# CALIFORNIA OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ASSOCIATION

Volume 23 Issue 6 January 2011



# OFF-ROADERS IN ACTION

# **BLM to Limit Desert Event Permits**

On August 14, 2010, a tragic accident occurred during the California 200 race event at the Bureau of Land Management's Johnson Valley Office-Highway Vehicle Open Area, which is located approximately 100 miles northeast of Los Angeles. This report summarizes the BLM's response to the incident to date. The report concludes with specific action items to ensure effective special recreation permit administration and safety compliance at events; some are immediate and others long term. These include providing adequate BLM ranger and recreation staffing at all events, requiring companies to compensate the BLM for processing and administering permits that take up more than 50 hours of staff time, and requiring more oversight from the District and State Office of BLM to check for policy compliance and program consistency.

- Cost recovery -If more than 50 hours of staff time are required for processing and managing a permit, cost recovery of direct expenses related to the permit will be charged.
- National Environmental Policy Act -The issuance of an SRP is a Federal action and subject to NEPA analysis.
- Permit stipulations -A copy of the permit terms and stipulations signed and dated by the permittee shall be included in the permit file.
- Operating plan -A signed operating plan must be submitted for commercial and competitive SRPs, and may be required for other types of permits.
- Monitoring -Permits are monitored by the BLM for compliance with stipulations, terms and conditions.
- Insurance -A specified level of insurance must be obtained by a permittee, and a copy of the insurance policy or certificate of insurance must be on file 10 days prior to the authorized use. The policy shall list the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management and an additional insurer.
- Bonding -The authorized officer shall require the posting of a bond sufficient to defray the costs of anticipated rehabilitation or repair of resource or government facility damage, if such damage is expected to be caused by the permittee's actions.
- JOHNSON VALLEY
  OHV Recreation Area
  Boone Road
- · Estimated fees -Fees are to be paid by the permit applicant in advance of any authorized use.
- Compliance -Violation of permit terms, stipulations, operating plans, or other regulations can result in administrative or criminal penalties.
- Performance evaluation -A performance evaluation is completed by BLM for all commercial and competitive permittees.
- Documentation/Record Keeping -The official file includes a copy of the permit and stipulations, insurance certificate, fee payment records, correspondence (including email), telephone conversation logs, maps, NEPA documentation, operating plan, advertisements, monitoring, post-use reports, and annual evaluation.

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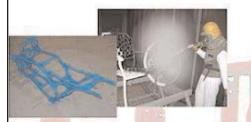




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# WHAT IS CORVA?

The California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) is a varied group of outdoor recreationalists who are extremely active in promoting the positive aspects of vehicular access on public lands and protecting that right.

The group is composed of the owners of "Green Sticker" vehicles such as ATV's, motorcycles, 3-wheelers, trail bikes, and dune buggies, as well as "street legal" 4x4 vehicles, dual sport motorcycles, baja and desert racers.

The main purpose of CORVA is to have fun! We also work with the land managers for responsible off-highway vehicular access and recreation opportunities. Secondarily, we educate our membership on the constantly changing rules and regulations and promote conservation, clean-up and trail maintenance projects.

We participate in lobbying activities in both Sacramento and Washington DC. We work closely with the State Department of Parks and Recreation providing input to the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) program from the users' standpoint. We provide a valuable resource to land managers in the form of dedicated OHV enthusiasts who believe in using our public lands responsibly.

We are active at all levels of the land management public process with both the BLM and USFS. We do this by commenting on many environmental documents on issues that affect us.

We coordinate with other multiple use organizations such as snowmobiles to horse enthusiasts to protect multiple use rights that we both share. Only together can we fight the extremists. We are,

"Dedicated to protecting our lands for the people, not from the people."

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# By Jim Woods

So if you think 2010 was a big year for off-road access issues "you ain't seen nothing yet", as the saying goes. The year 2011 is shaping up to be more than anyone has bargained for and it's barely getting started.

Let's start with the new directive from the BLM regarding the Mojave Desert racing accident. Future procedures and management of all OHV events will change effective immediately. At the December BLM California Desert District managers and OHV Leadership meeting held in Moreno Valley, we reviewed the official report on the tragic MDR racing incident and the new guidelines for all events in the future. This document is too complex to discuss in full detail in my column but one major issue will be the new monitoring assessment matrix for special recreation permits. This matrix will help determine how much BLM monitoring will be needed for each and all events on public property managed by the BLM. Once determined, the BLM will use this matrix-guide to decide how much staffing will be needed and the cost recovery or the amount of fees charged for a permit. I was very pleased with the well thought out first draft of this directive and our Desert director was very open to discussion of key issues. At this time the BLM is asking for direction from all OHV leadership and promoters to help mold this guideline to a working agreement for us to follow.

