

MONTANA **SPRING 2021** TRAIL RIDER NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTANA TRAIL VEHICLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION



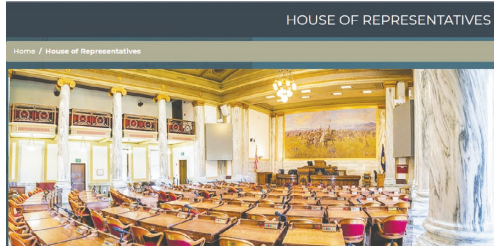
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The 2021 Montana Legislative Session

Excerpts from Treasure State Resources Association News, December 2020

The Montana Legislative Session will kick off on Monday, January 4, 2021. Republicans enjoy large majorities in both the House of Representatives and the Montana Senate. Montana will also swear in a new Governor, Greg Gianforte, and other statewide elected officials following a Republican sweep of all major offices.



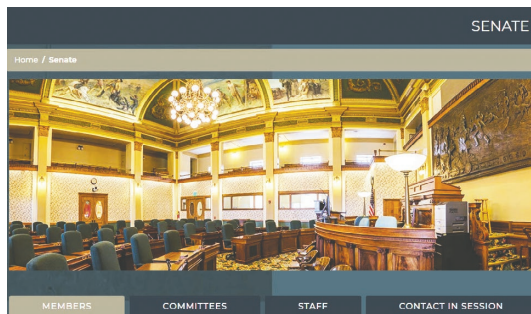
Legislative Bill Draft Requests:

The number of bill draft requests for the 67th Legislative Session is approaching 2000. The deadline for unlimited requests has passed, but legislators can continue to submit requests as the session approaches. A significant number of the requests are broad in title, serving as placeholders for more targeted language to come. Those interested in reviewing

the list can review them on the website at <https://leg.mt.gov/>

Standing Committee Members Named for 2021 Legislative Session

The Legislative Branch released the names of legislators who will serve on standing committees (also referred to as Session Committees) for the 67th Montana Legislative Session. The 2021 House and Senate Standing Committees lists are online at: <https://leg.mt.gov/committees/session-committees/>



Additional information and bill tracking are online at on <https://leg.mt.gov/>.

Members and other information are subject to change. Check the website for the most up-to-date lists.

MTVRA General Membership Meeting February 23, 2021

From the MTVRA Board of Directors

The MTVRA General Membership meeting will be held at 6:30 PM on February 23, 2021 and will be conducted by conference call. The conference call-in number is (425) 436-6320 and the access code is 615553. The meeting is open to all members who wish to join.

Electronic Network

Attention: Members if you are not receiving email news, please send in your email addresses. The cost of producing the newsletter, shortage of volunteers, and the real time lag in getting information to you in a timely fashion make the electronic network an important tool now and for

the future. We promise we will not deluge you with excess notices. All news releases sent to MTVRA will be reviewed for importance to Montana before sending out. To be added to the network, simply email mona.ehnes@gmail.com and ask to be added.

MONTANA TRAIL RIDER NEWS

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Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the MTVRA or its officers. Your editorial or news contributions would be appreciated.

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MTVRA BYLAWS - Current bylaws, with changes approved June 2006, are posted on our website, www.MTVRA.com

2020 MTVRA Trail Tractor Maintenance Program Report

By Mona Ehnes

2020 MTVRA Trail Tractor Maintenance Program Report

By Mona Ehnes

MTVRA received its first \$90,000 Recreational Trails Program grant for trail maintenance using a Sutter trail Dozer in 2014. The most recent work done during the summer of 2020 is the seventh year MTVRA performed trail maintenance on USFS OHV trails and BLM OHV trails on public lands across Montana.

2020 was a busy summer for the Trail Tractor Maintenance Program. There were four new locations with trails that had not received motorized mechanized maintenance in prior years. The trail maintenance contractor working on the 2020 MTVRA trail maintenance grant projects also performed work on a project on the Lincoln Ranger District and another USFS trail construction project in the Little Belt Mountains. The project in the Little Belt Mountains was funded by an OHV grant awarded to the Missouri River Off-Roaders, a four-wheel drive club from Great Falls.

BLM Butte Field Office: Beginning in April, there were 33 miles of the BLM trails at Pipestone OHV Area maintained this past summer. This area receives maintenance every year because it is a high-use OHV area, and this year \$18,000 was spent on maintaining these trails. BLM covered the \$4,500 cost to have an employee dedicated to on-site support of the work.

BLM Billings Field Office: Work was done on Red Pryor Route #1022 and Dandy Mine #1034 trails. This is the first major maintenance that has been undertaken in this area in over 30 years. This project was planned for September and October of 2019 but was canceled due to the early snow and frozen ground. The BLM also worked on additional trails in the area with other funding sources. The RTP grant fund covered \$19,617.50 of the cost for the project and, BLM matched with \$5,404.



Red Pryor Route 1022 before trail maintenance summer 2020



Dandy Mine Route 1034 before trail maintenance summer 2020

Beaverhead-Dillon National Forest, Butte Ranger District: In the Fleecer area, trail #4164 received maintenance during July 28-30th. This is the first time that work has been done in the Fleecer area, although it had been proposed in past grants. This trail was identified as high priority due to safety issues. On 3.5 miles of trail, \$5,197.50 of RTP grant funds were spent with a match of \$1,738.41 in USFS employee time. After work was completed David Scherbel reported that the work was excellent and that he had received calls from riders telling him how great it looks and that it was much safer than in had been in many years.

Beaverhead-Dillon National Forest, Dillon Ranger District: The Comet Ridge Project consisted of approximately 4.7 miles of trail work. This trail had been included in prior years' grant proposals. \$7,080 of RTP grant funds were spent on this project with a USFS match of \$1,845 in employee time.

MTVRA member and past contractor Parke Scott had talked to the Program Manager for Recreation about maintenance work. Since she was new to the area, he offered to take her out to see the motorized trails on the ground. After seeing the trail conditions first-hand, she was surprised to see how poorly maintained they were. She noted that the

Comet trail looked like it should be closed for safety reasons, with excessive water erosion to several portions of the trail and an erosion crevice approximately 5 feet deep and quite long. There were many boulders that needed to be dug out and she counted about 45 water diversions that needed to be installed within the 4.7-mile stretch of trail being maintained.

The contractor was on site August 3 through the 6th and when done, The Program Manager said she was extremely happy with the work done and surprised at the quantity and quality of the work that could be completed by the contractor and his equipment. She has requested that they return in 2021 to complete the Comet Ridge project and work on additional trails.

The contractor had been scheduled to go to Bozeman Ranger District, but after explaining the situation on the Dillon Ranger District and the safety need, they rearranged their schedule to conform with the contractor's availability. This was a win-win situation.



Comet Ridge Trail

Before & After

Erosion crevice



Custer-Gallatin National Forest, Bozeman Ranger District: The contractor was on site August 10th through the 20th, performing maintenance on a total of 24.96 miles of trails, at a total cost of \$15,048. Trail #502 had 10.64 miles maintained, #555 had 6.42 miles maintained and trail #506 had 7.87 miles maintained. The RTP grant paid \$14,722.50 on the invoice for this work, which consumed the last of the funding available in the grant. MTVRA contributed \$325.50 to pay the remainder of the invoice. These trails were included in the project that was scheduled for summer of 2019 but had been postponed.

