February 24, 2012

Executive Summary

Colorado's Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail Program

Colorado's Off-Highway Vehicle Program is statutorily created in sections 33-14.5-101 to 33-14.5-113, Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS), and is funded through the sale of OHV registrations and trail use permits. It is estimated that over 160,000 vehicles will be registered or permitted in the 2012-2013 season generating revenues in excess of \$4 million. The price of an annual OHV registration or OHV trail use permits issued for out-of-state or licensed vehicles is \$25.25\frac{1}{2}. Funds are used to support the statewide OHV Program, the OHV Registration Program and OHV Trail Grant Program, including OHV law enforcement. Registration and use permit revenues are deposited into the OHV Recreation Fund authorized by section 33-14.5-106, CRS.

The 2011 OHV Law Enforcement Pilot Program

The OHV Law Enforcement Pilot Program was initiated by the State Parks Division and the State Parks Board as part of a strategic initiative designed to address questions and concerns raised by critics of OHV recreation on public lands in Colorado. The matter of OHV riding on public lands in Colorado and OHV enthusiasts' compliance with OHV riding regulations had been a frequent topic of concern brought before the State Parks Board in 2009 and 2010. The State Parks Board approved the OHV strategic process in May, 2010. The OHV draft Law Enforcement Pilot Program plan was subsequently developed in accordance with the approved strategic process and its startup endorsed by the Parks Board in March, 2011.

The 2011 Off-highway Vehicle Law Enforcement Pilot Program featured four major elements: a seasonal law enforcement detail under the direction of the Colorado State Parks motorized trail unit; two law enforcement details under the direction of the Forest Service and the BLM, respectively; and a citizen based, peer-compliance initiative implemented by the Responsible Recreation Foundation. A steering group representing the Forest Service, BLM, the State Park Trails Program, the Responsible Recreation Foundation and the Colorado Recreational Trails Committee coordinated field operations and deployments of law enforcement teams for the duration of the pilot program. Deployments focused on high use OHV riding areas throughout Colorado and areas of concern identified by environmental interest groups.

The principle focus of this effort was a comprehensive assessment of Colorado's OHV compliance and law enforcement needs. The program gathered compliance information and data related to approved travel management plans, signage, OHV registration requirements and designated OHV trails. Specifically, the law enforcement teams were not required to address or fix infrastructure needs such as signage replacement or repairs, trail maintenance or repairs or performing trail closures. Pilot Program participants, particularly the State Park OHV Ranger Teams carefully documented matters like signage adequacy, route closure and trail maintenance needs and reported those findings to the appropriate land management agency.

¹ \$0.25 of the registration fee goes to the Colorado Search and Rescue Fund pursuant to C.R.S. 33-1-112.5. Created in 1987, the fund reimburses political subdivisions and search and rescue organizations for the costs incurred in conducting search and rescue operations, and to further provide funding for the purchase of search and rescue related equipment and training. The fund is not insurance and does not reimburse individuals.

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Funding for this effort was estimated to be \$630,000 with the bulk of the work slated to be performed during the 2011 summer and fall recreation seasons. Funding for the project was drawn from the OHV Recreation Fund and was set aside in Fiscal Year 2011. The actual cost of the program was approximately \$310,000. All of the data and information generated by the project's participants has been incorporated into this summary report.

The data and observations documented by the project demonstrate excellent compliance with OHV rules and regulations throughout Colorado by the OHV riders contacted in the field by the program's participants. Over 10,000 individual OHV riders were stopped and inspected by the pilot program's participants. A total of 290 warnings and 125 citations were issued to OHV riders who failed to comply with OHV registration requirements including failure to have or display a valid OHV registration or permit, expired OHV registrations, or failure to have proof of a valid OHV registration on hand. A total of 109 warnings and 35 citations were issued for non-registration related violations including minors (youth ten or older) riding OHVs not under the direct supervision by a person who possessed a valid driver's license issued by the State of Colorado or another state, unsafe operation such as speeding, equipment or sound violations, operating an OHV on a public street or road not authorized for OHV access or other miscellaneous OHV operator violations. Five (5) warnings and seven (7) citations were issued to OHV operators who were found to be operating off of a designated OHV trail or roadway.

No custodial arrests were made and little off-trail damage was noted by the State Park Rangers or the Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) employed by the Forest Service or BLM under the OHV Law Enforcement Pilot Program.

