

During the joint ATV/snow meeting, Lee suggested that education might contribute to people respecting bridge weight limits. Bryan pointed out that some people, particularly club leaders, are aware of weight restrictions but consciously choose to ignore them in favor of using big equipment. Lee suggested that if more of the rank and file club members knew of the issue and understood it, maybe they would have some influence in causing the club to respect bridge load limits. There was general agreement that it can't hurt to increase knowledge throughout the ranks of all involved.

Bryan pointed out that both organizations have a magazine. It might be helpful to write a neutral article that discusses the issues and publish it in both magazines. One concern from the snow folks was that the identical article appear in both publications. Bryan suggested that the article be written by a neutral third party. Bryan agreed to outline the relevant issues that could or should be covered in the article so that we can take the next step to get it written.

Bridge Article

Bridge Limits

- Engineered bridges
- What does weight limit mean (footprint/load)?
- Bridges get weaker over time, not stronger. Stressing with overloads weakens bridge.
- No occasional overload is permitted. It is either within weight limits or not.
- "Frankenbridges". May have sturdy components but poor design. Unknown components without engineering is a problem – especially with greater loads which raises risk even more. (House trailer frames, scrapped utility poles, semi-trailer beds, flat cars, rails, etc)
- Informed inspections. Screening versus a more technical inspection. Screening leading to a more technical inspection.
- Existing practices for inspection cycles.

Tractor and Rig Weights

- Load footprint.
- Base weight plus add-ons. (Weights, fuel/fluids, fluid filled tires/tracks, other modifications, and grooming rig weights.

Regulation/Enforcement

- Sign engineered bridges with engineered capacity.
- Prohibit loads beyond engineered capacity.
- Contracts with those that use equipment must make it clear that equipment cannot use bridges if it exceeds the capacity. We don't pay people program money to ruin bridges with overweight equipment.
- Part of the contract could describe routes that allow large equipment where the bridges can handle the loads. In areas with lighter bridges, smaller equipment would have to be used. This is being practiced in some areas now. Clubs have multiple combinations of equipment so they can completely cover their trail system within the limits of their bridges.
- Describe penalties.
- Is an ordinance required or will simply violating the posted signage cover the offense.

Insurance

- Counties insuring bridges.
- Clubs insuring tractors/rigs.
- Limits of insurance coverage if people knowingly disregard bridge load limits.
- You break, you pay.
- General liability of club officers/members. If knowingly disregard established limits, will they still be covered personally?

Liabilities

- County.
- Club (how organized).
- Club Officers.
- Club members.
- Knowingly disregard limits.
- Some may like to think that no one will sue. When someone can't feed his/her family, suing is sometimes the only remedy.

It might also be helpful to point out that some of this is in place already so that people understand that it is not a new concept.

Please give this a review and let me know if there are some other points that should be covered that are not accounted for in the outline already.

Also, if you can suggest contacts in the insurance or legal professions that can share some general "rules" or concepts related to this it would be helpful in trying to put the article together.

One way to handle this might be to have an anonymous person posing questions to people that are qualified to share informed insight on some of the topics (bridge engineering, insurance coverage, liability, etc). I don't see one single author being able to write the article since it requires expertise in several fields. The question and answer format using several sources appears to work best.

Bryan Much
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