

April 13, 2005

Dear Jeff Comstock and the Moffat County Land Use Board,

Attached are the goals and objectives for the NWCOS OHV monitoring group. These goals and objectives represent CSU's interpretations of the OHV monitoring group's discussions. This group effort has stemmed from the adaptive management workshop that I hosted in January. During the post-workshop interviews, various individuals showed interest in following through with creating an adaptive management plan and gaining some on-the-ground experience with monitoring. As a result, CSU offered to help organize a monitoring plan that focuses on OHV trail use and OHV effects on vegetation and soil. The overarching goal of this effort is to obtain some baseline data on OHV use and interactions in Sandwash Basin. Future goals include using these baseline data and subsequent year-to-year monitoring data to inform management decisions.

On Saturday, April 2, the OHV monitoring group went to Sandwash Basin to look at potential trails to include in the monitoring plan and I walked them through the proposed monitoring protocols. The group has also shown interest in monitoring impacts on archeological sites and wildlife habitat in the Sandwash Basin area. However, the methods for monitoring these aspects have not been worked out. We expect the group will need to bring in added expertise if they want to address those objectives in their monitoring.

The OHV group is a NWCOS led group. The role of CSU is to help create a statistically rigorous and feasible monitoring plan and provide organizational support that will be useful to the group's efforts.

Sincerely,

Dana Bishop

**Sandwash monitoring goals:**

- 1) Gather baseline data in Sandwash area with respect to OHV use and OHV interaction with the landscape.
- 2) Gather baseline data that can be used to inform adaptive management decisions.
- 3) Gain experience with community-based monitoring.

**Sandwash monitoring objectives** (based on the group's comments):

- 1) Determine the level of use across the landscape using trail counters and aerial photos over time.
- 2) Understand how the different levels of OHV use affect
  - a) vegetation and soils
  - b) archeological sites
  - c) sage grouse habitat
  - d) wildlife (wild horses, elk, deer, etc) (to some extent, this info can be extrapolated from vegetation and soils data)

3) Correlate 1 and 2:

- By using the information gathered from monitoring how the different levels of OHV affect different resources (2 above) and comparing it to the data collected on the level of use across the landscape (1 above), we can determine how the resources are being affected by different the use levels across the landscape.
- For example, if we learn that a certain area is heavily used by OHVs, we can be rather confident that the resources in this area are being affected in a certain manner, based on our monitoring from heavily used areas—even if we haven't done monitoring in that exact location.