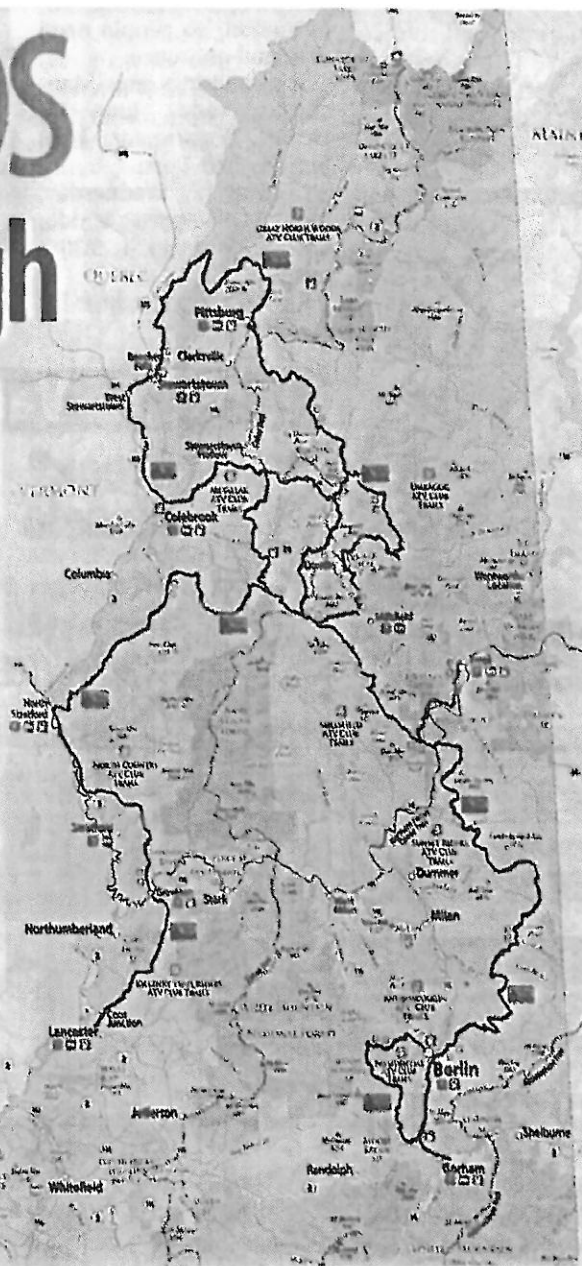


# THE WILDS are riding high



JOHN KOZIOL

Harry Brown is president of the North Country OHRV Coalition, which helped bring together the many groups that formed Ride the Wilds, a 1,000-plus mile interconnected system of off-highway recreational vehicle trails from Lancaster and Somersham to Pittsburg in Coos County.

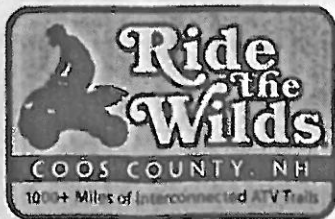


## 1,000 miles of interconnected OHRV trails called North Country's new economic 'factory'

By JOHN KOZIOL  
Union Leader Correspondent

**ERROL** — To the delight of riders, supporters and business owners, Ride the Wilds — the 1,000-plus-mile system of interconnected off-highway recreational vehicle trails in Coos County — is proving to be the region's new economic engine.

Born in 2011, Ride the Wilds started as individual OHRV riding areas in Stratford, then Pittsburg and at Jericho Mountain State Park in Berlin and now includes trails owned and operated by 11 separate, nonprofit clubs.



Someone said, "wouldn't it be cool if they were connected," and Ride the Wilds was founded, according to Harry Brown, the president of the North Country OHRV Coalition. Brown's group owns the trademark for Ride the Wilds and has been working with four cham-

bers of commerce to promote it.

Brown is confident that OHRVs and Ride the Wilds will become a major job creator.

"This is our new factory in Coos County," Brown said.