This trail work required prework of clearing and planning, which was completed in June. A switchback with a turn that was too tight to be safe required blasting work that was completed August 5th.

BLM Billings Field Office: The contractor was on site September 29th through October 13th, performing maintenance on 19 miles of trails in the Shepherd Ah-Nei OHV Area. The BLM does not require trail numbers in OHV areas, so this was the first time MTVRA had worked with a project to maintain trails identified only on a map without any trail identification numbers. Total cost to the RTP grant for this project was \$18,256 with the BLM matching time valued at \$1,620 and \$3,000 for MCC on contract with the BLM. This was the first MTVRA Trail Maintenance project completed with Advanced Trail Services, LLC.

Advanced Trail Services, LLC: This fall PJ Brown, who has worked with Parke Scott of Scott's Fire Service from Dillon for the past several years, purchased the trail maintenance portion of the business. His new company is Advanced Trail Services, LLC. Within the purchase, the contract with MTVRA was transferred to PJ and Advanced Trail Services, LLC. PJ started by doing the trail rake with the ATV and then progressed thru the training on the Sutter dozer with Parke. We will miss Parke, but realize it was time to make some changes. Scott's Fire Service is still in business and fighting fires as well as other things. Thanks for all your help.

Electric Bicycle Use On Public Land

By Russ Ehnes and Carl Siroky

e-bike [NOUN]: a bicycle that can be run on electric power as well as by pedaling.

An e-bike is a bicycle with an electric motor that can help the rider to traverse the road or the trail. You ride an e-bike much like you ride a normal bicycle, but with much less effort.

In the last few years nearly every bicycle manufacturer has entered the e-bike market, making them available and more affordable for many people. With this increase in ownership of e-bikes their use on public land trails has become the latest opportunity for public land management and a hot topic in user debates.

This past summer I saw my first "No E-Bikes" sign on a non-motorized trail in the Custer-Gallatin National Forest. Until I saw this sign, I was operating under the assumption that an e-bike was just another type of mountain bike and as such could be used on any trail that a mountain bike can be used on. I posted this picture on the left on Facebook with a comment about how surprised I was to see that e-bikes are being managed as "Motorized". I got plenty of informative feedback from other folks, showing me that this is a hot topic in the outdoor recreation community.

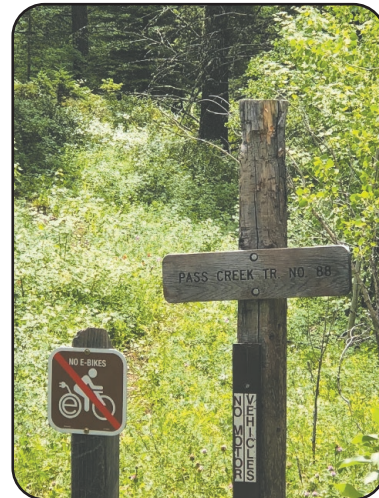
I did a little research, to see what is going on with e-bikes on public land. What I discovered is that the BLM has a final e-bike rule but there is not yet final travel plan regulations written for e-bike management on Forest Service lands. I found out that the public land managers consider e-bikes to be "Motorized vehicles" and with a few notable exceptions, are managing their use as just that.

The Forest Service Statement on E-Bike Use:

Here is the official statement from the US Forest Service from their website at this address: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/e-bikes>

Emerging technologies such as e-bikes are changing the way people enjoy their visits to national forests and grasslands. Today, more than 60,000 miles of trails and roads on national forests and grasslands are currently open to e-bike use. As use trends change with time and new technologies, the way we manage lands to ensure their long-term health and resilience must change as well. This is why we are closely examining our policy to identify ways to expand access for American's to enjoy these recreation opportunities on our forests and grasslands in ways that meet user needs while continuing to protect forest resources.

On September 24, 2020 the US Department of Agriculture published a notice of availability for public comment on proposed changes to the Forest Service Manual 7700



regarding travel management. The comment period closed on October 26th. The Forest Service proposed changes included recognizing the three classes of e-bikes that 27 states have recognized and allowing managers to designate trail use on USFS trails by class and season. It appears likely these changes will be made to the USFS Manual.

On December 2 2020 the BLM Final E-bike Rule went into effect. Much like the proposed USFS Rule, the BLM recognizes the three classes of e-bikes, gives managers the authority to designate e-bike use on routes and areas but it differs from the USFS Proposed Rule in one major way. The BLM Final E-bike Rule gives managers the authority to recognize e-bikes as non-motorized vehicles on a route-by-route basis.

So, what does all this mean to OHV riders and e-bike riders right now?

In the immediate future, it means e-bikes are only allowed on trails open to OHV's until land managers go through the necessary public planning processes to designate which trails will be open to e-bikes, which classes of e-bikes can be ridden, and when they may be ridden.

In the longer term it could affect OHV riders in several ways. First, it means more use on motorized trails. It could mean trails that have been closed to motorized use in the past could be open to e-bikes but remain closed to motorized vehicles. As someone who has lived through many closures, it is encouraging that I may be able to visit those trails again with electrically powered assistance without relying only on human or equine power.

Unfortunately, it also means trails I enjoy on my motorcycle could also be restricted to e-bikes only in the future so we will have to remain

vigilant and engaged to protect our current access and expand motorized and e-bike access in the future.

The new rules could also present opportunities for OHV clubs in the future. Interestingly, most mountain bike organizations oppose the use of e-bikes on non-motorized trails and wilderness advocates are dead-set against e-bikes on non-motorized trails, so e-bike riders are mostly unrepresented at this time. Since OHV riders and e-bike riders use the same trails, e-bike riders could join OHV clubs so they can engage in trail maintenance and advocacy. In the long run this could help us maintain motorized access and prevent limitation of open motorized trails to e-bikes only.

MTVRA Membership Renewal

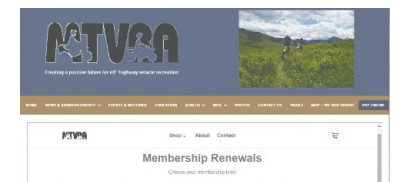
Dear MTVRA Regular and Business Members,

Here is a big THANK YOU for your continued support by paying your MTVRA and other club dues. It is more important than ever that the clubs remain active and participate in the land management issues, legislation, as well as trail maintenance through the grant process. Also, donating some extra for the Legal and Special Savings Account as well as the Little Belts Maintenance Fund is appreciated. Since there will be more grants to apply for, the issue of matching funds for the club grants will increase. Again, THANK YOU...

Mona Ehnes, Sec/Treasurer

To make it easier for people to donate, join or members to renew their MTVRA membership through a "Pay Online" link on the MTVRA website.

