

The ^{www.}COHVCO^{.ORG} *Advocate*

Fall 2019



Protecting Your Motorized Access to Public Lands



Advocate

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Mission

The Mission of *Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition* is to represent, assist, educate, and empower OHV recreationists in the protection and promotion of off-highway motorized recreation throughout Colorado. COHVCO advocates and promotes the responsible use and stewardship of our public lands and natural resources to preserve their aesthetic and recreational qualities for future generations.



For more information, visit www.cohvco.org or contact us at info@cohvco.org.

Purpose & Objectives

The purposes and objectives of COHVCO shall be to:

- a) unite into one statewide organization all persons, organizations and businesses with an interest in preserving and promoting OHV recreation.
- b) promote the safe and responsible use of OHVs.
- c) work with federal, state, and local governments, as well as other organizations in partnership as stewards of the land to prevent closure of existing OHV trails, routes, and roads, and to work toward construction of new OHV trails, routes and roads, including the reopening of closed routes on public lands.



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Introduction

Catching Up on a Busy Year

Matt Hiller, COHVCO Chairman

We at COHVCO have been busy working hard for the OHV community. When challenges arise, we roll up our sleeves and we get the job at hand done. As the Summer season starts to wind down and Fall is just around the corner, we thought we'd catch everyone up on what's been happening this year.

Take a few minutes to browse this issue of the COHVCO Advocate. We've included a summary of the 2019 Legislative Session, land use news, and stories shared by COHVCO Directors and OHV community members like you. Keep an eye out for the next issue which should be out later this year!

If you enjoy what you have read and have something you'd like to share, such as an event or advertisement for your organization, or even an interesting story, contact me at chair@cohvco.org.

Thanks for being an active part of our OHV community, we look forward to representing you!

Legislation

Advocate

2019 Legislative Session

600 Bills Reviewed

32 Bills Tracked

120 Working Days

480 Hours Devoted

Final Summary for 2019

Jerry Abboud, COHVCO Executive Director & President

COHVCO lobbyists Jerry Abboud and Jim Bensberg reviewed approximately 600 bills this year and tracked 32. Approximately 120 working days resulted in an average of 4 hours a day devoted to the session, including before, during and after. This totals 480 hours over 5 months. Below are the most important bills relevant to motorized recreationists. Lobbying legislation was the quietest since 2003 and it seemed very strange and many of the normal processes were way out of sync.

This is due most likely (I am being kind) to one party controlling both the legislature and the governor's office. When one party takes control, they go back to proposed legislation they wanted urgently but it was blocked by the other party. The majority party had much the of the session tied up with social welfare and environmental issues.

Bills are now either contained in current law or have been postponed indefinitely (killed). Nevertheless, all bills must have a level of review because the title of the bill, if amended, could be disastrous. In other words, bills with a broad title can be amended after they are introduced and then reviewed. They must be tracked throughout the process. So, one of COHVCO's most important services to its members is to monitor. And this requires a high level of expertise.

Additionally, through the remainder of 2019, COHVCO will track interim committees, the Transportation Legislative revenue committee, among others, during summer and fall. Even though the session has been completed, communication with legislators and staff will continue in order to remain abreast of developments.

BILLS

SB19-054

This bill was introduced at the behest of SEMA. It was originally tended to provide certain exemptions for surplus military vehicles. These vehicles are generally unable to be titled or pass the front range emissions testing. COHVCO offered its assistance but was asked by SEMA to let them handle it. We honored their request.

Unfortunately, the bill was amended to include such vehicles in the category of OHVs. Then SEMA withdrew its support. It is not a negative as such vehicles could be towed to trails and roads open to OHVs. But this is a far cry from the goals SEMA originally envisioned.

SB19-144

Motorcyclists have had to deal with traffic signals that are activated by a vehicle's mass/weight. They have had to sit endlessly until a car or truck comes by or proceed illegally through the signal device. This bill allows a motorcyclist to go through a constant red or yellow light.

SB19-175

This bill imposes a greater penalty on the driver of a motor vehicle that causes serious bodily injury to a vulnerable road user. There is a long list of who is vulnerable including motorcyclists, off-highway vehicle operators, road workers, bicyclists and a host of others.

HB19-1026

Increases certain Parks & Wildlife fines. COHVCO made sure that Parks & Wildlife did not raise fines for operation of vehicles that are on a closed trail. More importantly we supported the return of half the fines for OHV infractions to the OHV/Snowmobile/registration and permit programs. This has never happened before.

HB19-1159

Electric motorcycles with a battery storage capacity of 4kwh and certain hybrids, if they become available, will have the tax credit available for Innovative Motor Vehicles extended until Jan. 1, 2026. The Current credit of \$5000 will continue prior to Jan.1, 2021.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2021 and prior to Jan.1 2023, the income tax credit becomes \$2500. Beginning Jan. 1, 2023 and prior to Jan.1, 2026 the credit is lowered to \$2000.

