

# Motorized Travel Rules

for  
**Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use on  
the  
San Juan National Forest  
Tres Rios BLM**

## **Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation is one of many uses allowed on Public Lands.**

Responsible operation and respect for the rights of others and for natural resources will help keep public lands open and available for OHV enthusiasts.

## **Some Motorized Travel Rules are Changing on the San Juan National Forest**

**Off-road motorized vehicles (OHVs), including ATVs, are ONLY allowed on trails and roads designated specifically for their use.** Please call for details on specific areas. These rules do not apply to snow machines operating over snow.

## **Why are Motorized Travel Rules Changing?**

A **national regulation** published by the U.S. Forest Service in 2005 requires that each National Forest or Ranger District designate specific roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicle use.

These changes are being made in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act with full public participation.

One of the outcomes is a **Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM)** displaying designated routes by vehicle class and time of year. **Motor vehicle use inconsistent with the MVUM will be prohibited.** Other maps, such as the San Juan National Forest Visitor Map, will be updated to reflect all changes.

The San Juan National Forest is currently in the process of designating which routes and areas are open to motor vehicle use. **Roads and trails not specifically designated as open to motorized use are closed to motorized use. Designations will be made by class of vehicle, and if appropriate, time of year.**

**You are responsible for knowing which roads and trails are open to motorized use under the new regulations.**

## Rules and Regulations

### Federal Rules

#### **OHVs Okay on Most Forest Roads**

Usually, if a National Forest road is open to passenger vehicles, it is also open to OHVs. There are some exceptions where roads are closed to OHVs due to high traffic and high speed limits. Check with the Ranger District prior to your visit for details or consult the official Motor Vehicle Use Map for the area.

#### **Temporary Road Closures**

National Forest roads or trails may be closed temporarily at times for your safety, to minimize impacts to wildlife, or to prevent road damage. Current conditions are available by calling a local office or on-line: [www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan](http://www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan), then selecting Road Conditions.

#### **Some Areas are Always Closed to OHVs**

By law, motorized or mechanized (bicycles) vehicles are **never allowed** in the Piedra Area, and the Weminuche, Lizard Head, Hermosa and South San Juan Wildernesses.

#### **Access Through Gates**

Never park a vehicle in front of a gate to a closed road, it may block emergency access for firefighting, search & rescue, etc. When you pass through gates on trails, leave the gate as you find it (either open or closed). These gates restrict the movement of livestock.

#### **Access across Private Property**

Unless there is a public right of way or someone has direct permission from an adjacent landowner, it is illegal to cross private land to access public land. There are many private, subdivision or gas well roads that are not open to the general public. Trespass violations are enforced by the County Sheriff's office.

#### **Access from Private Property**

If your property is adjacent to the National Forest, **you are not allowed to drive a motorized vehicle onto National Forest lands from your property**. There are no areas open to cross-country OHV access from private property.

#### **Off Road Travel**

Parking is allowed up to one vehicle length off of open roads and motorized trails. However, **for the purpose of dispersed camping, motorized vehicles can travel up to 300 feet off an open road**, but only if such travel does not cause resource damage or is not prohibited.

Travel off of roads or designated motorized trails for any other purpose is prohibited unless allowed by a permit or contract issued under Federal law or regulation. **Cross-country travel is not allowed**. Motorized game retrieval is allowed only in the Boggy/Glade area NW of Dolores.

#### **Seasonal Road Closures**

Forest roads open seasonally to motorized vehicle use will open and close to such use annually on specific dates depending on safety, weather, and resource conditions.

## Parks and Wildlife Hunting Rules

**While hunting, all motorized travel rules apply.**

The use of OHVs to retrieve game is allowed only on roads, trails and areas which are designated as open to such motorized vehicles. **Cross-country travel is not allowed**. Motorized game retrieval is allowed only in the Boggy/Glade area NW of Dolores. Call (970) 882-7296 for details.

It is illegal to hunt, chase, pursue, harass or shoot at wildlife from any motorized vehicle.

Firearms (except handguns) must be unloaded in chamber and magazine while carried on an OHV.

Firearms (except handguns) and bows carried on an OHV must be fully enclosed in a hard or soft case.

For additional information, refer to the current hunting proclamation or contact the **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** (970) 247-0855 or online at: [www.wildlife.state.co.us](http://www.wildlife.state.co.us).  
Or [www.colorado.gov/pacific/csp/colorado-gun-laws](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/csp/colorado-gun-laws)

## **SW Colorado County Rules**

Individual counties in Colorado may allow OHVs on select county roads. They usually have stricter rules than public lands with regards to insurance, helmets, seat belts and child safety seats. These should be well posted and questions can be directed to the individual county offices or websites.

The **Alpine Loop** and Mountain Counties including San Juan County (Silverton), Hinsdale County (Lake City), Ouray County and San Miguel County (Telluride) have many county roads open to OHVs, but each operator **must carry proof of insurance**. All of these counties, except for Ouray county, also require that operators **have a valid drivers license and be 16 years of age** to drive on county roads. County roads open to OHVs mostly include higher elevation four wheel drive roads and not lower elevation rural or frontage roads.