<https://montana-trail-vehicle-riders-association.square.site/>



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2021 Race Series for 406XC Montana Cross Country

Preliminary Race Schedule for the 2021 season

April 24, – 25	Last Chance XC	Helena
May 8 – 9	Coal Mine Coulee XC	Big Sandy
May 22 – 23	Yellowstone XC	Billings
June 5 – 6	Horse Creek XC	Adams Ranch, Melstone
June 26 – 27	Elk Basin XC	BMC, Belfry

CMMX Race Schedule

Race Schedule for the 2021 season

DATE:	LOCATION:	HOSTED BY:
April 18th	Great Falls, MT	Electric City Dirt Riders
May 8th	Anaconda, MT	Anaconda Motocross
May 30th	Florence, MT	Bitterroot Valley MX
June 6th	Dillon, MT	Dillon Motocross
June 20th	Helena, MT	Last Chance Riders Association
July 11th	Wilsall, MT	Big Air Montana
August 14th	Helena, MT	Last Chance Riders Association



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The New Summer Motorized Trail Pass:

By Russ Ehnes



During the 2019 Legislature Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association (MTVRA) worked with Montana Legislator Kerry White to pass HB 355, which among other things, created a "Summer Motorized Recreation Grant Program". The program will be funded through the sale of a "Summer motorized recreation trail pass", which will cost \$20, will be good for two years, and will be required to ride on summer motorized recreational

trails on public lands in Montana. To quote the law, "Summer motorized recreation trail" means a trail designated as open to motorized use and approved for inclusion in the summer motorized recreation trail grant program established in [section 4] by the land management agency with jurisdiction over the trail.

Why did we need to pass this new law? Simply put, there isn't enough money available to OHV clubs and associations or land managers to maintain our trails. Of course, we've all heard about federal budget cuts that affect agency trail budgets and while that's a real problem, it's only part of the problem. Another part of the problem, and the part MTVRA could affect, has been the loss of funding for the Montana OHV Grant Program.

An Important History of the Montana OHV Grant Program

In 1985 the Montana Legislature passed a bill that required every OHV to have a \$25 registration decal to operate on public lands. The problem was every penny went to county budgets, not OHV trails. MTVRA entered the legislative arena in 1987 in an effort to change this misguided law so it would benefit OHV users. MTVRA succeeded in getting the law changed so \$5 from each \$25 decal went to an OHV grant program while the balance still went to the counties. In 1991 MTVRA again worked to change the law so a portion of the Montana gas tax, 1/8 of 1%, would be returned to the OHV program. This is a refund for the taxes we pay on gasoline that is not used on-road, similar to the snowmobile program. Every OHV user was required to buy a \$25 decal annually (every year) for every OHV they used on public lands.

As the annual decal sales increased because of increased compliance and increased numbers of riders registering machines, the grant program grew to its peak in the late 1990's when about \$300,000 was available each year for grants to maintain OHV trails and for educational efforts in Montana.

In the 1999 legislative session legislators changed the law to give owners the option to register motorcycles and quadricycles (ATVs) 11 years or older permanently. In 2003 the legislature changed all registration of motorcycles, ATVs, Boats, RVs and trailers to permanent registration at the request of Montana counties. The reason was legitimate; county motor-vehicle registration offices were being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of registering and selling annual plates and decals for these vehicles.

While the permanent registration eased the burden on the counties, it was based on flawed information. The assumptions made by the bill drafters and used in the fiscal note for the bill said that OHV users bought new vehicles about every three years, therefore the permanent registration would be sold for \$61.25 with about \$15 of that going to the OHV fund, roughly triple the annual rate.

MTVRA presented data at the bill hearings acquired from actual sales numbers from the Motorcycle Industry Council that proved the average rider purchased a new OHV about every seven years, but our data was ignored. In addition, the law required sellers of used vehicles to remove the permanent decal and the new buyer would be required

to buy a new permanent decal. That simply doesn't happen in the real world. Montana Snowmobile Association (MSA) found snowmobiles with permanent decals that had been through six different owners without a new decal. The same is true for OHVs.

The result has been that almost all permanent decals sold now are for brand new units and our OHV grant program has declined from a high of \$300,000 annually in the late 1990's to a low of \$75,000 several years ago. The fund has been hovering between \$75,000 and \$100,000 for the past several years.

The permanent registration had the same devastating effect on the snowmobile program so MSA worked to implement a "Winter Trail Pass" in the 2015 Legislative session to restore funding to their trail grooming program. The new Summer Motorized Recreation Trail Pass closely resembles the snowmobile trail pass and was created to restore funding for OHV trail maintenance.

More information about the Montana Summer Motorized Trail Pass program can be found on the Montana State Parks website at <https://stateparks.mt.gov/activities/off-highway-vehicles>

Questions and Answers

Where do I buy a trail pass?

Trail passes can be purchased online at stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/ohvProgram.html and will be mailed to the address you specify. To buy passes in person, visit any Fish Wildlife and Parks office or an authorized vendor. A list of vendors can be found on the same site listed above.

Where does my \$20 go and what is my money used for?

If you buy a trail pass from a vendor, \$18 goes to the grant fund and the vendor gets \$2. All \$20 goes in the grant fund. If you buy a pass from Fish, Wildlife, and Parks either in-person or online. The grant funds are administered by Montana State Park Department. Up to 5% of the fund can be used by the department for administration of the program, \$1 from each pass is to be granted for mitigation and eradication of noxious weeds along summer motorized recreation trails, and the remainder of the grant funds are available for designation, maintenance, and improvement of summer motorized recreational trails.

Who can apply for grants?

Only private clubs and organizations can apply for grants from this grant fund. Therefore, any grant money spent on trails must be done through cooperative agreements and partnerships with the agencies managing the trails. While this gives OHV riders assurance the money is being used to benefit them, it also means that local clubs and the state association will be responsible for acquiring grants, spending the money responsibly and working in cooperation and partnership with the managing agencies.

How will MTVRA use money they get from the grants?

In western states the vast majority of trail maintenance on Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails is performed by state operated OHV trail programs and volunteer organization. In Montana there is no state sponsored OHV trail maintenance program so that burden has fallen to MTVRA and its member organizations.

For the past seven years MTVRA has operated a statewide OHV mechanized trail maintenance program in cooperation with the BLM and USFS. MTVRA has applied for and received grants from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) each year. The grants have been \$45-90,000 each year and are used to hire a contractor to perform trail maintenance with a Sutter Trail Dozer on OHV trails in five National Forests and three BLM areas in Montana.

The maintenance program has been exceptionally successful but the demand for maintenance from other USFS and BLM areas far exceeds the capacity MTVRA has with the current \$90,000 limit on RTP grants. The Summer Motorized Recreation Grant Program

What You Need to Know

will provide a reliable funding stream and allow additional funding for the maintenance program so MTVRA can expand it to additional areas across Montana.

Why not just rely on the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) money?

The RTP is a federal program derived from a gas tax refund for fuel we use off-highway. The RTP Program must be reauthorized every few years and is under constant threat of being eliminated from the federal budget. While MTVRA and others will continue to defend RTP, it is a very real possibility the program could end at any time.

Additionally, the program is extremely competitive and while MTVRA has been successful every year we have applied, the \$90,000 request has been reduced to \$45,000 in the past. This is less likely to occur in the Summer Motorized Recreation Grant Program.

Can my local club get grants?

Absolutely! Your club can get money for trail signing, trail repairs and maintenance, or to develop a maintenance program of its own. MTVRA and State Parks will be glad to share examples and information to help you and your local club succeed.

Why do I need a permanent sticker and a trail pass?

The permanent decal requirement was not changed because the existing OHV Grant Program is still funded by permanent decal sales and gas tax refund. The existing program and the new Summer Motorized Recreation Grant Program complement each other since the existing program allows grants for educational programs and allows agencies to apply for small grants. Both programs can be used as matching funds for RTP grants which require 20% match.

Also, in order to purchase a trail pass, your vehicle must be registered and titled, which is accomplished when you buy a permanent decal.

What is a designated trail?