Another issue discussed in length at this meeting was illegal riding - especially in the Red Rock and Jawbone area. The Red Rock Area management decision is due this year from State Parks. Please tell all anyone you encounter while riding in these areas that riding off trail will only further damage the image of the OHV user and could potentially close the entire area for everyone. Let's be good ambassadors and not be afraid to promote riding responsibly and legally! Be vocal; tell any violators to Stay on the Trail. We must try to make them listen!

The Ivanpah Renewable Energy Project proposed by Brightsourse Energy Inc. has requested a permit for 3500 acres in San Bernardino County to install Solar Plants as part of the renewable energy demands in California. However, non-access groups are asking for a 1-to-10 ratio of mitigation acres for desert areas lost by the project for endangered species, IE: the Desert Tortoise. This means that both private and federal lands will be purchased and closed as Wilderness to prevent public user access. If you do the math that is a lot of land closed to OHV access and recreation. Don't we already have enough Wilderness? (There is already over 16 million acres in California deserts alone.) When will we as off-road users and the rest of the OHV access public be considered Endangered Species? When our areas for OHV use are removed, can we sue for more inventory - even at a 1 to 1 ratio?

Beginning in 2011 we will also receive the first, of many yet to come, reports and the DEIS for Johnson Valley and the Marine Base expansion. Once we receive the Marine's reports, we will keep you informed and ask you to be ready to comment on the study when appropriate. As always go to "The Partnership for Johnson Valley's" website for the most current information available. I would like to thank CORVA members Helen and Harry Baker for their hard work on that front.

And if that is all not enough, the WEMO decision from the judge is due soon and hopefully we will see the use R5 and R 50 in Ridgecrest again. The Stanislaus National Forest lawsuit is also about to begin. Plus, let's not forget our new Governor and all of the changes he may bring to Sacramento.

Yes, folks it will be a challenging year but with your help and support, CORVA will be there to represent you and help establish a workable solution. Thank you for all your support and I hope to see you at the CORVA Truckhaven Challenge January 22, 2011.

Jul Dad



# 16th Annual

# Truckhaven Challenge

January 22-23 2011



Ocotillo Wells SVRA
Fun for the Whole Family!

NO PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED! PAY AT EVENT SITE!

All OHV's Welcome!\*

POKER RUN- Saturday, January 22nd

Registration- Each Vehicle \$35
Kids (12 and under) on ATV's/MC- \$15
All Prices include one poker hand and 1 raffle ticket!
Great prizes for 1st, 2nd, & 3nd place Poker Hands
Great prizes for 1st, 2nd, & 3nd place in Games

START TIME 8:00 AM! Start line closes at 11:00 AM.



### GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES DONATED BY THE OFF ROAD INDUSTRY

Salton City Volunteer Fire Department Pancake breakfast on Sunday morning.
BRING YOUR DOG AND JOIN THE DOG SHOW ON SATURDAY!

Course length approx. 20 miles

Alternate "difficult routes" for those willing to "GO FOR IT!'
Checkpoints have "games of skill" for more family fun and
prizes! Course closes 4:00 pm
BBQ dinner (see menu) to follow Poker Run
Awards and great raffle prizes donated by off road industry!

DON'T	MISS	THE	KIDS	GAMES	ON	SUNDAY
	141100	1115	NUC	CHIVILO	$\sim$ 11	CONDAI

Great fun for the whole family.







Trailmasters Club BBQ Dinne	er Menu
Hamburger	\$4.00
Hamburger w/side of chili	\$5.00
Hot Dog	\$2.00
Hot Dog w/chili	\$3.00
Bowl of chili	\$2.00

#### \*REQUIRED SAFETY EQUIPMENT!

4x4's, Baja's & buggies- Metal roof or Roll bar ATV's/MC's- Helmet, spark arrestor

ATV's must have whips/flags!

#### SUGGESTED ITEMS:

First Aid Kit, Tow Strap, Spare Tire, Fire Extinguisher

Registration desk will open early Friday afternoon (January 21st) at the event

Camping for the event is located in an easily accessible dirt area adjacent to a large dry wash. Plenty of room for motorhomes and trailers. This is dry desert camping, so no hook-ups. We will however, have portable toilets brought in for those "tenting it".



All proceeds from this event to go to CORVA's Land Use Fund! Need more info?

Email: <u>steve.hewitt@corva.org</u> or call 951-237-0233 CELEBRATING 16 YEARS OF GREAT OFF-ROADING!!!



# **CORVA Land Use Resources and Public Policy Report**

# By Bruce Whitcher CORVA VP of Land Resources and Public Policy

#### Forest Service Planning Regulations on the Fast Track for Completion by Year's End

The U.S. Forest Service is continuing the process of revising its regulations that govern how the agency prepares Forest Plans. Known as the "Planning Rule," these regulations will be the driving force behind how the agency prepares Land Use Plans and will guide land managers in developing, amending, and revising land management plans for the 155 national forests and 20 grasslands in the National Forest System (NFS). CORVA representatives have participated in sessions held in California and have actively promoted recreation as an important consideration. CORVA has repeatedly emphasized that recreation must be given serious consideration as part of the Forest planning process.

