



*T-H photo by Peter Sur*

An ATV rider makes tracks in the sand after completing a short jump at Sand Hill in Puna on a recent day.

## Councilman calls for volunteer-built ATV track in Hilo

Puna Councilman Gary Safarik is drafting a resolution for an off-road park to be built next to the Hilo Drag Strip.

The resolution, to be introduced at a County Council meeting Sept.

3, will enlist volunteers from the off-road motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle community to add and grade the soil.

"The bottom line for this whole endeavor is to provide a safe, legal

and measured motorcross track for people who want to pursue their sport but don't have a place to do it in a legal manner," Safarik said.

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Hawaii County has no public designated place for off-road vehicles. Ten acres near the drag strip were set aside in 1978.

Under Safarik's proposal, volunteers would work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to level the ground with a bulldozer and truck in dirt from Honokaa, he said. The off-road community would be responsible for the park's maintenance. The estimated cost would be \$10,000 to \$15,000, he said.

"So the only thing the county will assume at this point is the liability," he said. Riders may be required to sign waivers, however.

Safarik is involved in a

project beyond his district because of the amount of illegal motorcycle and ATV activity in Puna, he said.

Once the proposed park is built, police would "step up enforcement" of riders who trespass on public and private property, he said.

The resolution does not include a design of the park. The community would come up with a design, which would require county approval.

"It's long overdue," says Kris Kiser, general manager of Kiser Honda. "A lot of ATVs are being sold into the community with a lack of facilities to use them in a safe, controlled environment."