

## Roadside cleanup challenge answered

By Terry Karlos, Staff Writer  
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RUMFORD — Like locusts swarming fields of crops, 32 members of two all-terrain vehicle clubs vigorously swept through miles of Oxford County roadsides on Saturday morning, bagging litter in Rumford, Mexico and Roxbury.

They were joined by the [Webb River Valley ATV Club](#) — members of which cleaned up a Carthage cemetery — and members of the Andover Service Circle, who bagged trash along Route 5 from the Andover-Rumford line and up through Andover village.

The Earth Day effort organized by the [Roxbury Riders ATV Club](#) drew 23 club members to clean roadsides along Routes 120 and 17. They were joined by nine members of the [River Valley Riders ATV Club](#) who bagged trash along Route 2 in Mexico.

The four groups responded to a challenge from Roxbury club president Michael Worthley, who called for help cleaning up town roads.

"Basically, it's appreciation to all the towns for what they do for us," Worthley said, plucking trash along Route 120 opposite Tasker Avenue near Mountain Valley High School in Rumford.

"We want people to know we're more than just a bunch of people who go out and tear up trails," he said. "ATVs get a bad rap and we want to show people we're not that bad."

Dan Mitchell of Dixfield, a member of the River Valley Riders club said, "We're doing this to show landowners that, hey, we care. We're the people that care."

"It's a great community service," Tami Kane of Roxbury said, bagging litter with daughter Jessica Kane, a Freeport High School junior, along Frye Crossover Road in Roxbury.

Members of the Roxbury club, the Kanes said they were amazed by all the trash they were finding.

"There is a lot of Styrofoam, quarts of oil cans, and we just found trim off a car. We found a muffler last year," Tami Kane said. "My daughter's been saying, 'C'mon, people. Learn to recycle.'"



Donna Webber scans the ditch along Route 17 in Roxbury for more trash as she places some in a bag held by her son, Carroll, Saturday morning as members of the Roxbury ATV Club participated in their fourth annual cleanup. Gibby Hodgkins, background, was driving the ATV and collecting bags of garbage.

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"Last year, I found a safe. It was already broken into," said Roxbury ATV Club vice president Doug Kane of Freeport, when asked about the strangest thing he's found while participating in the club's annual cleanup. Kane and other club members were picking up trash along Route 120 in Roxbury on Saturday.

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Cigarette butts — I'm just frustrated at seeing so many, said Jessica Kane, who was participating to help her mother and to earn community service work toward the National Honor Society at school.

Back on Route 120 near the Rumford high school, Worthley said he was finding mostly coffee cups and empty beer cans. His club has been doing roadside cleanup for four straight years, mostly in Roxbury and Andover.

The first year, they began cleaning up roads near their ATV trails before tacking on more miles and branching out on state roads, which this year netted them 150 trash bags donated by the Maine Department of Transportation in Bethel.

"The first year, we picked up mostly tires, barrels and sinks, and then after that, it's just been trash," Worthley said.

Last year, they also collected just over \$100 in returnable bottles and cans along roads, and will donate any money they collect from Saturday's effort to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

On Route 2 in Mexico, Mitchell said his group was finding so much litter that it was slow going. He said he believed most of it either fell or blew off pickup trucks as people headed to the Mexico transfer station about 4 miles away.

"I'd like to have people stretched out from here to the transfer station, but we've been out over an hour and a half so far, we've filled 15 bags and we haven't even made a mile yet," he said at 9:48 a.m.

Worthley said he was pleased with the local response to his challenge, but he'd like to see their new annual Earth Day event blossom and multiply.

"Hopefully, as we get the word out, next year there can be more groups out statewide," he said.

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Mike Dupuis, left, of Mexico, spears a can while cleaning up Route 120 in Roxbury with Brent Gordon, 12, center, of Hanover, and Austin Ryerson, 14, of Greenwood on Saturday.

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While a River Valley Riders ATV Club member drives bagged trash to the next cleanup spot along Route 2 in Mexico, member Harry Carver adds debris to yet another bag during Saturday's Earth Day roadside cleanup project.

- Terry Karkos



During Saturday morning's Earth Day roadside cleanup, River Valley Riders ATV Club members gather litter beside Route 2 in Mexico. At right is Harry Carver. The event was organized through an April 14 roadside cleanup challenge made in a local newspaper by Roxbury Riders ATV Club President Mike Worthley.

- Terry Karkos



Mike Worthley of Roxbury, president of the Roxbury Riders ATV Club, starts picking up litter along Route 120 near Mountain Valley High School in Rumford during Saturday morning's Earth Day project.

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