The percentage of the warnings and citations issued versus the total number of OHV riders stopped and checked by the pilot program officers are as follows:

% of OHV riders contacted who received a warning or citation (571); % of OHV riders contacted who received a warning (404); % of OHV riders contacted who received a citation (167);	5.3 % 3.8 % 1.6 %
% of OHV riders contacted receiving a warning or citation not related to registrations (156); % of OHV riders contacted receiving a warning not related to registrations (114); % of OHV riders contacted receiving a citation not related to registrations (42);	1.5 % 1.1 % 0.4 %
% of OHV riders receiving a warning or a citation for operating off of designated routes (12); % of OHV riders receiving a warning for operating off of designated routes (7); % of OHV riders receiving a citation for operating off of designated routes (5);	.12 % .07 % .05 %

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The Responsible Recreation Foundation (RRF) implemented the Colorado Trail Patrol Program as a peer-to-peer compliance monitoring effort under the pilot program. Over the course of the 2011 summer and fall recreation season, RRF trained 265 volunteer monitors and logged 940 hours monitoring roads and trails on public lands in Colorado. Most of the RRF trained monitors were full-sized vehicle operators and therefore spent most of their time on roads traveled by 4x4 vehicles. Many of the trained monitors did not log their observations. When RRF surveyed those individuals to determine the reasons for not utilizing the on-line reporting system, most responded to say they either forgot or were too busy upon returning home to record their observations. In total, over 100 reports were recorded with 75 incidents reported. As with the State Park Rangers, and BLM and Forest Service LEOs, most incident reports identified trail maintenance and signage needs as the principal trail/road problems. Monitors also reported observing four (4) vehicles that were off-trail.

The collective recommendations and observations of the pilot program field crews and citizen monitors can be summarized into five general categories: Trail Maintenance Issues- The greatest demand and need as observed by all pilot program field teams was for OHV trail maintenance throughout Colorado. Downed trees, pools of water created by poor drainage or inadequate drainage structures, and snow banks are regarded by most riders as obstacles to be avoided. Typical behavior is for OHV riders to avoid those obstacles in taking the path of least resistance or around the obstacle and outside the trail's path. This leads to trail braiding or trail widening where the obstacles persist. Elimination of these obstacles, the repair and replacement of failed drainage features, and the hardening of erosive or chronically wet soils would greatly curtail the creation of new routes or bypasses along established trails created to avoid problem areas. Signage Issues – The pilot program documented the need for better and more uniform signage along OHV trails and at trail head/parking areas statewide. Signage that informs riders on OHV trail routes, route navigation, degree of trail difficulty, responsible use practices, trail use and access allowances, and route closures is universally needed across the state. In many established riding areas, signage was old and not legible, vandalized or inconsistent to the point it was difficult to navigate trail systems. **Urban Interface Areas** – OHV riding areas located near urban centers receive higher concentrations of OHV use than Colorado's more remote riding locations due to convenience, and ease of access. New or inexperienced riders may frequent these areas in higher numbers due to their lack of knowledge of other riding opportunities. This phenomenon exists for nonmotorized trail use as well. These areas naturally require a higher level of maintenance and attention. Problems with trail maintenance, signage, vandalism, regulatory compliance, and user satisfaction with riding opportunities are greater in these areas. Rangers observed a greater frequency of user conflicts between user groups (e.g., full-sized vehicles versus ATVs and motorcycles seeking trail riding experiences, persons seeking non-motorized trail access versus motorized and unique special interest access interests such as target shooting and trash disposal versus trail use advocates). There is a distinct need to foster the development of well-managed OHV riding parks close to Colorado's urban centers. Dedicated OHV parks can be operated to provide riding opportunities that will educate and promote responsible riding practices while eliminating conflicts with other recreational uses. Education – The riding public's reaction to the presence of the OHV law enforcement agents was very positive in almost every instance. Riders' reception of the State Park Rangers was very positive because they were seen out riding trails and viewed as true trail "ambassadors." The overwhelming majority of persons stopped in the field expressed their support for seeing OHV law enforcement agents in the field and on the trails. Thousands of

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Motor Vehicle Use Maps were distributed and thousands of questions related to OHV regulations as well as questions related to other backcountry use regulations were addressed. The opportunity to educate was a direct benefit of the OHV Law Enforcement Pilot Program. The mere presence of rangers and LEOs promoted dialogue and exchanges with the riding public enabling communication on riding rules and responsible use principles such as "Stay the Trail" and "Leave No Trace."

