



DRAFT STATEWIDE MOTORIZED TRAIL GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES



Goals, Objectives and Strategies For Top Statewide Issues

The chapter focuses on a set of long-range goals, objectives and strategies for the top four Statewide Motorized Trails Issues as identified through the motorized trails planning effort. A brainstorming session during the September 16, 2003 Motorized Trails Steering Committee Meeting produced an initial set goals, objectives and strategies for resolving these top statewide issues.

For the purposes of this plan, goals are general, broadly stated, desirable conditions toward which all motorized trail providers in the state should direct their efforts. Objectives, for the purposes of this plan, are the proposed long-range solutions to the issues and the discrete problem areas involved. Objectives do not represent the complete solution to the identified issue, but are aspects of the solution identified during the planning process. Finally, strategies are what need to be done to accomplish each objective and identify which specific motorized trail providers would be responsible for the strategies within the state's ten-year planning cycle.

Statewide Motorized Trail Issue A: Need For New Trails/Managed Riding Areas

Recreation providers and the general public consistently reported in the planning workshops that motorized Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on public lands in the state of Oregon has increased substantially in recent years. This growth in OHV participation was also identified in the 2003-2007 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). A comparison of All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) participation estimates from the 1986-1987 Pacific Northwest Recreation Study and the 2002 Oregon Outdoor Recreation Survey showed a 38% statewide increase in annual ATV participation (from 1.6 to 2.2 million annual user occasions).

According to recreation providers and rider groups, there are an insufficient number of designated motorized areas to accommodate growing numbers of Class I (three and four-wheel ATVs), Class II (four-wheel drive vehicles including jeeps, pickups, SUVs) and Class III (dual sport or dirt motorcycles) OHV enthusiasts in Oregon. Recreational providers reported that additional designated motorized areas are needed to proactively address increasing levels of resource impacts associated with high use levels in designated motorized areas.

In recent years, the trend in motorized recreation in Oregon has been that more motorized areas and trails are being closed to use rather than opened. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been and are currently designating developed trail systems for OHV use in areas previously designated as generally open to cross-country travel. Although this may help reduce resource impacts and user conflict and improve riding conditions, the development of designated trail systems often results in an overall reduction in total miles of OHV trails. In cases where closures and management strategies have reduced the inventory of OHV trails, the result has often been increased pressure on other trails and riding areas and increased violation of posted closures.

Snowmobile club members also reported a strong need for more organized and maintained snowmobile trails to satisfy a growing user base. This growth in snowmobile use was also identified in the SCORP plan with a 97% statewide increase in annual snowmobile participation (from .2 to .4 million annual user occasions). Recreation providers further confirmed this need by repeatedly stating that Sno-Park areas are at overflow capacity during peak-use winter weekends and holidays.

In addition, recreation providers reported a substantial increase in off-road 4-wheel drive vehicle use in the state. According to recreation providers, this use has resulted in trail damage and resource impacts. Drivers are looking for opportunities to test their vehicles and driving skills. To address this existing need and reduce impacts on sensitive lands, there is a need for trails and play areas specifically designed for challenging 4-wheel drive use. Such trails should be designed to accommodate a wide range and variety of vehicle types (from Hummers to Suzuki Samurai) and to accommodate a range of vehicle widths, lengths and technical driving areas for a range of driving capabilities.

Agency and riding club representatives stated that there are a growing number of OHV enthusiasts in the Willamette Valley—but few nearby riding opportunities available. A similar shortage of riding opportunities in reasonably close proximity to metropolitan areas was reported in a number of regions throughout the state. Currently, Oregonians are traveling considerable distances to access riding opportunities. Lack of close-to-home riding areas increases illegal riding or trespass to closed areas. As a result, there is a need to develop new trails and managed OHV riding areas within reasonable day-use distance of urban areas.

Finally, recreation providers and members of the general public reported that there is a need for more riding opportunities on privately owned properties in the state. They stated a need to explore recreation opportunities on private timberlands and work with private landowners for access. In addition, OHV vendors and manufacturers need to take greater responsibility in providing motorized riding areas and facilities in the state. Local recreation providers such as County Recreation & Park Departments and Special Park & Recreation Districts should be encouraged to pursue motorized trail development as component of their overall economic development strategies (e.g. Morrow and Coos County OHV Riding Areas).

