

COLORADO

6000

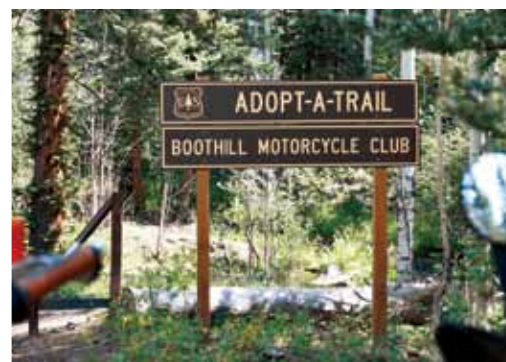
The Trails Preservation Alliance Colorado 600 is much more than a group trail ride. Now in its third year, this prominent event is about preserving dirt bikers' rights to enjoy the riding we all love so much. A gathering of off-road legends, activists, enthusiasts and supporters, the Colorado 600 is an important summit that provides the opportunity to educate and collaborate, as well as to enjoy some of the most epic single-track in the United States.

Upon arriving at the small town that serves as home base for the Colorado 600, I had already been building up the thought of a perfect trail in my head. Having just driven nearly four hours on scenic Colorado highways through farmland, winding rivers and rock canyons, I couldn't help but let my imagination go wild. Stoking that fire was my driver for the day, BRP's Jim Rios, who spent the duration

of our road trip ranting and raving about how insane last year's ride was. Between Chris Denison—who tackled this prestigious trip last year—and Jim's enthusiastic stories, the term *traction storm* was widely used. Apparently these are afternoon Colorado rainstorms that dump adequate amounts of moisture on trails, causing traction to go through the roof. Needless to say, I could hardly sit still. Adding to this was the fact that Jim was kind enough to let me ride his brand-new 2012 KTM 300 XC-W, which was decorated axle to axle with every trail goody you could imagine along with some motor and suspension mods fit for the Rockies. It takes a real man to let some happy-go-lucky kid ride hundreds of miles on his brand-new steed! This was the first trace of evidence of the top-notch people who would be attending this event, and I must say, I've never made so many dirt biking friends in my life in just under a week.

RESPONSIBLE RIDING IN TRAIL HEAVEN

Story By Chris Green · Photos By Chris Green And Jim Rios



COLORADO 600

Over the years I've spent a lot of time at motocross and off-road races sanctioned by the AMA where a membership is required to race. But did you know that this membership money goes back into the motorcycling community and helps the AMA fight for what us motorcyclists believe is right? "If the AMA had a few million members, they would have a much louder voice," Stan Simpson, president of the AMA, preached after breakfast on the first morning of the ride. "We are nothing without individual members, and that is what gives us the horsepower in Washington [D.C.] to make a difference." Over the course of the week at the CO600 I learned that the AMA is too broad of a group to deal with unique issues on local levels. That is where you and I come in. All it takes is an educated group of people who share a specific desire to preserve—or save—a set of trails. If you need motivation, just think back to the first time you experienced some perfect single-track. Now, imagine not being able to share that feeling with young riders because the trail system was forcibly and permanently shut down. This is something that we need to act on now, because if we wait until it's too late to learn our lesson, then it will be a whole lot harder to fight for the reopening of trails as opposed to starting various local groups and getting numbers while we still have a fighting chance. Every rider in America needs to view his or her sacred riding area as a treasure.