While the amounts corresponding to the 2021-2026 extension are about half, the program would have ended in 2020, well before any market for electric motorcycles could take root.

To learn the ins and outs of this program go to:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Income69.pdf>

Remember the amounts in this article are accurate. The chart in the Department of Revenue information piece has not been updated.

HB19-1188

In keeping with California's lavish spending, this legislation gives the leadership of the General Assembly the ability to require bills to have a net impact on greenhouse gas pollution as part of the fiscal note. How the legislative staff with one "expert" on greenhouse gas will be able to prepare a greenhouse gas fiscal note with any degree of accuracy is hard to imagine, particularly if the leadership requires notes on a large number of bills.

This bill sweeps so broadly that literally any legislation that could cause, not does cause, a greenhouse gas negative impact will now carry the badge of bad for the environment throughout the process.

Legislation aimed toward relaxing any state regulations that overly burden business may see this as a foundation for opposition.

We strongly opposed this bill as did business, but it was unstoppable.



Land Use

The Recent Omnibus Land Use Legislation

Scott Jones, Esq., COHVCO Vice President

I wanted to touch on the recent passage of an Omnibus Lands Bill by Congress (S.47), as there are a lot of rumors floating around about the Legislation, and what it did and what it did not do. S.47 combines a lot of different legislative proposals that have been around for some time addressing state issues. Motorized recreation in some states fared very nicely and other states not as well. There can really be no argument that reauthorization of Land and Water Conservation funding is a big deal for Colorado and every other state. Here in Colorado, we did pretty nicely as the CORE Wilderness provisions were not included in the Omnibus bill, as those proposals were far too controversial, and the concept of an Omnibus bill is run under the assumption there is little to no controversy around the provisions. Stopping the addition of CORE Wilderness in the omnibus bill was a huge win for us as almost every area was a lost opportunity for motorized usage currently or in the future and unlike previous land use legislation, we have developed in Colorado, there was absolutely no acreage released or protected for multiple use. This was a direct result of the efforts of Congressman Tipton's and Senator Gardner's offices. Without their efforts we would have lost almost 400,000 acres to Wilderness.

Utah on the other hand did not fare exceptionally well as the Emery County portions of the Omnibus Bill provided for large new designations of Wilderness in areas that had previously been open to motorized usage and several new recreation areas were created that again did not provide for motorized usage. This is unfortunate and we really wished there had been a better response to the concerns of the motorized community in these portions of the Legislation, but there was not. The only positive I can come away with for the Utah provisions are the fact the closures are smaller than the Bears Ears monument designations.

California was another example of the mixed bag results from the land use provisions in S.47, but this has a far more positive spin on the results. There were many new Wilderness areas that were designated and many had motorized access at minimal levels. Are these losses? The answer is of course. However, California succeeded in designating over 210,000 acres of contested lands in the desert as national off-highway vehicle areas, and as a result these lands are now removed from further discussions as possible Wilderness or other restrictive management standards as Congress has clearly identified these as OHV areas. These are requests that the OHV community had been making for decades. The precedent this has set is hugely valuable for the OHV community as these protections are similar in effect to the closures we have seen for Wilderness except these uses protect OHV recreation.

Hopefully we can clear up some of the confusion around S.47 and use the successes in the Legislation to protect more opportunity areas in the future.

BLM to Move D.C. Offices to Grand Junction

Reprinted

The Trump administration plans to relocate the headquarters of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from Washington, D.C., to Colorado, according to two lawmakers.

The reorganization, first considered under former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, is aimed at putting more agency officials closer to the lands they manage out West, though critics have questioned moving tenured policy officials far from the nation's capital.

Currently only about 4 percent of BLM employees live in D.C., but the proposal would shrink that number even further, leaving just 60 of the nearly 400 BLM employees in the nation's

capital, according to a letter from Interior to a Republican lawmaker dated Tuesday, obtained by The Hill.

Just 27 employees will be moved to the new headquarters in Grand Junction, Colo., with the rest divided among the western states of Utah, Nevada and other existing local offices, according to the document.

Since BLM has nearly 10,000 employees, the reorganization plans would effectively move the agency entirely out of D.C.

Colorado Sen. Cory Gardner (R) confirmed the headquarters move on Monday, calling it a "significant win" for his state.

"This means that people will be able to have greater say, greater impact on public lands decisions that affect their community," Gardner said in a video he tweeted.

"This is an effort I started years ago under the Obama administration so that we could have the policymakers in Washington closer to the people that are most impacted by the decisions that Washington makes."

The Department of Interior, which oversees BLM, did not respond to requests for comment or details about the plan. The agency is expected to make an announcement later Tuesday.

Interior Secretary David Bernhardt often failed to provide any details about the move when pushed by lawmakers, typically saying the decision began under Zinke and was still being reviewed. Bernhardt is originally from Rifle, Colo., about 60 miles east of Grand Junction.

