

## Accessing Wilderness : (page 180)

Historically, access was limited to coastal areas, limited access inland. (Historical examples, pages 182 - 183)

Today, our greater ability to access wilderness means the interior areas are no longer out of reach of most wilderness enthusiasts. 96 % of NL is “crown land”...accessible by the public...more than any other Province, so no wonder more people use wilderness areas here in NL than in most other places. To ensure this opportunity continues, accessing wilderness has to be done responsibly. Anyone expecting a high quality wilderness experience has to assume some of the responsibility in maintaining it...with different users respecting the needs of other groups.

Greater access into wilderness areas means increased hunting and fishing pressures, the potential to fragment wildlife habitat into smaller interrupted pieces, and increased potential for pollution, fires, and water changes.

## Changing Technology and Access :

Accessing MORE wilderness often involves two things : ....a greater network of roads and trails... .... and improved vehicle / gear technology....

- Ex. Fuel efficient 4 stroke motors - longer distance trips with the same fuel
- Better communications - signalling, satellite communication, cell coverage
- Lightweight gear - from tools, to machines, food, GPS, and clothing technology

## Building more roads...what are the impacts ???

1. Changes water runoff patterns, earlier roads in particular ( lack of proper ditching, culverts, water diversion).
2. Human activities increase as these roads afford access to areas otherwise cut off from human impacts. ( ex. Lobstick Lodge, or the central Plateau portion ( phase 3) of the TLH).
3. Fragments wildlife habitat into pieces.
4. Dust and silt produced by traffic can enter waterways or cover vegetation.
5. Rock and fill taken from their natural setting to build up the road.
6. Traffic impact on the setting and wildlife numbers / movement.
7. Increased fire risk.
8. Introduces non native plants. Disturbs natural succession.
9. Competition between established wilderness businesses, and new road travellers.

(For a look at some of the guidelines regulating the building of roads, look at page 187)

Accessing wilderness will involve either **mechanized** or **non-mechanized** methods. Either can be used together with our system of walking trails, snowmobile trails, waterways, rail beds ( ex. NL Trailway), power lines, and access roads created for industry.

Mechanized access	Non-mechanized access
boats / outboard motors* snowmobiles* float planes helicopters ATV's - quads, trikes seadoos amphibious vehicles 4 X 4 pick-ups dirtbikes	walking snowshoeing skiing canoeing biking

\* Be able to compare **two stroke** and **four stroke** motors in very general terms !  
 2 strokes - less efficient, louder, more exhaust and residue in snow, water systems, and soils  
 Ex. Up to 30 % of fuel and oil blown out as exhaust

**All Terrain Vehicle ( ATV) Impacts -**

Be able to identify some environmental impacts of using snowmobiles or boats !

1. emissions from less efficient two stroke motors, but all motors of course (Including gas / oil residues)
2. disturbance to soils, water, and wildlife, degree of disturbance depends on topography and driving habits
3. wetlands, beaches, forest floors, and barrens especially sensitive
4. increased stress on nearby wildlife
5. increased hunting success
6. loss of vegetation near streams and rivers ( increasing erosion and turbidity)
7. reducing shade over water increases its temperature
8. silt and sediment drifting down current from crossings....affects.....?
9. changes made to spring melt patterns....compressed trails take much longer to thaw and can block runoff
10. runoff carries fuel / oil residues into water supplies
11. fish reproduction disturbances during fall spawning
12. breaking / crushing young trees
13. shifting of animals home ranges
14. compaction of snow, track spin, and residues affect vegetation growth and distribution
15. uncompacted snow retains heat 11 times longer than compacted snow....changes soil properties and plant growth

NFLD restricts trail development and use, and riders need to know how to mitigate against their impacts (page 201). Labrador has no similar restrictions.

- avoid wet slick trails AMAP
- slow down to lessen damage
- minimize wheel spin out
- minimize stream crossings - especially in the fall
- stay off wetlands and beaches

Even non-mechanized access has environmental impacts. Increased litter, risk of fire, soil compaction, and vegetation damage. You cannot enter wilderness without some level of impact on it. We don't expect to remove all of our impacts, but minimize them wherever possible.

### How is soil affected by wilderness access ?

In stages....

loss of litter layer ⇒ less nutrients enter the soil ⇒ soil compaction ( there s less air and water holding) ⇒ increased runoff ⇒ increased erosion and damage

## soil compaction and water percolation rates activity - pages 210 - 211