



The Trails Preservation Alliance, using materials and references from the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC) and the Blue Ribbon Coalition (BRC) has adopted the following 11 basic rules for dealing with land management agencies:

1: UTILIZE THE CHAIN OF COMMAND	
<u>Recognize that there is a chain of command and respect it.</u>	
<p>We will discuss politics later, but we can quickly make an enemy by needlessly bypassing one or more links in the chain of command. When dealing with an issue, always start at the lowest appropriate level. Don't go to the District Ranger if you don't like the way the Recreation Technician put up a trail sign before you have talked to the Recreation Technician. On the flip side, don't be afraid to move up one link in the chain if you don't get the response or answers you want at the lower level.</p>	
2: BE WILLING TO COMPROMISE	
<p><u>Never let the perfect be the enemy of the good.</u></p> <p>In many respects, the game of land use is a game of compromise. The very nature of compromise means that you will give up something to get something. In addition, the OHV community is not always politically active, which means that we often end up with less than you started with.</p>	<p>Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>All too often, recreationists are put in the position of responding to travel plans developed by the land managers, or worse, plans submitted by an anti-OHV group. Think outside the parameters presented. Look for opportunities for adding routes, or respond by formulating your own travel plan. Never be afraid to ask for adequate quantity of trail-based motorized recreational experiences that will meet the present and future needs. Land managers rarely</i></p>

	<p><i>suggest the "maximum recreation" alternative, so if we want to ensure adequate opportunity you will need to suggest it on behalf of OHV interests.</i></p>
<p>3: GET INVOLVED</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Land Use Planning is a public involvement process, so you must be involved.</u></p> <p>We need to be honest here. No national OHV advocacy group can save your roads and trails for you. The TPA, COHVCO, BRC and other state and national groups can offer much in the way of assistance, but if the local recreation community doesn't get involved, nobody will. It takes time, it takes effort and it can be extremely frustrating at times. However, we are continually amazed at what a few dedicated people can accomplish.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>One of the easiest ways to get involved is to simply get on the land manager's mailing list. The Forest Service and most BLM offices issue a quarterly update of all their planning projects. This is often called the "Schedule of Proposed Actions" (or SOPA). This document lists all projects either ongoing or proposed in your area.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>The president of your club can't be responsible for everything and land use can take a lot of time. Find someone in your club who is interested in land use and make that person your Land Use Director. The Director reads the SOPA and reports to the club on what issues are going on and what actions are needed.</i></p>
<p>4: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER</p>	
<p><u>The more you know about the process, the more you can make it work for you.</u></p> <p>Anti-access groups know the process and have energetic, paid staff to ensure the process works for them. We are relatively new to the game and don't</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>Knowledge is power; therefore, learn everything you can about NEPA and the planning process. Granted, reading about NEPA isn't exactly our preference for bedtime reading, but you need to learn it. Nearly every BLM</i></p>

<p>have paid staff, so we need to work smarter and harder to turn our past losses into future wins.</p>	<p><i>field office and Forest Service district office has a NEPA Specialist. These folks know NEPA and are passionate when talking about it. Find out who your local NEPA staff person is and talk to him/her. They are often the person listed on the scoping letter as "send comments to:" They will help you understand the process. More importantly, they will learn who their "interested public" is and you will have the opportunity to explain your position and help them understand your activity. That's right, they probably don't pursue your form of recreation and don't understand why you do. Knowledge is power. Educate them.</i></p> <p>Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>Stay up on current affairs at all levels – state, federal and local. Assign someone in your group to read the local newspaper and monitor the local TV and radio stations about issues related to OHV activity in your area. Disseminate this info to your members. Again, knowledge is power.</i></p>
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5: PUT IT IN WRITING

