

2007 Southwest Law Enforcement Survey Essays

Essay answers by Southwest BLM and Forest Service law enforcement officers to these two questions:

I would improve enforcement against ORV violations and/or abusive practices by doing the following:

What should the public know about the ORV issue that it does not now seem to realize?

I would improve enforcement against ORV violations and/or abusive practices by doing the following:

I. Tougher Penalties

“Possibly the greatest weakness in the ORV enforcement program is the lack of bite in judicial penalties. There is often little penalty in not paying tickets. On the East Coast, failure to pay a federal ticket results in immediate suspension of a driver license. In California it means you only have to pay tickets when you renew a license.” (BLM)

“Confiscate vehicles of repeat violators or in causes of blatant destruction of resources. Ban minors from riding on forest unless with a parent or other responsible adult” (USFS)

“Loss of hunting license when violations occur with hunt” (USFS)

“Move/set fines/ citations to at least \$1000” (BLM)

“Increased citations; stiffer penalties” (USFS)

“Raise cost of violation notice to ORV violators” (USFS)

“Citations that lead to confiscation of ORV vehicle.” (BLM)

“We need to provide use routes under adaptive management principles i.e. – if you go off the route and abuse the privilege – you and everyone else lose the privilege. We need manages up the line that will support local decisions, regardless of political/social pressure.” (BLM)

“Consistency in ORV regulations from state to state.” (BLM)

“Higher fines. Revoking public land use to multi-violators” (BLM)

II. Greater Law Enforcement Staffing or Resources

“The challenge will be enforcement since we lack employees. I suggest we have focused law enforcement or ‘stings’ where we set up road blocks every so often on high impact areas and hit the public hard with tickets to let them know we’re watching” (USFS)

“Increasing number of officers working weekends” (USFS)

“Having more lower graded full time employees who work at ATV rangers. They would educate the public, work with dealers, enforce regulations, maintain trails, and provide a Forest Service presents out in the woods when we need it most. These would be FPOs not LEOs.” (USFS)

“Increasing officer presence through greater numbers of offices” (BLM)

“Hiring more LEO’s” (BLM)

“Need money, staff and implementation.” (BLM)

“Increasing the number of law enforcement officers. We’ve been cut 2/3 of positions without hiring new LEO’s.” (BLM)

“Hire seasonals to patrol areas and work with volunteer groups to increase education and enforcement” (USFS)

“BLM has eliminated one of our Ranger positions when we could really use two more. BLM also cut out budget so we cannot fund the Ranger position or the two vacant Recreation Planner positions (we have no Rec. Planners in this office.)” (BLM)

“Hiring more Rangers for effective patrolling” (BLM)

“Change the funding structure for law enforcement so that it mirrors the fire funding structure. This will enable the law enforcement program to direct the proper funding to the OHV problem instead of having non-LE managers redirecting funding away from LE issues.” (BLM)

III. Closures, Signage or Other Physical Controls

“Since arriving here, I have forced barricade fencing on closed routes. It works 24-7.” (BLM)

“Implement more access control so that riders must have a permit to enter” (USFS)

“Develop transportation plan with public input; sign closed or seasonally available routes; physically rehab closed routes (BLM)

“Keep up signs of closures, etc.” (BLM)

“Elimination of multiple entrance and egress sites” (BLM)

“Designated routes and maps will work – B.L.M. MGRS. are afraid to go there.” (BLM)

“Develop specific realistic recreation plans which address; open and closed areas, riding/driving styles and skill levels. OHV machine purpose and landscape limitations. Design trail systems or open use areas which offer a challenge suited to the targeted OHV. Physically separate categories for use; camping areas, and children play areas, casual joy riders and areas for serious competition styles of riding. Strictly enforce the above provisions of the area plans.” (BLM)

“Establishing an OHV area and closing the rest of the area to off road travel.” (BLM)

IV. Cooperation

“Get grounds like ‘Tread Lightly’ engaged in the right way, they are too ‘pro’ motorized use” (USFS)

“Better coop w/county LE and enforcement on city streets” (USFS)

“Create a count-state-blm task force to address local issues and support coordinated LE actions on problem areas and look into alternative and additional areas for ORV use.” (BLM)

V. Public Education

“Contact sales center of ORV and promote seminars and courses on using federal lands.” (BLM)

“Develop peer to peer self-policing” (USFS)

“More education targeted at children/teenagers and particularly hunters. More peer education programs” (USFS)

“User education. Adding staffing to manage” (USFS)

“ Have consistent laws between the state and federal agencies. Make the law clear for the public to understand. Have maps and signing on the ground.” (USFS)

“Require ORV to take an ORV test and passing required for license.” (BLM)

“Media coverage of closure areas.” (BLM)

“Media campaign, public outreach with endorsements from ‘professional’ ORB riders/competitors, counter the ‘extreme sports’ videos glorifying reckless and destructive ORV use (available for sale in many motorsports businesses).” (BLM)

“We need education of users to help them understand and believe that OHV use on public land is a privilege – not a right.” (BLM)

“Require a public lands testing/ education certification of anyone using mechanized vehicles on public lands.” (BLM)

VI. Other

“Offer rewards to turn in violators” (BLM)

“Tax ORV with funds going towards restoration of ORV damage.” (BLM)

“Ban them totally from public lands.” (BLM)

“Fine manufacturers for advertising and showing off-road use.” (BLM)

“Require ORV licensing of all ORV operators.” (BLM)

“Require all ORVs to be registered.” (BLM)

“Form a national workgroup to write new OHV regulations for land management agencies.” (BLM)

What should the public know about the ORV issue that it does not now seem to realize?

