

SPRING TIME WHEELER CHECKLIST

While the riding season is still a ways off, now is a good time to take a look at your machine that you hide in the far back corner of the hay barn or garage. By doing so, you might stand a chance of getting it in the shop for any necessary repairs and back out before next September, A few things to look at include:

1. Tires. Are they still round on all sides, or very flat on the bottom? Is that piece of wood still sticking out of the side wall? Have they got more cracks in them than a broken mirror? Might be a good idea to get them replaced.
2. Rims. Are there any cracks, especially in the spokes around the hubs? Are there any dents or gouges in the edge of the bead areas. These will cause those slow leaks that are driving you nuts.
3. Ball joints. Are they still tight without a lot of movement up and down. If there are grease fittings, when was the last time they were greased?
4. Tie rod ends. Are they still fairly tight without a lot of movement? Or are they still held together with that piece of wire you used to get it out of the woods last year?
5. Shocks. Are they still firmly attached to the machine and axle? Are there any fluid leaks, or do they just bottom out with a hard thud. New ones might just improve your ride and control.
6. Lights. Do they all work? Or do you have to bang on the housing to get them to come on?
7. Brake lines. Are they intact without and cuts or splits? Is there any fluid in the reservoir on the handle bar?
8. Brakes and rotors. Are the discs still there, or have they worn away and dropped off? Are the calipers still in good shape and not leaking? If you spent last season "coasting" to a stop, maybe now would be a good time to pay some attention to them.
9. Skid plates. Most machines have a steel plate mounted to the underbody to prevent damage to un-important things like engines, gear boxes, gas tanks, etc. Some also act as mounts for that snow plow on the front that seems to be there more than half the year. These are normally held in place with "U" bolts that go over the frame and down through the plate. They take a real beating going over logs and rocks and might need replacement.
10. Body work. Are the fenders still intact? Or do they kind of flap in the breeze? Have all of the equipment racks still have all their bolts, and are they tight?
11. Mirrors. You do have them, right? If you don't, or if they're broken, now's a good time to take care of them. Let's you see how close that bear is!