



**United States Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources**

**Off-Highway Vehicle Management on Public
Lands**

**Edward Moreland
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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Edward Moreland. I have the pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Government Relations for the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA). AMA is an organization representing nearly 300,000 dues paying enthusiasts.

Established in 1924, the AMA was formed to pursue, promote and protect the rights of both on-highway and off-highway motorcyclists while addressing the specific needs of its members. The AMA appreciates this opportunity to provide testimony regarding off-highway vehicle management on public lands.

Former US Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth correctly observed that the threat to the health of our public lands was not from *recreation* as many have asserted, but from “*unmanaged recreation*”. Recreation, like any other resource, must be actively managed.

Active management of all public lands, including those designated appropriate for motorized recreation, must include collaboration with the users of that area, honor the mission of multiple use, and provide proper staffing, adequate enforcement, and a set of deliverables that includes a recreation environment with facilities to meet the unique demands of OHV recreation. All of these requirements are tied directly to the issue of funding.

OHV recreation is pursued by millions of people each year and has steadily been on the rise as a family activity for the better part of the past two decades. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) reports that nearly 20% of the US population will participate in an off highway vehicle experience this year. Unfortunately, while interest and participation in off-highway recreation has rapidly increased in recent years, the funding, management and recreation opportunities have just as rapidly decreased. This has led to more concentrated impacts on those areas where OHV recreation is still allowed, an increased burden on land management staff and has contributed to user conflicts.

We recognize that this type of growth presents many unique challenges for public land managers. Additionally, as a primary stakeholder, the recreation community enjoys an impressive track record of collaborating with other users as well as land managers to create workable solutions.

Indeed, the motorized recreation community has long been a leader in developing some of the most widely accepted sustainable guideline tools available to land managers. Three documents in particular have become the standard for proper trail planning, construction, maintenance and ongoing management. In addition to their wide use by public land agencies they are quite literally the textbooks that are used to teach these specific skills at Marshall University where OHV recreation management is a degree program.

The Wernex Report, by Mr. Joe Wernex, in conjunction with the American Motorcyclist Association, outlines the proper design, construction and

maintenance of sustainable Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails. Contributions from national trails experts describe the methods and implementations of developing trail systems that minimize habitat encroachment and maximize user satisfaction. The goal of the Wernex Report is to provide the necessary information to help managers and enthusiasts develop responsible trail riding opportunities and to maintain and protect those that currently exist.

Park Guidelines for Off-Highway Vehicles, by Mr. George E. Fogg, is a publication offered by the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) that serves as a manual to the step-by-step process of creating a new OHV park. Recently in its second printing, the manual provides information, answers common questions, and offers suggestions on creating a successful OHV park that will employ the resources available through private interests and government organizations. *Park Guidelines for OHV* is so comprehensive that it is required reading for Marshall University students in their OHV recreation management program.

Management Guidelines for OHV Recreation, by Mr. Tom Crimmins, in association with NOHVCC, is a crucial tool for land managers and OHV club leaders to guide them through proper management of sustainable trail systems. The publication helps codify the future of a successful trail system by discussing user needs, the four elements of OHV management (Education, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation), the vision for the trail system and how to maintain active trail management.

Additionally the AMA supported a recent series of workshops held around the country led by the National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Coalition (NOHVCC), Americans for Responsible Recreational Access (ARRA) and the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA). NOHVCC conducted over 20 of these workshops to educate the public about the Travel Management Rule in an effort to prepare the public for the process as well as the anticipated outcomes.

The OHV community continues to support the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). RTP provides critical funding for all trail enthusiasts through the collection of a small portion of fuel tax revenues generated by the purchase of fuel for use in vehicles that are not operated on the road. These funds go directly to support trail construction and maintenance. Again, while this program is funded exclusively by motorized recreation, all users including hikers, bikers, and equestrians benefit through this program that allocates funds based on a formula of 30% motorized, 30% non-motorized and 40% mixed use.

