

## PRODUCT TEST

# Tru Trax Traction System



The Tru Trax System dramatically increases flotation. This setup minimizes environmental impact on soft soils.

Even ATVs, the most versatile motorsports vehicles ever made, have limitations. Very soft soils, deep snow and some marshes can quickly swallow your ATV.

Tru Trax combats these limitations with traction systems. They are available in many different configurations for almost any four- or six-wheeler. The secrets to the system's success center around the tracks. Tracks increase the surface area in contact with the ground compared to conventional tires. This results in the machine's weight being dispersed over a wider area. The ATV therefore transfers fewer pounds per square inch of pressure to the ground — increased flotation.

The theory is rather simple to grasp. There are two ways of getting through a mud hole. You either dig to the bottom and muscle your way through or you minimize weight and float over the top. The latter option works a lot better in really deep mud and is more acceptable from an environmental standpoint. As a matter of fact, these tracks are a great way to minimize environmental impact on sensitive areas.

Since ATVs come in a variety of sizes and configurations, several different track setups are required. Some of the different configurations include just the tracks for six-wheelers and amphibious units, a rear suspension assembly for four-wheelers and an optional rear rack. Two different cleat options are also available for any track configuration, metal or poly blocks.

### INSTALLATION

We tested a rear suspension and track assembly with the optional rear rack and cleats on a Sportsman 400 4x4. Installation involves removing the ATV's rear tires and replacing them with the rear wheel spacers and wheels used in the kit.

These wheels use Carlisle tires that are two inches shorter than stock. The Carlisle tires are used because the tread pattern perfectly matches

the tracks. Once the tracks are installed, the two inches lost on the tires is regained. This means the stock gear ratios are maintained, an important consideration with 4WDs.

Before installing the tracks, the rear suspension and wheel assembly must be attached. This is a quality looking setup complete with an adjustable shock system, bushings in all the moving joints and high-speed, heavy-duty wheel bearings.

The rear suspension assembly attaches to the ATV's rear trailer hitch with a pivoting joint. This allows the assembly to move independently of the ATV's rear axle. The other attaching points are to the ATV's rear rack. Once attached, the unit looks very clean. The optional rack greatly enhances cargo space.

### PUTTING IT TO THE TEST

When we first looked at the track system, our first impression was, this thing isn't going to turn very well. Luckily, we were wrong. The Polaris Sportsman 4x4 is noted for a sharp turning radius, and the tracks didn't seem to have much of an affect at all. The steering was still relatively light and the front tracked where



The rear suspension and wheel assembly moves independently of the ATV's suspension. The track was designed to ride on a pair of Carlisle tires.

it was aimed. It didn't matter if the machine was in 2WD or 4WD.

As a matter of fact, you could still slide the rear end around to cut sharp corners. Brown explained that too much traction is not desirable. By allowing the tracks to spin when you want them to, cornering is enhanced and there is less wear on the ATV.

On uneven terrain, the ATV's suspension was a little stiffer than a non-tracked ATV, but the ride quality was still comfortable. It was interesting to watch the track's suspension system at work. The rear axle on the track system is allowed to move up and down and twist independently of the machine's rear axle. This helps mitigate any negative effects on handling or ride quality.

Shooting down a smooth hard-packed gravel surface at a relatively brisk pace, you could definitely feel the vibration from the track's cleats. But this is not what the track system was designed to do. Even though the tracks can withstand the rigors of 50 mph high-speed passes, they were designed for low-speed utility applications.

You should remove the tracks before trying any high-speed trail riding. But luckily, Tru Trax makes that simple. By leaving the mounts attached to the machine and pulling a few pins, this system can be removed or installed in 20 minutes. Of course this includes changing the rear wheels back to stock.

We tried our hardest to toss or derail one of the tracks. We spun doughnuts, swerved back and forth while running at almost 50 mph and slammed the brakes on intermittently. The result? They stood up to our abuse without even the most remote sign of problems.

#### CONCLUSION

Todd Brown has spent eight years perfecting the Tru Trax System, and it shows. The workmanship appears first rate and it works. You can't ask for any more than that.

How well do they work? The Minnesota Mosquito Control uses Tru Trax Systems and is currently purchasing additional units. These are people that live in some of the nastiest swamps known to man!

The suggested retail price for the basic system we tested was \$1,695. The rack was a \$150 option and the cleats were \$2 a piece. If you decide to purchase cleats, you can either purchase a full set or a half set, where you cleat every other link.

The price of individual traction systems varies by how many links the system requires and whether or not wheel spacers are required. Individual links are available for \$14.45 a piece, with the link pin included.

#### **For further information, contact:**

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