



**Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition
Protecting Your Motorized Access to Public Lands
Since 1987**

2022 Year End Report



OHV Users Unite

2022 Summary

In the continuing trend of the last several years, this was the busiest year ever. This year we provided formal written comments on OHV issues basically weekly. There were over 500 bills introduced in the 2022 Session of the Colorado General Assembly of which 11 were of serious concern to the OHV/snowmobile and 4wd recreationists. This confirms the need for professional staff monitoring issues on an ongoing basis. While volunteers are critically they may not be the answer for all situations and often volunteers are being asked to do more than ever before. Challenges are becoming more complex every day but we continue to have major wins for motorized users.



COHVCO Capitol Successes protect OHV access



Colorado General Assembly 2022 Session Legislative Report

This year the session was distinguished by four major issues impacting the OHV, snowmobile and 4wd communities. The issues include: Colorado Rule 20 and adoption of the California Air Resources Board's standards for vehicle emissions; reduction in theft of catalytic converters (cats); Reduction in mobile and stationary emissions in general; attempts by the legislature to take wildlife and natural resources management out of the hands of the Department of Natural Resources and place it in the hands of legislators or a commission comprised of academics and scientist with little accountability to anyone, particularly the public.

The first major category of bills was targeting adoption of the California Air Resources Board's LEV III and ZEV Emissions standards (these standards can be found in the attached Colorado Rule 20). LEV, Low Emission Vehicles and ZEV, Zero Emission Vehicles.



COHVCO Capitol Successes protect OHV access



The second issue dealt with addressing the monumental increase in the theft of catalytic converters and taking various measures to dramatically reduce theft. This approach uses different strategies to curb theft due to the value of precious metals in catalytic converters.

The third issue included identifying areas of higher than normal emissions, then taking whatever measures would be necessary to reduce that level to reach federal compliance. This included both mobile and stationary sources.

Finally, the environmental pressure being placed on legislators to remove state government from resource management and place it in the hands of others poses a nightmarish scenario as you will understand when you are introduced to the bills.



COHVCO Capitol Successes protect OHV access



COHVCO kept OHVs and snowmobiles out of the emissions mess and not subject to new CA standards. Same for you licensed motorcycles, on or off-road. The bill to allow private citizens with academic backgrounds to manage natural resources was never introduced do to so much backlash. In short, despite a great number of bad policy decisions we were not hurt.

Funding increase for the CPW OHV program continued at \$6 million annually. We are pleased that funding for the OHV program continues to reflect the full amount of revenue generated by OHV sticker sales. Clear summer trails mean clear winter trails as well.

For a summary of the rest of the 2022 Legislative Report it is available on our website.



Successes protecting OHV access statewide



CORE Wilderness legislation was again defeated. WIN. This Wilderness Proposal would have closed or restricted access to huge portions of legal riding areas through Wilderness and other Congressional designations. This was passed out of the US House of Representatives and resulted in a tie vote in the Senate Committee. We fought hard to ensure that this legislation was not included in various proposals such as the Omnibus Legislation and other funding packages.

Camp Hale Presidential Proclamation. WIN- More than 53,000 acres outside Minturn, Colorado was designated as the Camp Hale/Continental Divide National Monument. Summer and winter motorized usage of the area was specifically protected without caps or limitations by the Proclamation. The scale of this win is apparent after even a brief comparison of the various Legislative management proposals for the Camp Hale area which include Congressional designation of most of these areas as Wilderness under the Hidden Gems Proposal. This would have prohibited all motorized usages permanently. The Proclamation also provided better access for several other areas when compared to recent Legislative efforts. Previous Legislation identified 200,000 acres, known as the Thompson Divide area, for management to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This was very concerning as motorized recreation is directly tied to the production of very small amounts of greenhouse gases. Under the Proclamation, this threat was removed as the Thompson Divide area was excluded from oil and gas leasing for the next 20 years instead of the permanent Legislative designation requiring mitigation of greenhouse gases as a management goal.



Successes protecting OHV access statewide



Pike San Isabel NF Travel planning. WIN. COHVCO and our partners at TPA has been very involved in the forest level travel plan for the Pike/San Isabel NF. This travel plan maintained more than 97% of exiting OHV routes and critical expansions were included as well. While there are some areas we remain concerned about, this win cannot be overlooked at the landscape level. This is a good foundation for any winter travel management efforts moving forward.