A designated trail is a "Summer motorized recreation trail", which means a trail designated as open to motorized use and approved for inclusion in the summer motorized recreation trail grant program by the land management agency with jurisdiction over the trail.

Why do trails need to be enrolled in the program?

The trail pass differs from the permanent decal in a technical sense because the trail pass is not a "registration" which is applicable to all OHVs owned by residents of the state (with few exceptions). The trail pass is required under this new state law (HB0355) for users of trails that are included in the OHV grant program by the land management agency. Trails included in this program are designated as open to motorized use and approved for inclusion ("enrolled") in the summer motorized recreation trail grant program by the land management agency with jurisdiction over the trail. The system of "enrollment" allows users of the facilities to know where the pass is required. This is the same system that has been used in Wyoming for their trail pass for over a decade. While this is a little complicated and confusing, it is necessary to comply with federal laws.

How are trails enrolled?

On Forest Service lands, nearly all Rangers Districts have completed travel management decisions in accordance with the 2005 Travel Management Rule (TMR). The TMR requires each unit to produce a "Motor Vehicle Use Map" (MVUM) that is the legal document that designates trails and areas where motorized use can occur, the type or class of vehicle allowed, and when use may occur. The MVUM also includes a complete table (list) of every legal OHV trail. The USFS is working with Montana State Parks to finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will recognize every MVUM and accompanying table in Montana as the list of enrolled trails. The MOU will also allow Rangers Districts that have not completed travel planning in their districts to list routes open to summertime OHV use individually or through other means of description as enrolled. This will be completed in the spring of 2020.

The BLM is working with Montana State Parks on a similar MOU that will be completed in the spring of 2020.

Will the pass help open trails that have been closed?

Trails are closed and restricted for a variety of reasons. Some are closed because they are eroded or damaged by use or storm events. In many cases these trails can be reopened after being repaired, redesigned,

or relocated using money from the Summer Motorized Recreation Grant Program. Money from the grant program could be used to mitigate other problems that have caused trail closures. For instance, a trail could be rerouted to avoid riparian habitat, raptor nests, other critical habitat, or sensitive cultural sites.

Will the pass help build new trails?

Yes. While not as common as we riders would like, new trails are being built on public lands. The Summer Motorized Recreation Grant Program will be an excellent source of funding for new trails and can be used as matching funds for the RTP program. A good example of new trail construction are the new system trails being constructed near Lincoln by the USFS using RTP funds.

Do Jeeps need the trail pass?

Full size street-legal vehicles like Jeeps meet the definition of "motorized equipment" in HB 355 and will be required to buy a trail pass to be used on USFS trails and open to vehicles greater than 50" and BLM "primitive roads" enrolled in the program. The USFS 2005 TMR specifically defines trails over 50" and several forests in Montana have utilized this designation. BLM defines their routes as trails, primitive roads, and roads. Full size street-legal do not need a trail pass for USFS roads or BLM roads not designated "primitive roads".

My side-by-side is over 50" wide. Do I need a trail pass?

Side-by-side vehicles greater than 50" will be required to buy a trail pass to use USFS trails open to vehicles greater than 50" and BLM "primitive roads" as described above. Side-by-side vehicles are not required to buy a trail pass to use unpaved roads on USFS and BLM route systems. For more specific information about the use of OHV's on unpaved roads in Montana, consult your local land manager or look at SB 314 at <https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2017/billpdf/SB0314.pdf>

Do I need a trail pass if I rent an OHV from a rental vendor?

No but you will need to carry a copy of "proof of rental".

Where can I read HB 355?

<https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2019/billpdf/HB0355.pdf>

Permanent means permanent doesn't it?

In the case of a permanent OHV registration, permanent means "the time period you own the vehicle". If the vehicle transfers ownership, the new owner is required to buy a new permanent registration.

I bought a permanent registration. Haven't I already paid my fair share of trail maintenance?

When you bought a permanent registration decal for \$61.25 you paid approximately \$15 to the maintenance fund one time. In the future, if you buy a vehicle and purchase a \$20 trail pass, you can then purchase a permanent registration decal for \$41.25. You will be required to buy a new trail pass for \$20 every two years.

Do I need a trail pass if I don't live in Montana?

If you are not a resident of Montana and you would like to bring your vehicle from another state, you will be required to purchase a non-resident temporary use permit for \$35, of which \$27.50 will be used for trail maintenance.

Non-resident temporary use permits are good for the calendar year in which they are purchased. They can be purchased online at <https://stateparks.mt.gov/activities/off-highway-vehicles> will be mailed to the address you specify. To buy passes in person, visit any Fish Wildlife and Parks office or an authorized vendor. A list of vendors can be found on the same site listed above.

If you are coming to Montana and want to order your temporary non-resident use permit online, it's a good idea to order at least two weeks before you depart.

If I'm from another state but ride a borrowed vehicle that has a trail pass, will I also need a non-resident temporary use permit?

No.

Shop Tip: Basic OHV Inspection & Maintenance

by Carl Siroky



Like it or not, for a lot of us, there comes a time when we must store the OHV for the winter. If you follow some basic proactive maintenance steps like these should get your machine through the winter just fine and make it ready for many miles of safe, reliable fun on the trails with the coming of the spring season. Even if you're not going to park the OHV for the winter, at the end of the fall season is as good a time as any to perform the 12-month inspection

and maintenance activities that are outlined in your OHV Owner's Manual. This should be part of your regular care for the OHV from now on. A good visual inspection and the annual recommended maintenance really doesn't take that long and it's the best way to make sure your ride is ready for spring.

1. Clean it thoroughly. Now is the best time to thoroughly clean and lube your OHV. A good wash now will go a long way toward protecting your OHV's finish and getting the dirt and crud off the machine makes it easier to visually inspect things for wear or damage. This is a good time to clean the collection of aging snack bars out of the tool bags and cargo boxes too, to have one less attractant for the mice to nest in the OHV during the winter.



2. Inspect it. Inspect everything that moves and even some things that don't. This is one of the best things you can do to identify what maintenance work is needed to make your ride reliable through the next season. Your owner's manual should have a complete inspection checklist to guide you, but in general when you're inspecting you want to look for the following:

- Loose or missing bolts
- Cracks in the frame, especially at welds
- If you notice orange colored dust or stains at the steering knuckles, suspension pivot pins, and linkage pivots it is probably rust and probably indicates excessive metal wear due to lack of lubrication.
- Check for linkage looseness. Check for excessive looseness at all the linkages using a prybar or by wiggling them with your hands.
- Check for wheel looseness. Jack the machine up and grab each of the wheels at 12 and 6 then 3 and 9 O'clock and check for looseness in all directions. You should not notice any looseness at all. If you do, then consult with a service technician as necessary to determine the cause and maintenance needed to fix the looseness.



3. Lube it. Lubricate everything that moves. Silicone, multi-purpose lube, white lithium grease and a tub of good ol' Marine-grease will cover everything you need. When you're inspecting and lubricating look for the following:

4. Treat the fuel system. Fill your fuel tank and add a fuel stabilizer such as Sta-Bil (No, more is not better). It's a good idea to add the stabilizer to your fuel at the gas station. That way, the ride home will mix it up and get it into the carburetor or fuel injection system. Keeping the tank full of fuel reduces air space inside, which greatly reduces the possibility of condensation as temperatures change over the winter. The fuel also prevents rust from forming inside the tank. The stabilizer helps to maintain the properties of the fuel

and reduce deposits and buildup inside your fuel system. It is better to use a non-ethanol and preferably premium grade fuel. The ethanol in fuel will attract moisture. This is especially important if you're keeping your OHV in an unheated space.

