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# News Release

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## **Illegal Off-road Vehicles Damage Lake Resources**

**NASHVILLE, TENN., (May 3, 2005)** - The popularity of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) continues to grow. These rugged vehicles allow users to travel deep into undeveloped areas and backcountry where no roads exist. They are used by farmers for many tasks such as inspecting fence lines and monitoring livestock. They provide challenging tests of driving skills on designated trails where their use is permitted.

However, illegal use of these vehicles on public lands at J. Percy Priest Lake is causing significant environmental damage by destroying fragile vegetation, promoting soil erosion and more silt runoff into the lake, disturbing wildlife, creating conflicts with legitimate uses of the resources, and creating pollution in the form of litter left by ATV users. Just one of these vehicles can cause serious damage to sensitive cedar glades, which are found all around the lake.

Owners and operators of ATVs need to be aware that there are no authorized ATV trails at J. Percy Priest Lake and that the use of these vehicles is prohibited on ALL public lands at the lake. Any use of these vehicles on public lands or roadways surrounding the lake is a violation of Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, and persons who violate these regulations may be punished by fines of up to \$5,000, or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

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# **To Better Serve The Public**

The J. Percy Priest Lake staff requests your assistance in helping stop this destruction of our natural resources. You can help by informing friends and relatives who own an ATV that it is illegal to ride their vehicle on public lands at J. Percy Priest Lake. You would also be helping them avoid a hefty fine or worse. If you have specific information about persons riding such vehicles illegally on public lands, you can report this information to the J. Percy Priest Lake Resource Managers Office. For more information, contact the Resource Manager's Office at 889-1975.