Legal challenge to Rio Grande NF Resource Plan. WIN. Planning efforts on the Rio Grande NF can continue forward after a legal challenge to the Resource Plan were settled without loss of any snowmobile opportunities. Anti-Access groups had sought to have the plan significantly revised through court proceedings that included injunctions against snowmobile access to the Forest. Huge thanks to Mountain States Legal Foundation for their support and partnership in this effort along with Trail Preservation Alliance and others for this success.



AROUND THE NEXT BEND



GMUG National Forest Plan revision. COHVCO has been very involved in development of the new Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest Management Plan. We are thrilled that the preferred Alternative has only minimal Wilderness recommendations and provides good access for OSV usage generally. We continue to fight against recommendations of large wildlife areas in certain alternatives that are not even based on accurate wildlife counts. While some groups assert wildlife populations are collapsing on the GMUG, actual science indicates elk populations on the GMUG are 35% above objective, moose are well above goals and deer are slightly below goal as they are still recovering from the winterkill that was experienced in 2007/08

State Wildlife Area fees. We continue to work with CPW to ensure that the OHV community does not need to purchase additional passes to access roads and trails on State Wildlife Areas. We welcome the fact that other users that have not paid to access these areas now will be required to support the management of these areas.

Recreation and Conservation Districts. In 2020, Governor Polis issued an Executive Order requiring the development of local recreation/Conservation Districts throughout the State and development of a State Recreation/Conservation Plan in 2025. This has been a massive project and we have been involved with these throughout the State to ensure motorized interests are represented. We have had mixed results with these local efforts but addressing recreational concerns locally will be critical to development of the statewide plan.



AROUND THE NEXT BEND



Wolves. COHVCO and our partners have been very involved in the wolf reintroduction efforts to ensure that motorized trails are not lost in these efforts. While we are not highly concerned that snowmobile riders will be pursued by wolves, we are very concerned that wolves eat deer and elk and these population declines will be used as the basis for trail closures. The draft wolf plan available now is better than the 2005 CPW Wolf management plan from this perspective but still has several issues that must be resolved.

Supporting partner efforts. COHVCO has been very involved in efforts throughout the region including camping and travel plans throughout Utah and opposing Wilderness and other restrictions throughout the region.

Protecting federal money supporting trails in Colorado. COHVCO and partners spearheaded efforts to protect access to Federal Recreational Trail Program funds at risk due to new requirements that are functionally impossible to comply with.

Working with state leadership. We attend a lot of meetings and continue to address faulty positions and assertions from representatives in these meetings. Inaccurate stories get told and if they are not contradicted, they become fact. We provide that contradiction when necessary.

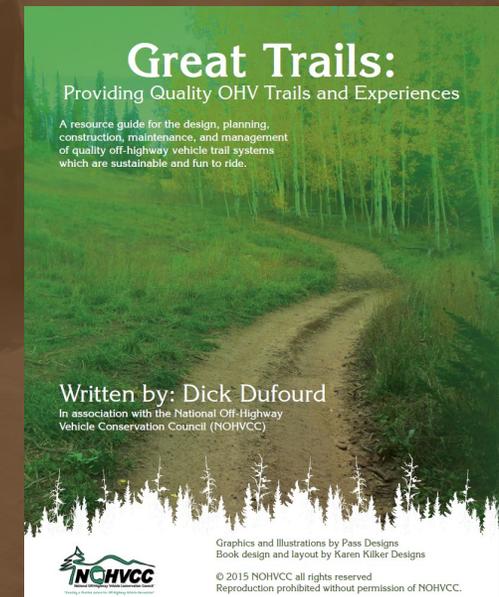
AROUND THE NEXT BEND



OHV Workshops will continue

- Our roundtable discussion was attended by almost 100 people in Montrose, CO
- Our Great Trails Training was attended by more than 30 people
- Last Years workshops provided chainsaw certification to more than a dozen riders

Updating economic contribution study for motorized recreation





How can you help?

1. Volunteer
2. Tell your friends
3. Donations