5. Empty your carburetor. If you have fuel injection, you're done with the fuel system. But if your OHV is carbureted, you need to take some additional steps. Even if you use stabilizer, fuel left in the carb can evaporate and leave behind a corrosive varnish-like residue that clogs small openings in the carbs or keep the floats from moving freely. Draining it through the float bowl drain plug is the best way to prevent this.

6. Change all your OHV's lubricants. Changing everything is the ultimate in care, because changing fluids removes the contaminants they contain. If you don't change all the fluids, at least do this:

Check the motor oil quality. If it's not somewhat transparent, change it. This will remove acids that could attack the metal parts of your engine. Change the filter, too. The 10 bucks you save by skipping this step won't go very far toward the engine rebuild you could eventually have to do.

Check the oil quality for the front and rear differentials, looking primarily for water contamination. We all do the occasional deep creek crossing which often introduce water into the differential housings. A little bit of water goes a long way toward really screwing things up in the differentials. I'd just change the oil but if you don't want to, then inspect the oil after a short ride with the 4x4 engaged. Water in the oil will usually give the oil a frothy, milky appearance.

Check the brake and/or clutch fluids. If they are as dark as new motor oil, they are contaminated and must be changed prior to storage. The fluid color when new is almost perfectly clear. The darker it gets, the more contaminated it is. Contaminated fluid can cause corrosion all winter while the OHV sits. In general, these fluids should be changed every two years or sooner.

If your OHV has coolant, test it with a "ball checker" tester, available at any auto parts store. If it looks dirty or won't protect against freezing at the temperatures you expect, change it before storage. This fluid should also be changed about every two years anyway. Letting dirty coolant sit in your radiator over the winter can allow hard deposits to form and corrode your cooling system. If in doubt, change it.

7. Tend to your battery. If you take care of your battery, you won't have to buy a new one every year. If your OHV will be stored in a place where temperatures will fall well below freezing, remove the battery. An attached garage may stay warm enough for you to leave the battery in the OHV. Either way, the battery must be charged periodically. If your battery has removable caps, top it off with distilled water. If it is maintenance-free, don't touch that cap.

Either use a charger that maintains the battery by monitoring the voltage level and turning on and off automatically to keep the battery just above 12 volts, or charge your battery weekly, using a very low-amperage trickle charger (1.5 amps or less). Test the battery to be sure you're not overcharging or undercharging it.

Put a couple extra pounds of air pressure in your tires to avoid flat spots from sitting. Better yet, if you have stands, raise the OHV off the tires for the winter.

Finally, cover the OHV. If it is outside, spend the money and get a high-quality cover, a real cover protects against damage a lot better.

References: American Motorcyclist, 5 Tips for Storing your Machine this winter. <http://www.americanmotorcyclist.com/For-Members/AMA-Life-Member-News/Story/five-tips-for-storing-your-machine-this-winter>

Four Questions with AMA Board Chair Russ Ehnes

From AMA Magazine



Russ Ehnes has a long history of fighting for off-highway rights. He continues that work as AMA Board chair.

Russ Ehnes, who has been an AMA member for 23 consecutive years and spent decades advocating for off-highway access rights, was selected as Chair of the AMA Board of Directors during a meeting in February 2020. In addition to serving on the AMA Board as the member representative from the Northwest Region, Ehnes is the former executive director of the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council. He also has led the Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association

and the Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association. He has chaired the Montana OHV Grant Advisory Committee and has served on the Federal Advisory Committee for the U.S. Forest Service Planning Rule. Ehnes replaced outgoing chair Maggie McNally-Bradshaw, former member representative from the Northeast Region. McNally-Bradshaw served on the board since 2009 and had been the AMA board chair since 2013. She exited her position due to term limits.

We asked Ehnes a few questions to help members get to know him better.

American Motorcyclist: What was your first reaction to being selected Board Chair?

Russ Ehnes: I really felt honored to have the trust of the board. I've been on the board for a couple years now, so I know being the chair takes commitment and will require some extra time and work, but I'm ready. I've developed strong personal and professional relationships with other board members, so I was encouraged by several of them to run for the chair position. I declared my candidacy in January, so there wasn't really an element of surprise.

AM: What first prompted you to seek a seat on the Board?

RE: I was appointed to the AMA board to serve the remainder of a term when the board seat for my region became vacant. I had just retired from my position as executive director of the NOHVCC, after serving in that role for nearly 20 years, when I got the call from AMA to see if I was interested. I've worked with AMA leadership and the government relations staff for over 20 years and have been an AMA member for 23 years, so I've always been a strong supporter of the AMA, but my NOHVCC job simply didn't allow me the time to participate as a board member. Since it was the remainder of a term, I agreed to take the spot to see if I could contribute and see if I really had the time to do the job right, along with my new job and my other volunteer jobs. I really enjoyed my time on the board so I decided to run in the next board election for my region.

AM: What experience has your time on the Board provided that will help you in your new role?

RE: My time on the board has allowed me to really get to know the other board members and the executive staff of the AMA. The executive staff has a tough job, because motorcycling is such a diverse sport, and motorcyclists are diverse and passionate people. The staff work hard balancing the needs of an amazing variety of recreational riders, racers, amateur and pro racing, government relations and helping and training advocates. They also need to keep the association healthy. I think joining the board would be eye-opening for anyone. It takes a couple years of listening and participating to wrap your head around all the facets of the AMA and what a complex job it is to manage.

AM: What else would you like to say?

RE: It's an exciting time for the AMA. More people are joining the sport, and the potential for growth is enormous. As board chair, I have several priorities.

First, when I was with NOHVCC I was blessed with a great board of directors. We figured out how to work as a team, staff and the board members, to make the best decisions we

could for the riders and the organization. I want to help improve the culture of the AMA by sharing my experiences and fostering an environment that allows for the best possible communication and decision making.

Second, I want to help build and improve relationships between the AMA, industry groups, and other national advocacy organizations. We're all on the same team, but I think it's easy to get so wrapped up in what we are doing as individual groups that we may miss opportunities to help each other and work together. I'm interested in results for riders like me and you, so anything we can do to get better results by working together is worth the effort.

Third, I want to look for ways we can tell our story about the work the AMA is doing to protect motorcycling and improve riding for all riders. Racing is a huge part of the AMA and, rightfully so, gets a lot of attention. What most riders outside our membership don't hear about is the work done by the government relations department, AMA districts and individual members that protect our right to ride on a daily basis.

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MTVRA Board of Directors Meeting

By Mona Ehnes

On January 6, 2021, the MTVRA Board of Directors conducted a meeting by conference call. Those attending the meeting were President Nic Richardson, Vice President, Russ Ehnes Directors at large Bill Black and Doug Abelin, Secretary-Treasurer Mona Ehnes, Acting Director for CTVA Patty Duaaguard, and Bob Walker. Carl Siroky and Rich Winget respond they were not available to attend the meeting.

The following topics were brought before the board:

Hire a Lobbyist for 2021 Legislative Session - Russ presented Roger Hagan's proposal to be a Lobbyist on behalf of MTVRA for the 2021 Legislative Session. Bob Walker discussed the upcoming session and the changes proposed in SB38 to correct the Trail Pass Bill. Russ made the motion to hire Roger for this session, which was seconded by Doug Abelin, and the motion passed.

