

—continued from page 3 -

involvement, and I firmly believe that family participation in off-roading can be a positive influence on kids. The first of my kids is now learning to ride, and I look forward to sharing my love of observed trials, racing, and dirt bike riding with each of them. To that end, my work for NMOHVA and off-roading in New Mexico is to preserve as much of the vast open riding the state has, and to ensure that my kids have an opportunity to discover the joy of riding.

New Mexico To Host NOHVCC Conference in 2008

The National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) has chosen Albuquerque to be the site of their annual conference in 2008. NMOHVA, under the lead of our NOHVCC representative John Barksdale, will be organizing the two days of riding that will be offered as part of the conference. Here is our chance to spotlight the terrific riding opportunities we have in this state, as well as have the chance to talk with some of the national leaders of the OHV community. Other goals of the conference include networking, and speaking to federal land managers and many great workshops that will give us background and training in dealing with keeping OHV opportunities in New Mexico alive and well. Go to www.nohvcc.org, and see how much terrific work is happening, and sign up for their 'e-newsletter'. Keep it here for updates!



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- Gila Trail Riders
 - New Mexico 4 Wheelers
 - Prairie Dawgs MC

LIFE MEMBERS:
Harry Wagner

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Saving Our Trails: National Forest Update

First some quick background on the National Travel Management Rule -All national forests must designate what trails, road and areas motorized vehicles are allowed to use. They print a map, and then everything and anything NOT on the map is ILLEGAL to ride or drive. What we've worried about for years is happening, this is the "closed unless designated open" policy. It is exactly the opposite of the current management policy.

Who is Affected: Recreational users (dirtbikes, ATVs, 4WD), but also anyone who drives into the forest to camp, hike, hunt, cut firewood etc. The Rule affects ALL motor vehicle use on every

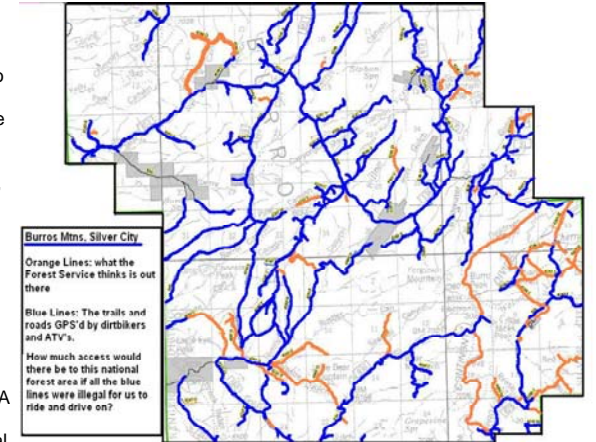
The Inside Line—The Newsletter of the New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance—Aug 07

Forest Planning Races Forward

Timing: The planning has been underway for over a year and will be done in 18-24 months. Not too late to affect this...but the most serious decisions are being made now, and it's happening all over New Mexico. The further along the agency gets with its planning, the harder it is to convince them to make changes.

The Need: Local OHV'ers who know the trails and roads in the forest they use. This means dirt-bike, ATV, full size 4WD, and trials riders. OHV users need to be aware of what their forest is doing. Write, email, and attend meetings. Contact us at NMOHVA for details, write to president@nmohva.org. Your personal comment with specifics about your riding areas really do matter!
The Reality: Choose Orange or Blue

This map shows just a slice of one ranger district, the Burros Mountains ranger district in the Gila National Forest near Silver City. Would you want to ride on the



blue trails or the orange trails? Yeah, that's a silly question. The orange trails are what the Forest Service has on its maps. The blue trails are what the dirtbikers and ATV'ers ride; they GPS mapped and submitted the trails to the forest service. Without the riders pushing to put those blue line trails on the official map, the forest service would say "All you get are the orange line trails and all the blue line trails are illegal". The orange line trails are useless, just a

—continued on page two—

Support Public Lands Day Where You Play

On Saturday, September 29, 2007, America celebrates the 14th annual National Public Lands Day. Each fall, volunteers across the country join together in the nation's largest grass roots effort to improve and enhance the public lands we all enjoy. Projects range from building bridges and trails, to improving wildlife habitat by removing invasive plants that threaten native historic and cultural resources. The goal of this national day is to improve our public lands for outdoor recreation and to educate Americans about the importance of accepting responsible stewardship of our public lands.

NMOHVA would like to encourage all recreation enthusiasts to join the thousands of other volunteers on September 29th in enhancing America's natural beauty. Use this link <http://www.publiclandsday.org> to visit the event's website, and find out how you can participate in National Public Lands Day here in New Mexico.