The BLM headquarters move could be the first of many reorganizational plans within the Department of Interior. Zinke first announced in January 2018 plans to overhaul the department, arguing that too many bureaucrats lead from Washington rather than the areas they are regulating. His plan, announced last August, would reorganize management of the department through 12 ecosystem and watershed boundaries rather than state lines in what will be called Unified Regions.

The decision to move West comes as other agencies are also planning to relocate parts of their teams. The Environmental Protection Agency has moved employees around several of its offices outside of D.C., and the U.S. Department of Agriculture gave more than 500 employees until Monday to decide whether to move to the Kansas City area.

USFS Seeks to Significantly Reduce Environmental Analysis Necessary for Trail Maintenance

Scott Jones, Esq., COHVCO Vice President

The Forest Service recently released a revised rule updating their planning regulations to maintain or restore ecological functions and improve the Agency's ability to manage facilities, roads, and trails. This Forest Service proposal would be a quantum leap forward in reducing the amount of analysis and paperwork needed for the basic maintenance and operations of trail networks on public lands. These changes will allow the Agency and partners to more efficiently implement projects that support the management and operation of agency

infrastructure, including administrative sites and facilities, recreation sites and facilities, and trails, roads, and bridges.

Overall this is a significant revision of the current regulations so the list below is far from complete but any additional clarity around the use of lower levels of NEPA on basic issues like these is a step forward for trails. Examples of clarity around use of lower levels of analysis would be:

- Land managers can now construct trailhead facilities like parking lots and toilets with a Categorical Exclusion;
- Allow land managers to construct/realign up to 5 miles of new NFS road and reconstruct up to 10 miles of NFS roads;
- Clarifying that managers can move user created routes to system routes with a categorical exclusion under certain circumstances; and
- Allow issuance of permits for events that are occurring on existing USFS roads and trails.

Our one concern is the term "Potential Wilderness" used throughout the document but not defined. The lack of a definition for this term is one of the largest hurdles faced in discussions around what NEPA is necessary for a project. The lack of this definition could undermine the effectiveness of many of the other revisions, as it has been our experience that citizen Wilderness proposals often bear little relationship to conditions on the ground and reflect legislation that has not moved in decades.

We would also note that the use of Categorical Exclusions relates to inherently small projects, which we do not anticipate altering the Wilderness characteristics of any area. Our ask on this would be that potential Wilderness be limited to Recommended Wilderness in the forest plan, in order to align with the standards in the remainder of the Proposed Rule. Wilderness recommendations from special interest groups should not be given any priority in analysis.



A Lot More than Your Weekend Ride is at Stake

Jon Freehill, Rampart Range Motorcycle Management Committee

Use it responsibly & sustainably, or lose it, right? That's how the saying goes when talking about OHV use. If we continue to lose OHV access the impact that will have will be far greater than just losing a hobby or sport.

Americans spend more each year on outdoor recreation than they do on Pharmaceuticals & Fuel, combined¹. The outdoor recreation crowd is an economic engine in and of itself. The industry as a whole generates²:

- 887 Billion in Consumer Spending
 - 184.5 Billion on Recreational Products (gear, services, vehicles)
 - 702.3 Billion on Trip & Travel Spending (airfare, fuel, guides, lessons)
- 7.6 Million American Jobs
- 65.3 Billion in Federal Tax Revenue
- 59.2 Billion in State & Local Tax Revenue

Our industry as a whole has a massive impact on the overall economy and we are just starting to learn how wide the impact reaches. Our outdoor recreation economy directly supports 7.6 Million American jobs. Our industry supports more jobs than Food & Beverage service and Real Estate & Leasing³.

If we continue to lose land and the number of jobs will no longer be needed so we will see unemployment impacted. No one will have the incentive to go to their local dealer and purchase the new vehicle because they have nowhere to use it. All of the little small mountain, mining towns that rely on

those yearly rides and benefits to keep their economies propped up will be firsthand witnesses to the power of outdoor recreation.

Our Outdoor Recreation industry is finally being measured and taken seriously at the federal level due to the sheer size. But with that growth comes opposition. We lead a constant effort to fight for our rights to use public land in a responsible & sustainable manner.

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets that it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value" - Theodore Roosevelt

Teddy did more for national parks than any other president and even over 100 years ago these words hold true. So, what can we do?

Get Involved

Most activity happens at the local level that have support groups like COHVCO fighting for your rights.

Take Care of Your Land

- The fastest way we lose access is when natural resources are trashed.
- Just follow one rule: Leave it better than you found it.

Set the Example

Make sure you abide by all rules & regs while out (arrestors, stickers, width restrictions, etc.)

We are an industry showing growth year after year. If we are going to keep the American staple that is the Great Outdoors, we have to fight for our right to protect it.

¹The Outdoor Recreation Economy Study, 3rd Edition

²Ibid.