For information contact the local County Sheriff's offices:

**San Juan County Sheriff (970) 387-5531**

**Hinsdale County Sheriff (970) 944-2291**

**Ouray County Sheriff (970) 325-7272**

**San Miguel County Sheriff (970) 728-4442**

**La Plata County Sheriff (970) 247-1157**

**Archuleta County Sheriff (970) 731-2160**

**Montezuma County Sheriff (970) 565-8452**

## **Colorado State Rules**

OHVs operated on public lands or trails in Colorado—including dirt bikes, motorcycles, 3-wheelers, ATVs, UTVs and dune buggies—or any vehicle driving on a designated OHV Trail - **must be registered with Colorado State Parks.**

Out-of-state residents who bring OHVs into Colorado must purchase a Colorado Non-Resident OHV permit. Out of State permits can be purchased directly from hunting and fishing license vendors, online thru the Colorado State Parks website, from some OHV dealerships, and some San Juan National Forest offices.

**Persons less than 10 years of age cannot operate OHVs on public roads.** OHV operators between the ages of 10 and 16 must be accompanied by and under the immediate supervision (within direct visual contact) of a person with a valid driver's license. (rules on county roads may be stricter)

The following OHV sound limits must be met:

- 99 dB(A) if manufactured before 1/1/1998

- 96 dB(A) if manufactured after 1/1/1998

For more information call

**Colorado Parks and Wildlife Registration Division**

**(303) 791-1920** or online at: [www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us).

## **Fines**

Fines vary by offense and jurisdiction, but Forest Service fines can be up to \$5000.00 and 6 months in jail. Fines for riding off of a designated trail begin at \$250.00. Offenses incurred while hunting can include losing preference points as well as monetary fines or jail time. State and County fines can be additional.

## **Vehicle Definitions**

### **Off-highway vehicle (OHV)**

Any motor vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain. (36 Code of Federal Regulations 212.1). They do not have to be street legal but **they must be registered in Colorado to ride on public lands.**

### **All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV)**

A type of off-highway vehicle that travels on three or more low-pressure tires, has handle-bar steering, and is less than or equal to 50 inches in width. Colorado does not allow or recognize ATVs as street legal.

### **Utility Vehicle (UTV or ROV)**

A type of off-highway vehicle that travels on four or more low pressure tires, has a steering wheel, and is designed for side by side seating. Most are greater than 50" wide, but some models are less than 50". Colorado does not allow or recognize UTVs as street legal.

### **Motorcycle**

A two-wheeled motor vehicle on which the two wheels are not side-by-side, but in line. Motorcycles can be street legal or OHVs. Legally license plated motorcycles still need to be registered as OHVs if they ride on designated OHV trails.

## **Questions?**

**San Juan National Forest  
Supervisors Office  
15 Burnett Court  
Durango, CO 81301 (970)  
247-4874  
[www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan](http://www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan)**

**Columbine Ranger District  
P.O. Box 439  
367 Pearl Street  
Bayfield, CO 81122  
(970) 884-2512**

**Pagosa Ranger District  
P.O. Box 310  
180 Pagosa Street  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147  
(970) 264-2268**

**Dolores Public Lands Office and  
Tres Rios BLM Field Office  
29211 Hwy 184  
Dolores, CO 81323  
(970) 882-7296**

**Silverton BLM Office (summer)  
(970) 387-5530**

## Let's Go for a Ride

**Please remember that you will be sharing these roads with full-sized vehicles. All roads and trails are also open to bicyclists, horse riders, and hikers.**

**Damage to roads, trails and other areas is not allowed. You can be ticketed for damaging roads or trails even if they are posted as open.** On roads and trails designated as open to motorized vehicles, consider the condition of the surface and your ability to successfully travel without damage to yourself, your vehicle, or the road or trail surface.

Check with our office for current conditions and carry a current map. National Forest Maps, Motor Vehicle Use Maps, BLM Maps, and private company maps are excellent maps for the San Juan area. Remember that maps may be outdated while the rules are changing.

## Tread Lightly!

### **Ride only on routes wider than your vehicle.**

Different trail types are constructed for different widths of vehicles. Learn about different trails and which trails are designed for which vehicles. Remember to only ride on trails wider than your vehicle. Motorized routes are either all vehicle, vehicles 50 inches or less, or single track motorcycle.

### **Ride only on routes open to your vehicle.**

In Colorado, we use brown signs with white graphics to designate which trails are open to which vehicles. A red slash across a sign indicates a trail is closed to that type of vehicle. Signs are present at trail heads and may be present at trail junctions.

### **Ride over obstacles, not around them.**

Going around obstacles widens trails, impacts vegetation and causes erosion. Challenge yourself by staying on the trail. Use caution when going over obstacles and remember to be courteous to other trail users.

### **Be an ambassador to non-motorized trail users**

Your trails are always in danger of being closed. On any day of riding you become the face of OHV recreation to other users—leave them with a good impression of your sport. Always yield the trail to non-motorized users.

### **Slow down for your fellow riders.**

Care is required when passing or meeting fellow OHV enthusiasts on narrow trails. Slow down. Let the other rider know your intentions. Stay on the trail so you do not flatten vegetation or widen the trail.