In a new development, more than 70 organizations signed a letter to Chief Tidwell expressing grave concern about how the Forest Service was going to treat the issue of recreation in the proposed Planning Rule. A similar letter was sent from 41 members of Congress.

Using input they will finalize the proposed rule and draft an environmental impact statement with the intent of publishing the proposed rule and DEIS in December 2010.

### **Clear Creek Management Area**

Update: Record of Decision to be announced in May-June 2011.

A copy of the Clear Creek draft EIS/RMP can be downloaded here:

http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/hollister/clear creek management area/CCMA RMP.html

The future of Clear Creek is seen by all as a precedent-setting national issue that will have repercussions for the future of OHV recreation for years to come.

- Energy-related proposals in the Mojave are taking priority in Washington.
- Submitted proposal similar to alternative E in draft RMP with additional routes. Draft of final RMP is not publicly available. Additional routes not defined.
- No dry season closures in future
- No off road vehicles (dirt bikes) are to be allowed in CCMA.

Once the Record of Decision has been announced objections may be filed. CORVA plans to join with other interested groups in filing objections.

# The Obama Administration's Great Outdoors Initiative

As many of you have heard, President Obama convened the White House Conference on the Great Outdoors (AGO) in April. The deadline for the final AGO report was November 15th. The deadline has come and gone, and guess what, no report!

Apparently public lands agencies are having difficulty matching up the AGO recommendations with the FY2012 budget. In other words, it's one thing to announce new policies; it's another thing to find the dollars to fund those policies. It may be late January or even February before the AGO recommendations are finally released to the public.

One of major shortcomings of the AGO process was getting notification of the public listening sessions from the Administration in a timely manner so everyone could informed of when and where the sessions were being held. Environmental groups were receiving early notification of these meetings.

This lack of transparency in the process has caught the attention of some members of Congress. Eighteen members of the House and the Senate have written to Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, Interior Secretary Salazar and EPA Administrator Jackson requesting information on how and what individuals were contacted about participating in the various AGO listening sessions.

Continued on next page

# **CORVA Report from Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Meetings**

Many of you have heard about the intense competition between various interests to reserve parts of the California desert for renewable energy development and protection of endangered species. Some of these areas are "limited use" BLM lands that have long been open for public access via motorized routes of travel. CORVA has been involved in discussion related to the future use of California's desert public lands and has spoken out to help keep our areas open.

There are numerous ways in which recreation stands to lose opportunity as a result of development of renewable energy in the California Desert. First there is the loss of lands for the actual facilities themselves, then with the setting aside of mitigation lands as compensation for the environmental damage caused by the facilities. Currently, the highest number I have seen for the combined areas of solar facilities is 600 square miles. Mitigation ratios can range from 1 to 1 to a high end of 5 to 1. So we lose could lose between 1200 square miles and 3600 square miles of land traditionally open for limited OHV use.

As if that's not bad enough, the next worst aspect of this comes into play when you realize that all these square miles of land are not in one contiguous block. These mitigation lands are spread over a wide area of the desert. With that fact we risk having our recreational areas divided by mitigation lands. Typically, when an area is set aside for mitigation, ownership is transferred to a private land trust conservation group and public access is lost.

In addition, our deserts are covered with vast areas which are considered migration routes for desert wildlife. Rather than simply reserving areas for development with a buffer zone surrounding endangered or threatened species, additional land would be set aside as migration corridors.

Vast areas of our deserts have been classified as "Conservation Opportunity". This classification pretty much covers everything that has not already been spoken for in our deserts. If you weave the concerns centering around motorized travel and recreation found inside of the proposed draft EIS that will be produced by the Conservation Plan, you may as well beat your OHV into the shape of a Subaru.

Thanks to Dave Beaumont of "Save California's Deserts" for the content of this report.

# **Travel Management Update**

1. The Stanislaus National Forest has been sued by environmental organizations over their Travel Management Plan. In spite of closing over 80% of motorized trails, the lawsuit challenges a decision by the Forest Service federal to "expand the motor vehicle system in the Stanislaus National Forest at the expense of irreversible damage to public natural resources and without adequate public disclosure". The Plaintiffs seek declaratory and injunctive relief from the decision, stating that it "violates federal executive orders and environmental laws and regulations by failing to fully disclose to the public or to minimize environmental damage to the forest, including impacts to wildlife, wildlife habitat, soils, vegetation, watersheds, and other protected areas."

CORVA, along with a number of other pro-access organizations, will file in federal court as an intervener in this case.

