

2021 MOTORIZED RECREATION REPORT

For BLM Managed Lands in Idaho

Prepared for:

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management



By

The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council



2021 Motorized Recreation Report

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2

Executive Summary..... 1

Introduction 2

Project Purpose..... 2

Demographics of OHV Enthusiasts 4

Idaho Recreation Statistics 6

Reporting Process 6

Community Workshops 6

Comments and Feedback..... 7

Workshop Priorities 8

US Bureau of Land Management in Idaho OHV Recreation Needs and Opportunities..... 10

NOHVCC Recommendations for the BLM:..... 14

BLM Staff Recommendations: Partnership and Facility Needs: 15

Conclusion..... 19

About NOHVCC 19

Project Team 20

References 20

Attachments..... 20

Executive Summary

Nearly 65% of the acres that make up the State of Idaho are public land. Of this 65%, 22% are managed by the Bureau of Land Management. While a preponderance of the land managed by BLM is in the southern part of the state, there are recreation opportunities throughout Idaho. Many of the 14 BLM Field Offices in Idaho manage areas where OHV recreation opportunities are available.

Nearly 9% of the population in Idaho (1.787 million people in 2019) participates in OHV recreation. Idaho recorded approximately 160,000 OHV registrations in 2021, which does not include the many non-residents that purchased OHV registrations. Outdoor recreation in Idaho generates 3% of the State's GDP with a total value added of 2.5 billion. A 2012 economic impact study by the University of Idaho showed that OHV recreation contributes \$434 million per year (\$186 million in trip expenditures and \$248 million in capital expenditures) into the State's economy. This means that OHV recreation accounts for 17% of Idaho's outdoor recreation economy.

Many of the OHV recreation opportunities in Idaho have been funded by grant dollars managed by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. The Department disperses nearly \$300,000 per year from the Motorbike Fund, which is generated by the sale of OHV registrations, nearly \$500,000 per year from the Off-Road Motor Vehicle (ORMV) Account, which is funded by a portion of the State's total gas tax revenue, and approximately \$500,000 from the Recreational Trails Program which is a federal program.

The work funded by these grants is often completed by land managers in partnership with local clubs and enthusiasts. Idaho has a strong history of OHV volunteerism with numerous state associations and local clubs taking on volunteer projects.

These funding programs and proactive partnerships among land managers and OHV enthusiasts have been leveraged to create outstanding OHV opportunities across the state. This report was commissioned by BLM to identify issues and opportunities for improvement in OHV recreation opportunities on lands managed by the BLM in Idaho.

This process behind the development of this report was based on the National Motorized Recreation Strategy and the Individual State Action plan created by BLM in partnership with NOHVCC. A series of community listening sessions were held across Idaho to solicit public feedback on how they would like to see OHV recreation opportunities improved. NOHVCC received 66 unique comment forms from across the state expressing needs and opportunities for numerous trail systems and riding areas.

Although participation was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic; comments received were informed and substantive, which led to a high-quality and detailed report.

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

Introduction

In 2014 NOHVCC and BLM partnered to develop a National Motorized Recreation Action Strategy designed to help the BLM develop individual state action plans for providing high quality OHV opportunities and develop partnerships to help maintain those opportunities. This process has created state specific OHV action plans in 7 other states where BLM manages public land. The strategies will be used to guide future travel management and resource management decisions; however, the strategies are NOT part of a specific travel management plan or resource management plan.

To accomplish this objective BLM partnered with NOHVCC in creating action plans through a community driven process whereby enthusiasts can participate in an open forum. This unique approach provides a platform for candid discussion allowing the OHV community the ability to share ideas on how the BLM can enhance recreational experiences. The objectives of this process include achieving a greater understanding of existing and potential OHV opportunities, identifying priorities from enthusiasts, discussing methods to accomplish these goals by leveraging resources, and further developing inter-agency and community relationships through communication and action.

NOHVCC's role in this partnership is to facilitate a process whereby the OHV community is engaged in a dialogue that is driven by the public for the benefit of the public. Consequently, the recommended future management practices are specific to enhancing OHV trail systems and riding opportunities to include (but not limited to) repairing and developing current and new infrastructure, the design of new trail systems, new riding and staging areas, and improved communication between users, grassroots groups, and agencies.

Project Purpose

The development of an Idaho Motorized Recreation Action Plan will provide numerous benefits to the BLM, its partners, and the public at large. It will provide for community efforts to plan for and manage motorized recreation opportunities, services, and facilities. The strategic planning process will assist BLM by prioritizing motorized recreation areas and leveraging resources through community partners to ensure that high-priority sites, services, and activities are provided.