³Bureau of Labor Statistics



Protecting Access for Future Generations

John Davenport, COHVCO Director

In 1974 our friends introduced us to four-wheeling. In 1975 we just had to buy our first Jeep, a 1974 CJ-5 (my wife's first Jeep). Soon we were out on the trails. While still new to this sport, we found ourselves stuck on the top of Pearl Pass. We discovered the Jeep was still in 2nd gear. Another trip in those early days and as advocates of "Stay the Trail" beliefs we spent the night in a mud-hole on the trail near the top of Ptarmigan Pass. We went out the next weekend and bought a winch.



Our children's first driving experiences were behind the wheel of a Jeep. First easy trails and then more difficult. Our son has continued off-roading with dirt bikes and ATVs. He has joined us on several trails giving us time

together. Our youngest grandchild practiced her driving skills on trails in our Jeep as her son is doing now. Our middle grandchild and his family are enjoying off-roading as well. They have a Jeep, ATV and dirt bikes.

We have enjoyed forty-four years and four generations of off-roading experience. Mine is only one of countless stories in families throughout Colorado and across the country. Let's work together to take care of our trails, so we can keep these stories alive for generations to come!





On the Trail

Roaming the Rockies

Wendy Miles, COHVCO Director



I know this is going to sound crazy, but there are indeed off-road rigs that are not Jeeps. Last summer, members of NORAC were down in Buena Vista “Roaming the Rockies”. If you are unfamiliar with NORAC, it was established in 2013 as the Nissan Off Road Association of Colorado. These days, the club happily accepts any make of rig, something one of Buena Vista’s locals thought was awesome, and our adopted trails are the Boulder County side of Kingston Peak, Caribou Creek, Eldora, T-33, and Park Creek.

Last summer was the inaugural year for the event that is only open to members of the club and their families. There were 22 rigs, about 40 people, and 3 dogs in attendance. The trails they ran were Four Mile, Mt. Antero (including a hike to the top for one of the groups), Chinaman Gulch, Alpine Tunnel – Tincup Pass Loop, Iron Chest, Mineral Basin, Billings Lake, and Clohesy Lake. (As some of my fellow trail mates learned, I have the functional capacity of a drunken baby in the mornings, sorry guys.) After running trails, we had group BBQs in Buena Vista River Park and a group trip to the Mount Princeton Hot Springs one evening.

Safety in Numbers

As we all know, running 4x4 trails is not without risks which is why we outfit our rigs as best we can and try to wheel in groups. A member at the event had an experience that showed the importance of not traveling off-highway trails alone no matter what you are running or how well your rig is set up.

Here is an account from Joe Kearney:

All my life I've always had a healthy fear of tipping over in my 4x4. In the back of my mind I've always wanted to know how far the vehicle would lean before it ended up on its side. My worry probably kept me from trying many obstacles such as Poughkeepsie Gulch in the San Juan Mountains.

My dreaded concern was finally alleviated on the trail at Chinaman Gulch at an obstacle named "The Whales Tail". I've run this trail before and didn't have much concern going in. I did previously run into some trouble at the un-named final obstacle but didn't expect to have any difficulty at the Whales Tail on this run.

The start of my climb was normal and maybe I felt like this was going to be a little too easy. Apparently, about halfway up, I didn't start my turn coming out of the climb and my driver side rear tire slipped off the ledge into the small crevasse. It slipped slowly and my crawler gears kept churning away as the passenger front continued to climb higher and higher. From my view, I thought I was still on all 4 wheels until my spotter started yelling "stop, stop, stop". Obviously, something was wrong and, as I looked out my door window, I realized my face was a mere few inches from the ground.



The vehicle felt fairly stable as I sat there and everyone around me started taking pictures before attempting to figure out what to do. It was decided to run a pull strap through my windows and over the roof to try and keep my rig from going over all the way. At this juncture I became aware of just how dire my situation was as my buddies started running the strap around my roof, their slightest touch made my vehicle rock back and forth just a little bit. Not a very nice feel to say the least! The only plan we had was to start pulling on the strap and motor my way to finish the climb.

Fortuitously for me, the vehicle immediately came back down on all four wheels and all was good. Later that evening, after viewing the pictures, I couldn't believe how far my rig could lean without rolling over. I promptly concluded that my lifelong fear was very much unwarranted.

Thankfully, there was a group available to help, likely saving the rig and possibly Joe. And, strangely enough, got him over a fear of tipping.



All in all, it was a great trip full of amazing scenery, great food, new and strengthened friendships, and fun on the trails. Everything you'd expect from a well-planned off-roading trip.

If you are interested in learning more about NORAC or this year's Roaming the Rockies, please find us on Facebook at NORAC 4x4 or online at www.norac4x4.com.

Trail User Conflicts: Unavoidable?