- 2. The Sequoia National Forest planning process has wrapped up following a series of stakeholder meetings held in Kernville. Pro-access interests favored keeping as many trails open as possible. This is one to watch.
- 3. The Tahoe National Forest Issues Motorized Travel Management Appeal Deadline was December 3. A number of pro-access appeals have been filed, facilitated by the CORVA Comments Project.

The CORVA Comments Project and a number of pro-access groups filed an appeal of the Travel Management Decision with the Regional Forester. This is the final and necessary step in the Travel Management process before litigation is considered.

4. Plumas National Forest Appeals were filed by December 27, 2010. The CORVA Comments Project has facilitated appeals of this Travel Management Decision.

### WEMO lawsuit - Hearing Held, Judge Ponders Decision

The WEMO Plaintiffs, Alliance for Responsible Recreation, The Wilderness Society, California Wilderness Coalition, Friends of Juniper Flats, Western San Bernardino Landowners Association, California Native Plant Society, Community ORV Watch, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, and Desert Survivors filed a motion for "partial vacatur of the Record of Decision and for interim injunctive relief." The hearing on this motion was set for June 18, 2010; however this was postponed until September 3rd, but at the hearing the judge did not hear oral argument or render a decision.

So far there has been no progress on this very complex issue, although we expect a court decision soon.

# We Have a New Governor - What will this mean for OHV recreation?

by Bob Han

With Jerry Brown returning as governor we have the opportunity to examine his past performance and how that might relate to OHV recreation in California.

In the minds of OHV enthusiasts, the most critical aspect of State government is the OHV grants program administered by the OHV Division. This keeps our state vehicular recreation areas open and provides funding that assures access to California's federal public lands.

I was asked how the OHV Division functioned during the first Jerry Brown administrations. First it is important to understand that the DIVISION did not do anything under Jerry Brown. It did not exist until he walked out the door. Prior to Assemblyman Bruce Young's bill in 1982 that created the Commission and the Division we evolved under various Jerry Brown Directors.

#### **A Little History:**

The OHV Program was created when Reagan signed the original Chappie/Z'berg Off Highway vehicle legislation in 1971. We had one year to get green stickers which meant it was June 30, 1973 before any enforcement of green sticker registration took place.v Money trickled in throughout 1974 as we got legislation that added gas taxes to the program. On January 2, 1974 Brown took over as Governor of California. At the time, the program was run in the Planning and Grants Division of DPR under a Division Chief, and directly managed by a single employee.

Jerry Brown kept the Reagan-era parks director Wm. Penn Mott for the first year. The Department added a few people on part time assignments to try to pretend something was happening with the program in the wake of OHV users screaming "where is all the money going?" Actually there was not much coming in as most OHV'ers were boycotting the program, and someone had even printed and distributed counterfeit stickers as a protest. Director Mott transformed a portion of Pismo State Beach into the first SVRA in the wake of the new Coastal Commission trying to shut it down to OHV use.

The SVRA in Oroville Dam area was also added as the DWR donated the land to DPR which then made it an SVRA. The next year the gas tax money started rolling in, and in the meantime Brown's Resources Secretary, Claire Dedrick replaced Mott with her crony, Herbert Rhoads. By 1976 we realized that Parks was using much of this new money on administration of the Department and we got our first audit (thanks to Chappie) and found that they were already ripping off the money. The program continued to be moved around from Planning to Grants to anyone who would look after the "red headed stepchild of DPR". In about 1980 we got Assemblyman Bob Cline to pass a bill that created an "Office of OHV Recreation" to combine the people around the department who were billing time to the OHV Fund into a single point of contact and also added an advisory committee. They continued to manipulate the advisory committee however; so during the next session we got Assemblyman Young to write the bill that created a Commission and a Division.

Under Brown the program was, by design, allowed to move around as long as they did not do too much for us. It was considered an ATM machine for the rest of the Department whenever they could justify it. Brown once said that he didn't much care what we as a community wanted because "you are all Republicans anyway and you don't vote, so why do I need to have give a damn about what you think?" At the time Cal 4 and CORVA had just filed suit against his Resources Secretary Huey Johnson over misallocation of Funds from DWR to speed up a wild and scenic river designation. The Secretary had to homestead his house because under the law on which we were suing, a state official could be held personally liable for misallocation of funds. The suit lost and days later the judge on the case, Rodda, was appointed to the court of appeals.

What about key appointments? Will Ruth Coleman stay? She came from legislative Democrats. Daphne Green, who knows? We do know that on Brown's final day in office, which was also the first day of the existence of the new OHV Commission, Brown made the three gubernatorial appointments to the commission. He did these before noon when George Deukmejian was officially sworn in as Governor. Those appointments included: Howard Wilshire, an environmentalist scientist who was probably the most vocal anti-OHV individual in California; Steven Casagrande, a Sacramento dentist with environmental credentials and an openly anti-OHV bias; and Marty Coren, a Southern California democratic political activist who wanted to convert part of Hungry Valley into a county fairground for the San Fernando Valley. None of these persons were appointed because of their dedication to improvement of the sport and the stated objective of the new law which was to secure environmentally appropriate places for OHV use to take place in perpetuity.