Planned Date for the MTVRA General Membership meeting - The date for the annual MTVRA General Membership meeting was set for February 23, 2021 and will be conducted by conference call starting at 6:30. The announcement will be in the Montana Trail Rider Newsletter and should be in members hands within the days required in the bylaws. Same phone in and access numbers. (Call in number: (425) 436-6320 Access code: 615553)

Information Shared about E-bike Rules - LC1760 is a proposed bill for e-bike use management. There is no finalized language at this time, however the BLM has final rule and USFS will have final e-bike rule soon. Local clubs should pay attention to this topic and encourage e-bike riders on motorized trails. Watch for motorized trails getting proposed for quiet use & e-bikes.

Great Western Trail Update - Not much happened this past year to progress the Great Western Trail, due to COVID restrictions and interference. Kent Wellner had planned to talk to rangers, prior to COVID, so we wait to hear more from him.

2021 Grant Programs - Russ made the motion for MTVRA to apply for the following Trail Tractor Maintenance grants for the upcoming season, which was seconded by Bill Black, and the motion passed.

- \$50,000 from the Recreational Trails Program (2 years),
- \$50,000 from (SB24) the new Montana Trail Stewardship Program (2 years),
- \$100,000 from (SB355) the Summer Motorized Trail Pass Program (3 years), and
- \$20,000 from the OHV grant, for project with agency.

Update about the previous request for legal assistance from the Bitterroot Ridge Runners - The request has been canceled because the club no longer needs the additional funds. They reached an agreement with their legal team.

Discussion planning for the 2021 State Ride event - The board will continue to explore possible options for an organized event, if the COVID lockdown situation improves. Russ mentioned he will be representing AMA in his involvement with the BMW Motorcycle Owners rally planned for June 24th through the 27th in Great Falls this summer.

Hell-Gate Mine purchase discussion - There was a discussion about how this mine purchase has resulted in closure of access the trail there. There is a Missoula county commission meeting agenda item and a resolution regarding all-terrain vehicles. Bob will forward information about it to the board members.

Other Information and Discussion Items

- 2021 Legislative Night and Luncheon in the Rotunda are cancelled
- Doug Abelin made a motion that MTVRA pay the dues of \$265.00 to renew our annual membership to the Treasure State Resource Association for the year, which Nic seconded and the motion passed.
- Treasurers report will be sent to Board members as requested.

Russ moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Nic, and the motion passed.

Mona Ehnes, Sec/Treas.



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WE NEED PHOTOS!

We are always looking for good photos to feature in the newsletter. Set your camera to high-resolution and snap away. Who knows, your image may end up as the next newsletter cover! Send your photos to Carl Siroky, carlsiroky@hotmail.com Be sure to include the date the photo was taken, the location, the event (if applicable), and the names of anyone in the photo. You may also include a little write-up about the photo. We may include your story in the newsletter!

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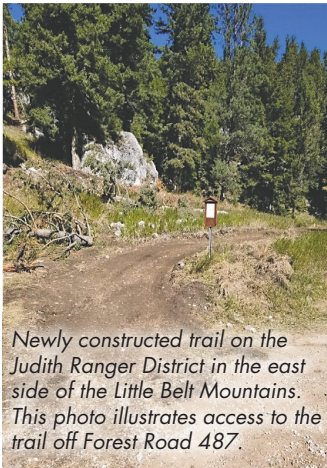


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New Trail in the Little Belt Mountains

From GFTBRA and Helena Lewis & Clark NF

JUDITH-MUSSELSHELL RANGER DISTRICT UPDATE: Your working Forest is excited to announce the opening of a newly constructed jeep trail on the east side of the Little Belt Mountains. This new trail was approved in the Forest's 2007 Travel Plan and provides a new route from the South Fork Road (FS 487) to the Ettien Ridge Trail (J821) that does not have to cross the Middle Fork of the Judith river. It is open from May 16 - November 30 to both highway and off-highway legal vehicles. Please note, the trail is maintained for high clearance vehicles. The trail was constructed with a grant from the Montana Recreational Trails Program to a Great Falls 4x4 club, the Missouri River Off-Roaders.



Newly constructed trail on the Judith Ranger District in the east side of the Little Belt Mountains. This photo illustrates access to the trail off Forest Road 487.



Newly constructed trail on the Judith Ranger District in the east side of the Little Belt Mountains. This photo illustrates access to the trail off the Ettien Ridge Trail J821.

Great American Outdoors Act

From Bob Walker



Last year President Trump called on Congress to send him a bill that would fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and restore our national parks. On August 4, 2020, President Trump signed the Great American Outdoors Act into law, accomplishing those exact objectives.

The Trump Administration worked with Congress to secure the passage of this landmark conservation legislation, which

will use revenues from energy development to provide up to \$1.9 billion a year for five years to provide needed maintenance for critical facilities and infrastructure in our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, recreation areas, and American Indian schools. It will also use royalties from offshore oil and natural gas to permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the tune of \$900 million a year to invest in conservation and recreation opportunities across the country.

National parks host more than 325 million visitors every year, and the infrastructure cannot keep up without significant repairs. The network of roads, trails, restrooms, water treatment systems, and visitor facilities are aging, and many are exceeding the capacity they were designed to support. The National Parks and Public Lands Restoration Fund will provide funding for priority projects that address the maintenance backlog at NPS facilities, including campgrounds, picnic areas, roads, trails, and other critical infrastructure. Specific projects to be funded will be announced in the future.

More information can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/legal/great-american-outdoors-act.htmf>

A big MTVRA thank you to these BUSINESS MEMBERS

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NOHVCC Recorded Webinars

From the NOHVCC Website

NOHVCC staff and invited guests conducted webinars covering a myriad of topics of importance to the OHV community. The title of each recorded webinar is shared below. While we encourage anyone, who has an interest in a webinar topic to participate live, we understand that sometimes that just isn't possible, so these webinars were recorded when they were conducted. You are encouraged you to visit the webinar archive to see which topics interest you most. We also urge OHV enthusiasts and managers to check the webinar archive from time to time in case you missed something.

You can access the recordings of the webinars by going to NOHVCC online at <https://www.nohvcc.org>, where a personal login is required, but the registration and access to the content is free.

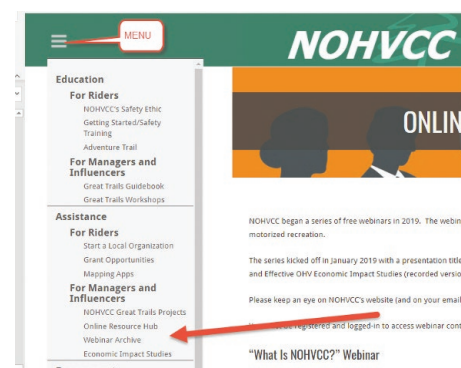
NOHVCC Webinar Subjects:

- "What Is NOHVCC?"
- OHV Clubs and Associations Development
- Introduction to Mapping and GIS
- Effective OHV Economic Impact Studies
- Vehicle Noise Control and Management Basics
- Web Marketing Basics for Clubs and Associations
- Introduction to Great Trails Workshop- What Makes a Great Trail Great?
- Learn How To Host Rides for Veterans
- Access to Safety Training – And How to Know if Your Child is Ready To Ride an ATV
- Working With Land Managers- A Guide To Building Positive Relationships
- Analyzing Economic Impact Studies
- Utah OHV Trail Hosts – A Study of Effective Volunteerism
- Preparing for the Long Haul – Be prepared for Your Next Off-Highway Adventure
- Vehicle Spark Arresters Past, Present and Future
- Post Wildfire OHV Alliance – Building Capacity to Mitigate Post-Disaster Impacts to Recreation Facilities Through Volunteer and Professional Services
- Industry Update From The Motorcycle Industry Council

Once you've registered and logged in you can access the "Webinar Archive" on [nohvcc.org](https://www.nohvcc.org) by opening the hamburger menu at the top left of the home page then selecting Webinar Archive.