Glenn Morgan, COHVCO Director

I live 9 miles up a twisty mountain canyon road. Because of its serpentine form, and the great views, "our" road is a favorite of weekend bicyclists, sport motorcyclists and even a "rent a racer" business or two. (These are the companies that take well-heeled drivers on a day of guided cruising in supercars and exotics).

We are fortunate to be able to drive these roads every day. But there is disharmony here in the canyon. There's trouble in paradise, as those who use different modes of transportation encounter and conflict.

Sharing the Road

A few years ago, the state placed signs along the canyon road that show a stylized bicycle along with the admonition for motorists to "Share the Road." These are telltale signs that hint at conflict between the locals in their Subaru wagons, titans of finance driving somebody else's \$300k Lamborghini, rock-hard serious bicyclists who are challenging themselves and the road's 3000-foot climb to the top and, of course, swarms of leather-clad 35-year-olds on howling 150-mph sport bikes.



When these disparate travelers meet, it is in many ways, a recipe for disaster. The roads are narrow and shoulderless. There are dozens of blind turns, where a motorist going 40 may well come around a turn only to find a cyclist in the middle of the lane going 15 mph. Numerous shunts have occurred. This has been compounded by the fact that our road is regularly used by dump trucks and 18-wheelers carrying materials and equipment to and from construction sites in the next county.

The road was never engineered to accommodate all of this. People get frustrated when they are being held up by bicycles struggling with climbing a 20% grade. And motorcyclists feel a need to scrape their pegs in every turn and pass over solid lines so they can hustle through the next set of switchbacks. Tempers flare. Hand signs are flashed. And everyone hates those who use the road differently than they do.

Like I said, this situation is prime for conflict and it is a perfect analog for the perennial conflict between users of trails and roads on public land.

Sharing the Trail

Solving conflicts and striving for more motorized access and therefore balanced use of public lands is what COHVCO has done for over 30 years. During that time, the Front Range of Colorado has seen explosive population growth and so many

of these newcomers were enjoying their access to public land in the state. And all the while, trail transportation technology was advancing by leaps and bounds.

Take mountain biking, for instance. What started as a small cult-like movement in the 1970s to adapt old bicycles to handle cross country use, is now a multi-billion-dollar industry and a sport with millions of participants worldwide. Bicycles have dramatically changed the trail use experience for just about all of us. They are everywhere and they are not necessarily welcome as far as other user groups are concerned.

Most trails often began as game trails which were not built with sustainability or high-volume traffic in mind. But up until about 40 years ago the trails were so lightly used, it did not matter much. Miners and timber harvesters followed the prehistoric users and brought along their equipment and pack animals. This necessitated widening and smoothing out the trails.

But starting in the mid-20th century, as forestry and mining use shrank, trails that once provided access for miners and foresters were converted to use by 4x4 enthusiasts and off-road motorcyclists for recreation. With the invention of the ATV in the 1970s, yet another group and their technology became major users of these same trails. And the evolution continues today - as we now have another user class - the UTV riders with their side by side rigs.

WELCOME TO THE MONARCH CREST TRAIL

RESPECT GETS RESPECT:

Treat other users how you want to be treated. Be safe, be friendly, have fun!

HIKERS

- Be aware of your surroundings and expect other users.
- Help other users know how to pass when you see them.
- Control your pets.
- Minimize resource damage by stepping out of trail for others to pass.

EQUESTRIANS

- Be aware of your surroundings and expect other users.
- Talk to other users, help them know how to pass your horse.
- Make sure your animal has the temperament for encountering other users.

MOUNTAIN BIKERS

- Expect users around every corner—Slow down and enjoy!
- Yield to other users—slow or stop and ask how you should pass.
- Stay on the trail—don't go around drifts or downfall.
- Speak to horses and riders when you see them—mountain bikes can scare livestock.

MOTORCYCLE RIDERS

- Expect users around every corner—Slow down and enjoy!
- Yield to other users—slow or stop and ask how you should pass.
- Stay on the trail—don't go around drifts or downfall.
- Speak to horses and riders when you see them—motorcycles can scare livestock.





Respect other user groups. They have just as much right to enjoy our wildlands as you and I. Follow proper trail etiquette and whenever you encounter others, consider yourself an “ambassador” for your sport.

Increasing demand for recreation requires constant monitoring and adjustments to forest management plans. Make sure our government land managers understand this concept and make them accountable for practicing it.

COHVCO foresaw years ago that involving User Groups in Land Use Management planning and execution was one of the most critical moves motorized recreationists could make to influence management of public lands. Land managers who are creative in their planning bring in new/emerging user groups to the planning process. They keep their ear to the ground. They detect new trends.

The advent of the wider side-by-side is an example of new technology. Why? Because their use was ignored for years by the agencies. But, give the agencies credit, they are taking steps to address the issues on public land in an effort to resolve some lingering conflicts. Advise your government land managers to think ahead and reach out to new classes of trail recreationists who have a new set of needs.