There are five "portals" where riders can enter. With OHRVs capable of accommodating up to six people, families are a common sight on the trails, Brown said. The experience is decidedly more social than snowmobiling, he said, an observation shared by rider Matt Theriault of Ossipee.

► See **Ride the Wilds**, Page A6

## No jail for man in voter fraud

◆ **Busted:** Mass. resident with Manchester roots was recognized at the polls.

By PAT GROSSMITH  
New Hampshire Union Leader

**MANCHESTER** — A Massachusetts man charged with voter fraud for casting ballots in the first-in-the-nation primary and presidential elections wanted to vote in New Hampshire because he didn't believe his vote would count in the Bay State, according to a prosecutor.

Lorin C. Schneider Jr., who is in his mid-60s and lives in Carver, Mass., pleaded guilty in Hillsborough County Superior Court North to one felony and two misdemeanor charges of wrongful voting.

He was given a one- to three-year state prison sentence, suspended for five years on the condition of good behavior. He also must pay a \$5,000 fine, plus a 24 percent penalty assessment.

As a result of the conviction,

► See **Voter fraud**, Page A6

## New report details VA waits in NH

◆ **Veterans:** Nearly all in state had appointments scheduled within 30 days.

By MARK HAYWARD  
New Hampshire Union Leader

A New Hampshire veteran with a mental illness faces an

ics from the audit:

the White River VA.

Boston.

mhayward@unionleader.com

## Ride the Wilds

Continued from Page A

"We see all the wildlife" — a moose crossed in front of his OHRV just moments before — "and you enjoy everything," said Theriault, who on Saturday was riding with a friend. He said the activity is making him rethink his passion for snowmobiling.

Scott and Terri Eldridge of Tamworth said they love operating their OHRV on the Ride the Wilds trails, with Terri noting: "We try to do it as often as we can."

Brad Bollard came up from Glastonbury, Conn., to Ride the Wilds on Saturday, bringing with him friend Barry Vytal and his son, Matthew, as well as Tim Mather of Marlboro, Conn.

"We started riding at 9 this morning and we're still at it," Mather said well into the afternoon.

Barry Vytal said he hoped that "they open even more trails."

Brown said that is in the works, with Ride the Wilds looking to improve its east-west connectivity.

Currently, he said, the towns of Pittsburg, Stewartstown, Clarksville, Columbia, Stratford, Colebrook, Northumberland, Lancaster, Dixville, Dix's Grant, Millsfield, Errol, Cambridge, Success, Milan, Dummer, Gorham and the city of Berlin have adopted regulations that allow OHRVs on some or all portions of their municipal roads.

The theory behind that, said Brown, is that OHRVs will come off the trails and go into town for food, gas and other needs.

Corrine Rober and her hus-

band, Steve Baillargeon, own and operate Bear Rock Adventures in Colebrook, which rents OHRVs for up to six riders. She said Ride the Wilds has generated customers for her one-year-old business.

Rober recalled that when they opened for business on Memorial Day 2013, she and her husband rented only one of their 10 OHRVs. But business took off during the rest of the 2013 riding season. The couple increased their fleet to 23 OHRVs, all of which, Rober pointed out with pride, were rented for Memorial Day 2014.

"Now we have a business that actually looks like we can move up here, and we went from one employee to four," Rober said.

Dennis and Korene French, the owners of 45th Parallel

Cabins in Stewartstown, said their business, too, has taken off thanks to Ride the Wilds.

"This," said Dennis French "is unconditionally wonderful for business."

The Frenches said their business grew 2,000 percent between 2011 and 2012; it went up another 90 percent between 2012 and 2013.

"I couldn't say enough good things about (Ride the Wilds)," said French. "I wouldn't have added a third cabin without it," nor would he and his wife be thinking of adding two more cabins next year.

Brown said he envisions Ride the Wilds eventually including mountain-biking areas and a white-water rafting experience on the Connecticut River.

jkaziol@newstote.com

## Northern Pass

Continued from Page A1