



# National OHV Policy & Implementation Teams

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## On the Right Trail!



January 7, 2004

### Managing Off-Highway Vehicles

#### **Key Tasks: Work in Progress**

**Revise** current regulations & Forest Service manual direction.

**Develop** policy to generally prohibit cross-country travel.

**Evaluate** route inventory needs.

**Develop** steps for OHV Route designation Process

**Set** national timeframes to complete contemporary OHV management decisions at the field level.

**Develop** monitoring methods and protocols

**Develop** tools & direction for Forest Land and Resource Management Planning (FLRMP).

**Improve & Streamline** project planning process (NEPA).

**Create** tools to improve education, communication, & collaboration.

**Assess** research & development needs.

**Identify & share** best practices for managing OHV recreation.

#### **Key Contacts**

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## USDA Forest Service Chief Charters National OHV Teams

The Chief of the Forest Service has identified unmanaged Recreation, especially the undesirable impacts from OHVs, as one of the key threats facing the Nation's Forests and grasslands today. Concerns have been expressed over the amount of unplanned roads and trails, erosion, lack of quality OHV recreation opportunities, water degradation and habitat destruction from OHV activity. In response to this issue the Chief has chartered two National Teams to develop contemporary policy and tools to address this issue effectively at the field level.

Over the last few months, senior Forest Service Leaders have been hard at work informing groups around the country on agency concerns surrounding the impacts of unmanaged recreation. The current focus is on expediting the transitioning of the agency towards a policy of designated routes for OHVs. The policy being developed would require OHVs to stay on designated roads, trails, and specifically defined off-highway use areas.

The policy development is focusing on three key issues:

- 1) Moving the agency to a system of designated routes for OHV activity to minimize or eliminate the impacts from current unmanaged use.
- 2) Generally prohibiting cross-country travel by OHVs.
- 3) Completing OHV designation decisions at the field level.



**Unplanned trails developing from cross-country travel occurring on National Forests System Lands.**

The two teams are now in place to address the issue:

**National OHV Policy Team**, headed by Jack Troyer, R4 Regional Forester.

**National OHV Implementation Team**, headed by Marlene Finley, R5 Director for Recreation.

#### **Team Charters:**

- The **National OHV Policy Team** will provide leadership and engage national level interests in crafting revised and narrowed policy.
- The **National OHV Implementation Team** will develop and provide tools, techniques and best practices associated with managing OHVs

*“This is not an easy issue to tackle, but if we wait a day, a week, or even a year, the impact on the land and the issues surrounding the problem will become even harder to deal with. We need to address the issue now.” - Dale Bosworth, Forest Service Chief*

## Our Opportunity For Improvement

Off-Highway vehicles provide a good opportunity to explore public lands. Over the last 30 years use has gone from about 5 million riders in 1972 to about 36 million in 2000. The soaring use of OHVs on public lands has meant that even the smallest amount of use off of

planned Forest roads and trails has created considerable impacts to the environment. Improved OHV management on National Forest system lands will allow the Forest Service to ensure it provides the public with high-quality motorized recreation opportunity

without compromising basic forest resources. The Forest Service is committed to effectively managing a system of designated, logical, well thought out routes to ensure the best location for user needs and environmental considerations.

## Working Together: Communication & Collaboration

In many parts of the country, the Forest Service is working with local motorized and non-motorized interest groups and communities of interest to formulate better travel management plans and to improve trail sign-

age and other forms of communication (maps, trailhead kiosks, liaison with local community groups and elected officials, public notices, websites and news articles) about recreation opportunities. They are also work-

ing with these groups to maintain and repair roads and trails designated for OHV use. Sharing these models will be an important task for the National Implementation Team.



Members of Central Oregon Motorcycle and ATV Club installing a trail cattleguard and fencing at an OHV staging area.



Member of Lobos Motorcycle Club Inc. using trail maintenance equipment on designated trail system.



The Motherlode Rockcrawlers install trailhead signs on the Amador Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest.