

Wheelin Spotlight

Featured Member:

Andy Suchla

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MINNESOTA

Wheelin

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Wheelin Spotlight

Meet Our Members

ATV MN FEATURED MEMBER

ANDY SUCHLA

Photos by Tim Sasse

Hi, Andy Suchla here. I'm 53 years old and a member of two local ATV clubs in the Brainerd area. I'm also a member of ATV Minnesota.

When I was a little boy, my family went camping on weekends and we rode dirt bikes. My parents gave me a Honda Trail 50 Minibike, pretty much the day I could ride my pedal bike without training wheels. Then I progressed into a Yamaha YZ80 motorcycle, and that transitioned into a three-wheeler. My most favorite times were when in my young teens (in the '80s), when my family went and camped at Spider Lake. Back then we were able to camp beside the lake and ride our dirt bikes for hours, without seeing any other riders. This is back when Spider Lake was a ski trail in the winter, and in the summertime the trails in the area were used as Enduro trails. Eventually it became more popular as three-wheelers made their invasion. My family started to get into the three-wheeler craze and what fun we all had with them. I do miss my Honda ATC 200X. I put a set of flat track tires on and hit the Bull Moose Trail (north of Spider Lake), those were some fun times!

Now I have a Yamaha Grizzly four-wheeler and a Yamaha RMAX side-by-side. I have put plenty of miles on both. I spend a lot of time around Crosby, Ironton and Riverton, as I have family with some land in the area. This is how I became active in the local ATV Clubs: the Cuyuna Iron Range Riders (CIRR) and the Central Lakes ATV Club. I joined these clubs to get more information about trails and riding. I have met wonderful people riding, and people with so much knowledge of the Brainerd area. I started to understand the trails I had been riding were old logging trails and forest roads which were not kept up the best, just by locals and hunters clearing them to get through.

I joined the CIRR and learned this club was just about to open and maintain a Grant-in-Aid trail called the Miller-Black Bear Trail (MBB). These are DNR trails, but only exist with the efforts of the local club



» In every sport, there are "doers" and there are "done-fors." Andy is a doer, a hard-working member of two ATV clubs that build and maintain trail systems in Crow Wing County, as well as a Safety Instructor and Trail Ambassador.

that is willing to maintain them. I was intrigued with this and became a board member of CIRR, so I could do more and be part of the club doing great things. The CIRR had their sights set on another local riding area. They created the Mississippi River Northwoods Trail, which is now a DNR Grant-in-Aid system and mapped for others to enjoy. Now with two trail systems, the CIRR has about 40 miles of trails to maintain. It takes a lot of volunteer hours to do this. It's something I enjoy doing, keeping the trails in great shape. As I became more involved with CIRR, I became the vice president of the club, learning the ins and outs of running an ATV Club. Our Club was interested in adding more miles to MBB. Teaming up with the DNR and Crow Wing County, we came up with 12 more miles. With the mild fall and winter, we were able to get a lot of the trails cut in and some new trails opened last fall. I have a lot of miles scouting, flagging, clearing and brush hogging in a skid steer creating new trails. It takes a club and its volunteer members to make these trails and maintain them. The goal is to have these 12 miles signed and open by the fall of 2024.

The next project I am involved with is connecting our two trail systems together, and connecting them to the towns of Brainerd and Ironton, to make these trails a destination riding area. It takes lots of time and energy figuring everything out and staying positive. Along with all the trail fun, I am also a Trail Ambassador, so you might see me out on the trails you like to ride. I will have the bright yellow and orange vest on. I am sure you have seen one of us out on the trails at some time. It's a great program, stop and talk to us, we will tell you all about it. I am also a Youth ATV Safety Instructor. The CIRR Club has a class every June in Ironton.

I just enjoy and love being a part of all the great things the CIRR does for the ATV community and the area. Who knows what the future will hold. Keep the wheels in the dirt and see you on the trails! MW

