

Partnership Project Success Story

State:	Colorado	FS Funds Used:	\$ 8500/year
National Forest/Grassland:	GMUG	Other Funds Used:	\$
		Partners:	\$8500/year
Project Name:	Unc. NF OHV Partnership	Total Project Cost:	\$ 17000

Project Purpose/Objectives: Starting in July of 2004, San Miguel County and the Forest Service embarked on a partnership to address management of OHV's on popular jeep roads on the Norwood Ranger District. The objective was to collaboratively address concerns about traffic levels, resource damage, OHV registration, and underaged OHV riders occurring on the Black Bear Pass, Ophir Pass, and Imogene Pass Roads within San Miguel County.

By entering into this partnership, the County and the FS "agreed to disagree" about jurisdiction of the three jeep roads. This ended years of debate over road jurisdiction as we moved forward with the OHV partnership.

Work Performed: A 3-year OHV Recreation Survey and Monitoring Program began during the summer of 2005. The County provided funding for 2 people to conduct traffic patrols and surveys on the three jeep roads. The FS designed survey protocols, supervised the program and provided vehicle support/training for one of the surveyors.

The two surveyors counted and classified recreation traffic in the project area for 2-3 days/week throughout the peak use period of July thru early September. They also made visitor contacts and documented interviews with recreationists to determine what their recreation experience was like. One of the surveyors who had Forest Protection Officer training also enforced Forest regulations and monitored OHV compliance with State OHV registration regulations.

As part of this project, in 2005 the FS and neighboring Town of Ophir shared the costs of installing 9 road closure gates to address off-road vehicle use along the jeep roads. In 2006 a local jeep club (Western Slope Fourwheelers) provided volunteer labor to install dozens of new directional and informational signs along the roads.

This survey and patrol program occurred in 2005 and 2006 and will be continued during the summer of 2007. Preliminary survey results have shown that traffic levels and resource damage are minor concerns. Compliance with State OHV registration regulations is increasing. However, reckless OHV riding by dirt bikes and ATV's has emerged as a significant issue.

Benefits: Concurrent with the survey program, the County held several public meetings to consider lifting a County Resolution that had prohibited OHV use of the three jeep roads. Ultimately, by July of 2006 the County Commissioners had decided to lift the restrictions for all three roads.

San Miguel County and the Uncompahgre National Forest have forged a strong partnership with regards to management of the three jeep roads. By sharing the results of each survey season, the public has a clearer understanding of the management issues.

Of most importance, the survey project has: 1) provided a FS presence on the 3 roads, resulting in a reduction in illegal off-road vehicle use and damage, improved OHV registration compliance and overall greater dissemination of Tread Lightly and FS travel management information; and 2) resulted in the collection of baseline survey data that will be used to develop a recreation capacity analysis and management plan for the three pass roads.

The program's successes have been shared with the two adjacent counties (Ouray and San Juan) that share management of the jeep roads. As a result in 2006, surveys and patrols were expanded to the Ouray County side of Imogene Pass Road (Ouray Ranger District). In addition in 2007, San Juan County plans to hire a seasonal "jeep ranger" position that will assist in visitor contacts and law enforcement activities on two of the jeep roads.

Additional Information

Partners: San Miguel County and the Forest Service