The OHV User Group, Sierra Riders and Jemez Forest District of the Santa Fe National forest partnered up for some training and work on May

12. Forest Service personnel taught the ATV riders some techniques in water and trail mitigation. This is the first time that an ATV group and the Santa Fe National forest has partnered for such a project and its success will promote such partnerships into the future.



Get Involved with Forest Trails Designation (Cont'd from Front Page)

a few disconnected pieces. Imagine that is all you can legally ride, you couldn't even get to most of them.

How would you like to have 80% of YOUR trails closed? This is not hypothetical, or a scare tactic, this is real and it's happening now. We're finding in every forest that the forest service has less than 25% of our trails on their 'official' maps.

What's happening: All the forests have to follow the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process to do the travel management designations. The first part is scoping: they gather their maps and data, ask for public opinion, and develop a draft or proposed map. The second part is analysis: they analyze the data (streams and soils, wildlife, ancient human sites, etc.) and collect public opinion on the proposed map. Then they develop several different maps called 'a range of alternatives'. Some will be pro-OHV (more roads, trails, and areas we can use) and some will be anti-OHV (very few roads, trails, areas open to us). Third, the public reviews those alternatives; the forest goes back to analyzing and decides which map is their 'preferred alternative'. Then they have to go through review periods, more public comment and a lot of bureaucratic stuff to make it official. That last step can take 3 months to a year. Technically the public can comment and try to influence changes all the way through. In reality, once you're at the preferred alternative, the forest service is too invested in it to make major changes. The best chance to influence this is right now.

What we're seeing: Pro-OHV folks are documenting trails and working with the forest service in some forests to design reasonable trail systems that will meet our needs. Anti-OHV groups everywhere are demanding we be locked out. They make exaggerated claims of soil damage, impacts to wildlife, criminal behavior, noise and conflicts over sharing trails. Some people living near forests are demanding special treatment, like prohibiting access through their neighborhoods (even though the roads are public), and closing trailheads near their homes.

The Opponents: The Center for Biological Diversity (Tucson) is a major source of lawsuits against the Forest Service. They've decided to make the Santa Fe National Forest their focus for the anti-OHV push in New Mexico. Some other anti-OHV groups are Forest Guardians, NM Wilderness Alliance, and the Sierra Club. Go to their websites and read what they say about OHVs. Outside enviro money is flowing into smaller local groups to fund their anti-OHV activities. One example is "UGWA", Upper Gila Watershed Assoc. They received money from CBD to hire someone to 'monitor' OHVs in the Gila.

Cibola National Forest (Albuquerque, Grants, and Mountainair): The Cibola is the only Forest doing this process one ranger district at a time. The Sandia Ranger District has released the proposed plan for motorized recreation which is entirely limited to the Cedro Peak area. Most of our identified trails are included, but not enough trails are designated for ATV use. The Forest Service proposes that the entire La Madera area be closed to motorized use. This is a relatively remote and under-utilized area which has tremendous potential for dirtbikes, ATVs and 4WD. And lastly, they are proposing to **close all Cedro peak Trails for 5 months each year**, from December 1 to May 1, regardless of weather conditions. The closure would apply only to motorized recreation, not mountain bikers or horse riders or hikers. Go to www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola/travel-management/index.shtml for the maps and proposed plans. The Sandia Ranger District is finishing the scoping period and starting the analysis. The Mountainair ranger district will start scoping this fall. The Mt. Taylor district will start sometime in 2008.

Clubs working here are Blackfeather (dirtbikes), New Mexico Trials Association (trials riders), New Mexico 4Wheelers (4WD), and Sierra Riders ATV club.

Santa Fe National Forest (Santa Fe, Pecos, and Los Alamos): The Santa Fe has produced a first draft of maps with proposed routes. It appears that they've slashed the single-track trails mapped by the Blackfeather club by over 50%. We're working with the Santa Fe NF to find out if that is really what they are proposing, or if the maps just aren't complete yet. All trails have to be checked out in the field and it is very time-consuming. 4WD routes look pretty good but there are no areas for trials riders. Maps are posted, but as of this writing they had not posted the new maps we saw at last week's meetings. Those are the just revealed "proposed system". Santa Fe NF is near the end of scoping, and starting analysis.

Involved clubs are Blackfeather, NM Trials Association, NM 4Wheelers, and Sierra Riders ATV club.

Carson National Forest (Taos and one ranger district near Grants): The scoping report on the website lists mostly anti-OHV comments like "ban all motor vehicles in the forest". We're not hearing anything from Taos and they are not providing anything current on their website. The website information has not been updated in about 6 months. We don't know where the Taos Ranger District is in their process.