<p><u>If it isn't in writing, it didn't happen.</u></p> <p>This is one of the most important things for OHV access advocates, and it's also one that folks too often forget to do. We must face the reality that the good old days of a handshake and a smile are gone.</p>	<p>Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>Agency staffers transfer or retire. Verbal agreements can be forgotten. Agency goals and priorities change. Your input must be reduced to writing no matter how well you know agency personnel or how many meetings you attend. Likewise, any agency agreements, MOUs or commitments must be in writing.</i></p>
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	<p>Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>Whenever a project comes up that you are interested in, start a project file and keep a record of everything related to this project: scoping letter, SOPA, all correspondence, notes from telephone conversations, newspaper articles, notes from public meetings, etc. Do this at the beginning of a project, not when things start going wrong.</i></p>
<p>6: DON'T ASSUME</p>	
<p><u>Don't assume that someone else will look out for your best interests.</u></p> <p>Again, the days of the "good old boy" are gone. You may have a good friend in the local agency office, but that person is still an agency employee who must act and respond to agency policies and priorities. If you don't have a friend in the local office, read and heed this tool tip.</p>	<p>Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>Does your local district ranger, field manager, or recreation specialist know who you are and what your interests are? They won't know what's important to you unless you tell them. It's not that hard - they're real people. Pick up the phone and make an appointment to talk to them. Again, knowledge is power, so educate them.</i></p>
<p>7: ASK FOR HELP</p>	
<p><u>There is often a lack of knowledge and understanding about motorized recreation within the agencies.</u></p> <p>There are a lot of resources available to land managers who lack specific motorized trail based management expertise. Have your local BLM staff person or Forest Service recreation staff contact the TPA, COHVCO or BRC and</p>	<p>Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>Take your local agency personnel out on a field trip so they can learn about you and our sport. It is of the utmost importance that they have fun and have a positive experience. We don't want tired people and we don't want to injure people, so keep it short and keep it easy. A good forum to consider is a mock poker run with a BBQ in the middle for a lunch break. This is easy to set</i></p>

<p>learn about the resources available to help them manage OHV use.</p>	<p><i>up, it's fun, and most agency personnel have no idea what a poker run is. Knowledge is power.</i></p>
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8: SPEAK UP

Attending a meeting is not the same as speaking at a meeting.

No one will know who you are or what your interests are if you just sit with your arms folded across your chest and listen to everyone else. We often hear, "I can wrench my bike, but I can't get up and talk in front of other people. Let someone else do it." Number one, there is no one else. Number two, we are mom and pop representing the grass roots of America. We don't have to be smooth, we don't have to be polished, and we don't have to be eloquent. But we do have to remain calm and be polite and courteous. Most of us can do that, so let's do it. Remember, if we're not at the table, we'll be on the menu.

9: DON'T COUNT ON HISTORICAL USE

Historical use does not guarantee future use.

You can never assume that just because you've always done an activity that you'll always be able to do that activity. We hear it all the time, "That road has been open for 50 years!" It's sad to say, but it doesn't matter. The land managers do not factor that into the equation. Today, each road or trail must "add something" to the transportation system. We can no longer rely on historical use as a reason to keep roads and trails open. Rather, we must tell the land manager "why" it should be open, and what features the road or trail has that makes it an enjoyable recreation experience.

10: EXTERNAL 3 P's: Politics, Politics, Politics

<p>District Rangers, Forest Supervisors,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tool Tip:</p> <p><i>WE MUST ENTER THE POLITICAL ARENA. When the staff at BRC was preparing</i></p>
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Field Managers, and District Managers are the decision makers and they operate in the political arena. Their job is to "serve" the public and to try to make "balanced" decisions, but politics go a long way in determining who is served and what is balanced. Clark Collins, Blue Ribbon Coalition Founder, has a famous story about this when he was told that he wasn't going to win an issue because he was "politically insignificant." At the time, that was true, but that statement drove Clark into action and through the exercise of the 3 P's became politically significant and won. It boils down to our choice: we can whine and snivel, remain insignificant, and lose. Or, we can keep our eyes on the prize, take charge, become significant, and win.

our Member Handbook, Clark Collins, BRC's Founder came into our office and closed the door behind him. (Whenever Clark Collins closes the door behind him, you know something important is about to be said.)

Collins told us:

"The single most important thing to do during a planning process is to establish a close working relationship with the local staff of your elected representatives. Those relationships can influence the process and will help you keep roads and trails open."

Tool Tip:

There's an old saying that politics makes strange bedfellows and it's true. This is a game of politics. We may have philosophical differences that will never be resolved, but NEVER alienate anybody- even the wilderness advocate. You and the equestrian or you and the mountain biker may be working shoulder to shoulder on the next issue. Elected officials at all levels like to see compromise and consensus among competing interests. It makes their job easier and produces more favorable outcomes.

11: INTERNAL 3 P's: Patience, Persistence, Pressure

We don't become politically significant overnight. We don't always win. The land use battles never stop. There can be a high level of frustration, and these planning processes can take years to complete. But again, if we don't have

Tool Tip:

We all have a comfort zone where we feel warm, fuzzy, and safe, but at some point, we have to force ourselves out of that comfort zone and take action. How much are we willing to

**these 3 P's, we're not committed and
we're not in the game.**

*lose? Once it's gone, it's gone forever. Who
else is going to do it? We must start now!*