To achieve consistent motorized recreation management on a national scale NOHVCC believes that it is necessary to utilize a step-down approach. This method will reduce expenses and allocate joint funding directly to projects. The BLM Idaho State Office Mountain Region has been provided an opportunity to coordinate this effort with NOHVCC and existing State OHV organizations to gather information from local communities, motorized organizations, and individual motorized recreationists. The information gathered can then be used to inform planning processes and help create a dialog between motorized recreationists, local communities, and OHV managers. This will lead to better relationships and partnerships that will result in lasting solutions that benefit riders, local communities, and the land management agencies.

NOHVCC worked with BLM and local stakeholders to organize and facilitate a series of community workshops (i.e., listening sessions) designed to gather information from the motorized recreation

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

community. Workshop sites were located near BLM managed lands in Idaho. NOHVCC also worked closely with state motorized recreation associations and clubs to identify key community motorized organizations and individuals to participate in the workshops.

This report is the outcome of the workshops and will be shared with BLM and the public. The information contained in this report will be used to help land managers, NOHVCC, and the public achieve the following objectives:

- Provide high-quality OHV opportunities and experiences that meet the needs of motorized users and result in enhanced resource protection
- Develop riding opportunities within the urban interface (i.e., close-to-town settings)
- Identify current motorized recreation opportunities on BLM managed lands and develop ideas on how to improve these opportunities
- Identify potential opportunities on BLM managed lands
- Identify methods to inform the public on responsible use
- Inform the public on the decision-making process regarding motorized recreation
- Inform the public how they can best become effective participants in planning processes
- Help provide for seamless management between agencies
- Gain a better understanding of motorized recreationists' needs
- Develop partnerships that result in high-quality recreational opportunities
- Develop a report and spreadsheet and/or GIS data to indicate this information
- Gain better information to integrate into agency planning documents
- Create and enhance partnerships to better manage motorized recreation opportunities and experiences
- Enhance motorized recreation opportunities to help local economies

To enhance user experience, it is imperative to understand the needs of riders. Riding areas and trails should be designed to meet the riders' needs, provide desired opportunities, and offer quality experiences. Riding areas that do not meet riders' needs will not be used or supported. Riders desire trails that include some or all the following: fun, varying degrees of challenge, signing, trail maps, trail loops, distance, scenery, destinations, points of interest, open areas, camping, parking, and amenities. Once specific desires are recognized, land managers can make informed decisions on the types of motorized recreation needs of local users. User needs and desires can vary, so riding opportunities must be managed accordingly to ensure resource protection and sustainability for many years to come. Motorized recreation enthusiasts can desire activities as diverse as recreational trail riding, non-competitive organized trail riding, competitive activities, observed trials, motocross tracks for practice and competition, hill climbs for practice and competition, obstacle courses, open areas and more. To learn more about these types of uses please refer to "*Great Trails: Providing Quality OHV Trails and Experiences*" written by Dick Dufourd in association with NOHVCC in 2015.

2021 Motorized Recreation Report



Demographics of OHV Enthusiasts

Note: These figures represent the most recently available figures and do not accurately capture the increase in outdoor and OHV recreation witnessed in 2020.

To better understand what OHV enthusiasts, want, you must first know who these enthusiasts are. The findings of a 2014 Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) survey of motorcycle and ATV owners are below. Since the side-by-side industry is still relatively new, statistics are not available for this type of OHV recreation.

Demographics	Motorcycle	ATV
Mean Age	44.8 Years	40.3 Years
Median Age	47 Years	39 Years
Male	86%	82%
Female	14%	18%
Single	38%	40%
Married	61%	59%
Some College	29%	27%
College Graduate	20%	19%
Postgraduate	23%	17%
Employed	71%	67%
Students	5%	10%
Retired	15%	11%
Median Household Income	\$62,200	\$63,400
Owners Have Children Under 16	31%	38%

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

ATV and motorcycle riders are similar in many ways. The average rider is in his or her forties, married with a family, and is employed with disposable income. ATV and motorcycle owners earned about \$10,000 more than the US national median income of \$52,500 in 2014. ATV and motorcycle riders generally start young and are surrounded by people who have a positive view of OHV recreation. Some other quick facts about ATV and motorcycle riders in the US include:

- Most motorcycle riders begin riding off-highway in their preteens around the age of 12
- 66% of motorcycle owners indicated their family/friends had a positive attitude towards their interest in motorcycling; only 5% had a negative attitude
- 83% of ATV owners indicated their family/friends had a positive attitude toward their interest in ATV's; only 10% had a negative attitude
- 39% of motorcycle owners participate in hiking and camping; 34% participate in hunting and fishing
- 50% of ATV owners participate in hiking and camping; 58% participate in hunting and fishing
- 53% of off-highway motorcycle operation is on public land in the Western United States

Powersports dealers indicate the average OHV owner uses ATVs and side-by-sides for more than recreational use. These machines are versatile and provide users with the option to use the equipment for both work and play. OHVs (ATVs and side-by-sides in particular) are highly capable machines in both work and recreation settings. Finally, a thriving aftermarket provides myriad accessories that allow for extensive customization to an individual owner's priorities.