Goal #1:
Increase the supply of high-quality OHV opportunities for all trail users, throughout Oregon.

Objective 1: Provide additional public or privately owned OHV recreational areas.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 1:

- Develop criteria for evaluating potential OHV riding areas which includes identifying recreational need, limitations of the OPRD-administered ATV program and process, environmental concerns (such as soils, vegetation, habitat, wildlife, and cultural and historic resources), infrastructure needs (roads and facilities) and social constraints (urban growth patterns and projections) and land use compatibility.
- Identify potential sites for appropriate public or privately owned and managed OHV riding areas.

- Develop methods to gather comprehensive stakeholder input from OHV groups, environmental organizations, private landowners, and local and federal agencies early in the process of identifying potential OHV areas.
- Develop case studies that showcase the planning and development of well-designed and managed OHV areas on both public and private lands.
- Evaluate existing and proposed Sno-Park and OHV staging areas for all-season, shared use to maximize the value of facility investments.

Objective 2: Greater emphasis on developing OHV riding opportunities on private and local government land.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 2:

- Additional funding priority for development of OHV riding areas on private, county or local recreation provider lands.
- Explore recreation opportunities on private lands and work with private landowners for motorized access.
- Encourage OHV vendors and manufacturers and the private sector to take a greater role in providing motorized riding areas, facilities and services.
- Encourage public/private partnerships in providing OHV riding areas, facilities and services.

Objective 3: Develop additional OHV opportunities in reasonably close proximity to communities and urban areas.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 3:

- Inventory and evaluate appropriate public or privately owned OHV sites for high-intensity motorized use within proximity of urban areas using adopted evaluation criteria adopted under Objective 1.
- Provide legal corridors or easements for OHV travel between communities, adjacent trail systems and public lands.
- Identify existing underdeveloped/unmanaged OHV dispersed use areas appropriate for development into formal and appropriately managed OHV riding areas. After development, new managed OHV riding areas should be listed in *The Official Guide To Oregon Off Highway Vehicle Recreation*¹.
- Provide funding priority for the completion of well-designed and well-managed OHV riding areas and trail systems.

Objective 4: Develop additional riding opportunities at existing OHV recreational areas as identified in *The Official Guide To Oregon Off Highway Vehicle Recreation*.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 4:

- Inventory all OHV trails at the 40 OHV areas included in the Oregon OHV Guide.
- Evaluate the potential for increasing user capacity at each of these 40 OHV riding areas.
- Provide funding priority for agencies proposing to increase user capacity at the 40 OHV riding areas where such a need exists.
- Assemble and disseminate information to OHV area managers on subjects essential for effective management and development of OHV areas.

¹ Map published by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

Objective 5: Increase the diversity of OHV opportunities.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 5:

- Plan and develop additional children's riding (play) areas at OHV staging areas or campgrounds.
- Plan, design and develop additional OHV "challenge opportunities."
- Develop or renovate trail systems to diversify the range of riding opportunities available to accommodate enthusiasts of all experience levels.
- Provide OHV opportunities in a wide range of Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) setting classification types, from Rural to Semi-Primitive Motorized.
- Plan, design and develop trails/areas specifically for high-challenge and technical 4-wheel drive use, and including features such as rock crawls.
- Increase winter Sno-Park capacity where need has been identified.

Statewide Motorized Trail Issue B: Need For Regional Interagency Coordination/Cooperation in Trail Planning & Management

Recreation providers and the general public consistently reported that successful OHV facility development and management relies on good coordination and communication between OHV organizations, federal, state, and local agencies, tribal governments and other stakeholders. In many regions, providers and user groups stressed the need for regional coordination and information sharing between agencies for motorized trail planning, operations and management.

Regional coordination and communication should also encourage:

- adopting consistent design, construction and maintenance standards,
- developing and implementing directional and regulatory signing consistency,
- developing regulatory and law enforcement consistency,
- sharing limited trail maintenance resources and OHV equipment,
- taking a regional approach, rather than having each agency working independently, to more effectively address riding capacity issues,
- taking a regional approach, rather than having each agency working independently, to more effectively address user conflict (e.g. OHV users and hunters),
- a regional approach, rather than having each agency working independently, to more effectively develop and distribute riding information and other promotional materials, and
- connecting existing trails and riding areas where opportunities exist.