We also supported the Recreation Fee Program in an effort to create more local revenue for the agencies to properly manage OHV recreation facilities.

The OHV community has worked diligently has sacrificed considerably to assist the agencies' requirements for additional revenue. Sadly, while many have made good faith efforts to discover new opportunities to augment existing program

dollars, the base budgets continue to erode yearly. The money that was intended to augment federal budget dollars, has simply supplanted it.

The off-highway community also continues to actively support legislation that will impose stiffer fines and penalties for those who knowingly damage our public lands. H.R. 1484, sponsored by Representatives Tancredo and Udall of Colorado is a bipartisan bill that also establishes consistent law enforcement authority for all federal land agencies including BLM, the Forest Service and the Park Service.

And, in recognition of the need for increased active management on many of our national forests, the AMA and other motorized recreation groups supported the Forest Service's new Travel Management Rule. We did so however with a number of caveats, not the least of which was our opposition to unfunded mandates and artificial deadlines that would sacrifice accuracy for expediency. Now those very issues threaten to undermine any genuine efforts by the Forest Service to fully inventory their trail systems.

Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the state of Colorado. There off highway enthusiasts from the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO) have formed Trail Inventory Gap Resolution (TIGeR) teams to systematically collect route information using state of the art Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) information to share with the Forest Service in the White River, Gunnison, Pike and San Juan National Forests. Unfortunately, the personnel in those forests have refused to accept much of the information provided by COHVCO and the Trails Preservation Alliance (TPA) citing the agency's inability to stay on schedule.

This is an example of hard deadlines and unfunded mandates preventing a truly comprehensive list of trails for consideration in the final plans for those forests. While the Forest Service asserts that this is simply the start of the process and that all of the trail information could still be considered prior to the final rule, many remain concerned that if these trails are not documented now, they may be lost forever to a process that refused to even review user provided input.

I share this information with you today as a cautionary tale for what we are seeing in many Forests around the country. An inventory system that fails to provide adequate time and funding to do the job right is destined to fail. We urge the Committee to be cautious as you consider similar planning for other land management agencies.

While it remains incumbent upon the agencies to provide a managed setting for recreation, the users to engage in the debate and help provide resources, education and expertise, it is the responsibility of Congress to ensure that the agencies have sufficient resources to accomplish their mission.

Active management can not simply be defined as reducing the costs of management. We've seen what simply cutting the budget can do. We've now seen what whole sale elimination of trail systems can do. In both cases

everybody loses. What we have yet to see is the adoption of full scale active management, a truly collaborative approach and the budgets and people to accomplish a truly multiple use mission.

The motorized recreation community has a long history of volunteerism and stands ready to help public land managers by maintaining trails, promoting ethical use and advocating for appropriate funding levels.

The AMA is confident that with the continued commitment of the recreation community, a renewed commitment from the agencies to active management and adequate funding from Congress the challenges facing our public lands can be overcome.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with members of the Committee. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edward Moreland", with a stylized, flowing script.

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Images of volunteer efforts to construct, maintain, and inventory the national trail system; and others.



A volunteer from the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) follows two young riders learning proper Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) operation during the 2008 Classroom to Trails program at East Middle School in Great Falls, MT.



This photo shows the Wayne National Forest Volunteer Trail Patrol vest worn by volunteers during trail maintenance and restoration projects. The artwork was donated by the American Motorcyclist Association to the U.S. Forest Service.



American Motorcyclist Association volunteer clears fallen branches from a motorized trail in the Wayne National Forest.



Sign posted in the Jawbone recreation area in Southern California showing the on-going trail maintenance program.



Volunteers from the California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) help in the trail maintenance and restoration project in the Jawbone recreation area. Here they are marking a portion of the trail as off-limits to motorized recreation.



Member of Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO) volunteers to help map the Pike-San Isabel trail system. The volunteer is using a vehicle-mounted GPS unit to collect trail data.