Idaho Recreation Statistics

Between 2010 and 2020 the population of Idaho grew 14% from 1,567,482 people to 1,839,106 people. A study conducted by the Outdoor Industry Association found that 79% of Idaho residents participated in some form of outdoor recreation. This places them third for outdoor recreation participation in the country, behind only Alaska and Montana. The 2018 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) found that ATV riding and UTV/Jeep riding are among the top five increasing outdoor recreation use types in the State. Over 50% of participants in a survey conducted as part of the SCORP identified UTV riding as the most trending outdoor recreation activity in their region of Idaho.

A 2012 economic impact study found that Idahoans took 959,000 OHV trips per year and spent \$186 million of household expenditures on these trips. On top of this the study found that there were \$284 million of capital expenditures in the same period. Idaho residents purchased approximately 18,000 new powersports units in 2021.

Reporting Process

To develop a Motorized Recreation Report for Idaho this project was divided into several phases:

- Phase I: Interview land managers in each Field Office across the state. Conduct research and compile information regarding current OHV riding areas, facilities, trail infrastructure, and any other relevant information.
- Phase II: Facilitate five public listening sessions across Idaho
 - Engage OHV enthusiasts in an open dialogue to address five specific questions on riding location, types of OHVs used to participate in activity, identify potential/new locations, improvements that need to be made to enhance rider experience. Gather all comments and feedback from participants then have the group prioritize their top three recommendations.
- Phase III: Compile comments and feedback, and develop tables to display acreages, OHV riding areas and current infrastructure.
- Phase IV: Develop final report to convey the priorities as outlined by the enthusiasts that recreate in Idaho, summarize priorities, and make final recommendations for the Action Plan.

Community Workshops

NOHVCC reached out to partnering organizations, NOHVCC State Partners, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation OHV Program, the BLM Idaho Travel Management Lead, and state and regional OHV clubs notifying them of the Idaho OHV Recreation Action Plan and to garner support for the initiative. The intent was to invite the OHV community to participate in the workshops and share their thoughts on how land managers can enhance recreational experience on public lands. 66 participants took part in the NOHVCC-facilitated listening sessions. Listening sessions were held in Challis, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Boise, and Coeur d'Alene. Two additional virtual sessions were held to capture

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

additional comments. Those who wished to do so could also provide e-mail comments through November 17, 2021. Participants represented a broad array of OHV users, County Commissioners, Federal, State, and Municipal representatives, and the public.

Listening Session Location	Date	Number of Participants	Participating Organizations and Representatives
Challis	9/13/21	4	IDPR, BLM
Idaho Falls	9/14/21	12	Eagle Rock Off-Roaders, Snake River Off-Road, IDPR, BLM
Pocatello	9/15/21	3	IDPR, BLM
Boise	9/16/21	12	ID State ATV Assoc, IDPR, Idaho Rec Council, Boise ATV, Treasure Valley Trail Machine Assoc, Southern Idaho Desert Riders Assoc, Idaho Off-Road 4x4 Club, BLM
Coeur d'Alene	9/17/21	22	N. Idaho Jeep, N. Idaho Trail Blazers, Backcountry ATV, Rough Riders, PANTRA, IDPR, BLM
Virtual Sessions	10/6 & 10/13	7	Various Organizations
E-mail Comments	9/13-10/17	6	Various Organizations
	Total	66	

Comments and Feedback

The workshops opened with an overview of the OHV Action Plan process for Idaho, including the objectives and outcomes of the community workshop process. It was emphasized during this time that this process was not a substitute for participating in agency planning. Participants were encouraged to stay engaged in their local processes.

The second part of the workshops focused on engaging participants in a group discussion pertaining to how the land managers could enhance user experience on public lands. The participants were divided into groups and each participant was given an opportunity to fill out a comment form. The following questions were asked of workshop participants:

- Where do you ride on BLM managed lands in Idaho? (Area and/or Trail)
- What OHVs do you ride in this area/trail?
 - Location: (Area/Trail)
 - Type of OHV:
- What are your favorite features in this area/trail?
- What improvements/experiences are you looking for in this area?
- Where might these improvements/experiences fit on public land in Idaho?
- What could the BLM do better to enhance your OHV recreation experience?

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

After each participant answered the above questions, they were asked to discuss with their group how they felt the BLM could best enhance their OHV recreation experience. The groups were then instructed to look for common themes in their answers and to prioritize the three most important answers as determined by the group. A detailed record of individual comments may be found in the Appendix.

Once group activities were completed, the facilitators reconvened all participants and asked each small group to share their top three answers with the entire group. The facilitators recorded the answers from each group on a flip chart. Once every group had a chance to share their answers, each participant was asked to vote on their top three recommendations. The workshop priorities are listed below.

Workshop Priorities

The tables below list priorities indicated by the groups during each workshop and are separated by workshop location.

