

utility of collars. If predation is severe and if livestock can be managed to direct predation at collared animals, collars can be a safe, cost-effective control tool.

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## Viewpoint: Vehicular Recreation Use on Public Lands

Stu Bengson

Vehicular recreation, commonly referred to as off road vehicle (ORV), use of public lands is a very 'hot' issue these days. Discussions of public land management invariably focus on "ORV impacts" with heated conversation of the pro's and con's.

What is vehicular recreation? Vehicular recreation, unheard of prior to the 1960's, is the fastest growing form of outdoor recreation in America. In 1976 there were an estimated 5 million ORV motorcycles, 2.8 million 4WD's, more than 2.2 million snowmobiles, and 250,000 "dune buggies." Total sales of these vehicles in the past 7 years were in excess of 12 million. It is estimated that 4 out of 5, 4 × 4 owners will use their vehicles occasionally for outdoor recreational purposes. Overall, in 1977, there were some 43.6 million Americans (25% of the total recreational public) involved in vehicular recreation with as much as 40% of this total in four-wheeling.

All these vehicular recreationists need somewhere to go, which leads to recreational use of the public lands. This creates a very high demand on some areas and presents the land use manager with various management problems and conflicts. The center of the controversy over ORV use on public lands is "environmental impacts." Without question, the unmanaged, unregulated use of the public lands by recreational vehicles has caused much damage to some areas. There are other examples where well-managed and regulated ORV use can be accommodated. One study showed that more than 60% of the public had no objections to 4-wheel drive or ORV use in a specific area. Another study showed that only 4% of the public objected to ORV uses.

Everyone involved with the "ORV controversy" has read or heard of the many reports, texts, etc., that have "documented" the severe impacts of ORV use. Sheridan & Carroll's 1979 CEQ Report and Webb & Wilshires 1983 book on "ORV Management" are prime examples of the 'biased' information that is presently being used to develop management and

policy strategies for vehicular recreation. What is needed are some **real** unbiased, studies on the true impacts, needs and problems of recreational vehicle use on public lands.

One solution is the proper management with reasonable and practical regulation. Vehicular recreation is here to stay and will continue to grow. Closing one area only shifts the problem to other unregulated and unmanaged areas. Many areas of the West have documented hundreds of thousands of ORV recreational visitor days use. Proper ORV use in an area can be a benefit. It is not uncommon for a major "ORV event" to draw 18,000 visitors and generate \$125,000 in revenue. Vehicle recreation accounts for about \$28 million annual revenue in one economically depressed area in Colorado. A 1984 California study placed ORV values at \$45/person/day. Total ORV recreation in California in 1985 was estimated at over 52 million visitor days which would equal \$2.3 billion.

One study shows that only 2% of the recreational lands are designated for ORV use. A National Park Service study showed that 7% of the recreational use was with ORVs while 3% was hiking. A 1985 Forest Service study shows that 29% of the recreational use was motorized while only 7% was backpacking. A 1985 BLM study shows that 57% of the recreational use is ORV related. Only 10 states have any kind of ORV management plan and only 19 states have designated ORV areas. Some of the biggest problems with proper ORV management are inadequate funds, user conflicts, and misuse of the land.

There is an increasing appetite for more "wilderness" areas. At present, about 27% (some 188 million acres) of the Federal public recreational lands are classed or being managed as some form of wilderness area—closed to vehicular recreation. Since 1984, an additional 6 million acres of new Wilderness lands have been legislated. These closures remove thousands of miles of motorized trails from vehicular recreational use. Today there are over 350 designated "National Recreational Trails" totaling 105,000 miles, only 98

miles of which are designated as motorized recreational trails. It is not the 'acres' of open ORV areas that is important. It is the miles of roads accessible that are important to vehicular recreationists. Most vehicular recreationists do not want unroaded pristine wilderness areas opened up by bulldozing new roads for motorized use. They want existing 'roaded' areas left for 'semi-primitive motorized' recreational use.

Except for some designated "play" areas such as beaches, dunes, etc., ORV use is confined to "existing and designated roadways." Off-road vehicle use involves leaving the paved, improved roads for access to the public lands to hunt, fish, sightsee, or access wilderness and hiking trails. Approximately 60% of vehicular recreationists are family groups using their vehicles to get close to nature.

This dedicated attitude is reflected by vehicular recreationists' willingness to volunteer their time and efforts to protect, improve, and enhance the natural resource areas. In these days of extremely constrained budgets, this becomes a major economic factor for land management agencies. In 1984, 42,000 volunteers working the National Forests accomplished \$15 million worth of work. Much of this work is done by vehicular recreationists. A recent study indicated that more than 156,000 manhours have been donated by vehicular recreationists. In the past 2 years, over 48,000 manhours have been volunteered to programs such as "Adopt-A-Trail" and "Forest Watch." Vehicular recreationists are involved in other volunteer programs such as litter patrols, reforestation, historical restoration, fencing and wildlife habitat improvement.

Vehicular recreationists make up a large portion of the American recreational public. Just because a very few "ORV" recreationists are natural resource *vandals* and *bandits*, disobeying rules, regulations and common sense, does not mean that all

ORV recreationists should be punished and banned from public lands. This would be equivalent to closing all highways because some drivers exceed 55 MPH.

Vehicular recreationists are not opposed to fair regulation and will support 'special registration and fees' within reasonable and logical limits, if the fees are used to further enhance the resources of the ORV use areas. All user groups should be fairly 'taxed' for the use of the recreational areas. Arbitrary regulation and inequitable fee structuring to the detriment of vehicle recreationists to subsidize and favor other recreational groups is unjust.

Local ORV recreational groups are anxious to develop satisfactory and agreeable land management plans and regulations. All it takes is a little cooperative effort on the part of all interested parties. This would reduce the controversy and problems of vehicular recreational use on public lands.

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## Viewpoint: Off-Road Vehicle Damage to Public Lands

**Sid Goodloe**

Lack of understanding of the fragility our Western range and forest lands combined with unenforced regulations have resulted in serious damage to our public lands by off-road vehicles (ORVs). In Wyoming alone 75% of the public lands are impacted by ORV use. Anyone who has driven across southern California in the last few years can attest to the numbers of ORV's using public lands there.

There are more than 400 million acres of public lands in the United States. These include watersheds affecting rivers, streams, lakes, and underground water supplies that are vital to all of us. Although legislation guarantees the public a right of access to these priceless lands, the framers of such legislation did not intend, I believe, for **use** to constitute **misuse**.

In the past 30 years, ORV traffic on public lands has gone from almost none at all to overwhelming. While other uses

such as timber and fuel wood harvest, energy exploration, grazing and game harvest have reasonably adequate restrictions, regulations for ORV use on these lands go virtually unenforced.

Over 6 million 4-wheel-drive vehicles were built and sold by American auto makers during the past decade. Many of these vehicles, plus uncounted Japanese 4 × 4's, dirt bikes and three-wheelers, are being driven on public lands causing erosion, asthetic deterioration and wildlife habitat damage.

Despite Executive Order 11644 signed by President Nixon on February 8, 1972, off-road vehicles are basically uncontrolled while using our public lands. This Executive Order requires Federal agencies to develop regulations and procedures for control of ORVs on public lands to minimize resource damage. In 1977, yet another Executive Order (11899) issued by