Stay “Plugged in” to changes in forest plans. Understand that most of us do not scan the Federal Register looking for notice of upcoming changes. Rely on them to keep you informed of changes that may impact your trail use. Don’t be caught unawares.

Engage other user groups when conflict becomes a problem. Demonstrate a willingness to come together and work to solve problems that affect you both. Understand that compromise is often required.

So, the fact is, that as user populations and their technology continue to grow and evolve, there will be conflict. It will change the trail experience and, in some cases, reduce the quality of that experience. As users of public lands, you should know that and make sure the managers of your favorite public lands understand that and strive to keep working to avoid and/or minimize conflicts among user groups.

You can double your effectiveness in combating the challenges presented by our antagonists and the elite user groups by joining COHVCO. We can help you solve the problems associated with “Protecting your Motorized Access to public Lands.”

The Changing Face of Trail Use

More and more recreationists—each group using higher technology are changing the face of trail use. The forests are quickly becoming playgrounds for people on their mechanical conveyances. And each new group of users is not necessarily welcomed by those whose use preceded them.

As transportation technology changes and the number of forest users grows, the government land managers are hard pressed to keep up with this the rapid evolution and the conflict it creates. In the 21st century, the concept behind the USFS moto or “The Land of Many Uses” has taken on a totally new meaning.

How easy is it to “Share the Road” as we are constantly reminded? The answer to both questions is that it won’t be easy – and it will only get more difficult as more people and their technology put more pressure on our scarce forest resources.

Land managers like to call it conflict when different users encounter one another; it becomes “Goal Interference.” That’s a fancy term meaning that the recreation goal of one group, say equestrians, is compromised by the presence of other groups.

Doing Our Part

So, what can we as recreationists and our government land managers do to keep the ill effects of this conflict to a minimum? Try following these guidelines:





Off-Highway Trail Etiquette

Keith Douglas, COHVCO Director

Off-roading in Colorado is a fun and rewarding activity. Whether you have a 4x4, SXS (side by side), motorcycle, snowmobile, or ATV, going out to enjoy the outdoors and trails is something we have enjoyed for generations. Using proper trail etiquette will go a long way to keeping this activity available for years to come – here are some important points of trail etiquette that I modified from Lori Carey’s article, “WHO?” (*Driving Line*, May 29, 2014).

Most of us are on the trail because we love spending time outdoors and have learned to respect the land. Nobody wants to be “that guy” who acts poorly causing accidents, trail closures, or other damaging consequences. Colorado and all it has to offer is a gift we all can share. Respect it and enjoy it. Doing the right things will keep it available to use for years to come!

Know Before You Go

Know who owns the land you will be traveling on and any rules, fees and permits required. In Colorado an off-road permit is required on a lot of trails and the proceeds for those permits are put back into the off-road community to support trail maintenance and trail education. Make sure you stop at the local Forest Service or BLM office to make sure of what is available and request an MVUM at the Forest Service office.

Read the Signs

Familiarize yourself with the Forest Service trail signage. Trail signs frequently include color coded difficulty levels and will indicate what types of vehicles are permitted on the trail. An example is the smaller 50 inch SXS trail sized units are allowed on some trails where the larger SXSs are not.

Tread Lightly

Stay on marked trails, don’t drive over vegetation, cross streams only at designated crossings, drive over (not around) obstacles to avoid widening the trail, and respect all signage and barriers.

Leave No Trace

Pack it in, pack it out. Pretty simple when you think about it. Trash on the trails annoys people more than most anything. A lot of trail users make a point to pick up trash along the way left by others. Social media highlights this persistent problem all the time. Don’t give other groups ammunition to close trails due to messes left behind.

Close the Gate

Leave gates the way you found them. If you open a gate, close it behind you.

Safety

Off-highway/motorized trips can be dangerous activities. Following a common set of etiquette helps to keep everyone out there safe.

Yield Right of Way

Most of Colorado’s trails are multi-use trails. Yield right of way to mountain bikes, hikers and horses. Slow down and give them plenty of room. When encountering a horse and rider on the trail you should pull over to the side, shut off your engine and ask the rider how best to proceed.

Know Proper Hand Signals

It is common practice when traveling with a group of vehicles to let on-coming traffic know how many rigs in your group are behind you by showing that number of fingers with a friendly hand gesture. A raised fist means: "I am the last vehicle in my group."

Know Who's "King of the Hill"

As a rule of thumb when vehicles meet on a steep hill, the vehicle traveling up the hill has the right of way. This is because the vehicle traveling uphill may need to maintain momentum, and it is usually more difficult and dangerous to back down a steep narrow trail. Common sense should prevail, however..... If the uphill vehicle has an obvious place to pull over it might make more sense for them to pull over. Be courteous, everyone is on the trail to have fun and enjoy the day. If your group is going up a long, steep climb that might be blind to people coming down, it may make sense to send a spotter up on foot to make sure the trail is clear.

