



Trails Preservation Alliance (TPA) 2014 End of Year Report

This report provides an overview of 2014 activities and events. For a more detailed review, please see the individual project/issue in the news section on the TPA web page. *Is there light at the end of the tunnel for OHV recreation in Colorado? Well.... maybe...*

In 2014 we have seen several major success issues related to saving our sport. Combining this with several changes in Forest Services (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) management actions, provides hope that OHV recreation is finally being given recognition as it relates to legitimate recreation on public property.



2014 Success Stories

The **Tenderfoot Trail Project** was approved in the White River NF and created twenty two miles of new single track motorized trails outside Dillon, Colorado.

The **Hermosa Watershed Legislation** was approved which creates a 70,000 acre special management area for motorized recreation, protecting riding areas that had long been within recommended Wilderness areas and released a Wilderness Study Area for motorized usage.

The **Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger District** of the White River NF reopened almost 150 miles of motorized routes to OHV usage.

The **Uncompahgre BLM Field Office** determined that motorized and non-motorized usage should be

balanced in a **trail project in the Burn Canyon** area that was originally to be exclusively non-motorized trails.

New **management documents** were issued for **wolverine and lynx** clearly stating that motorized recreation is not an issue on millions of acres of habitat. Previously this issue was classified as unresolved and resulted in overly cautious management decisions.

A more noticeable **proactive involvement style** by **Federal Land Managers** is apparent as it relates to a wide range of OHV issues impacting recreation on public lands continues to yield some positive results.

Legislation Issues

In 2014, TPA addressed four key legislation initiatives:

- We are building on the successful release of the West Needles Wilderness Study area in 2014 and

are working to gain release of the North Sand Hills Wilderness Study area outside Walden Colorado due to the long history of motorized usage in the area



- We are exploring landscape level tools for the release of Wilderness Study areas that have never been found suitable for designation.
- TPA has strategically positioned itself to work more closely and effectively with Colorado’s elected officials in the US Senate and House.
- TPA and our partners published a consolidated research paper noting a wide range of impacts

for expanded Wilderness designations, including negative economic impacts to communities, low levels of utilizations of current opportunities and negative impacts to the overall health of public lands from wilderness management restrictions. This paper was written to give everyone in Colorado a better understanding of what the announcement of a wilderness designation does to a local area.

Legal Issues

- **Bear Creek/Green Back Trout (PPSI. Pikes Peak District).** Motorcycle use in this area continues to be denied. Land ownership is still in question. (City of Colorado Springs) The FS is in the process of completing a NEPA of the entire area. The follow-on TMP is said to include a motorized bypass route of the endangered trout area. Until ownership of the land is settled and an agreement is in-place between the FS and landowner, motorized recreation in the area is on hold.
- **Pike San Isabel** Filed in January 2011 this case challenges Forest Service management of vehicle access to six Ranger Districts in the Pike and San Isabel National Forest. Plaintiffs filed an opening brief on the merits in August 2013. The Forest Service and Plaintiffs began settlement discussions, which continue. TPA-lead interveners are allowed to participate indirectly in this effort, and to mitigate adverse impacts on

historical access. No restrictions have been imposed as a result of this lawsuit.

- **Rico West Dolores.** This case was brought by the Colorado Chapter, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, and seeks to close fourteen prime motorcycle trails in the Rico West Dolores area of the San Juan National Forest. TPA and COHVCO, San Juan Trail Riders, Public Access Preservation Association and Blue-ribbon Coalition intervened as co-defendants alongside the Forest Service. The district court denied CBHA's motion for a preliminary injunction, and ruled in favor of the Forest Service and pro-access interveners on the merits. CBHA appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, which heard oral argument on November 21, 2014. The appeal remains under advisement.

The TPA stays actively involved in all ongoing legal issues.

Current OHV Tourism Projects

The TPA has accepted responsibility for an OHV tourism awareness project. This special project was developed to show the positive aspects of OHV tourism for towns and counties in western Colorado. The Economic Contribution study (funded by the TPA in 2009) was a first step in this initiative. A special TPA staff person is assigned to work with local communities in Colorado. This work is funded by TPA

donations and a special Polaris grant. OHV tourism has proved to create a positive economic impact for our State and communities. A recent study showed that over \$100.00 per day is spent per OHV use in local towns.