Challis, ID Priorities-NOHVCC Listening Sessions	
Priority	Description
1	Better communication with Forest Service
2	Improved connectivity of routes between land managers
3	Increased and improved access
4	Increased and improved signage
5	Cooperative management of Grouse Peak/Development of OHV opportunities at Grouse Peak
6	Streamline NEPA/approval process
7	Focus on erosion control and maintenance
8	Install beginner/training areas
9	Establish designated/safe OHV crossing of the Salmon River
10	Utilize momentum of plans and issues, don't let local engagement and enthusiasm die off
11	Conduct route inventory
12	Perform scaled down NEPA, focus on project area not whole field office
13	Install designated trailhead, facilities, and bathrooms

Idaho Falls, ID Priorities-NOHVCC Listening Sessions	
Priority	Description
1	Improve/maintain communication with user groups
2	Keep historical 4x4 routes open to such use
3	Recognize use at Hell's Half Acre
4	Expansion of 4x4 opportunities
5	Increase in difficulty of 4x4 trails
6	Improve/install signage at Hell's Half Acre
7	Improve/create maps for Hell's Half Acre
8	Trash cans at OHV facilities

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

9	Restrooms at OHV facilities
10	Increased trail maintenance
11	Increased educational efforts

Pocatello, ID Priorities-NOHVCC Listening Sessions	
Priority	Description
1	Secure Access to public lands
2	Pursue easements with private landowners to improve access

Boise, ID Priorities-NOHVCC Listening Sessions	
Priority	Description
1	Education of OHV renters and new users
2	Plan for garbage removal from OHV areas
3	Land manager communication (consistent boundaries, improved signage, consistent trail width management between managers, etc.)
4	Install shelter and tot-lot at Hemmingway Butte
5	Increased enforcement/land manager presence at OHV areas (education first focus of enforcement)
6	Utilize natural features in single-track trails
7	Dispersal of users, trails, and trailheads (don't focus all use in one place)
8	Allow adaptive management, manage wider machines
9	Install open challenge areas, play areas, and hill climbs
10	Increase education (stewardship, mapping, width limiters, dealer education)
11	Increase opportunities for larger machines
12	Catalog and inventory BLM trails
13	Adopt cow trials and social trails where appropriate

Coeur d'Alene, ID Priorities-NOHVCC Listening Sessions	
Priority	Description
1	Designate/create 4x4 and UTV trails opportunities that compete with other states
2	Maintain current access and increase where possible
3	Increase camping, trailheads, and facilities for OHV
4	Replicate Wild Bill OHV Area
5	Stop closing trails
6	Install training area/challenge area
7	Follow and utilize existing RMP/TMP documents
8	Improve signage and maps
9	Better communication between agencies and public

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

10	Provide opportunities for influx of new users
11	Disperse users for safety
12	Utilize partnerships and adopt-a-trail programs
13	Utilize funding to help maintain trails (ID OHV sticker program)
14	Sponsor trash pickups
15	Increased education and enforcement
16	Widen 50" trails when appropriate
17	Install new trail systems and loop opportunities
18	Maintain existing trails
19	Adopt a designated CB radio channel for OHV trails

Virtual Session Priorities, ID-NOHVCC Listening Sessions	
Priority	Description
1	Create database of landowners that border BLM managed lands
2	Adopt an official adopt-a-trail program
3	OnX type reporting system for trail conditions/issues
4	Coordination of seasonal closures between land managers
5	Eliminate inconsistency of vehicle types allowed on trails
6	Consistent signing (BLM and other land managers)
7	Widen trails and open to full size vehicles where appropriate
8	Maintain and improve access
9	Provide heavy traffic notifications

US Bureau of Land Management in Idaho OHV Recreation Needs and Opportunities

The BLM manages nearly 12 million acres of land in Idaho, nearly ¼ of the state’s total land area, for multiple uses. The lands managed fall into four different district offices: the Boise District, The Coeur d’Alene District, the Idaho Falls District, and the Twin Falls District. Each district is broken up into 14 different field offices.

- Boise: Bruneau Field Office, Four Rivers Field Office, Morley Nelson Birds of Prey NCA, Owyhee Field Office
- Coeur d’Alene: Coeur d’Alene Field Office, Cottonwood Field Office
- Idaho Falls: Challis Field Office, Pocatello Field Office, Salmon Field Office, Upper Snake Field Office
- Twin Falls: Burley Field Office, Craters of the Moon National Monument, Jarbridge Field Office, Shoshone Field Office

Specific BLM comments provided by listening session participants include:

Idaho Falls District:

- Salmon Field Office:

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

- Allison Creek does not connect to main trails, Cow Creek trail dead ends, connecting trails in this area to create more cohesive loops would be beneficial
- Work with the Forest Service to develop a trail system in the Grouse Peak area (see attachments)
- Assess feasibility of widening OHV trails to expand access
- Upper Snake Field Office:
 - Forks of Moody was a 4x4 road that a creek crossing was blocked and a 50" bridge installed. Reopen to full size access
 - Hell's Half Acre could be developed into a world class rock crawling area bringing tourism to the area
 - Install designated parking area and facilities at Hell's Half Acre
 - Signing, mapping, and establishment of designated routes at Hell's Half Acre
 - Follow up on the Stinking Springs-Spring Creek bypass proposal submitted by the Snake River Trails Alliance (see attachments)
- Pocatello Field Office
 - Pursue easements to provide access to the Deep Creek Area and develop and designate a trail system there (see attachments)

Boise District:

- Owyhee Field Office:
 - Install group shelter at Hemingway Butte
 - Improve mapping and signage
 - Manage for trail user diversity: UTV, motorcycle, ATV, and 4x4
 - Designate play areas/open areas
 - Accurately inventory travel routes including how they move through non-managed lands
 - Have a presence on the ground to educate/enforce when needed
 - Develop/build trails and maintain them
 - SW Idaho can be developed to become a destination for trail-based recreation; motorized and non-motorized. Develop trails/play areas for mountain bikes and OHVs in a way they can coexist and share the land.
 - Provide better opportunities to host events
 - Allow for more single-track trails as many of the trails have been taken over by ATVs, side-by-sides, and jeeps
 - Eliminate checkerboard access
 - Recognize trail designations for larger vehicles
 - More vault toilets, picnic tables and shade structures for camping. (think car camping area/day use)
 - A 4x4 practice area to include a "sluice box course," "Stairstep Boulder Climb" and other rock-filled boulder tracks for testing vehicles and drivers without obstructing an existing trail. (think newly upgraded vehicle shakedown and new drivers needing practice near support vehicles or parking lot rescue ~100-200 yards long, multiple lanes).

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

- A large shade structure for club meetings with cooking facilities nearby. (think pavilion with picnic tables and charcoal grill stands for ~100 people)

Coeur d'Alene District:

- Coeur d'Alene Field Office
 - Designate more trails for full size vehicles.
 - Specify what constitutes high clearance trails
 - Mark trailheads with name and difficulty ratings
 - We need an outlet for extreme experiences without constant conflict
 - Support health & responsible recreation
 - Reopen historical use trails
 - More trail experience, less roads
 - Increase trail difficulty (add or utilize more obstacles) allow for use of mechanized equipment to construct obstacles
 - Better maps
 - Improved trail connectivity
 - Make 4x4 trails more accessible and not just 50" trail
 - Increase trail maintenance
 - Increase trail diversity
 - Increase camping opportunities
 - Designate trailheads for 4x4 access
 - Implement an adopt-a-trail program
 - Improved communication
 - Officially recognize Denver and Red Cloud Trails
 - Provide restrooms at trailheads
 - Stop closing trails to 4x4 access
 - Use gatekeepers/filters to keep incapable vehicles from accessing 4x4 trails
 - "Rollercoaster trail is an awesome trail with lots of great obstacles. I would like to have more trails like this to play on."
 - Improve signage/replace damaged signs
 - Install 4x4 trail system such as those found in MT, WA, and Oregon
 - "So far the Coeur d'Alene District has only reduced access. I would like to see them secure easements so a trail system could be developed. A loop between Pine Creek to Denver Creek would be great." -Anonymous
 - "We need the land managers to follow the current RMP/TMP. They have taken actions that are in complete conflict with those documents." -Anonymous
 - NITB has years of work invested in this trail (Rollercoaster). With the new management in the CDA District it is as if all the time and money invested means nothing.
 - We need more locations like the Rollercoaster Trail that create more access to dispersed use.

General BLM Public Comments:

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

- As the safety training coordinator for OHV use, the idea of ATV training areas and obstacle courses is very appealing. This would be a great thing to see in many different areas.
- Install more restrooms at OHV facilities
- Ensure that changes take all groups into consideration
- Foster open, continuous communication and partnerships with local groups for continuous feedback
- Open more trails to full-sized vehicle access
- Maintain existing 4x4 access rather than limiting routes to smaller vehicles
- Increase obstacles and difficulty of trails
- Share responsibility and upkeep of trails with clubs
- Improve mapping
- Improve signing
- Planning/management continuity between land managers and user groups
- Install bypasses on challenge areas to increase trail sustainability
- “I feel there is a better place to install windmills on land that isn’t being used for recreational use, wild animals and history of the trails. We have lots of rock area land where the windmill companies can build roads. Windmill companies need to support their own construction of maintenance roads and not close the trails and roads. They can do this in both areas of out south and north.” -Anonymous
- Improve trail maintenance
- Improve education and enforcement
- All trails should be open unless restricted; restrictions must be signed on the ground
- Provide flexibility to local land managers that allows them to be flexible according to new use type and trends
- Expand >50” trail availability statewide
- Increase stewardship and ethics messaging
- Provide ongoing trail maintenance
- Post trail limiters at the head of all 50” trails
- Inventory what is on the ground
- Utilize management options other than trail closure
- Over the last several years the BLM has limited and, in some areas, removed trailheads. In south-central Idaho the BLM removed vaulted toilets at the old snowmobile parking area near West Magic Reservoir in Blaine County and from the snow play area near Johnson Hill on State Highway 46 along the Gooding and Camas County boundaries. Both locations feature large, graveled parking lots used by both winter recreationalist (less not with less snowfall) and wheeled motorized users.
- “It would be great if the BLM would develop designated trailheads for users. I want to be a good steward of the land and not infringe upon private landowners and public land range users. Developing trailheads instead of eliminating them will benefit **ALL** public land users. The bulk of BLM developed areas center around fishing and rafting. Very little for OHV.” -Anonymous
- “Idaho is vastly spotted with Federal Lands, State Lands, and Private Lands. Development of recreational sites for off-highway users is greatly needed. We have several sites being used until

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

some form of conflict happens. When there is conflict, BLM seems to limit access and not work with user groups to resolve the issue. By building designated OHV trailheads can be a step at resolving the conflict instead of exasperating it. We have had great working relations with most Forest Service Ranger Districts. It just seems unorganized with dealing with the BLM.” - Anonymous

- “Idaho is a unique and beautiful place to recreate. We have a true four-season year where many wheeled OHV users transition to snowmobiles in the winter. But we still have vast areas of wheeled OHV opportunities. When the snow gets too deep and temperatures drop, lots of wheeled OHVs head to the deserts. This makes Idaho unique, but the BLM uses this as lack of use. During the spring, summer, and fall most OHV users prefer to ride the upper elevations where temperatures are cooler and scenic colors are awe inspiring. In late fall to early spring, many wheeled OHV users will head to the deserts and enjoy the wonderful scenic vistas and historic features when the temperatures are cooler. Understanding these seasonal transitions would behoove the BLM to recognize and form developed trailheads for users.” -Anonymous
- “I would like BLM, NOHVCC or Idaho State 4x4 Association to act as an information source for the clubs to communicate with the private landowners who are adjacent to the designated trails and vice versa. Being able to communicate back and forth will help the clubs be good stewards with trail management and foster good relations to alleviate landowners’ complaints. The scale of landowners and club members is too big for any single club, central data compilation is necessary. I feel it would be best for NOHVCC or Idaho State 4x4 Association to handle the direct advertisement and communication between the groups. BLM should handle the funding & data management administration for access to the information. Simply put, most off-road enthusiast wants to be good stewards of the land and maintaining access requires all parties to communicate effectively.” - Anonymous

NOHVCC Recommendations for the BLM:

1. Increase communication and transparency: There is a perception that OHV user voices are not heard, and their needs are not being met. There also seems to be a lack of shared understanding of TMP and RMP documents and decision making. Consider creating a stakeholder group that meets regularly to properly inform users of upcoming management decisions and actions. This could be done statewide, by District, or by Field Office.
2. Look for opportunities for expansion of trail opportunities for vehicles greater than > 50” in width. This is the fastest growing user group in the country. If land managers give riders the opportunities they want on trails and in open areas, they won’t create their own opportunities. This will reduce user conflict and resource damage. Connectivity, variety of experiences, and multiple challenge levels are vital components of any trail system.
3. Improved mapping: Mapping is a major concern of OHV users in Idaho. Help educate users about the availability of the Idaho Trails Mapping App (trails.idaho.gov) and other applications. Ensure that local user maps are available on Avenza or equivalent apps. Encourage partner groups to seek funding through grants and sponsorships to create and distribute trail maps.
4. Improved signage: Signage is also a concern for OHV users in Idaho. Proper signage is a valuable enforcement tool for keeping riders on the trails/areas where they should be riding. Consider pursuing grant funds from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to improve signage.

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

Utilize partner groups to install and maintain signs to help alleviate staffing and funding shortages.

5. Increase enforcement activities: This could simply mean having agency presence at trailheads and on the trails. An education first focused program is favored by users, but citations are welcomed for bad actors. Peer enforcement can be a valuable tool; consider utilizing local clubs as ambassadors who can educate users on proper use and ethics. Idaho OHV sticker funds are available to local County Sherriff's Offices that conduct OHV patrols.
6. Increased trail maintenance: Trail maintenance is a well-known need across the nation. Ensure that local recreation planners are aware of the maintenance programs offered by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Train and certify volunteers to conduct tread maintenance. The resources given to the agency are not sufficient to meet the trail maintenance needs, so contributions from volunteers and partners are invaluable.
7. Expand trail opportunities: NOHVCC understands that developing new trails is a massive undertaking. With the long history of mineral and resource extraction as well as grazing in Idaho there are many routes that could be converted to OHV routes. Please refer to the Great Trails Guidebook, which can be found at www.nohvcc.org, for recommendations on how to create high quality road to trail conversions.
8. Increase trail difficulty: Users seeking challenge often create their own if it can't be found on the trail. Utilizing natural challenge features or creating challenge features like those found on the Rollercoaster Trail in the Coeur d'Alene Field Office are both good strategies for providing quality recreation experiences. Make sure that challenging trails/trail segments are signed appropriately and provide alternate lines to increase accessibility to the trail and reduce resource damage. Please refer to the Great Trails Guidebook, which can be found at www.nohvcc.org, for recommendations on how to create trail challenges.