Managing agencies should strive to provide users with seamless and coherent trail experiences that are not disrupted by administrative boundaries.

Goal #2:
Promote coordination and cooperation between public agencies, private organizations and motorized trail users.

Objective 1: Develop a regional approach to motorized trail planning.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 1:

- Establish regional OHV working groups (e.g. COHVOPS), including representatives from OHV organizations, federal, state, and local agencies, tribal governments and other stakeholders, to work in cooperation with managing agencies in trail planning, funding and design to facilitate the identification of multi-jurisdictional priorities.
- Develop multi-jurisdictional regional OHV plans.
- Involve OHV organizations, motorized trail enthusiasts and other interested stakeholders in the development of regional OHV plans.
- Provide additional scoring points in the ATV Grant Program for grant requests satisfying priority needs identified through a regional committee process.
- Create corridors to link existing OHV trails and riding areas.

Objective 2: Standardize statewide OHV management practices.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 2:

- Coordinate the standardization of rules and regulations across management boundaries.
- Review and revise any state laws or agency regulations or rules to create consistency in the regulation of motorized recreation (e.g. gravel road use).
- Use design and construction standards included in the publication, *Park Guidelines for Off-Highway Vehicles. A Resource Guide to Assist in the Planning, Development, Enhancement and Operation of OHV Recreation Facilities*².
- Develop directional and regulatory signing standards.
- OPRD will provide coordination between the agency, other agencies and non-agency stakeholders in the implementation of the 2005-2014 Oregon Motorized Trails Action Plan.
- Promote communication and information sharing through websites, OHV management workshops or other public forums.

Statewide Motorized Trail Issue C: Need For User Education/Training (Regulatory & Safety Information)

Recreation providers and the general public consistently reported a need for additional user education and safety training in Oregon for youth involved with or interested in motorized recreation (including Off-Highway Vehicle and snowmobile riding). Recreation providers reported a strong need for education to help develop an appreciation and respect for the natural resource base. They recommended that such educational efforts be incentive based, fun, and area specific to ensure youth participation.

Recreation providers and the general public expressed a need for trail user education, including existing programs such as Tread Lightly! and Right Rider and education on riding regulations, shared use and information resources currently not available. In addition, motorized providers, retailers and enthusiasts need to be better informed on who needs safety training.

Also reported was a need for more safety training facilities, instructors, and user-friendly training opportunities (times and locations). Recreation providers strongly recommended that training

² Fogg, G. E. In Association With The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council. (2002). *Park Guidelines for Off-Highway Vehicles. A Resource Guide to Assist in the Planning, Development, Enhancement and Operation of OHV Recreation Facilities*. National Recreation and Park Association.

classes be provided on a prearranged schedule, throughout the year, to ensure that the riding public has regular and dependable access to training opportunities. A need was also expressed for providing additional incentives for retaining instructors.

Recreation providers expressed a need for better coordination with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W) to address the high degree of OHV use violation that occurs during the hunting season. Knowledge and compliance of motorized regulations are poor among hunters who use OHVs solely during the hunting season. Problems include illegal cross-country travel, not purchasing an ATV sticker, trespass in closed areas, operating on roads closed to OHV travel and improper handling of weapons. OHV user groups are very concerned about the negative publicity directed towards the entire user community as a result of the actions of these violators. As a result, there is a need to better educate hunters on existing OHV rules and regulations. A suggestion was made that when hunters purchase a tag from ODF&W that, in addition to hunting regulations, they receive information about OHV rules and regulations.

Goal #3:
Educate and inform Oregon's trail users on the proper use of, and user safety and the environmental impacts associated with, motorized recreation.

Objective 1: Increase the number of OHV users who are educated and trained in OHV operation, safety, rules and regulations and user ethics.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 1:

- Develop a comprehensive statewide OHV education and training program.
- Develop a statewide organizational network to promote and conduct OHV training and outreach programs.
- Develop additional OHV training facilities where need has been identified.
- Review the adoption of mandatory OHV training requirements for certain age groups, and revise as necessary.
- Work with manufacturers and retailers to provide educational information (e.g. videos, brochures and maps) to users at point of sale.