We have one NMOHVA member in Grants working on the Jicarilla Ranger District, aided by the San Juan Trail Riders of Durango. A couple of members are working on the Taos ranger district. Members of NMTA have submitted maps and descriptions of trails and trials areas.

Lincoln National Forest (Cloudcroft, Ruidoso, and Alamogordo): The Lincoln NF has had a designated trail system for twenty years. Their website says they don't intend to do anything except look at the current designated trails. The Lincoln contains over 1.1 million acres, with 3 ranger districts spread over 4 counties. There are 86,000 acres of wilderness. With all that land, the existing trail system for motorcycles and ATVs is only 100 miles. That's entirely inadequate. The Jemez district of the Santa Fe NF is proposing more than that, and it is only 251,000 acres in comparison. We don't know where the Lincoln is with their process.

Prairie Dawgs MC (motorcycles) and a new ATV club in Alamogordo are involved. The ATV Club in Alamogordo is Rocky Mountain ATV Club

Gila National Forest (Silver City, Glenwood, Reserve, and the Arizona border): The riders in the Gila were the first to do serious work with the forest service. The Gila NF website posts the maps for each ranger district, showing the orange 'system roads' the agency has on its maps, and the blue lines for what the riders know is really on the ground. (Note: you'll need broadband, map files are from 5 MB to over 11 MB.) The Gila NF is saying it won't have maps of proposed routes until this fall.

Thanks to the Gila Trail Riders and the MAG ATV club for their leadership and hard work.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED: Contact NMOHVA, president@nmohva.org, and we'll put you in touch with the people working to save OHV recreation in your local forest.

NMOHVA Annual Meeting Highlights

The New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance (NMOHVA) held its Annual Meeting for NMOHVA's membership on April 7, 2007. The main topics of business were consideration of proposed Bylaw changes and the annual election of its Board of Directors. The changes adopted by the membership present include adding a Recreation Resource Director to the Board of Directors. NMOHVA's membership strongly affirmed maintaining public land access and enhancing motorized recreation opportunities are fundamental to the purpose of NMOHVA. Creating a Board position focused on these activities will enable NMOHVA to expand its role in shaping motorized recreation opportunities in the state of New Mexico. The membership also added another 'at-large' Board position, created staggered two-year terms for all Board positions, and eliminated term limits for the Board of Directors.

The results of the election are as follows:

President – Chris Johnson

Vice President – Michelle Cassella

Secretary – Mark Werkmeister

Treasurer – Hurley Wilvert

Recreation Resource Director – Joanne Spivack

Board Member At-Large #1 – Phil Fuerschbach (Phil has since resigned and Bob Stapleton appointed in his place - Ed.)

Board Member At-Large #2 – Kent Stam

Board Member At-Large #3 – Ron Schubert

With the newly modified Bylaws in play, the offices of President, Secretary, Recreation Resource Director, and At-Large Board Member #2 will expire in March of 2008. The other Board members' terms will expire in April of 2009.

The newly elected Board of Directors is energized about NMOHVA's opportunities to positively influence motorized recreation in New Mexico in the coming year!

In Focus—New President of NMOHVA –Chris Johnson

My passion for motorcycles, and dirt bikes in particular, started in junior high school in Grants, New Mexico. The early 70's dirt bike explosion fueled by rapidly advancing Japanese motorcycle technology and the movie *On Any Sunday* was at full throttle. The paperboy up the street had a Suzuki 90, the next-door neighbor had a Honda CT-70, and for a brief golden period I was able to scrounge afternoon rides on a Yamaha DT175 belonging to a school mate. Grants had a network of outlaw trails, alleys, arroyos, and open fields running through town. It was dirt bike heaven for a kid. Unfortunately, my family situation meant it would be years be-

fore I could actually get my own motorcycle. But I had the bug, and I had it bad.

Upon returning to New Mexico after service in the Navy, during which I rode in the boonies of Hawaii and Guam, I bought my first real dirt bike, a brand-new '86 Kawasaki KDX200. Sparsely-developed Rio Rancho was even more wide open for dirt bikes than Grants had been, and I could ride out of my garage all the way to the Rio Puerco. I caught the racing bug, and I competed in the New Mexico Desert Racing Association's events for six years.

When family and fatherhood became a reality, so did the danger of

racing. I could no longer justify the risks, so I limited my dirt biking to trail riding, and I still have my '89 KX250. But I found a new off-road challenge in motorcycle observed trials. My progress has been slow, but the cool thing about observed trials is that, like golf, the challenge is really internal. With each event I learn something new about riding, and internalizing that new learning is the key.

I'm also very fortunate to have discovered and joined the New Mexico Trials Association, an incredibly enthusiastic club with a long history of putting on quality events in the state. The club puts an emphasis on family

-continued on back page -