BLM Staff Recommendations: Partnership and Facility Needs:

As part of the research for this report, NOHVCC distributed a questionnaire to BLM staff in Idaho. Each Field Office was asked to provide some basic information and any specific notes for the OHV opportunities that they manage. This feedback can be found below.

Boise District:

- Bruneau Field Office
 - No comments provided
- Four Rivers Field Office
 - Checkerboard management nature of some areas makes mapping difficult for BLM to make unilateral decisions – Have good map for some areas, particularly close to urban areas.
 - 8th Street area has digital maps. City of Boise takes the lead.
 - Areas are well-signed but may not always meet expectations of urban visitors.
 - Have robust volunteer community – State Parks primarily manages OHV volunteer activity.

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

- Will eventually need to develop additional structures to accommodate increased use in dispersed areas and for resource protection.
- Lots of developed and dispersed opportunities near Boise. Need to consider maintenance costs for existing opportunities before moving on to new construction.
- Morley Nelson Birds of Prey NCA
 - No comments provided
- Owyhee Field Office
 - No comments provided

Coeur d'Alene District:

- Coeur d'Alene Field Office
 - Only in the Rochat/ Pine Creek SRMA are there specific facility infrastructure established for motorized recreation in the FO. There are informal parking staging areas on BLM for the East Fork of Pine Creek (Lynch Gulch, Highland Creek, Nabob-Burma, and Hunter-Trapper) Dispersed camping opportunities exist. No formal designated OHV campgrounds and related OHV facility amenities exist in the CdA FO
 - Revisions to the TMP maps needs to occur in-house by BLM staff first. Then open opportunities can be discussed for third party creation of BLM maps in addition to mapping apps
 - "Friends Groups" need to be in alliance with BLM missions, regulations, and management direction for responsible, sustainable OHV access and uses. Must be willing to provide accurate public interpretation for staying on designated roads and trails, route restrictions, cleaning and maintaining facilities, respecting private property rights within BLM's direction under a formal agreement
 - Organize Volunteers: Promotion of Leave No Trace and pack it in- pack it out ethics. Garbage, dispersed camping, and abandon vehicle clean-ups are always welcomed.
 - Plan for facilities and restrooms: Collaboration and idea gathering for where these facilities would be best located to serve public visitors. NEPA then would need to be performed.
 - Ongoing- responsible collaboration efforts can be discussed. Buy in from gateway communities and adjacent private land owns is a must. Securing public easements and ROWs is key in this FO.
- Cottonwood Field Office
 - No significant OHV recreation

Idaho Falls District:

- Challis Field Office
 - Install trailheads and facilities for OHV trailheads
 - Update sign inventory
 - Create "Friends Group" for OHV area(s)
 - Complete TMP revision

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

- Pocatello Field Office
 - Create “Friends Group” for the area
 - Design & install trails for existing or new OHV area
 - Install 3 campsites
 - Install 3 fire rings
 - Install 3 picnic tables
 - Install shade structure
 - Install loading ramp
 - Install additional barriers for undesignated routes
 - Install additional bollards for size restriction
 - Replace heavy duty gates at the trailheads
- Salmon Field Office
 - Digital map completed in 2021
 - Digital map on BLM page, may be added to apps with agency approval
 - Need updated/replaced signs, Open road/trail markers for South half, develop sign plan for North half
 - Toole Trails Group current partnership, increased volunteer support would be good but opportunity to recruit in Salmon/Challis is limited
 - Maintenance capacity may limit expansion of facilities
- Upper Snake Field Office
 - Create TMP for Mountain Valleys, Sand Creek, Big Desert, Upper Snake East, and Snake River Corridor.