We can certainly take hope from some of his statements that he is not beholden to any special interest groups and that he will take seriously his obligation to manage the program for the benefit of OHV and the environment. While you are all holding our breath in hopes that this will happen, I will continue to seek out good places to go off-roading near my second home in Baja California because I fear Jerry Brown will disrupt our sport again just as he did during his first stand as governor.

# **CORVA Southern Region Report**

by Clayton Miller, Southern Regional Director

The Southern Board, by way of conference call, met during the second week of December to cover some of the many issues certain to have a large impact on off-roading and access to public lands in southern California. Reports were given by Helen Baker and Jim Woods closely following the steps BLM is taking to enhance its Special Recreation Permit program for organized events and races in the California Desert District. We received an update on the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) efforts currently underway by Dave Beaumont. The Southern Board also appointed a new Assistant Southern Director for Clubs and a member volunteered to be a Field Representative for the Southern Region.

Rick Fisher, a long-time member and past CORVA treasurer, was appointed as Assistant Southern Director for Clubs. Rick stepped forward and offered to fill the position previously held by Jeff Leonard. The representative for clubs serves an important role in the organization. They help keep the clubs up to date with what is going on with CORVA, and keep CORVA in touch with, and informed of, the many activities held by the clubs. In this busy world, finding the time to keep in regular contact with all the club representatives and attend their meetings and events throughout southern California can be a challenge. But Rick is up to the task and is looking forward to enhancing the relationships with CORVA's clubs, and establishing some new ones.

CORVA clubs enjoy a variety of benefits. One of the most valuable is liability coverage for non-competitive club events and rallies. This coverage could save a club thousands of dollars and help it grow. Another benefit is the elevated exposure a club receives from having its contact information and logo featured on the CORVA website. Club event and meeting dates can also be published in the newsletter. CORVA clubs also qualify to participate in the annual elections. If your club is interested in learning about becoming a CORVA Club, please contact Rick Fisher at <a href="mailto:rick.fisher@corva.org">rick.fisher@corva.org</a> or any CORVA director for more information.

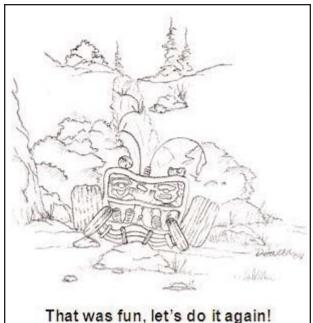
CORVA benefits from club memberships too. Club members often assist at off-road shows, fun runs, jamborees, with trail maintenance and outreach to name a few. These activities simply would not be possible without the help of volunteers. But CORVA does not only rely on its club members for help. Its individual members also dedicate many hours volunteering. Did you know dozens of volunteers are needed for each poker run to man check points, help with the games, mark courses, help prepare the dinners etc.?

To help bring everyone together who wants to volunteer with the many off-road related events scheduled throughout the year, Wayne Ford has agreed to be a CORVA Field Representative and the Volunteer Coordinator for the Southern Region. Wayne has been very active with CORVA over the last several years and his enthusiasm, drive and abilities to promote poker runs and emcee raffle drawings and award ceremonies are incredible. Keep a lookout for more information in future newsletters on how you can become involved as a volunteer.

I am excited and grateful that Rick Fisher and Wayne Ford have agreed to help in their new positions. CORVA will certainly gain from their increased involvement.

If you would like to participate in the next Southern Regional Board meeting, mark February 2nd on your calendar.

Feel free to call me at (909) 815-3780 or send me an email at: <u>clayton.miller@corva.org</u> if you would like for more information.



# Mark Your Calendar Now Annual High Desert Rally: August 12-13, 2011

Bring your friends and family for a weekend of fun!

# **Educational News VP-Education, Ed Waldheim**

# Too Much Fun Can Equal No Access and Worse

by Gerry Hillier

As I drove out to Cuddeback Dry Lake I was surprised by a broad expanse of road, slightly rutted, and certainly not requiring the use of my 4Runner. I was also alone. Folks just don't come here anymore. Though it's flat, the surrounding hills to the east offer a variety of experiences for the desert explorer. It is also close to one of BLM's open areas, Spangler Hills. What is the problem? The answer is simply that the good riding and the good OHV exploring is withering, and may shrink further. I do offer some advice: ride, enjoy the desert in all its glory, but be alert and vigilant. Obey the signs, and stay on the trails that are already there.

# Cuddeback Dry Lake

About ten miles southeast of the old mining town of Red Mountain, California, is Cuddeback Dry Lake. It is a ways southwest of Death Valley, but was once on the 165 mile route of the renowned twenty mule teams that hauled borax from the Harmony Borax Works north of Furnace Creek to Mojave, California. About seven miles south of Red Mountain on Highway 395, the famous borax route crosses the pavement.