Active and Holistic OHV Trail and Support Facility Management – Given the results of the pilot program in 2011, a conclusion that can be drawn from this effort is that neither trail maintenance alone, or signage alone, or law enforcement alone, do not represent the single greatest OHV management need Colorado. Rather, broad-scale or holistic management approaches have been shown to be the most effective way to address the management needs for OHV riding areas. The deployment of dedicated crews that are familiar with the areas they attend to and that are trained and equipped to address maintenance, signage and law enforcement needs is the most cost effective and efficient method to managing Colorado's OHV riding areas. Good Management Trail Crews routinely employ multiple management approaches while protecting environmentally sensitive areas such as stream crossings and steeply sloped areas with erodible soils. Since 99% of the OHV riding areas in Colorado are on federal lands, it is important to recognize that local federal land managers prefer this approach because it provides flexibility to react to multiple, and often times, changing priorities.

The data collected through the OHV Law Enforcement Pilot Program documented excellent compliance with OHV riding rules and regulations in every OHV riding area patrolled by pilot program participants. The program documented little environmental damage caused by OHV riding on public lands throughout Colorado. The State Park Rangers who rode trails in almost every OHV riding area in Colorado documented numerous projects completed with OHV grant assistance that served to protect sensitive environmental resources on Colorado's public lands. The actual pilot project cost was approximately 50% less than originally estimated. Trail maintenance, education, and signage were viewed as the highest priorities needed to improve rider compliance and OHV riding experiences in Colorado's designated OHV riding areas. Utilization of dedicated trail crews with law enforcement capabilities was thought to be the most effective delivery system for the priorities identified.

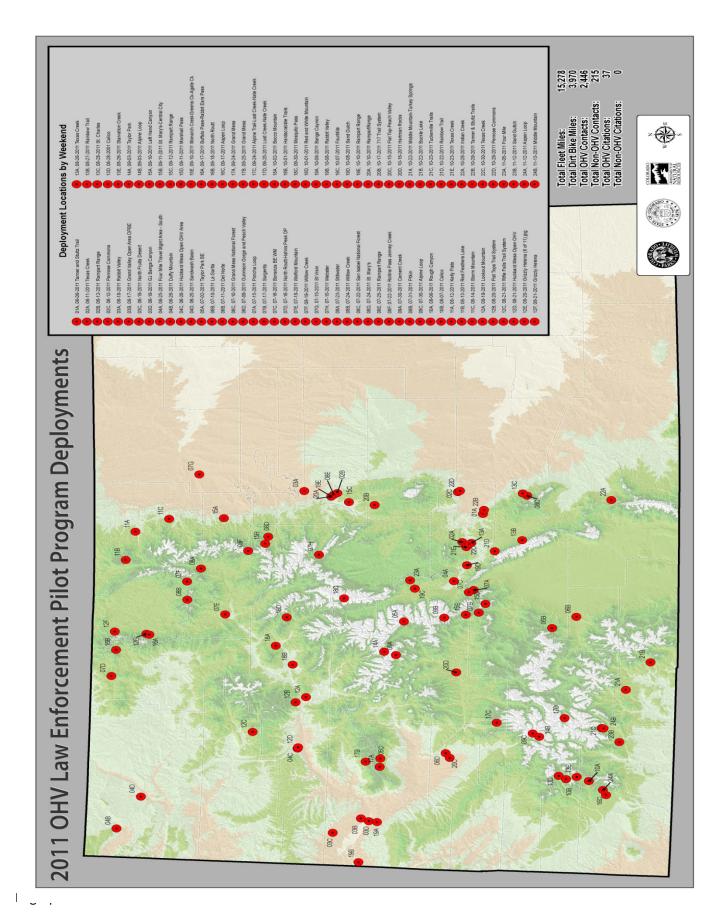
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Summary of Data Gathered by State Park, BLM and Forest Service OHV Law Enforcement Officials - 2011 OHV Law Enforcement Pilot Program

