

## How to Minimize ORV Impacts on Wetlands

### Go around wetlands not through them.

Even if there is an existing trail through the wetland, avoid it to prevent damaging vegetation or becoming stuck in mud.

### Stay on existing hard-bottomed trails where possible.

Expanding routes and crisscrossing trails reduce habitat quality and may impact wildlife.

### Cross streams only at bridges or designated areas

where the trail crosses the stream.

### Slow down.

Reduced speed means less noise and pollution, reduced fuel costs, and fewer accidents. It is also easier on soil and helps to prevent erosion. Ruts bare the soil and create pools of water which attract frogs and insects into the path of ATVs and dirtbikes.

## Is it a wetland?

Wetlands are the links between land and water. Wetlands come in all shapes and sizes from bogs and marshes, to shrub and wooded swamps to wet meadows. Some wetlands are seasonal and only have standing water during certain times of the year.

The Yukon backcountry is shared by many outdoor enthusiasts. While it may not seem like one person makes much of an impact, the effects are cumulative and they add up. We all have a responsibility to our outdoor home.

### Let's work together

to ensure the Yukon wilderness stays healthy and accessible for future generations.

*Only You Can Keep the  
Yukon Wild.  
Ride Smart and Stay  
on Trails.*

If you see someone damaging the natural environment or harassing wildlife, contact your local Conservation Office or call

**Turn in Poachers & Polluters  
(TIPP Line): 1-800-661-0525**



*We are working together to reduce ORV impacts on the land and can provide you with more information. With your support, we can manage ORV use in a way that works for everyone.*

- Klondike Snowmobile Association
- Yukon Off-Road Riders Association
  - Trails Only Yukon Association
- Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon
  - Yukon Conservation Society
  - Yukon Fish & Game Association

# ORVs and Yukon Wetlands



photo: Peter Mather

Wetlands are home for a large diversity of plants and wildlife and are important for water quality.

Wetlands are environmentally sensitive areas and are particularly susceptible to damage by ORVs.

## Importance of Wetlands

**Wetlands are home** for a large diversity of plants and wildlife including birds, frogs, fish, moose, shrews, bats, muskrat, mink, beaver and river otter. Wetlands are also popular areas for humans to pursue recreational activities.

Wetlands are **important for erosion, flood and drought control**. They act like a sponge and absorb water during wet periods and release water during dry periods.

Wetlands **purify our water** by filtering out sediments, nutrients and toxic chemicals.



## ORV Impacts on Soil and Vegetation

Ruts caused by ATVs and dirt bikes **can affect water flow** in wetlands and cause some areas to become wetter or others to dry up completely. Snowmobile activities can compact snow which can form barriers that alter spring runoff patterns and result in soil erosion and gullies.

ORVs **can damage vegetation** in wetlands. Even in the winter, frozen plants can snap off when run over especially if there is inadequate snowpack. Loss of vegetation makes soils susceptible to invasion by weeds such as White Sweetclover and Smooth Brome which can also be carried into wetlands by ORVs.

Fuel spills on frozen wetlands and ponds can **introduce toxic chemicals** into the water when the ice melts.

## ORV Impacts on Fish and Wildlife

**Noise** from ORV traffic can cause short and long term behavior changes in wildlife such as abandonment of preferred foraging areas or bird nests which can then lead to changes in the health of a population.

Winter recreation can be more detrimental than warm-season recreation for wildlife because animals may be **weak and stressed** in the winter.

ATV use may increase **sediment runoff** into streams and wetlands which creates muddy water. This reduces oxygen levels and sunlight penetration needed by aquatic life and can kill wetland vegetation, as well as fish, frogs and their eggs.



**Snow compaction** by snowmobiles results in loss of its insulating value and causes the ground temperature to drop. This can affect plants and the activities and survival of small mammals which move underneath the surface of snow.