I'm not sure of the history of the road to Cuddeback. It has certainly been there 40, 50 years or so. It was probably constructed at one time to provide access to the Air Force Target Range and was likely a route used by miners and ranchers over the past century. The road has spread far beyond any construction width, exceeding 100 feet or more in many areas. My guess is that after rains folks just took an easier route around the puddles and over time wore the route wider. Old camp sites adjoin the road, a quarter mile or so off the road. These are virtual hubs with use tracks by motorcycles and ATVs radiating in hub-like patterns to the hills.

Many people have enjoyed the area. As desert recreation goes, it has easy access, isn't far from the towns and cities, and offers a variety of terrain features. Most of the hills are now off limits to all vehicles. The flat expanses are now limited to a small network of routes, and BLM is wrestling with the specter of re-doing the designations as a result of recent court decisions. And there is pending legislation to close most of the remaining hills. What happened? Simply put, too many people used the area and others, both BLM staff and environmentally oriented citizens pressing BLM, have one-by-one severely limited the outdoor experience for thousands.

I interject at this time to make another point: it isn't only the riders and OHV explorers who have lost out. This area and many others in the high desert used to be used as an integral part of the annual cycle of sheep grazing. Sheep from the San Joaquin Valley moved out to the desert in springtime, used the wildflowers, bred the next generation, and moved on to the higher summer ranges in the National Forests before returning to Valley for lambing. This annual cycle has simply disappeared. Yes, the sheep business went bad when the wool market collapsed and the public quit dining on spring lamb. But the sheep and OHV use had a close and supportive relationship, whether they knew it or not. The sheep trails and bed grounds often provided the initial trails for OHV use and racing events. Bed grounds also offered brush-free areas for camping in groups. And springtime in the area was a joy for all.

The expanse of the use and its visibility attracted attention from all sorts of people who had no interest in either the economics and seasonal movements of the livestock or in outdoor recreation which wasn't of the scenery-viewing variety. Grazing and OHV became targets. They became targets because grazing required an annual license, and OHV events required a permit. The action by BLM to consider permit issuance became a bull's eye.

The first to go was the easiest, OHV events. Back in the early 1970s, the area had scores of races that used in the flat areas all around Fremont Peak and extending into the hills adjacent to the Navy's Mojave B Range. Extending up through Almond Cove and joining trails in the Spangler Hills, and sometimes extending to the Rand Mountains, this was an unlimited experience in terrain and skill.

BLM selected this unit, called Red Mountain, for its first land use plan. Pointing to the fact that tortoises used the area, particularly in the spring, BLM made a decision in the 1975 Red Mountain Plan to close the area to events. Bang. No appeal. The proliferation of roads and trails, first by sheep and then by OHV had simply led to the demise of one aspect of recreation.

Continued on next page

People still came to the area, but now in family groups to camp and ride and give the kids a chance to ride. By 1980 BLM had another land use plan. This one was desert-wide, the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. Under this plan, the proliferation of roads and trails provided justification that this area be moved from "existing roads and trails" to "designated roads and trails." The tortoises were still there; the wildflowers were still there, but OHV was still the target. Too much fun, and thoughtless expansion of trails to seek new experience provided the fodder for new restrictions. Some of the upland areas to the east and north were identified as Wilderness Study Areas, but in the final analysis BLM did not believe many except Red Mountain itself and a small part of the Lava Mountains actually become wilderness, but advocates and Congress had other ideas.

BLM next faced a formal listing of the desert tortoise. That occurred in 1989. The direct result is that throughout the Mojave all OHV events had to go through a formal review by Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The first victim of the listing was the sheep. FWS concluded that continued sheep use in this area, something that had likely occurred for perhaps 100 years, would "likely jeopardize the continued existence of the [tortoise] species." The industry, as it had been a part of the Mojave, was dead.

During the 1990s two more threats to recreation emerged, and again routes of travel and access were the targets. The first was that the FWS developed a Recovery Plan for the desert tortoise and designated critical habitat. The second was the Desert Protection Act. For vehicular access, the latter was the most important since it created federally designated wildernesses.

I went through the battles, and know that the passage was sold on the basis that people with vehicles did not appreciate the landscape and couldn't be controlled. Advocates carried baby tortoises to congressional offices. Areas such as Golden Valley, a highland area to the southeast of Cuddeback, became wilderness. This particular area was gorgeous to ride through, particularly in the spring with wildflowers, and it became off limits to access, except by the hardy few. (The hardy few would be forced to walk! So much for enjoying the landscape on the distance a half canteen of water can carry one.) The justification was always that trails would proliferate, widen, and in essence ruin the countryside.

Now the other shoe is about to drop. A bill in the US Senate proposes to expand wilderness to fill up all the areas that were missed in the 1994 CDPA. And again the justification is that the area that is not in wilderness is "not protected."



