject to many seasonal variables, and astute management can mitigate trail damage.

Thank you for giving this article a look, cheers to you current members whom we hope will be better satisfied by the continuing efforts of your local clubs and your OFTR to promote and protect off-road riding Ontario-wide. And also to those not-yet members of these united efforts — we hope our message is encouraging.

Maybe someday you will join us.



Most everyone understands that traversing the forest in early spring causes ruts and damage. Pity some loggers don't subscribe to this opinion - Northumberland County Forest, 2012.

## *The Voice of Off-Road Motorcyclists in Ontario!*