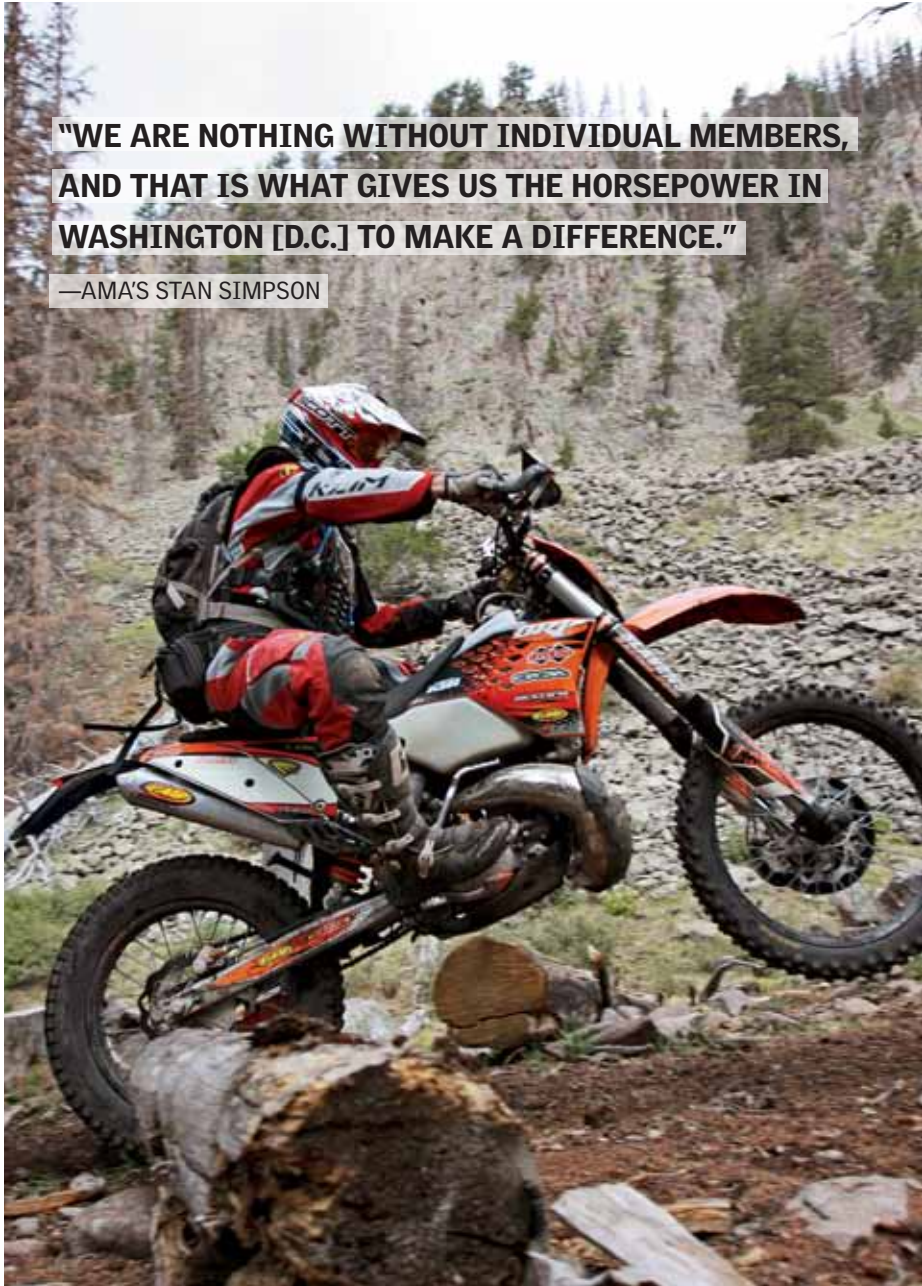
The TPA, COHVCO And The AMA

Don Riggle is a rugged, trail-savvy individual who started the Trails Preservation Alliance for one simple reason: "We need a funding source to help legislation, litigation, education and to start clubs in the state." Alongside a group of dedicated enthusiasts, Riggle works tirelessly to support riding in the state of Colorado. "We've organized nine separate motorcycle clubs in Colorado," Don explained. "We help clubs get going by giving them seed money. The TPA gives them \$1,000, sometimes more, and our lawyer also incorporates them as a nonprofit organization. What that does is gives that club an area they are in charge of where they can deal with the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The TPA and COHVCO (Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition) can't deal with everything. We can deal with state-level stuff, but when it gets down to the local level with district rangers and BLM field officers, you have to have local guys who can handle that."

Also pertaining to Riggle's strong views are issues with popular

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—AMA'S STAN SIMPSON



riding areas that are being taken advantage of and subsequently trashed. Overpopulation is affecting many trail systems in Colorado, and there are many factors that play into this. Riggle articulates: "The FS and BLM are closing more and more riding areas—some of it through legislation and through wildlife policy. At the same time you have anywhere from a 10 to 15 percent increase in UTVs, ATVs and motorcycles, which causes increasing demand for more areas to ride while the land managers are decreasing the area. That's a problem that is just going to get worse." Despite all this, the TPA is working with these groups to help them realize that opening up more areas will spread out riders, thus thinning out the amount of riders occupying overused OHV trails.

One of Riggle's boldest statements at the Colorado 600 involved coordination of forces. "We need to consolidate the OHV community," Don stated. "Currently, there are a bunch of different groups and riding clubs out there that are out doing their own thing, which is good. But what we need to have is somebody at the top. I'm going to use Trout Unlimited as an example; they have a national headquarters in Washington, D.C., which is the guys at the top. Under that, each state has a chapter, and down from that you have the local chapters. So you have the AMA at the top, you have groups like COHVCO and the TPA, which are state level, and then you have small, local organizations at the individual club level. We need to set up

something like this because we are wasting our time and money otherwise. Our resources need to be controlled because nobody has enough money to fight against trail closures single-handedly.”

While the TPA is an organization solely devoted to the preservation of single-track trails, COHVCO is a much broader group focused on sustaining the right for all motorized vehicles to use and enjoy the beautiful off-road areas of Colorado. Ranging from fire roads to jeep trails, two-track and single-track, the only things the Coalition doesn't have under its watch are hiking paths and animal trails.

John Bongiovanni is the man behind this operation and has some interesting insights into off-highway politics.

