



Protect Your Right to Ride!



NMOHVA Member Newsletter

July

2011

Upcoming Events

July 17 -
Red Rock
Motorsports
club Fun Run,
Gallup, NM

See the
[NMOHVA
Calendar](#) for
event details and
contacts.

Do you have an
event to share?
Contact NMOHVA at
prez@nmohva.org fo
r a listing in the
newsletter.

Our Forests are Burning!



Photo courtesy of the Las Conchas Fire Flickr site.

Our beloved forests are burning! As I sit here, the Las Conchas fire on the Santa Fe National Forest has already burned over 100,000 acres. This area is one of the most popular and heavily used forested areas in New Mexico. The fire continues to burn out of control. The ironic fact is

that the lack of available fuel due to previous fires in the area is about the only thing that is slowing it down. The smaller Pacheco fire north of Santa Fe is only 25% contained. The huge Wallow fire is an 'Arizona' fire but it has crossed the state line and burned many thousands of acres of national forest land in New Mexico.

Our thoughts are with those who lost their homes in these tragedies. At this point we can only wait for better weather and moisture and send our best wishes for safety to the men and woman trying to corral these monsters.

These horrific fires have set us thinking about their effects on New Mexico OHV enthusiasts. Here are some thoughts:

1. PLEASE, please, please make sure that you, your family, your friends, your club members, or your riding buddies aren't the cause of a fire in our forests. All three of the fires described above appear to have been human caused (but not OHV related). If you are camping, never leave a fire unattended. Always ensure that your fire is out COLD before you leave it. If you can't touch it, you can't leave it. Always make sure your exhaust system is in good working order. This means passenger vehicles as well as OHVs. Make sure your OHV's USFS approved spark arrester is in place and intact. That's the law in New Mexico and for a reason! If you park any vehicle off the pavement, anywhere, make sure you don't have combustibles (weeds, grass, etc.) under your vehicle. A catalytic converter can easily get hot enough to ignite dry grass or leaves.

2. The Las Conchas fire has devastated some of the best single track riding in New Mexico. The Cochiti loop had to have been one of the most popular loop rides in the state for both motorcycles and mountain bikes. If history serves as an indicator, it will be some years before that area of forest will be open to trail use. The Forest Service will exclude the public to protect them from falling trees until that danger has passed. Salvage timbering can greatly hasten that process but many will be deprived of their favorite trails for some period of time.

3. The Forest Service will need volunteer labor now more than ever to re-clear and re-establish the trails once the area is safe enough to re-enter. Road beds don't move but fires can make trails disappear. Most of the single track may be only memories, especially after several years of new vegetation growth. Our GPS tracks may be the only proof the trails ever existed. These trails can be made even more sustainable by working with the agency to re-establish them in optimal locations.

In closing, we offer these words of encouragement from Nora Hamilton, our NEPA consultant, dirtbike rider, and longtime Forest Service employee. Nora has ridden the Jemez and understands what we have lost.

Wow, it's sad to see the place has burned. Yet on a positive note, you will be amazed at how quickly the forest recovers. It is much different, obviously the big trees are burned, but the "pioneer" species (vegetation that thrives in burned-over areas) move right in and it's a whole new forest and that starts the first spring season after the fire. The first season is pretty rough and we usually cry when we see it. But it gets better and better every season. There are more animals because the pioneer species provide good forage where as the older forest tends to stifle the good forage.

A lot depends on how the Forest Service handles it. They usually put an emergency closure on a burned area because the dead trees are a hazard--they just fall over without warning and an amazing number of people are killed that way. Typically, there will be an emergency closure to keep the entire public out. If they do salvage sales the emergency should pass quickly because the dead trees will be removed in a season or two at the most--but the FS will still want to limit public access during that time.



The single track is usually very difficult to relocate except by memory. This won't be a problem for us as all of the trails were very carefully GPS'd recently. There could be trails restored within a couple of seasons if the Forest Service is cooperative and they do their salvage sales promptly. They should do the reforestation in the third or fourth season. That will be the critical time for preserving the trail because there will be people who want to use the fire as an excuse to re-forest the area without roads and trails. The radical environmentalist will try to obstruct the salvage sales, if they are successful at that then it will be a mess for a long time.

We will be shut out temporarily; but if the users are persistent, the roads and trails can be preserved. Because of the TMR plan, the roads and trails are on record as existing and under consideration for designation. Those roads and trails will need to be re-cleared. The destruction of the fire will provide even more opportunity to ensure the trails are located in a sustainable manner. The riders need to be willing and able to provide the manpower to make this happen just as soon as the Forest Service allows people back into the area.



Please forward this to anyone who needs encouragement--I've been through this as an employee and as a user, and it's not really as bleak as it may seem right now.

Nora

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

The Cedro trail project is currently shut down due to Stage 3 fire restrictions in the Cibola National Forest but the project will resume after the area receives sufficient moisture. We will still need volunteers to help with various tasks out at Cedro well into the autumn. Please contact project coordinator Joanne Spivack at ravens-nest@comcast.net for more details or to volunteer your time.



The BR Fjord Memorial Trail Cleanup will be August 6th on Mt. Taylor

near Grants, New Mexico. This is a volunteer project with the Mt. Taylor Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest. Those wishing to participate to help clean the mountain should contact Ronald Schubert at Redneckrons@msn.com to be put on the contact list for the project details. Lunch and water will be provided by Tread Lightly. Please Note: This activity could be re-scheduled due to the continuing drought that New Mexico is experiencing. Please check the NMOHVA website for any changes.

NMOHVA Trail Ambassador Ron Schubert has made the necessary arrangements for NMOHVA to participate in the NM Department of Game & Fish's Outdoor Expo on Aug 20 and 21. This annual event is held at the Albuquerque Shooting Range by the Double Eagle Airport. The NMOHVA booth was very successful last year and we look forward to another opportunity of telling the public what our organization is about. If you are interested in volunteering to help man the booth on either or both days, contact Ron at redneckrons@msn.com or by calling 505-681-5185.

Any ATV/Motorcycle/4WD individuals or groups that organize and complete any volunteer work are reminded to please contact Ronald Schubert, NMOHVA's Trail Ambassador, with the project information. Ron is logging all of our OHV volunteer efforts to communicate, coordinate, and advertize the good work we are doing across the state. Help us make sure everyone knows what great work your local club is doing!