A new extensive economic study is approved for funding by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife OHV





grants. This study will be much more in-depth than the 2009 study and is scheduled for completion in late 2015.

TPA works closely with the town of Meeker and the Rio Blanco County to promote OHV tourism. Today the Wagon Wheel Trail System is fully operational and providing an outstanding network of trails, right out of the town of Meeker. The TPA is also working with the following towns and counties helping them establish their own OHV tourism plans:

- Clear Creek County
- Lake County
- Teller County
- Hinsdale County
- San Juan County
-

These counties understand the positive impact of OHV recreation. TPA is rallying rural Colorado as a "force multiplier" in the battle to keep public lands open for OHV recreation. To see the exact action on going in each of the above areas, please see the news section of the TPA web page.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

With TPA assistance, two new motorcycle clubs were started this year in Colorado: The San Carlos MC Club, Pueblo, and Grace Tours of Colorado Springs.

The TPA responded/provided comments on the following land use issues.

- Bear Creek
- Colorado River Valley BLM Protest
- Domingez-Escalante NCA RMP
- Grand Junction BLM D/RMP's
- Kremmling FO BLM Protest
- Left Hand Canyon
- Rollin Pass
- San Juan NF TMP protest
- Tenderfoot trail
- Tres Rios BLM RMP protest
- VURB issue

Wildcat canyon area discussions about possible opening of many OHV routes closed by the Haymen fire.

Multiple meetings with selected FS and BLM Land Managers

Significant involvement with the listing of the Greater and Gunnison Sage Grouse – both of which could impact millions of acres of riding areas

BLM Planning Rule Version 2.0 proposal

Arizona, Tonto NF EA

Future Projects

TPA is involved in several significant land usage issues originating from the FS and the BLM. These issues are critical to the future of OHV recreation in Colorado.

The final version of the GJ/BLM Resource Master Plan is expected for the entire Grand Junction area. Draft versions of this document proposed high levels of closures of motorized routes. TPA is optimistic that efforts, since the release of the draft, have resulted in a far more balanced plan for the usage of the area and far lower levels of closures than originally proposed.





The San Juan NF is commencing a travel management plan for the Rico area and TPA is working hard to avoid any unnecessary closures in this area as the area has a long history of motorized usage.

The Rio Grande NF Forest Master Plan, and follow on TMP will be actively worked in conjunction with the local OHV clubs in the RGNF.

TPA will undergo some slight reorganization and our web page will be updated to reflect the current operational position as it relates to saving our sport in Colorado.

TPA continues to work closely with all OHV clubs and organizations in clubs in Colorado.

Donations

TPA supported the following organizations in 2014:

- COHVCO
- Grace Tours MC, Colorado Springs
- Gunnison/Crested Butte MC club (Goats)
- MTRA of Grand Junction
- NMOHVA
- PAPA, Telluride Colorado
- Ride with Respect. Moab Utah
- RMSR, Eagle
- San Carlos MC, Pueblo
- San Juan Trail Riders
- Volunteers of Colorado
- Wyoming Trail Riders

Summary

2014 was a very important year for the TPA as it marked our fourth year of operations. TPA has impacted many OHV issues and **2015 appears to be the most critical year for OHV planning in Colorado**. Planned BLM and FS projects will impact future OHV recreation for the next 10-20 years.

The Colorado 600 Trails Awareness Symposium continues to be our primary TPA fund raising operation and your active support of this event is appreciated.

TPA continues as a volunteer organization, putting a very high percentage of all donations to direct use for SAVING OUR SPORT.

The TPA Board of Directors thanks all of our supporters, individuals, corporate and clubs. Be assured that TPA is constantly striving to promote and preserve OHV recreation on public property.

Please contact us with any suggestions concerning on-going work or to recommend future work in which the TPA can be influential.

Thank you

The TPA BoD



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