

## **ENOUGH PUBLIC LANDS FOR ALL OF US TO ENJOY**

When anyone talks about prohibiting or limiting use of public lands, such as OHV recreation, it is important to look at the big picture.

I am Executive Director of Stewards of the Sequoia, a non-profit group promoting responsible recreation & environmental stewardship. Our OHV volunteers have spent thousands of hours maintaining over 400 miles of trails that are open to everyone. Yet Forest Service Staff often point out, folks who want to prohibit motorized use on public lands cannot be bothered with volunteering for trail maintenance to keep the land healthy.

Some claim OHV use affects their ability to enjoy the forest without motorized disturbance. They apparently overlook the huge majority of areas where OHV use is prohibited, such as 106 million acres of Designated Wilderness, 79 million acres of National Parks, all National Monuments & about 400 million acres of National Forest Lands.

By contrast only a small part of public lands allows OHV use, probably less than 20% of total trails. These are mostly on the least desirable lands, since the “last best places” have already been closed to historical OHV use through Designation of Wilderness, Parks & Monuments.

Peace & solitude is not the exclusive domain of non-motorized recreationists. We use our ATV's, dirt bikes, 4x4's & snowmobiles to enjoy fishing, camping, peace, solitude & scenic views on our public lands.

The purpose of the recently released Forest Service OHV rule is to allow OHV use on designated OHV trails. Yet closure activists, in their endless mission to close existing OHV trails, are already attempting to twist the well-intentioned OHV Rule into a closure tool. That is a crime, because closing trails will cause unnecessary damage by concentrating OHV use. It is also a shame, since there are too few trails for the number of families who enjoy OHV recreation.

I have hiked on trails that have been loved to death by too many hikers. The difference is the hikers chose to over use the trail; OHV users are being forced onto too few trails.

The Forest Service understands public lands are for all people & states OHV use is a valid form of recreation on public lands.

There are enough public lands for all of us to enjoy, except for those selfish few who apparently want it all for themselves.

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