

THE RIDER BEHIND YOU

As the club membership grows, so does the size of our runs.

It is pretty enjoyable when a large number of people can just get together for a nice day ride. You get to meet a bunch of new people and have lots of laughs. It seems that every club run a person attends they always end up with a new or different group of riders. Now this raises an issue.

When a group of friends go out together for a day ride, they are usually familiar with the group's riding habits but when you attend a ride with new people that may not be familiar with the group's riding habits, this can sometimes cause problems.

1. The most important thing to keep in mind is that YOU are responsible for the rider behind you, not getting lost. When you come to an intersection, a trail or a fork in the road, wait at the intersection until the rider behind you, sees you. Do not worry about the rider ahead of you. It doesn't matter where he/she is or how fast they are driving. If they follow the same rules as you, they will be waiting for you at the next turn off. It almost seems like some people panic as soon as they loose sight of the rider ahead of them for fear of getting lost that they take off to try and keep up with the rider ahead of them and not waiting for the rider behind them. As long as everyone in the group waits at the intersection for the rider behind them, things should go very smoothly. The leader could be 3km ahead and have taken 10 turn offs, but the 11th rider in the group should be able to find his way since there should be a rider waiting for him at each intersection.

2. If you get to an intersection and you don't see the rider behind you, wait, don't proceed in either direction because this could only lead to you too getting lost. The riders ahead of you, with a leader will come back to get you. On most runs there will be at least 3 lead riders, the leader, one in the middle of the pack, and one at the end. This way there is someone not too far away that knows where they are going.

3. If possible, everyone should stop for a break at the same time. If a rear group decides to take a break and the lead pack doesn't know about it, the last rider in the lead pack will be waiting for the rider behind them. This will end up spreading out the group and possibly slowing down the ride and even possibly getting a rider lost. Always be aware of the people in your group and don't leave with a different group of riders by mistake. Also, if someone decides to leave the run, be SURE to notify the leaders that you are leaving so that no one is looking for you later on.

4. If you come to an intersection and the rider ahead of you didn't wait for you, take a look for fresh tire tracks. If you aren't sure which way the group went, it's better to wait at the intersection then to try and guess which way they went. Someone will come back and look for you. If you take a guess and go the wrong way, the person going back may end up traveling a long distance and not find you since you went the wrong way. It's always better to wait for someone to come get you.

5. The Group leader should always wait at every major intersection and let the entire group catch up and do a head count. This will allow the group to bunch up together once again and keep everyone together.

I think that covers most of the basic riding guidelines that we usually try and follow. I'm sure we have missed a few things but it is a great start.

If other people have other suggestions of things that can be done to improve the group rides, please let us know. I'm sure a lot of people will gain a lot of experience and knowledge that will help them in future rides.

Saint John ATV Club Executive