

DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Program Overview

Iowa Code 321I gives the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), through the Natural Resource Commission, the authority to adopt rules for off-highway vehicles as follows: registration/titling, operation on public land/water/ice, establishment and administration of a grant program, establishment of education course, issuance of education certificates, and certification of education instructors.

Registration: Residents are required to register to operate off-highway vehicles on public land, public ice, public roadways, and designated riding areas. Nonresidents are required to have a user permit to operate on public land, public ice, public roadways, and designated riding areas. The annual \$15.00 (+ fees) registration/permit fees are deposited into the all-terrain vehicle fund. These funds are appropriated to the Iowa DNR to be utilized for administration of the state program (up to 50%) and grant program (at least 50%).

There are over 100,000 off-highway vehicles registered or permitted in Iowa annually. Exemptions exist for governmental purposes and agricultural use. Registrations and nonresident user permits for off-highway vehicles can be purchased or renewed through County Recorders, license agents, and the GoOutdoors system. Iowa Code defines three categories of off-highway vehicles to be registered with DNR: all-terrain vehicles (ATV), off-road motorcycles (ORM), and off-road utility vehicles (ORV).

Registration Numbers 2021-2025 (CY)					
Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
ATV	29,059	21,319	27,042	28,517	29,090
Off-Road Vehicle	44,778	38,982	52,421	69,641	71,935
Off-Road Motorcycle	7,652	4,530	7,390	9,005	9,055
Total	81,489	64,831	86,853	107,163	110,080

Stateside Program Details

- Administer the grant program to support seven public designated riding areas
- Provide law enforcement related to off-highway vehicle use
 - Officers assist with inspections, education events, emergency response, and enforcement at designated riding areas
 - Registration and permitting fees cannot be utilized for law enforcement outside of a designated riding area (321I.8(2))
- Establish and maintain an education course and certification process for education instructors
- Coordinate with partners on regulation, operation, safety, and education related to off-road use
- Regulate and approve special events on designated riding areas
- Others: bonding, registration/permits, regulation of off-highway vehicle dealers, operator’s incident reports, and issue VINs

Local Grant Program Details: Public off-highway vehicle parks are established (‘designated’) through an act of the Natural Resource Commission (NRC). In partnership with cities, counties, and other partner organizations, the grant program supports the operation, maintenance, and development of seven designated riding areas open to the public. The seven designated riding areas are as follows: Nicholson Ford (Marshall County), Gypsum City (Webster County), Riverview (Black Hawk County), Bluff Creek (Mahaska County), Rathbun (Appanoose County), Tama (Tama County), and Lakeview (Johnson County).

Program Budget (5-year average)

Revenue / Fees Collected	\$2,078,455
Stateside Expenditures	\$644,809
Local Expenditures	\$734,914
Total Expenditures	\$1,379,724
Difference (funds do not revert)	\$698,721

Safety and Education: The DNR offers an online ATV safety course through an outside vendor and promotes responsible off-road riding practices through printed materials and outreach. The online education course is available to anyone, but certification is required for ages 12-17 operating an ATV on public land. The course fee is \$34.95 and \$5 from each course fee is remitted to the all-terrain vehicle fund.