Please keep an eye on NOHVCC's website (and on your emails) as we will be providing more information as additional webinars are scheduled.

Let NOHVCC know at trailhead@nohvcc.org if you have ideas about future webinar topics.



How To Mount A Chainsaw On A Dirt Bike

By Carl Siroky, with excerpts and pictures from an article by Jim Harmer

Dirt bikes are built to traverse rough terrain conditions, which is what makes them so fun to ride. One of those trail conditions is logs from blowdown trees laying across the trail. Many of these logs can be crossed by riders with even a novice level of skill. However, some logs across the trail can't be crossed, even by the most skillful riders (with the exception of maybe Graham Jarvis).



One of the more hazardous trail conditions caused by blowdowns is "The Standing Blowdown Tree". This is the dead tree that is snagged in another tree beside the trail and is waiting for just the right conditions

to come down onto the trail or someone on the trail, in the worst-case scenario.

Some logs across the trail create extraordinary safety hazards for riders when they are located around blind corners, are hanging across the trail at chest or head height, are on steep sidehills, or are just too large or high off the ground to go over. For these types of trees across the trail some riders choose to create new trails around logs. This act of riding around logs across the trail creates unnecessary resource damage.

If you ride trails in the mountains you will encounter blowdown trees across the trail. If you want to ride early in the season you will encounter a lot of blowdowns across the trails. Some riders choose to go to the extra effort to carry a handsaw or chainsaw with them on their dirt bike to clear the blowdowns out of the trail for themselves and do a huge favor for other trail users coming through behind them.

Mounting A Chainsaw

Sometimes, riders will choose to simply strap a chainsaw to the rear of their bike, and while that can work, it can cause the bike to be unstable and add unnecessary risk to riding. If you're going to carry a chainsaw on your bike it's important that you get a good mount for it. Chainsaw mounts that are specifically made for dirt bikes



will keep your chainsaw securely mounted close to your bike frame. You can make your own chainsaw mount, but there are numerous manufacturers of chainsaw mounts for bikes. The main thing a mount should do for you is secure your chainsaw to the bike and balance its weight properly to not make the bike unstable to ride.

Combine the Best Chainsaw and Mount

Before you buy a chainsaw mount, you'll want to put some consideration to the size and type of chainsaw you're going to be using. You'll want to look for the lightest and lowest-profile chainsaw that you can find. A lot of chainsaw mounts only work with specific models of chainsaws, so pay careful attention to the product descriptions on both chainsaws and mounts.

Safety First!

No matter how experienced you are with operating a chainsaw, it's a good idea to use protective gear. Also, you should not be out alone when you are operating a chainsaw to clear logs from trails. Accidents can happen and having a trail-buddy to help you in an emergency can be your lifeline.

The USNF provides the "Saw Policy" on the forest service web page. Go there to learn more about the requirements in it <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/regulations-policies/saw-policy>

Trail Shenanigans

From Friends of the Little Belts

During August of 2020 approximately thirty barriers constructed of logs and large branches were encountered on trail number 739 in the Little Belt Mountains. These obstacles were intentionally placed around blind corners where users approaching at speed may not be able to see them in time to avoid them and could have caused serious injury.

Please be aware that this type of behavior is dangerous and illegal. Report any information you may have on these or other incidents like this to the forest service office in Great Falls (406) 791-7700 or Helena (406) 449-5201.

Stay safe out there!



NOHVCC Saw Training for Washington OHVA

By Marc Hildesheim MARC@NOHVCC.ORG

In 2016 after many years of collaboration with stakeholders, the Forest Service implemented a new chainsaw policy. This new policy was intended to make it easier for volunteers who perform trail work across the country to gain access to training, and to create a meaningful training that spoke directly to the type of cutting they do.

Part of the policy allows local volunteers to become certified "C" buckers, the highest possible proficiency level for this type of cutting. A bucker or bucking cut is the type of cut made when trees are on the ground across the trail, blocking access to trail users. A Sawyer Certified at the "A" level may operate a saw in the least complex situations and must be under the direct supervision of a B or C Sawyer. A Sawyer Certified at the "B" level may operate a saw in moderately complex situations.



Someone with a "C" bucking certification is able to evaluate sawyers in their community and provide them with the training they need to continue their trail work. A "C" bucker in the community could

only evaluate "A" or "B" level buckers. The evaluation of the student and the recommendation for sawyer level is then sent on to the Forest Service Region Saw Coordinator who can then issue sawyer cards. This means that the volunteer is now free to go back to cutting based on their certification level. Plans and reality often diverge, and it has been a challenge for the Forest Service to provide training in the communities with the limited resources and staff at their disposal. In 2018 NOHVCC staff, including myself, decided to do their small part to help bridge the training gap. Our intention was to expand our training offerings and hopefully help a few clubs out with their training needs while we were in the area for a workshop or trail project. We had a few good leads and some plans for training starting to develop, and then enter 2020. Travel and meeting in groups has become a near impossibility. I had all but written off the possibility of doing any training this year when an opportunity arose due to my involvement with the Washington Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance (WOHVA).

Because I don't get enough OHV throughout the day I serve as a board member for WOHVA. We were discussing how we would handle our annual meeting during the pandemic and what our plans for the future of the organization were and chainsaw training made it on the table. Not only did WOHVA want to help the clubs across the State receive necessary training, they also wanted to have a route to train

the employees of their Heavy Maintenance Crew to properly operate chainsaws. We figured the first step was to get a training going. I contacted the Forest Service Region 6 coordinator to get the ok and then we set to cut some logs.



Three current board members and a cherished past board member and sage adviser met in Duvall, WA to participate in the training. We started the day with a brief classroom portion in a large room where we could social distance, and we learned about the mindset of the sawyer, safety procedure, and cutting complexities.

In the afternoon it was time to put the concepts to work in the field where luckily it was a mostly dry day. Yes, there are days in Western Washington when it doesn't rain.... occasionally. We practiced some concepts talked about technique and then set about the actual evaluation portion of the class. Luckily for me I was working with an experienced group of sawyers who knew what they were doing, and the class went off without a hitch. Each course participant was recommended for a "B"

level bucking certification. The participants in the class seemed to enjoy the class and made it known that they would like to work with the regional coordinator to get a few more "C" buckers in the organization to create more training capacity.



NOHVCC appreciates the partnership with WOHVA and the chance to provide this training. If you have saw training needs in your club, please reach out to NOHVCC at trailhead@nohvcc.org. We will do our best to fill training needs or put you in touch with your local Forest Service saw coordinator.

