2021 Black Hills OHV Summit Results

Challenges participants experience in relation to OHV use. The challenges most frequently mentioned were:

1. Capacity Issues due to large number of visitors.
2. Unauthorized trails.
3. Trail system: loop and connect trails.
4. Dust issues: e.g. large groups of riders increase amount of dust.
5. Lack of or slow response of law enforcement.
6. Lack of funding and resources for the U.S. Forest Service.
7. Need for more effective communication e.g. through apps and social media.
8. Industry image and advertising promotes "These machines are made to go through the mud" which is contrary to local trail etiquette.
9. Travel Management Plan already outdated: Need to assess current conditions and to identify solutions on the ground.
11. Nighttime traffic.
12. Inconsistent rules and regulations across states, agencies and districts e.g. OHV width differences between states.
13. Lack of information regarding jurisdictions and authorities.
14. Need for more information and education regarding trail etiquette, rules, private landownership, importance of closing gates, etc.
15. Need for more signage to indicate changing conditions or rules.
16. Grazing permittees highly frustrated with gates left unopen by OHV users and other issues.
17. Great concern for wildlife habitat and wildlife behavior due to OHV use.

Statements summarizing Participants' Ideas for Solutions

1. Need one official app that is regularly updated regarding trail conditions, grazing issues, approved trails, etc.
2. Continue the collaboration that started at the Summit through a working group representing all interests that looks at all issues and creates recommendations to all decision-makers. Use this collaborative group to leverage funding for trail work, education efforts, etc.
3. Communication solutions need to be found that allow reporting of non-ethical behavior, open gates, regulatory information, current conditions. Solutions suggested are an app, advertising campaigns, messaging platforms and education.
4. Define the Black Hills community protocols for trail etiquette.
5. Create a comprehensive education program that involves OHV businesses, schools, OHV clubs, agencies, counties, cities, tourism bureau etc. based on the Black Hills OHV trails etiquette.
6. Conduct an audit to explore where funding is available and what funding needs exist. Find entities/individuals who will write grants for a remuneration.
7. The role of hunting in OHV use needs to be explored, as well as the use of OHV use in hunting. This may elicit additional solutions.
8. Find ways to reduce the spread of invasive weeds and erosion through OHV use.
9. Explore ways to have OHV use but in ways and places that disturb wildlife the least e.g., seasonal closures.
10. More law enforcement is required. This requires more funding. Explore ways to enhance the law enforcement capacity in the Black Hills region.
11. Explore ways to manage regulator/legislative OHV use on roads where the FS has limited regulatory authority e.g. through legislation or licensing.
12. Create easily accessible and usable maps with information, trails, conditions, etc.
13. Find robust signage methods.
14. Look at use patterns and intensities to improve the trail system in all areas, looking also at connections, re-routings, etc.
15. Clearly define width of vehicles allowable in what locations.
16. Create a volunteer group willing to help with patrolling and education.
17. Ensure as little conflict as possible with wildlife using seasonal closures, trail design and law enforcement.