Twin Falls District:

- Burley Field Office:
 - No information provided
- Craters of the Moon National Monument:
 - Digital map is available on the BLM site, as well as paper maps.
 - Map is downloadable to Avenza
 - Signing at key entrance points indicating stay on roads and trails. Desert roads get used primarily in the spring and fall – signs remind people to not use them when they are muddy or in other bad conditions.
 - Not enough demand for facilities
- Jarbridge Field Office
 - Undeveloped OHV area near Glens Ferry, ID. Historically, it has mostly been a motorcycle destination but over the last several years it has been utilized more by UTVs. Area management objective is to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in OHV riding so they realize a “moderate” level of exhilaration and excitement, testing and improving riding skills, being with friends and family, enjoying preferred activities in an appropriate setting, and risk taking.
 - Undeveloped OHV area that connects the Yahoo SRMA to the Deadman SRMA. Historically, there were trails that connected these two OHV areas but were lost due to wildfires and fence construction. Management objective is to provide opportunities on a

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

series of designated routes so they realize a “moderate” level of the targeted experience and benefit outcomes. Improvements should be geared toward facilitating access and accommodating users and to develop a designated trail system that links the Yahoo and Deadman OHV areas.

- Undeveloped OHV area near Hagerman, ID. Historically, it has mostly been a motorcycle destination but over the last several years it has been utilized more by UTVs. Area management objective is to provide opportunities for visitors to engage in OHV riding so they realize a “moderate” level of exhilaration and excitement, testing and improving riding skills, being with friends and family, enjoying preferred activities in an appropriate setting, and risk taking.
- New trail systems need to be designed that connect the Yahoo and Deadman trail systems
- Create digital and paper maps for OHV areas
- Add area map to appropriate mapping apps
- Create “Friends Group” for OHV area(s)
- Organize Volunteer Efforts
- Create sign plan and install comprehensive signing
- Perform needed trail design work in the Deadman SRMA
- Design and install trails for new or existing OHV area
- Finalize route/trail system
- Develop trail maintenance program
- Delineate parking areas
- Install 1-2 kiosks
- Install 1 vault toilet
- Install loading ramp
- Shoshone Field Office
 - Have an inventory, but it is dated (10-15 years old). Fairly confident there aren’t a lot of new routes. Ground isn’t conducive to proliferation of user-created routes. Not getting requests for maps.
 - Signing at key entrance points indicating stay on roads and trails. Desert roads get used primarily in the spring and fall – signs remind people to not use them when they are muddy or in other bad conditions.
 - Used to work with the Idaho Mountain Dirt Riders in the Wood River Valley but they are no longer an organized group.
 - Occasional involvement by volunteers to maintain one mile motocross track at Croy Creek. Riders not organized. Light use of motocross track (maybe 15-20 people on a very limited number of days when wet enough to allow riding).
 - Low OHV use across the entire FO. Most riding is concentrated on just a few days a year in the Spring and Fall.
 - Magic Valley ATV Riders – Most active club on the FO – Host 1-2 group rides in Shoshone each year that draw about 15-20 riders.
 - Motocross track – near an existing trailhead, has restrooms, designated parking area.

2021 Motorized Recreation Report

- EA just finished that allows for 80 miles of new recreational trails to be built. Most will be designated as Class 1, 2 or 3 e-bikes. EA identified area for 21 miles of motorized single-track. The yet-to-be constructed single-track will connect to an adjoining robust trail system on USFS land.
- No need for new trails in FO – a lot of the use there is ROV, and while use is increasing it only occurs on a few select days during Spring and Fall.

Conclusion

The passion and knowledge of the OHV users in Idaho is palpable. There is a strong desire to volunteer and support activities that promote sustainable and fun OHV activities. The BLM and non-governmental entities and individuals should work together to provide quality mapping, signing, and educational programs to enthusiasts in the State. Continue to utilize these partnerships to expand and improve the vast amount of OHV opportunities that the BLM manages in Idaho.

About NOHVCC

The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC), as a national body of OHV recreation enthusiasts, develops and provides a wide spectrum of programs, materials and information, or “tools”, to individuals, clubs, associations, and agencies to further a positive future for responsible OHV recreation. NOHVCC is a 501(c)3 education non-profit organization. The organization is not a membership organization, but a partnership organization with volunteer State Partners in nearly every State. The organization partners with the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council, the Canadian Quad Council, and the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada. In addition to these enthusiast partnerships, NOHVCC has partnerships with government agencies such as the USDA Forest Service, the USDI Bureau of Land Management, the Federal Highway Administration, plus state and local agencies. NOHVCC’s goal is simply to provide “A Positive Future for OHV Recreation.”



2021 Motorized Recreation Report

Project Team

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References

BLM National Management Strategy for Motorized Off Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands (2001)

BLM National Recreation Strategy: Connecting with Communities (2014-2019)

BLM National Motorized Recreation Action Plan (2014)

BLM Special Recreation Permits: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-passes/special-recreation-permits>

BLM Idaho: <https://www.blm.gov/idaho>

Great Trails: A Guide to Providing Quality OHV Trail Experiences (2015)

Management Guidelines for OHV Recreation by Tom Crimmins in Association with NOHVCC (2006)

Motorcycle Industry Council 2014 Motorcycle/ATV Owner Survey

Idaho SCORP: <https://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/scorp/>

Attachments