

INTO THE BACK COUNTRY

By Margy Lutz

Before I discovered Powell River, I was a horsewoman. Horseback riding gave me hours of pleasure and the opportunity to explore places that normally would be inaccessible for me. Soon after my husband and I moved to Powell River, our friend introduced us to off-road riding. Making the transition from horse to horsepower was fairly easy.

My first try was on a small off-road motorcycle. I had one lesson at the gravel pit and it was clear - motorcycles weren't for me. A friend then suggested an ATV. My first quad was a Honda 250. It was love at first sight. I used this quad for five years, and its 2-wheel drive kept me going almost everywhere the big guys went. But then I started to yearn for a 4X4 that would get me over that last hill with everyone else. I always thought my smaller quad was easier to drive, but I was wrong. This time it was love at first ride. Now I have a Kodiak 450 4X4 to explore all of the back roads and trails Powell River has to offer.

Recently, a friend came to visit us in Powell River. On her first visit, I gave her an introductory quad ride on a forest service road. For her second ride, we decided to take an easy trail close to town. We parked near Edgehill School at the head of Abbotsford Street and navigated the Edgehill Trail system through large stands of trees.



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This handy launch point can be used to reach areas east and south of town. Even though it's an easy trail, there are a few challenging spots for the novice rider. The first is a hill with some turns and rocky patches, but my friend put her quad into 4X4 and crawled up like a champ. Our slow speed gave us time to thoroughly enjoy our surroundings. We leave the logging road and enter a tree-lined track leading into

the forest. The trail is just wide enough for the wheels of our quads. I go slow, listening to the birds trill their morning song. It was warm out on the main, but here under the forest canopy there's still dew on the foliage.

When it rains, the Washout Trail is dotted with big puddles. The Wednesday ATV Trail Building

Group has created bypasses on drier soil to prevent damage to the area. At a well-marked junction, we turned up the Blue Trail. Here, the ATV Group constructed two new bridges over fish bearing streams with a combination of volunteer workers, donated supplies, and a \$3000 grant from ATV/BC. The Blue Trail isn't just a quad trail; it's multi-use for hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders as well. It's also an interpretive trail used to teach the youth of Powell River about their forest environment.



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Once back on the Duck Lake Forest Road, we backtracked to our parking spot and ended a wonderful day in the bush.

Do you have a quad, motorcycle or other off-road vehicle? Would you like to explore the great outdoors in Powell River? Would you like a book of maps depicting back roads and trails? The *ATV Trail Guide* written by the president of the Powell River ATV Club is available locally at Quality Parts, Guy's Cycle Works, and the Edgehill Store.

