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ATV, sled clubs want accident help sites

3,000 landing zones eyed to aid LifeFlight

BY NICK SAMBIDES JR.
OF THE NEWS STAFF

WINN — Hubert Aldrich doesn't want his ATV club's next accident to be fatal.

The Lee man is among as many as 110 state club leaders working with LifeFlight of Maine to set rescue helicopter landing zones along the 17,000 miles of all-terrain and snowmobile trails statewide.

As many as 3,000 zones will be established over the next year in parking lots, open fields, road intersections and atop mountains to serve the state's 165,000 registered ATV and snowmobile riders, said Jim Lane, president of ATV Maine, the state's federation of ATV clubs.

As president of the Dwinal Pond 4 Seasons Club of Winn, Aldrich will meet with LifeFlight officials at the club's Old Springfield Road clubhouse on June 1. The goal: to discuss setting four landing zones along club trails in Lee.

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Accidents

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Mattawamkeag and Winn by August.

"If you are out on these trails, you are a long way from First Aid," Aldrich said Wednesday.

The 46-year-old has seen enough broken bones at car accidents, in the woods and during his time in the military — he served with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division as a private first class in 1996-97 — to know that LifeFlight can save lives.

That is especially true in the remote areas of Burlington, Lee, Mattawamkeag and Winn intersected by the Dwinal Pond Club's 430 miles of ATV and snowmobile trails, he said.

"The thing with four-wheelers is that if they leave trails in accidents, it will likely be traumatic," Aldrich said. "There's a lot to run into out there."

ATV Maine and LifeFlight hope to establish 1,000 landing zones before snowmobilers hit the trails next winter, Lane said. The partnership between the two was set last month.

"Remember: A zone can be just an intersection of two roads," Lane said Wednesday, "so a lot of clubs might not have a lot of difficult work to do. There could be 10 of them on a 20-mile road somewhere."

Aldrich's proposed sites — off Bagley Mountain Road in Lee; on Gordon Field off Military Road in Winn; off Townline Road in Lee near Route 6; and at Mattawamkeag Wilderness Park — will probably meet LifeFlight's landing parameters, he said.

They have less than an 8-degree slope, are clear of trees and power lines and have no debris to get caught up in spinning helicopter rotors. "We might have to clear a little land," he said.

LifeFlight has been working with ATV and snowmobile clubs since 2008 to secure landing zones as part of a larger effort to update landing sites with local emergency medical service providers, said Melissa Arndt, marketing manager for LifeFlight Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides fundraising and public relations support to LifeFlight, the statewide medical helicopter service of Maine.

A dozen clubs have begun landing zone work, Arndt said.

All zones will have posted signs featuring GPS coordinates so riders know they're there and can telephone their locations when accidents occur, Aldrich said. It's his job to secure and coordinate site locations with landowners, firefighters, police, game wardens, hospitals and ambulance services for mapping.

Besides promoting safety, the presence of landing zones, Lane said, will likely entice more out-of-state riders to come to Maine. That's an important consideration as the state's ATV networks, and the millions of dollars in tourist revenue they represent, continue to mature.

"A landing zone in the right location gets into the golden hour of treatment," he said, "and that saves lives."

nsambides@bangordailynews.net
794-8215



European fallow deer run at the

Hunting

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need for additional game ranches and the sportsmanship of the hunts they offer.

"This is not the tradition of hunting in Maine that I can remember or that I will support," said Rep. Charles Harlow, a Portland Democrat and former registered Maine guide.

The seven game ranches

Camden

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coffee shop, like they have in Vassalboro, and it's not an X-rated video store. I wouldn't support anything like that. But I would support a legitimate business that would come in and create jobs for the community."

A date for the vote has not been set, but it should happen during the week of June 22-26, according to Town Manager Roberta Smith. A public hearing will be held before the vote, and likely will take place in the Camden Opera House.

The wave of opposition to such businesses was triggered when Connecticut...

Good Deal