In the public mind, this concept that if areas are open for access they aren't adequately protected was reinforced recently. In a publication by The Nature Conservancy, "Mojave Desert Ecoregional Assessment" (October 2010), only land within congressionally designated wilderness and units of the National Park System are characterized as "Lands under Conservation Management". This portrayal will be used, among others, to justify further land use restriction in the name of "conservation" and "protection," while completely ignoring the public's right to enjoy the public lands in a variety of ways. And in the desert there is simply unreality in the belief by some that a vehicle isn't necessary to use the back country.

So what can you do? In the longer term, don't give further ammunition to the advocates of more closures. Stay on trails, and have fun but not too much. You may think no one is watching, but evidence of misuse becomes the Exhibit A for the folks who will use the tracks against you. The last thing you want is for more land to be locked up, whether around Fremont Peak and next to Spangler Hills, or elsewhere in the desert. California already has more Wilderness than any other state except Alaska. We don't need more in the name of "protection."

Gerry Hillier: Gerry has spent his professional life involved with agriculture and natural resources management in the West. Raised in Sacramento, his undergraduate work was in Range Management at UC Davis and Washington State. He did graduate work in natural resources economics and public administration at George Washington, University of Montana and Oregon State. Gerry completed a 35-year career with the Bureau of Land Management in 1992, spending the last 16 years as the District Manager for the California Desert District, leading planning, management and regulation of the Federal public lands in Southern California. He has had a consulting firm since 1993, providing services involving natural resources and public land use to public and private sector clients in the Mojave Desert region. He serves as Executive Director of QuadState County Government Coalition, providing representation on public land issues to 7 counties in the Mojave. He is a member of a variety of professional and interest groups associated with natural resources and wine, and serves on the Board of Governors of the CSU System's Desert Studies Center at Zzyzx.

# Rowher Flats Boulder Course Testing- Rock Party!





# People and Rock Drivers (because there is a difference)

The Rowher Flats 4X4 Boulder Course is open and needs to be tested. I would like to put something together where we all assemble as a large group with different level trucks, and the Forest Service, to run the course and make any changes that may be necessary (under the Forest Service supervision).

If you have not heard the course, it is over 100 feet long and 30 feet wide and is one of the longest built in California. This is our course, built with funds from the Forest Service, Clubs, Non Profits and Donations, so we need to make sure it is all we want it to be, and possibly improve it. The Forest Service has been a great partner in this and will support ideas to make it its best.

My proposed date for this event to occur is January 8th. This is not yet set in stone, but it allows ample time to recover from the holidays and catch up on sleep. Please contact me if this conflicts with your schedule or if you would like to suggest a better date.



I want to arrange an event similar to a grand opening, and want everyone to be included, because it was the combination of all of our help that allowed this to happen. We may just be a small handful out of millions, but together with a common purpose we can accomplish anything.

There are some small BBQ's out there so we can burn some meat, and have a great family day. I am rather certain I can get



the day free of charge (for the course only, for the rest of the area it is only an adventure pass) to test it. So who's in?

Spread this information around and let's get more participants. The more we learn here, the better Azusa will be!

Mike Bishop, President, Azusa Canyon Off Road Association

Division of CTUC, a Not for Profit Corporation. (626) 840-8472

acora12@yahoo.com www.ACORAUSA.com Help Support the CORVA's Legal Defense Budget. Attend CORVA's TruckHaven Challenge or Family Fun Run and purchase your tickets to win a Honda Dirt Bike (CRF70). Tickets are \$1.00, winner must be 18 years or older but does not need to be present to win. Drawing for prize winner will be held at the Family Fun Run in March 2011. Don't miss this great opportunity to support CORVA and get a neat little dirt bike complete with cool CORVA graphics!



# DIRT BIKE RAFFLE

\$1.00 each TICKETS

# Donated by: Simi Valley Honda

CORVA Family Fun Run WHEN:

Hungry Valley SVRA

March 19, 2011

2006 Honda CRF70 (Value \$850.00) PRIZE:

Winner to pay DMV and sales tax. Delivery not included.

Winner must be 18+ years old. Winner need not be present to win.

It is not necessary to contribute to be entitled to participate in the raffle drawing. To aid in accounting for contributions, a free ticket (one per adult) may be obtained by sending a SASE to CORVA Raffle c/o Chris Kollbenschlag 1101 E Orangewood Ave, Anaheim, CA 92815

Want to buy tickets but can't make it to a CORVA event? Complete coupon below, include a SASE envelope and your check, and we will mail you some tickets. Be sure to mail your check by **March 1<sup>ST</sup>** 2011 so we can get your tickets to you and you will have time to fill them in and mail them back. Enclosed is my check in the amount of: \$ . Please mail my raffle tickets to: Name: Address: City, ZIP: Email/Phone:

Mail coupon, check & SASE to: CORVA Treasurer, c/o Chris Kolbenschlag 1101 E Orangewood Ave Ste 103 Anaheim, CA 92815

Thank you for Supporting CORVA!

