

Oppose the proposed OFF ROAD VEHICLE (ORV) Ordinance.

These vehicles are designed and were purchased for off-road use. There is a group consisting of both residents of Brown County and people who do not live or own property in Brown County that want to allow vehicles that do not qualify for license plates on our county roads. We are opposed for the following reasons.

1. While this ordinance is being presented as a local issue, it is being promoted in statewide and national Off Road Vehicle groups
2. DNR has reinforced that Off Road Vehicles (ORV) are designed specifically for off-road use, that operating these vehicles on paved surfaces can be hazardous because of handling issues and that riding on paved roads is a leading cause of ORV-related fatalities. In addition to the risks to ORV operators themselves, the risk of accidents with other vehicles also increases.
3. The proposal relies on the county's 2 DNR Officers for enforcement county wide. Sheriff Deputies and other law enforcement cannot write tickets for these violations.
4. While these vehicles obtain permits, that entire revenue goes to the development of Off Road Recreation Areas and to DNR for enforcement. They pay ZERO tax towards the upkeep of our roads.
5. Many of our roads in Brown County are in need of repair and require caution when traveling. We do not need yet another distraction or potential hazard on the roads.
6. Indiana Code IC 14-16-1 states that the state prohibits these vehicles on undesignated state property or state maintained roads.
7. There are a wide variety of vehicles that can operate on County roads if the ordinance is passed, not just the ones that are being portrayed by the Off Road Vehicle groups that are pushing for this change to current law.
8. The statistics being shown by those wanting the change are skewed due to the fact that only DNR officers are reporting these violations. No record is kept if a Deputy encounters someone illegally operating an ORV.
9. Proponents claim statistics show very few accidents in Brown County on the roads. There should be ZERO accidents as it is illegal to operate these on the road now.
10. The argument for change is that a large number of counties in the state allow these vehicles. Those opposed think Brown county is unique and does not lend itself to doing what everyone else does.
11. Several of the reasons given for changing the law can already be accomplished with in current state and county law.
12. Even if this ordinance passes, it will not allow these vehicles on state roads, state land, federal land, town of Nashville, Cordry-Sweet Water conservancy district. State law does not allow golf carts to operate in these areas.

Potential problems from this law passing.

Those in favor paint a best case scenario. Some of the concerns regarding the law include the following:

1. There is no provision to prevent out of town tourists to trailer in these vehicles and run them on the country roads of Brown County.
2. We have all become surrounded by tourist homes, do we want them being used as a base of operations for these vehicles to run our back roads?
3. With vehicles being able to operate on county roads, there will be easier access to our hiking trails. Currently damage is being done by ORV on Scarce O' Fat ridge in Yellowwood State Forest and other locations in the county.
4. Places an additional burden on DNR law enforcement
5. Increases noise level and traffic. In addition to the expected and seasonal traffic from tourists, these vehicles will be traveling year round on both paved and unpaved roads throughout the county.
6. Noise is among the greatest complaints from these vehicles. Enforcing a "noise limit" is nearly impossible. DNR would be required to carry decimeters to measure sound levels from individual vehicles.
7. Scaring away the wildlife; distraction during hunting season. Keep in mind these vehicles are designed to go places no one would take a motorcycle, bicycle, or licensed motor vehicle.
8. Although Proponents of this ordinance use the surrounding counties as examples of why this ordinance should be passed, several of those counties(Vigo) stated they passed the ordinance to strengthen their ability to limit the operation of these vehicles. They impose much greater insurance requirements, raise fines significantly and allow more law enforcement agencies to write tickets for infractions.