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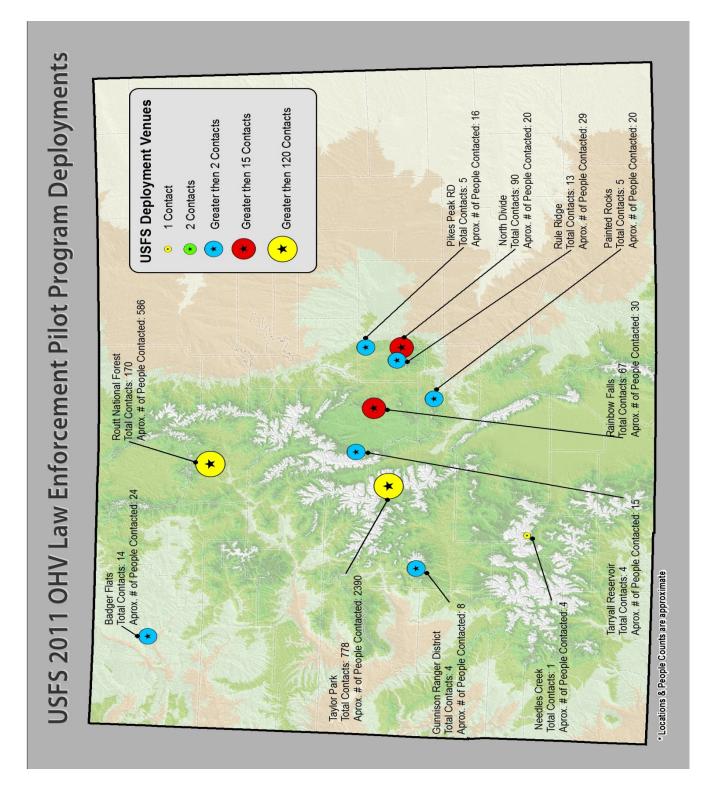
average of 4.359 persons per group. This spreadsheet projects compliance percentages based on the larger population figures accounting for uncounted parties by both the groups contacted where accurate counts were made. The same averaging approach was used to populate the BLM contacts where party counts were not made yielding an That average was calculated from the Forest Service contacts where an accurate count of the total number of persons in the party was recorded divided by the number of contacted. An average of 3.7564 persons per party was applied to all parties contacted by the Forest Service where a count of the total party members was not recorded. The BLM and Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers making OHV field contacts and compliance checks did not always count the number of persons in each party



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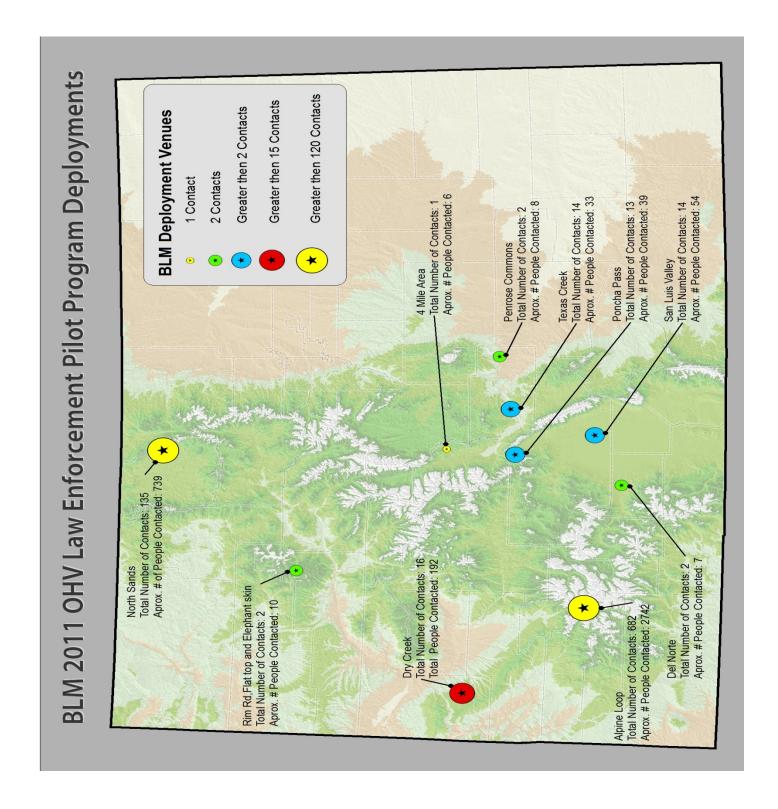
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Percent of Riders contacted who received a warning or citation	4.2%
Percent of Riders contacted who received a warning	2.9%
Percent of Riders contacted who received a citation	1.3%