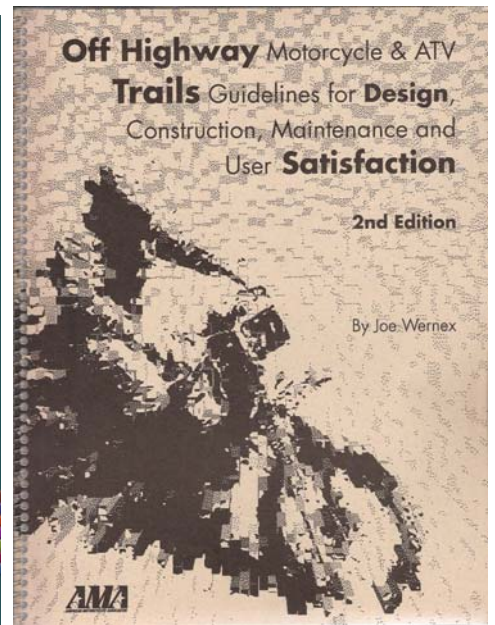
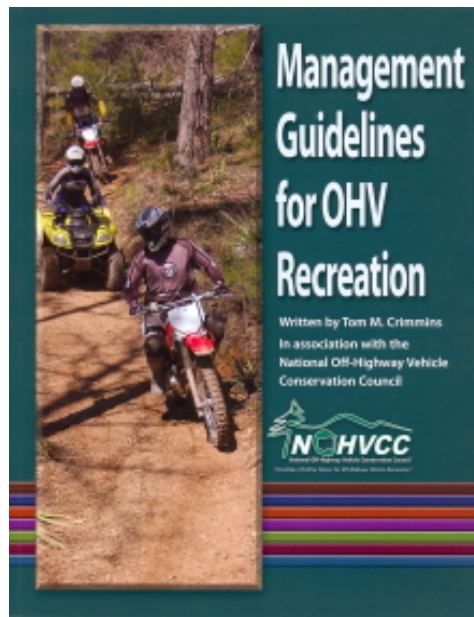
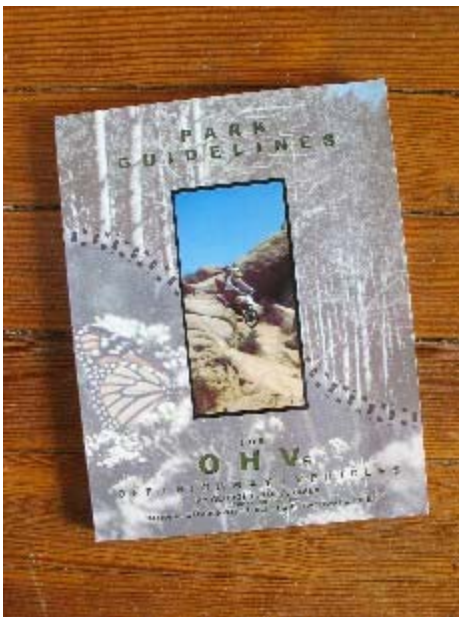
Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO) Pike-San Isabel trail system maintenance volunteer photo taken during trail mapping expedition for the US Forest Service travel management rule. The volunteer employed the use of a vehicle-mounted GPS unit.



This photo was taken by a volunteer from the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO) during a trail mapping expedition for the US Forest Service. The volunteer was assisted by vehicle-mounted GPS.



Members of the US Forest Service and volunteers from the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) learn proper trail construction and maintenance techniques.



From Left to Right: *Park Guidelines for OHVs*, by George Fogg; *Management Guidelines for OHV Recreation*, by Tom Crimmins; *The Wernex Report, 2nd Edition*, by Joe Wernex.



Across America, the number of families involved in Off-Highway Vehicle recreation continues to rise.

**Photo contributions courtesy of the All-Terrain Vehicle Association, the American Motorcyclist Association, the California Off-Road Vehicle Association, the Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition, and the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council.