

# NORTHCENTRAL REGIONAL ATV TRAIL

Council of Governments

NRAT COG

## WHAT IS A COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (COG)?

A voluntary regional structure of local governments working together to solve shared challenges

For NRAT specifically, the COG will manage the trail network locally, incorporating input and guidance from agencies and partners

At its core, the NRAT COG will shift decision-making, leadership, and management from DCNR to a local collaborative of governments, while maintaining active engagement and strong relationships with agency partners, organizations, and user groups

## MISSION

The Northcentral Regional ATV Trail (NRAT) COG mission is to facilitate a safe and sustainable motorized trail network that empowers rural communities to foster conservation and economic growth.

## SERVICE AREA

The current service area of the NRAT COG is the four-county region in northcentral Pennsylvania consisting of Clinton, Lycoming, Potter, and Tioga Counties. Once established, there is potential for the COG to expand to include counties and municipalities beyond the current footprint.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Learn More About  
Membership



### Common Concerns

- ✓ Dust Suppressant/Control
- ✓ Maintenance
- ✓ Law Enforcement

## COG Benefits & Responsibilities

### Q: What can my municipality expect from the COG?

**A: Over a six month period local municipalities, state agencies, community partners, and user groups, collaborated on various aspects of developing a COG that would be functional and representative.**

### The expectations for the COG include:

#### Respect Roles & Authority

The COG will operate in a manner that acknowledges the responsibilities of municipalities and partners, respecting their decision-making authority and providing clear points of contact for effective communication.

#### Ensure Sustainable Growth & Decision-Making

The COG will guide the responsible expansion and enhancement of the NRAT network by supporting prudent, policy-driven decisions that increase potential for recreational connectivity and economic development while balancing environmental and social impacts.

#### Coordinate Operations & Reimbursements

The COG will provide functional coordination of the trail network, including permit sales, reimbursement processes for municipal maintenance costs (e.g., dust suppression, sanitation, road work), annual mapping, issue resolution, and more.

#### Support Safety & Emergency Response

The COG will establish and continually improve systems for safety, enforcement, EMS connectivity, jurisdictional continuity, and standardized response protocols.

#### Strengthen Communication & Access

The COG will maintain communication portals (website, phone, social media, feedback loops), accurate maps, and signage while working to improve the technical limitations of communications throughout the trail network.

#### Provide Administrative & Technical Support

The COG will offer user-friendly services such as permit sales, meeting coordination, complaint handling, training, mapping, legal/regulatory resources, and technical support to members and users.

#### Promote the Trail & Build Partnerships

The COG will develop marketing and outreach strategies—including a potential rebrand and tourism partnerships—to boost ridership, highlight economic opportunities, and educate users and communities.

#### Facilitate Collaboration & Mediation

The COG will act as a mediator and expert resource to support members and partners, encourage productive collaboration, and strengthen community engagement.

**Q: As a member, what responsibilities would my municipality have to commit to?**

A: Over the same period local municipalities, state agencies, community partners, and user groups, collaborated on what it would mean to be a member of the COG (voting, participatory, or advisory) and responsibilities that would be both reasonable and appropriate.

**The responsibilities for members include:**

- **Appoint Active Representatives**  
Members will designate knowledgeable and committed representatives to the COG who actively engage in decision-making, committees, and collaborative efforts to manage the NRAT network.
- **Maintain Local Trail Segments**  
Members will provide routine and seasonal maintenance within municipal boundaries—including dust suppression, signage, and sanitation—while planning major maintenance outside of the riding season when possible.
- **Support Safety & Emergency Response**  
Members will deliver or coordinate emergency service (and law enforcement where applicable) response to incidents within the network, take reasonable measures to ensure rider safety, and help provide a positive visitor experience.
- **Communicate & Coordinate with the COG**  
Share timely updates on maintenance, closures, damages, or emergencies; supply current information for the website; and redirect user inquiries to the centralized hub.
- **Prioritize Maintenance with Broader Municipal Needs**  
Balance NRAT responsibilities with the municipality's full range of infrastructure and community obligations when prioritizing maintenance decisions.
- **Contribute Local Knowledge & Resources**  
Offer practical expertise to COG committees, provide input on seasonal route decisions, and engage in fundraising and volunteer-based efforts such as events, education, or trail ambassadorship.
- **Foster Community & Volunteer Engagement**  
Help develop and support volunteer initiatives that build stewardship, provide educational outreach, and strengthen community participation in the NRAT network.

## General NRAT Maintenance and Use

**Q: Is dust suppressant available and who pays for it?**

A: Yes. Reimbursement will remain available to all municipalities with mileage in the NRAT network. Formulas and methods for reimbursement will remain the same through the '26 riding season. The COG will review these processes and update them as leadership and management shifts from DCNR to the COG to ensure a consistent experience for participating municipalities.

**Q: Who is responsible for maintaining the trails?**

A: Local municipalities, DCNR, and PennDOT. This varies based on the underlying ownership of the land in question, as well as agreements between municipalities and agency partners, as well as special interest groups and nonprofit organizations.

**Q: Who is responsible for enforcing the law on the NRAT?**

A: Local police, state police, and DCNR rangers. Responsibility varies based on the underlying ownership of the land in question, as well as contracts and agreements between municipalities and Pennsylvania State Police (PSP).

**Q: What is required to legally ride on the NRAT?**

A: To ride the full expanse of the NRAT network, an annual permit is required. The permit grants permissions for legal use of designated roads in the NRAT network during the seasonal riding window. Some roads within the NRAT network may be open year round by municipal ordinance.

**Q: Where can I buy a riding permit?**

A: Riders can obtain a permit by either downloading and mailing in the Permit Application from DCNR's website or purchasing one in person at the Tioga, Tiadaghton, Sproul, or Susquehannock State Forest offices. Beginning with the 2027 riding season, permits will be solely available for purchase through the NRAT COG.

**Q: Are single-day, multi-day, or annual passes available?**

A: At this time, the NRAT permit provides access for the entire riding season, from late May through September—offering riders extended opportunities to explore and enjoy the trails. While other permit durations aren't currently offered, the full-season permit ensures maximum flexibility and value throughout the season.

## Approvals for Opening/Closing Roads to ATV Use

**Q: If a municipality has few or no municipally owned roadways (other than DCNR forestry roads or State Roads) how does the municipality request those roadways be opened to ATV use?**

A: The municipality would leverage the COG as a resource, working alongside the Executive Director to connect with the appropriate partners to initiate discussions related to a proposed route.

**Q: How can the COG assist municipalities seeking PennDOT or DCNR approval for state-owned connector routes, in addition to municipally owned roadways already open to ATVs?**

A: Municipalities can work alongside the COG and Executive Director to coordinate discussions with the appropriate state agencies—such as DCNR or PennDOT—regarding proposed connector segments. The COG can help develop a unified request and align it with the regional trail plan before submission for agency review and approval.

**Q: Can municipal elected officials deny the state or DCNR from opening a roadway to ATV's within their jurisdictional limits?**

A: Although the COG would aim to have productive and collaborative discussions with all relevant partners, each decision lies solely with the entity that has jurisdiction over the road. The appropriate entity, ideally in consultation with affected parties, would evaluate the request and make a determination.

