

**NWCOS Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Monitoring Subcommittee Meeting
March 16, 2005
Meeting Summary**

Attending

Vanessa Cameron, Valerie Dobrich, Stephen Flaherty, Maria Fernandez-Gimenez, Rick Hammel, Marianna Raftopoulos, Luke Schafer, Rob Schmitzer, Jeff Whilden, Kristi Parker Celico, and Heather Bergman.

Action Items

1. The Keystone Center will post Dana Bishop's literature review on OHV impacts and a digital copy of the monitoring manual on the NWCOS website.
2. Rob Schmitzer will look into getting BLM's assessment of OHV use in Sand Wash made available to the group.
3. Rick Hammel, Rob Schmitzer, and Jeff Whilden will get together on Tuesday, March 22nd at 9 a.m. at the BLM office in Craig to discuss specific areas the group will visit during outing on March 26th. Others who are interested in participating in this discussion are welcome to join them.
4. Decisions from the above meeting will be posted to the NWCOS website by The Keystone Center
5. **The first OHV monitoring field trip will be on Saturday, March 26th.** Those who are interested should meet at the BLM office in Craig at 8:30 a.m. Everyone should bring water, lunch, and hiking gear; these will not be provided. BLM will provide at least one vehicle; other 4-wheel drive vehicles are welcome. BLM and Maria Fernandez-Gimenez will provide the necessary monitoring equipment.
6. A second OHV monitoring field trip is scheduled for Saturday, April 2nd. Details on this meeting will be posted on the NWCOS website as soon as they have been decided upon.
7. Please send comments on this draft summary to Heather by Thursday, April 7th. If no comments are received, this document will become the final draft on Friday, April 8th. If comments are received, they will be incorporated into a final document that will be made available as soon as possible after receipt of comments.

Agenda Items

1. Discuss goals and objectives
2. Discuss what to do with data collected
3. Discuss how much work participants want to put in on this project

Note: This meeting addressed the goals and objectives of the OHV monitoring project and the methodology for gathering data. The remaining two agenda items will be addressed at future meetings.

Discuss Goals and Objectives

The group discussed some of the issues that are guiding various sectors' interests in this project. These include 1) the health and habitat of the wild horse herd and other wildlife, and 2) severe and potentially ongoing closures of current OHV routes. Concerns were also expressed about

the usefulness of this project in light of past inventorying efforts that do not appear to have been incorporated into BLM's planning processes. Rob Schmitzer expressed this willingness to convene another collaborative inventorying process. However, this project is not a route inventory.

After much discussion, the group identified two main goals:

1. Collect neutral/objective data to identify impacts from OHV use.
2. Validate or negate hypotheses about OHV impacts.

The group will gather data and use photodocumentation to increase the amount of available information about OHV use and about how much and what kind of impacts OHV use has on the resources in the Little Snake Resource Area. Participants agreed to avoid interpreting the data they gather for now. At this juncture, this is a data-gathering exercise only. **[Facilitator's Note: Some participants have raised concerns about the need to interpret the data gathered. This issue may need to be discussed at a future meeting.]**

Methodology for Data Gathering

Maria Fernandez-Gimenez made a brief presentation about the options for data gathering. She provided a handout outlining these options titled, "OHV Monitoring in Sand Wash – Considerations" which will be available on the NWCOS website soon. After a lot of discussion on how best to gather the field data, the group decided to identify high, medium, low, and no use areas in each of four ecosystem types (badland, sage, riparian, and juniper). There will be 3-5 testing plots per area. The field trip on the 26th will be focused on selecting the specific areas for testing.

The need for a study of the proliferation of routes was also discussed, and the group expressed interest in pursuing it. Because such a study would be based on aerial photography and not on plot-based field data like soil and vegetation transects, it will be explored separate from the present field data project.

Although four types of resource concerns were identified (impacts on wild horses; impacts on soils, vegetation and riparian areas; impacts on cultural resources (such as archaeological sites); and 4) impacts on wildlife & habitat (such as sage grouse), the sampling that the group is currently planning will primarily address at impact on soils and vegetation. If there is interest in exploring impacts on the other resources outlined above, additional planning and fieldwork will need to be done.