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Athens News Quotes Sack on Impact of Proposed APV Trails

August 30, 2018

Categories: Faculty in the News, In the News

Tags: Dorothy Sack, faculty in the news, Geography news, in the news



Dr. Dorothy Sack

The Athens News quotes [Dr. Dorothy Sack](#), Professor and Chair of Geography, in a story headlined “Proposed APV trails in state forests spark concerns.”

OU professor Dorothy Sack, chair of the university’s Department of Geography, said she has conducted and overseen “a fair amount” of research on the impact of APVs (also known as all-terrain vehicles or ATVs), and considers the impact of off-road vehicles on landscape as one of her research specialties.

In a comment sent to the ODNR, Sack expressed concerns over the negative environmental impacts of APVs in the forests. “It has been well established that unpaved roads of any kind lead to altered, unnatural and increased surface runoff, sediment erosion and sedimentation,” Sack stated. “Large amounts of eroded sediment typically end up in surface water bodies –streams, ponds/lakes and wetlands. Many organisms that live in these environments, including fish, cannot tolerate the changes that this sedimentation creates. Ecological changes will result, sometimes at a considerable distance from the roads.”

Additionally, Sack stated that “vehicles driving on unpaved roads augment those trends and also kick up additional sediment by the action of their tires.” APVs traveling on Wayne National Forest trails in southern Ohio, she said, “throw huge amounts of sediment onto neighboring tree trunks and slopes, especially when the road conditions are wet.”

Potential impacts to local wildlife are another concern, Sack stated. “Traffic noise, the de-vegetated road and sedimentation of road-adjacent areas can damage wildlife hearing and will disrupt burrows and other homes, reproduction, migration routes and ranges of all sorts of wildlife,” Sack said. “Vehicle emissions and even inadvertent leaks of oil, brake fluid and other vehicle fluids add to the environment toxic chemicals harmful to organisms. Increased usage of the forest region will bring more trash as well, including harmful plastics.”

[Read more in the Athens News story.](#)