

Snowmobiles & the Amoco Pipeline

Each winter for since my freshman year of high school I have gone up north to spend many weekends out on snowmobile trails, whether it was with friends or family. Most of the trails that I have learned happen to run over gas pipes that are in the ground and I see that as a way to make the most of a situation that is, for a lack of a better word, not great. I see the use of making trails out of the gas line areas as the making of a better situation. This is most evident when looking at the trail 4 loop near Gaylord that leads toward Fredrick. What I would like to look at is the possibility of adding more trails over the already existing pipelines that run underground as well as stopping gas companies from closing off roads, such as Amoco road near Waters, Michigan, to the public as it itself is used as a snowmobile trail for moving between subdivisions and the trails.

While this is a lesser known issue in Michigan, it brings two things to Michigan, more tourism during the winter, by adding more trails, and lessening Deforestation rates in Michigan as you are now only making trails by taking advantage of where the pipe work has already been laid under the ground by gas companies such as the Amoco gas company. The Amoco gas company in the last year has decided to close off Amoco road, which is named after the company, but considered a public road with a snowmobile trail on the side of it as well as a sled mechanic that lives on it, has begun to be closed off at one end by a pile of wood that they had placed to prevent people from getting through. This in turn has made this formerly public road into the pinnacle of my argument as it takes people who normally use this road to get to the better sled mechanic as well as forcing snowmobilers to use more gas to get to the trails. I wonder who is more affected, a large company that does not like people driving on a road that shares the companies name, or the mechanic who lives at the end of the street and relies on the snowmobilers who live in the area to help fix their sleds as his job. While it seems logical to me that the mechanic is far more affected than the Amoco gas company, I still have yet to hear an actual reason rather than word of mouth that the Amoco gas company decided to shut down one side of the road with logs blocking it off.

Going back to the deforestation part of my argument, Michigan already faces enough problems with keeping our trees whether it is the emerald ash bore or now the mimosa web worm which has been making a home out of Michigan due to warming temperatures. An article states that "cold weather used to be a line of defense for the trees" (Batanian) but now these bugs seem to be moving across the state from East Lansing to kill more trees than prior before.

In conclusion it is my belief that the trails that have already been made or the place where gas lines have already been placed all be converted or returned to being snowmobile trails so as to increase tourism and decrease deforestation for the creation of new trails.

Citations

Batanian, Jessica. "Climate change opens door to forest pests new to great lakes." Great Lakes Echo. Accessed February 18, 2014. <http://greatlakesecho.org/2013/11/11/climate-change-opens-door-to-new-great-lakes-forest-pest-threats/>.

Department of Natural Resources. "Otsego County Snowmobile Trail Map." Accessed February 18, 2014. http://www.midnr.com/Publications/pdfs/ForestsLandWater/SnowmobileTrailMaps/otsego_snowmobile.pdf.