Objective 2: Reduce the number of personal injury accidents involving recreational OHV use.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 2:

- Develop systematic methods to track OHV-related accidents and injuries.
- Develop systematic methods to track OHV-related law enforcement citations issued.
- Identify specific law enforcement and safety training strategies to reduce the number of OHV-related accidents (see Objective 1 above).
- Establish a forum to review site and facility design to minimize existing/potential safety problems.
- Reduce safety problems associated with overcrowding through construction of additional riding areas, additional facilities, and site design.
- Evaluate laws and regulations promoting user safety, and revise as necessary.
- Provide funding priority for safety-related education and enforcement at riding areas with high numbers of OHV-related accidents.

- Provide OHV safety training tailored specifically for Oregon riders.

Objective 3: Educate hunters on existing OHV rules and regulations.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 3:

- Develop a teaching module on OHV safety and ethics for inclusion in ODF&W's hunter safety program.
- Add an OHV rules and regulations section to all ODF&W hunter guides (tag program).
- Promote and support coordination among all agencies to reduce hunting season OHV violations.
- Provide training opportunities for ODF&W game enforcement officers on current OHV rules and regulations.

Statewide Motorized Trail Issue D: Concern About Trail Closures/Loss of Riding Opportunities

A number of private landowners have closed riding areas in Oregon in recent years due to personal liability, increasing vandalism and resource impacts. Trails and riding areas on public lands have been closed as a result of resource protection issues associated with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulatory compliance (e.g. Threatened and Endangered Species, cultural and natural resource protection, protection of plants and wildlife, soil and water), and conflicts with other recreational users. According to recreation providers and user groups, such trail and area closures are squeezing more and more use onto the state's 40 OHV riding areas, resulting in greater resource impacts and unsafe conditions.

Several potential strategies were mentioned in the public workshops to help address this problem, including:

- Where feasible, rather than close/eliminate OHV trails as a result of resource damage, OHV trails should be either repaired or rerouted to minimize resource damage. At a minimum, these trails should be studied to identify design strategies to minimize resource damage.
- Consider recreational use of roads scheduled for abandonment on federal lands.
- Evaluate and, where appropriate, reduce the amount of time that motorized riding areas are closed due to fire restrictions (e.g. Morrow County's fire management plan).

In addition, OHV participation continues to rise rapidly in the U.S. and in the state. According to a recent BLM national strategy report³, "This popularity is evidenced by the fact that recreational enthusiasts are buying motorized OHVs at a rate of 1,500 units per day nationwide, with nearly one-third of them doing so as first-time buyers of such vehicles." Similar purchase patterns are also occurring in the state of Oregon. During a period from 1998 to 2003, the number of registered off-highway vehicles in Oregon has increased by approximately 130% (from 25,525 registered OHVs in 1998 to 58,040 in 2003).

According to the BLM report, "Motorized OHV use is now firmly established as a major recreational activity on BLM-administered public lands." Despite differing perspectives of OHV enthusiasts, non-motorized recreationists and environmentalists over the legitimacy of motorized OHV use on public lands—it is evident that motorized recreation is here to stay. It is

³ Bureau of Land Management. (2001). *National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands*. U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management.

also evident that, in addition to improving OHV management, recreation providers must do a better job in educating and informing the general public of the legitimate need of a growing number of OHV enthusiasts to have access to high-quality riding opportunities throughout the state.

Goal #4:
Provide for motorized recreation on public and private lands.

Objective 1: Limit the loss of riding opportunities on public and private lands.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 1:

- Reduce unwarranted closures through comprehensive review/input/analysis by all stakeholders.
- Work with federal, state and local agencies to create more opportunity for public input in the road closure process.
- Work with private landowners to maintain access to private motorized riding areas.
- Develop case study examples that showcase successful OHV development/management on private lands.
- Reduce the amount of time that motorized riding areas are closed due to fire restrictions.

Objective 2: Improve the public image of OHV use and management in the state.

Strategies/Actions For Addressing Objective 2:

- Develop a public relations strategy for reinforcing the legitimate need of OHV enthusiasts to have access to high-quality riding opportunities throughout the state.
- Inform the public of OHV development/management success stories in the state.
- Work with Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) and OHV manufacturers and dealers to stop the use of marketing strategies (e.g. SUVs running through streambeds and sensitive alpine areas) which reinforce a negative public image of OHV use on public lands.