Hold Back

Leave plenty of room for the vehicle in front of you. You don't want to be in the way if it slips or makes a sudden movement and you want to provide that vehicle the ability to back up if needed.

Don't Stop in a Bad Spot

Never stop your vehicle on a blind curve or in the middle of trail – wait until you reach a place where you can safely pull over with room for others to pass.

Watch Your Back

When traveling with a group, each person is responsible for keeping an eye on the vehicle behind them. You don't want to lose anyone in your group, and you want to be available if the person behind you has trouble. If you lose sight of the vehicle behind you, slow down until you can see them or attempt to make radio contact if you can't spot them. Always wait at turns to make sure the vehicle behind you sees which way to go. You can waste a lot of time and miss out on a lot of fun if you end up spending the day trying to get your group back together again.

Don't Drink and Drive

Drinking alcohol is extremely dangerous while on the trail, endangering not only you but also everyone else on the trail.

Pot

Marijuana use is similar to alcohol in that it can be extremely dangerous on the trail.

Respect for Others

Everyone is out on the trail to have a good time. Respect others and hopefully they will respect you.

Mind Your Dust

Colorado is a semi-arid place, slow down when you pass other vehicles, hikers and campsites.

Keep It "PG"

Monitoring your language in general as well as on the CB/ham radio may not be second nature, but some people in hearing range may have kids with them; be aware that any foul language you're using is being heard by them too.

Know When to Say "When"

There is nothing wrong with being winched or helped through an obstacle if you can't make it on your own after a reasonable number of attempts. If you've made multiple attempts at an obstacle and there are vehicles behind you that have been waiting, move aside and let them through before making another run at it.

Leave Your Ego at Home

Don't let others pressure you into doing something you're not comfortable doing. There is nothing wrong with taking a bypass if you or your vehicle is not up to tackling an obstacle. Being safe and comfortable should always be a top priority.

Stop to Help Others

All of us out there rely on each other, especially in remote areas. The off-road community is one of the most friendly and helpful groups out there. If you see someone stopped on the side of trail, ask them if they need help. If someone is stuck or in a bad situation that you are uncomfortable dealing with, don't get yourself in trouble trying to help them. Call 911 or groups like Colorado 4x4 Rescue and Recovery that are trained to deal with difficult situations.

Leave No One Behind

Colorado is a big and wonderful place, but weather and situations can change quickly. If a vehicle in your group has a problem, the group stays until the problem is resolved. It is not right to abandon someone out on the trail to fend for themselves with a stuck or broken vehicle. Be prepared every time you go out. Always carry extra food, water, and foul weather gear in case you are out several hours longer than you had planned. Be patient, helpful and keep a good attitude; because next time, it could be you. Lots of websites have detailed lists of suggested items to take on any off-road trip. We have all heard about the quick off-road trip that started on a nice, warm sunny day and ended under tremendously different conditions.

Events

2019 COHVCO OHV Workshops: A Huge Success

Scott Jones, Esq., COHVCO Vice President



COHVCO recently concluded their 2019 OHV training workshops and these were a huge success. These trainings have been occurring for almost 20 years and would only be possible with support from CPW OHV grants. COHVCO has partnered with the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council to make these events

such a success. Our first event was an NHOVCC Great Trails training in Gunnison Colorado and our second event was round table OHV training in Salida, Colorado where we discussed developing motorized opportunities on public lands. This year we were thrilled to have more than 150 people attend the two events and we are already planning events for next year. Stay tuned for more information and thank you to EVERYONE that made this event such a success!!





Meeker Wagon Wheel OHV Rendezvous

Matt Hiller, COHVCO Chairman

The Wagon Wheel OHV Rendezvous was my first time attending an event for UTVs or side-by-sides or visiting the town of Meeker, Colorado. This truly was a great first experience!

The event started with the typical registration and info packets. Still not knowing what to expect, I was waiting to see how this group of users would be like. Once registered, we all headed to the golf course for the BBQ and to set up camp. I was quickly finding out this town truly opens their doors to event participants and all OHV users.

At the BBQ, they had an intro meeting where representatives from the Chamber of Commerce asked land managers and local authorities to speak. We gave a brief overview of COHVCO and what we do for the OHV community. After my short summary and Q&A, it became clear from comments that we needed to spend more time reaching out to this user group. After the BBQ, I set up camp and walked around to talk with the other campers. We talked about their rigs and discussed what this SXS thing is all about. It blew my mind to hear about how capable these vehicles are on the trail.

I am dirt biker plus I have got into Jeeping with my wife, but the builds on these vehicles were incredible. On top of that, they look pretty cool too. As with most OHV enthusiasts, I quickly learned that what we do have in common is that stock is still not good enough. They too have lists and plans for the next upgrade.