I. Extent of Resource Damage

“Just how much resources damage even one reckless rider can do on one machine in one afternoon!” (BLM)

“People do not understand the issues with user-created roads/trails. They figure they are there already so how could they be causing resource damage by using them”(USFS)

“That every little bit hurts!” (USFS)

“90% of ORV users cause resource damage every day they ride. Most will violate a rule, regulation or law daily. They will never agree to a limit of their use.” (BLM)

“How widespread it is. How long it takes areas to heal. How much money is being spent and how much is needed. How it effects the natural resources, and how it effects others’ recreation opportunities” (USFS)

“The detrimental effects of irresponsible use” (USFS)

“The numbers of off road vehicles on public lands, especially National Forests, are creating resource damage at an alarming rate. This damage is resulting in adverse effects to the land and the wildlife.” (USFS)

“Public show know about the effects of ORV on habitat, especially where sensitive species are present! Effects include: soil erosion, habitat destruction and/or fragmentation.” (BLM)

“The extent of damage caused by irresponsible riders riding off trail” (BLM)

“The amount of damage ORV’s do to the resources and how long it takes resources to recover.” (BLM)

“That where they go – a biological desert is created eventually” (BLM)

“ORV’s are an air pollutant, and causes undue harm on the environment” (BLM)

“The amount of H₂O-shed destruction that can occur and the cost to rehab areas” (USFS)

“How long it takes to restore damaged land (BLM)

II. Respect for Others

“User attitudes are atrocious. They are the single biggest destruction on public lands these days, far worse than grazing or energy development.” (BLM)

“It is not a God given right to have a place to ride an ORV just because you bought one. Spend some time in Europe. You would go to jail there for things we consider minor violations” (USFS)

“Rules apply. Impacts occurring in important habitats” (USFS)

“There must be a balance in regards to protection of area and use if we continue to provide the recreational opportunity from riding (BLM)

III. Approved Routes and Rules

“Where they can legally drive. State ORV licensing and use policies” (USFS)

“They need to know that they are going to lose their ridding opportunities if they don’t start minimizing their impact on the force by: staying on existing (and open) roads and trails, using a muffler (snow mobiles) and being courteous to other users. (slow down, ride right, stay out of campgrounds, walk during hunting season, supervise your kids, stay on the trail!)” (USFS)

“Land designation and classification and what the lands can be used for.” (BLM)

“Closure areas made public.” (BLM)

“They need to know the area regs before they go recreating.” (BLM)

“Rules and regs/ make it the publics responsibility to know the rules and where to get the info.” (BLM)

“When riding in different areas and/or different states they need to education themselves on the regulations for that specific area.” (BLM)

IV. Danger ---Especially to Children

“Accidents are common and often times involve children riding double with no helmets” (USFS)

“We need to highlight how many people are injured/killed per year on ATVs” (USFS)

“People use ATVs as babysitters – the underestimate how dangerous they are for children” (USFS)

“How dangerous riding beyond one’s capability is – accidents happen TOO frequently” (USFS)

“The number of people injured and killed each year, especially kids riding oversized machines, without protective gear, and/or without supervision” (BLM)

V. Need for Greater Enforcement

“Current regs (open cross country) don’t give us any teeth to enforce ‘unauthorized’ trail construction” (USFS)

“ORV politics are influencing agency policies, enforcement a lack of. Some ORV interest group leaders are allowed to bully agency staff and managers into weak enforcement of policies and regulations.” (BLM)

VI. Other

“The manufacturers and dealers are making hundreds of millions of dollars and are doing nothing to protect riding areas or support law enforcement or LM agencies.” (BLM)1.

“OHV recreation is a legal, legitimate and historic use of public land. As population increases, so do uses. OHV is, and supports large business interest. From the machine to the parts service and clothing lines and TAXES, OHV is as much an economic partner with the BLM as ranching.” (BLM)

“We close lands because of them and environmental groups: no by good science” (BLM)

“Environmental special interest groups have a louder voice than OHV-sportsman groups who put the most money into the natural resources – fuel taxes, hunting licenses, etc.” (BLM)

“Our public lands are shrinking w/more visitors using them and big money environmentalist are ready to take them away from multiple use!” (USFS)

“It’s growing in popularity and other areas are close so they are headed to the NF lands” (USFS)