



# The Voice

The Voice for Peace and Quiet and Healthy Trails and Waterways Since 1996

Fall, 2008

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**Learn more about MRR campaigns, news, Action Alerts, internships and volunteer opportunities on our website:**  
[www.MnResponsibleRec.org](http://www.MnResponsibleRec.org)

### MRR Mission

To protect peace & quiet, fresh air, personal safety & our environment from the unwanted effects of motorized recreation.

### MRR Board of Directors

Brian Bergeron, Chair, Duluth  
Linda Peck, St. Cloud  
Bobby King, Minneapolis

### MRR Staff

Executive Director:  
Jeff Brown  
[jeff@MnResponsibleRec.org](mailto:jeff@MnResponsibleRec.org)

### Contact Us


P.O. Box 111  
Duluth, MN 55801

Phone:  
218-740-3175

Fax:  
218-727-1161

E-mail:  
[info@MnResponsibleRec.org](mailto:info@MnResponsibleRec.org)

Website:  
[www.MnResponsibleRec.org](http://www.MnResponsibleRec.org)

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## Gas tax diversions to motorized recreation: Leg. Candidate Survey

\$188 million dollars in gas tax revenue has been diverted from repair and maintenance of our state's roads and bridges to promote motorized recreation since 1994. Recent increases in state gas tax will increase such diversions to around \$42 million/biennium.

Gas tax diversions to ATVs, dirt-bike motorcycles, four-wheel drive trucks, snowmobiles and motorboats reduces funds available for roads and bridges and generates a host of unwanted effects on our environment and quality of life. To educate Minnesotans and legislators MRR has sent a gas tax survey to all Minnesota House of Representative candidates. We seek response to five MRR policy initiatives. Citizens are encouraged to educate candidates about gas tax diversions to motorized recreation.

Find survey, gas tax facts, candidate names and contact info and more at [www.MnResponsibleRec.org](http://www.MnResponsibleRec.org). Or call MRR at 218-740-3175.

## MRR volunteers to debut GoogleEarthMnATVDamage

Damage from ATVs, dirt-bike motorcycles and four-wheel drive trucks is accumulating in Minnesota's forests and leaving an unhappy legacy for future generations to repair. DNR plans do not inventory damage, schedule or fund repairs, or sufficiently protect soils and streams.

To more widely publicize citizen monitoring of accumulating damage, MRR volunteers have created a new webpage that

## Global Warming & Motorized Recreation Study,

by Tina Schilawski, MRR Intern

A MRR review of literature finds that off-road vehicles emit significant amounts of toxic greenhouse gases including ~33% of carbon monoxide output in Maine. Regulation of on-road vehicle emissions has been offset by increase in off-road vehicles.

Despite a 2007 Minnesota law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the state lacks data regarding snowmobile, ATV, dirt-bike motorcycle, four-wheel drive truck and motorboat emissions. Recommended study should also investigate how Minnesota's gas tax promotion of motorized recreation contributes to global warming. Reducing the number of off-road vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is indicated.

Find literature review, 2007 Energy Act and how to participate in Global Warming and Internship programs on MRR's web.



Tina Schilawski, MRR Intern & Grad Student in UMD Leadership Program

displays statewide damage. Viewers can also zoom in on individual damage sites and site-related data. The webpage will be used to collaborate with other monitoring agencies and to motivate public officials to implement MRR's *Five Standards for Protecting Minnesota from ATVs*.

Contact MRR to post your damage photos and data. Watch MRR's homepage for launch of GoogleEarthMnATVDamage.

## Ending gas tax diversions to motorized recreation begins at home: Be an agent of accountability with a MRR *Citizen Audit* by Jeff Brown, Executive Director

\$188 million in gas tax diversions to promote motorized recreation in just 14 years! An increase to \$42 million/biennium! And we are all paying at the pump each time we buy gas! No wonder quiet places are getting harder to find and protect. Its hard to compete with motorized recreation's \$20 million/year gas tax powered budget.

Gas tax diversions subsidize DNR's Trails and Waterways Division that promotes motorized recreation access to public and private land. Gas tax funding generates a host of well-documented unwanted effects on our environment and quality of life. Some say the DNR division has turned our trails and waterways into raceways.

Millions of dollars in gas tax revenue are annually diverted to snowmobile and ATV clubs, often funding trespass on private property and the bulldozing of wetlands. Gas tax funds were involved in a snowmobile club's pull-tab gambling turf war with the American Legion.

The good news is that an opportunity to end these diversions resides in one's local town or county board.

Gas tax funds are diverted to snowmobile and ATV clubs through local governments which must pass annual funding resolutions. Resolutions are generally approved without discussion or citizen input. Resolutions can be defeated. This is where "we the people" come in.

Happily, local government fiscal agents are also required, in their grant-in-aid agreements with the DNR, to meet a variety of program requirements (such as easements to cross private property) and federal, state and local regulations .

Many local governments, such as St. Louis County, are disbursing gas tax funds despite pervasive violations of program requirements. MRR's *Citizen Audit* program assists citizens in gathering data about and challenging gas tax funding of ATV and snowmobile routes at the local level.

Go to MRR's website or contact us for case studies and help in conducting a *Citizen Audit* in your community. See MRR's *Toolkit for the Quiet Majority*

## Restoring Winter Quiet & Easement Education: "Many of Minnesota's snowmobile trails were built on trespass.", Veteran St. Louis County Land Manager

Snowmobiling has changed since the days when most of Minnesota's 18,000 miles of (gas tax funded) snowmobile routes were developed. Today's snowmobiles can go 100 miles per hour. Advertisements promote machines flying over drifts and speeding through turns. Many property owners no longer want the noise, fumes and sometime bad behavior related to this high performance sport in their backyards.

Happily, educated property owners can close unwanted snowmobile routes quite easily. To cross private land, snowmobiles clubs must have legal easements which can be withdrawn at any time. While legal easements require a delay before unwanted routes can be closed, if no legal easement exists, trespass can be halted immediately. Many of Minnesota's snowmobile trails were built through trespass.

Often whole neighborhoods of property owners are interested in restoring peace and quiet in their backyards. For assistance in restoring winter quiet in your backyard or neighborhood contact MRR at 218-740-3175 or e-mail us at [info@MnResponsibleRec.org](mailto:info@MnResponsibleRec.org).

Learn more about *Restoring Winter Quiet* and *Easement Education* and hear what property owners have to say about MRR at [www.MnResponsibleRec.org](http://www.MnResponsibleRec.org).

## Challenge grant triples new and increased contributions to MRR!

An unprecedented opportunity exists for Minnesota's quiet majority to invest in the future of quiet places and healthy trails and waterways.

MRR is the honored recipient of a \$25,000 David Winton Bell Foundation challenge grant. The foundation will triple any new or increased contribution to MRR. A one hundred dollar tax-deductible gift will become a three hundred dollar gift to

MRR. Contributions received by December 31, 2008 will be tripled!



Please help MRR meet this challenge by renewing, increasing or initiating

your MRR membership today.

Its easy to contribute! Use the enclosed envelope to mail your contribution or click on *Give or Join* on MRR's homepage and make a tax-deductible contribution via PayPal.

MRR is grateful for the David Winton Bell Foundation and generous members who have supported our cause over the years. Expect peace & quiet.