After a peaceful night on my camp chair watching the sunset, I turned in, eagerly looking forward to what I was going to experience in the morning. In the morning, I loaded my borrowed Kymco utility SXS, and I headed down the county road to the fair grounds. The Meeker ATV club provided breakfast and I was instructed to sign up for a trail. Sam Logan, from Stay The Trail, recommended running Miller Creek. He was also going to be running that trail and we thought it would be nice to run with one of our partners, so after a few questions, Glenn Morgan and I loaded up and headed out.



Neither of us had any idea what to expect, but we ended up being asked to lead a group to the trail. The pressure was on!

It was a nice scenic drive, and we of course kept it under the 35 MPH OHV speed limit. At the trailhead, we gathered the group and held our safety meeting. Glenn, Sam, and I made sure we wore helmets and eye protection. Once we got to the trail, I chose to get in line 2nd. We got to the entrance and received instructions to shift into 4-wheel drive, lock the diff, and shift into low range. When I'm in the Jeep, this is when I'm usually about to have fun. For this trip, I wanted to be extra careful with my borrowed vehicle. I was asked "not to hurt it". I got a little bit nervous when we crossed Miller Creek began an awesome hill climb, but that Kymco surprised me!



Once we got to the top, we entered a meadow with an amazing two-track. This is the stuff you only see on travel brochures...yep, the ones with flowers on both sides and down the middle. We followed along, never exceeding the 25 MPH trail speed limit. I was having the time of my life. It was hot and dusty, but a total blast! We went through some pretty rough terrain and saw some amazing views.

When we got to the end of the trail, we headed back to the fairgrounds. After a quick shower, we headed down to the farmers market to see a live band. We brought our 2019 Kawasaki Terex raffle vehicle and set up to sell some tickets.

We were welcomed by so many people, including the Mayor. We discussed the importance of COHVCO being at the event and the work we do for the OHV community. This was one of the warmest receptions in my five years of volunteering for COHVCO.

After the farmers market, we headed back to camp. I was starting to feel a little sore, realizing the amount of effort it

takes to operate these vehicles. I was looking forward to bed, but also another great day in the morning.

The next day, I headed down to have breakfast with the club and get ready for another trail ride. Unfortunately, When I got down to the trip sign-up, the only spots left were for difficult trails. I decided to stay and help Glenn load the COHVCO raffle vehicle, so he could head home to Boulder and have dinner with his wife. I was still a little bummed out. Another trail day would have been great, but I wasn't in the market for a slightly broken Kymco, so it was probably a good idea I didn't go.

I decided to head into town. I thought, let's visit the town and hear what OHV use on County roads means to them. Almost everyone I talked with said the town would be struggling without the OHV access to county roads. COHVCO has worked on assisting the Colorado General Assembly and counties and cities with legislation and ordinances that encourage safe use of streets and roads. The user groups who come are always welcome. This is not always the response I hear, so it was nice to have people say, "please come back" and "please help support our town". I felt truly welcome.

It was Saturday night the next event was the OHV Rodeo. I was instructed by a local, "If you want to know what our town is about, don't miss it!" I headed to the rodeo grounds not knowing what to expect, I have never been to an OHV rodeo.

It started with reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, then a performance of by the local super star who sang the National Anthem. I was handed a Navajo Taco, which was more than anyone should eat, by the way. It was amazing, though, so I stuffed every last bite down.

The announcements started. Listening to the events....the key hole, the slalom, the barrel race, and sled drag. They even had dunk the Sheriff for charity. They had event classes for almost every machine size and type. And it was a pretty good show, it was fun to watch the participants max out the capabilities of their machines. Every run got a roar from the crowd.

Then the sled pull came. After the water truck came to make the track a mud fest, the first rig was up. I was really trying to figure this out. I watched them hook up the rope, on went the helmet and goggles, then out around the cones and back. Truly a new experience.

The night ended without anyone getting hurt and smiles on everyone. When Looking around, I did see what this town was about. It was about families, friends, farmers and the support of the OHV community. I think most of the town was there.

I definitely plan to come back next year. It's a great town, amazing trail system, and a community of OHV users who just want a good day on the trail. The vehicles might be different, but we are all one big OHV family!



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Please make Checks / Money Order Payable to COHVCO

COHVCO is the only statewide organization that has both legal experts and lobbyists protecting access to public lands for motorized recreation.

Join or donate today!



www.cohvco.org

Through legislation, COHVCO created the Off Highway Recreation Fund that has contributed \$100M in grants, so you can enjoy your UTV experience.

With the growing popularity of UTVs, focus on our sport by the opposition is also on the rise. In order to continue protecting your access to public lands, we need your support.

COHVCO members receive regular alerts about active issues in the OHV community. Whenever you are confronted with an OHV issue, you can contact COHVCO for assistance.

Stay up to date with the latest happenings by following us on Facebook and watch for our periodic electronic newsletters. We welcome support from UTV enthusiasts all over the country who love what Colorado has to offer!