To find out more about the US Forest Service Chainsaw Policy and training requirements please go to the Saw Policy page on the U.S. Forest Service website <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/regulations-policies/saw-policy>

Understanding 50-inch ATV gates

From the Standard Examiner, By LYNN R. BLAMIRE

The variety of ATV trails available to ride in Utah has been the subject of this column for the past 13 years. Some of that variety is reflected in the width of the trails. So what about those 50-inch gates? Trail restrictions exist for different reasons depending on the particular trail.



To better understand, we need to examine some land use history. Before 1970, there were no restrictions on cross-country travel. Dirt roads had mining, ranching, logging and other commercial purposes. Recreation played a minor role.

But 1970 saw the introduction of the Honda ATC – a three-wheeled, single-rider vehicle designed for recreation. That was followed in 1982 by the first four-wheeler that opened a new world

of backcountry recreation. People began getting off paved roads in a big way.

In 1999 the Clinton administration moved to limit the development of new roads by passing the Clinton Roadless Rule. This required National Forests to inventory roadless areas by a specific set of standards. The new land designations were called Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Under new management rules, no new roads were allowed to be built in these areas. The new rules allowed for these route designations – single-track motorcycle, 50-inch-or-less motorized, trails open to all motorized vehicles, open areas, and specifically designated routes.

The Forest Service attempted to designate some roads that already existed in these roadless areas as “trails open to all motorized vehicles.” Some organizations felt this was a move disguised to allow roads in roadless areas and filed suit. The ruling was against the designation and required the Forest Service to remove this class of road from roadless areas.

In this ruling, however, the Forest Service was allowed to have trails open to vehicles less than 50 inches in width in a roadless area. The judge ruled that routes less than 50 inches constituted a trail and was not a road in disguise. This set a standard throughout the country allowing trails limited to 50 inches or less in Inventoried Roadless Areas.

With the popularity of the single-rider ATV came a new kind of recreation on public lands. These machines were agile and as they became more powerful, they became a preferred mode of transportation, compared to bulky full-sized trucks or jeeps. Trail systems were designed, engineered and constructed to accommodate these narrower machines.

The original purpose of larger side-by-sides was primarily for farmers, ranchers, and other commercial utility purposes. In 2004, Yamaha introduced a UTV called the Rhino, a sporty side-by-side that was built for recreation. People purchasing these large machines soon learned that they were not able to use them on trails restricted to 50 inches.

ATV manufacturers responded by developing a 50-inch-wide side-by-side that became extremely popular. The owners of larger UTVs saw these 50-inch two-person machines on the narrower trails and issues developed.

Safety quickly became a problem. Some people found ways around the restrictive gates, not knowing the nature of the trail. I know of someone who got stuck deep in a canyon too narrow to navigate. The situation required a costly rescue.

Sometimes drivers of large UTVs try to access trails designed for smaller ATVs in roadless areas. Some of these trails are there because of a court ruling, where otherwise they would not exist.

The reasons, then, for width restrictions could be because of the physical nature of the trail, the natural beauty of the trail is enhanced by a narrow width, or the trail is in a

roadless area and exists specifically because of its width.

Where possible, trail systems have adjusted widths to accommodate these larger UTVs. The Paiute Trail now has three width designations and the Arapeen has expanded over 77 miles of trail to 66 inches.

Each Forest District has a Motorized Travel Plan that is kept current. These maps note trail restrictions so you can know before you go.

I have a UTV so I can take passengers. I also have ATVs that fit on trails with 50-inch restrictions.

When you go, take plenty of water, keep the rubber side down and respect the 50-inch gates. That narrow trail could be in a roadless area.

You can email Lynn Blamires at quadmanone@gmail.com.

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Motorized Recreation Grant Programs

By Bob Walker

We've talked for the past 30 years about the need for more funds to adequately address the needs of motorized recreation in Montana. Unfortunately, by the time this article gets published in the MTRN the February 1st deadline for applying for grants will have passed, however the information in this article is still newsworthy and can help raise awareness of the program. The information that follows from Michelle McNamee helps explain the program and how to apply for the grants, albeit for next year at this point.

For the OHV community, you can access funds from all four programs listed below! The RTP program sets aside 30% of funds for motorized recreation or approximately \$450,000. The new Montana Trail Stewardship grant program identifies 30% or approximately \$375,000 per year for motorized. The new summer motorized trail pass grant program will have approximately \$250,000 available while the original OHV grant program has approximately \$150,000 available. These numbers are approximate but show the vast resources available.



Comet Ridge Trail Maintenance Summer 2020
Water Diversion

For the snowmobile community, clubs can access the RTP program where there is approximately \$450,000 or more available for motorized, and the new Trail Stewardship grant program where there is approximately \$375,000 identified for motorized. In addition to these you will continue to have the long-standing snowmobile grant program available at a later application date. That program provides more than \$400,000 for grooming grants and funds for equipment.

I want to correct a false rumor that the new trail stewardship grant program will not be available to motorized recreation. This is not accurate, in fact SB 24 that established this program identifies 30% or approximately \$375,000 or more that is available for motorized recreation.

Now the work begins. You can't get the money unless you apply! State parks staff has worked hard to simplify the grant application process so start now, please do not wait until the last minute to apply.

Here is some more information about the grants from Michelle McNamee

FWP just launched its new website. As a result, FWP's grant program webpages have moved and URLs have changed. All grant program information is now listed under "About FWP" in the horizontal menu at the top of the FWP homepage. From now forward, you can access the grant program webpages at: <https://stateparks.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs>

For your convenience, I've also listed the individual recreation grant program pages:

- Land & Water Conservation Fund Program: <https://stateparks.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/land-and-water-conservation-fund>
- Recreational Trails Program: <https://stateparks.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/recreational-trails>
- Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program: <https://stateparks.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/trail-stewardship>
- Off-Highway Vehicle Grant Program: <https://stateparks.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/off-highway-vehicle>
- Summer Motorized Trail Pass Grant Program: <https://stateparks.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/summer-motorized-trail-pass>
- Snowmobile Program: <https://stateparks.mt.gov/aboutfwp/grant-programs/snowmobile>

The URLs and links to the old FWP/State Parks webpages may no longer work. Please use those listed above to access program information and update your bookmarks. Contact me or Carissa Beckwith if you're having trouble locating specific information. Thank you for your patience with this transition.

Reminder: Applications for the RTP, Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program, OHV Program, and Summer Motorized Trail Pass Grant Program are due on Feb 1 at 3:00pm.

Applications for the LWCF Grant Program are being accepted on a rolling basis through November 2021. Grant application materials and information can be found on the program website (URL is listed above).

Michelle McNamee

Outdoor Recreation Program Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Montana OHV Clubs

Billings	Billings Motorcycle Club	Hamilton	Ravalli Co Off-Road Users Assn.
Billings	Rimrock Trail Riders	Helena	Capital Trail Vehicle Assn.
Billings	Treasure State ATV Assn.	Lincoln	Blackfoot Valley OHV Assn.
Bozeman	5 Rivers Trail Riders	Manhattan	Gallatin Valley Dirt Riders
Butte	Mining City Trail Riders	Missoula	Western Montana Trail Riders Assn.
Glendive	The Ranch Riders	Seeley Lake	Seeley-Swan ATV Club, Inc.
Great Falls	Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Assn.	Trout Creek	Cabinet Ridge Riders
Hamilton	Bitterroot Ridge Runners		

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Additional money included for donations to the legal defense fund are greatly appreciated!