# Roy Denner Memorial Track Dedication Ceremony

The Roy Denner Memorial ATV Training Track Dedication Ceremony was held Sunday, November 14, 2010. This training area was dedicated in his memory. Roy has done much to promote the off road cause, and will forever be remembered as a champion of off road recreation.

#### **Rov's OHV Accomplishments:**

- Roy became active in San Diego Off-Road Coalition (SDORC) in the mid-1990s; SDORC's Director of Land Use for several years.
- Member of the California Desert District Advisory Council for eight years.
- Member of the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Technical Review Team for eight years.
- Named OHV Volunteer of the Year by the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division in 1999.
- In 2001, formed the Off-Road Business Association (ORBA), a nonprofit association of businesses in the OHV recreation industry.
- Produced two successful ORBA Off-Road SuperShows.
- Organized fundraisers for state and federal political candidates—made several trips to Sacramento and Washington, D.C.
- Worked tirelessly to establish an OHV park in San Diego County.
- Pioneered the concept of full-time attorney working exclusively on OHV issues.
- 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award from Off Road Impact.

Roy would have been extremely proud of this permanent tribute to his many efforts on behalf of the OHV community. Let us continue Roy's dream and fight for the OHV cause.





# 16th Annual Truckhaven Challenge

I certainly hope everyone had a great holiday season. I say we start the New Year off in the desert at the CORVA 16th Annual Truckhaven Challenge January 22nd and 23rd, located in the Ocotillo Wells SVRA off of S22 on Holly Rd. We have a tight, twisting course planned that will be fun for everyone. I don't recommend full size or stock vehicles on this course, as you might run into a challenge in some sections of this course. We do, however, have more difficult bypasses for those willing to "go for it".

The Trailmasters will hold their amazing barbecue again Saturday night, a great way to finish up a day on the trail. Also, the Salton City Volunteer Fire Dept. will hold a pancake breakfast on Sunday morning. I can tell you from experience you are guaranteed a great meal from both groups.

For those of you who sometimes bring your four-legged friends off roading with you, we will have a dog show right before the Trailmasters barbeque. This has been a fan favorite at all our other events, so bring your dogs out and show them off.

Don't forget the ever popular raffle with great prizes donated by the off-road industry. This year is shaping up to be the best ever for the Truckhaven Challenge. Please see our flyer in this edition of the ORIA on page 5 or visit <a href="www.corva.org">www.corva.org</a> for more information on the Truckhaven Challenge. This is one event you don't want to miss. I hope to see you all there!





# **CORVA NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

Here are the main projects that CORVA is involved with at this time. Please cut this form out and mail with your donation to:

### **CORVA**

**1101 E. Orangewood Ave. Ste 103 Anaheim CA 92805-6827** 

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Address	
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Red Rock Comments Project Route Designation Process Reopening of Clear Creek Area Funding the CA Desert Legal Bills Funding work at: Other Area:	\$ \$ \$ \$
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TOTAL	\$
Please make checks payable to	



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To help us out and make a donation please see page 15

Thanks

# **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

\$50.00

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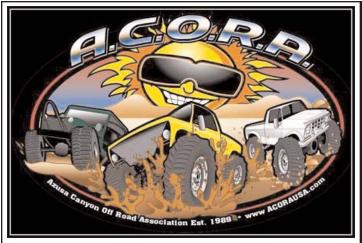
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The Azusa Canyon Off Road Association (ACORA) and the California Trail Users Coalition (CTUC) have begun the second phase of a state of the art Off Road Obstacle Course and ATV Training Course in the San Gabriel Canyon Off Highway Vehicle Recreation Area (Azusa Canyon).

As we begin Phase Two, ACORA is now working to procure tax deductible donations and sponsorships from off road shops and equipment manufacturers to build additional obstacles and amenities on each course, such as shaded tables, shaded bleachers, and shaded instructional areas, so that families and friends can be involved in relative comfort. Sponsors will be able to display their names on these additions to Phase Two.

Support ACORA and the Azusa Canyon Off Road Obstacle Course Project!

http://blogs.4wheeloffroad.com/azusa-canyon-off-roadobstacle-course-and-atv-training-course

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# <u>CORVA CALENDAR</u>

January:

1/15 14th Annual ISDRA MLK Weekend CleanUp -- Saturday event in both North and South Dunes.

See bottom of page 14. More info here: http://www.uniteddesertgateway.org

1/22-23 16th Annual TRUCKHAVEN CHALLENGE -- See page 5 for details.

March:

3/19 Annual CORVA Family Fun Run --- Hungry Valley State OHV Park --- Save the date!!!

More info on page 16.

FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT THE CORVA WEB SITE WWW.CORVA.ORG