“The biggest issue we have right now is that we are outnumbered at least 10 to 1, if you look at all of the active or registered people—both pro- and anti-motorized. That means there are 10 times as many people out there right now who are preaching anti-motorized than pro-motorized. That doesn't necessarily mean there are 10 times as many anti-motorized people; it just means there are 10 times as many people out there being *vocal* about it. And that is a key problem that we have. If it appears there are 10 times as many people preaching against us, then the higher-ups who are making decisions believe there are 10 times as many anti-motorized citizens (voters). But the last thing I want everybody to do is walk away thinking of the agencies as our enemies and that they are out to get us. That is flat-out not the case. I have had many people at the Forest Services and the Bureau of Land Management come to me and say, ‘You guys need to speak up more. You're getting the wrong idea. There should be a balance here.’ And that is coming from the agencies, which shows they aren't our enemies. They want to help us, but first we have to help ourselves so they can help us. There has to be a much more vocal group on the pro-motorized side, and we are just too quiet. We've got to get involved, and that's what I'd like riders to go out and preach. We have to get the word out, and we have to get people involved.”

The trails we have to ride in this country offer some of the most enjoyable outdoor recreation on the planet. But right now, if you aren't taking the initiative and finding a way to preserve your local areas, then you're essentially allowing opposite forces to remove the sport that keeps you sane, one trail at a time. Be proactive and get involved with a group in your area; this is the quickest way to make a difference. If you don't see any good going on, then get out there and start up a local club. Rev it up into something you are proud of and work with other groups to preserve the spots that you know and love. It'll be worth every hour, every dollar and every drop of sweat if it means that your kids and grandkids have the luxury of riding trails that you've protected for years.



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2012 KTM/BRP 300 XC-W PROJECT BIKE



When it comes to riding off-road, there are plenty of different types of terrain, and choosing a bike that will match everything seems somewhat unreasonable. I'm a firm believer in KTM's off-road two-stroke lineup and 300cc sounds about right, and that lands us right around the XC or XC-W mark. Narrow down the terrain type to none other than the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and the XC-W's smooth-handling and lightweight chassis is your new best friend. Jim Rios at BRP went way out of his way to transform his bone-stock, never-before-ridden 2012 KTM 300 XC-W into the ultimate trail slayer—all while remaining Colorado street-legal!

Jim knew that the high-altitude riding (8,000 feet and above) was going to rob some power, so he sent the head to Slavens Racing for a head/cylinder mod and Mountain Jetting Kit—which Jeff Slavens has specifically designed for KTM 300s at 6,000 to 12,000 feet of elevation. The motor maintained its amazing stock power delivery, but with Slavens' tweaks there was a lot more of it across the power spread. Chugging the bike in second and third gear nearly guaranteed a firmly-planted tire with amazing traction. In high elevation around 13,000 feet, every bike in our group ran extremely rich due to the lack of air. With the special jetting I was running, I did notice that my 300 was prone to reaching higher rpm quicker than the other bikes in our group. Getting a bike into the revs at those altitudes usually requires riding a gear or two lower, and my machine was breathing well. There was nothing we could do to maintain full power except ride them wide open and feel like heroes, except we were still traveling at normal speeds. The Pirelli MT-43 trials tire on the rear not only increased traction by what felt like 50 percent, it basically took out all of the trail harshness you would feel with a traditional 18-inch knobby tire. The suspension on this KTM took a bit of fine-tuning but was otherwise well-suited for the rocky routes.

A downfall that some see as the only negative on a KTM 300 is the vibration you feel in the handlebar. The BRP rubber-mounted SUB (Scotts Under Bar) mount took out most of the vibration. I've experienced nearly numb hands after all-day trips aboard 300cc two-strokes, and this wasn't an issue after five days and close to 600 miles of riding! The cockpit felt very neutral, and the BRP hand guard mounts and the Scotts steering stabilizer saved me many times when rocks seemed to jump out in front of me. The Hyde Racing skid plate was another chunk of trail armor that received its fair share of abuse and held up exceptionally well protecting the XC-W frame. An assortment of Enduro Engineering pieces served as functional eye candy including the spark arrestor end-cap, radiator braces, head- and taillights, brake light switch, clutch reservoir guard and the all-mighty carbon-fiber pipe guard that must have kept a million rocks from dinging up the pipe. Other BRP mods included an orange chain guide and a billet gas cap. Wrapped in Pirelli rubbers were the very stylish Dubya black D.I.D Dirt Star rims and orange Talon hubs that gave our KTM the extra bling it deserved.

The only thing I would have done differently on Jim's KTM would be to go down one spring rate on the fork (from the installed 4.4 N/mm) to get that smooth stock feeling back into the front end, yet I'd keep the smooth action in the mid-stroke that the Slavens Racing revalve provided. Unlimited power at elevation would have been nice, too, but since all that oxygen is hiding at the beach, I'll go ahead and say Jim couldn't have picked a better machine for the technical, sometimes trials-like riding that he has on tap. I'm right there with Mr. Rios on the list of mods he installed. Thumbs-up! **DR**
CHECK OUT MORE ABOUT THIS BIKE AT
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