

November 12th, 2020

Mary McGann, Chair
Grand County Commission
125 East Center Street
Moab, Utah 84532

Dear Commissioner McGann:

The Motorized Trails Committee (MTC) would like to express concern about the direction that Grand County and Moab City are taking in the name of reducing vehicular noise. Grand County established the MTC one year ago in part to have a motorized-recreation voice which the Commission can lean on when facing challenges that emerge. As with the local motorized-recreation groups in previous years, the MTC has not dismissed noise concerns or claimed that voluntary education would be enough to resolve this issue, so it should be clear that we are not trying to shirk or delay action. However we greatly wish to avoid actions that are likely to entrench the issue.

Since it appears that Grand County is following Moab City's lead on this issue, we should note the city received invitations to participate in forming the MTC in the summer of 2019. Over the course of 2020, Moab City and Grand County received offers for the MTC's input on reducing vehicular noise. Instead of taking us up on it, the city and county on October 20th enacted ATV speed limits as well as open-ended moratoriums on new ATV business licenses and ATV event permits. Also on October 20th the Mayor set out to lobby the state legislature to prohibit non-resident ATV use on city and possibly county streets, essentially stripping the street-legality of ATVs that are registered as street-legal. For the purpose of these actions, "ATV" refers to the state's classification of Type I (traditional ATV), Type II (UTV), and Type III (rock crawler). We are concerned that these actions won't reduce vehicular noise, and that they will undermine other measures that would directly reduce noise in a widespread manner.

The MTC agrees with the February 4th letter submitted by Ride with Respect that recommended:

1. Improve education efforts, possibly by requiring a course for adults (like Oregon does) and/or for renters (like Florida does with PWCs),
2. Require the 96 dB standard based on J1287 for all OHVs (in Grand County or statewide), possibly for other types of vehicles as well (using the corresponding stationary sound tests for snowmobiles, on-highway motorcycles, automobiles, and even heavy trucks),
3. Persuade UTV manufacturers to make all models 92 dB or less based on J1287, just as most models already do.

Because the MTC represents enthusiasts of off-highway motorcycle, ATV, UTV, 4WD, and snowmobile recreation, we support requiring sound standards for those vehicle types (based on SAE J1287, J1492, and J2567 respectively). We encourage Grand County to approach enthusiasts of on-highway motorcycle, car, and heavy-truck use before requiring sound standards for those vehicle types (based on SAE J1287, J1492, and J1096 respectively). If the state of Utah is unreceptive to codifying these vehicle-based standards, they could be placed into a county ordinance in addition to the event-based county ordinance that is already in place. The vehicle-based standards easily ensure that vehicles are properly

muffled. If Grand County is also concerned with excessive revving of engines, it could establish yet another event-based ordinance, such as this one from the City of Daytona Beach, Florida:

"Sec. 42-277. - Creation of certain noises upon public right-of-way prohibited.

(a) No person, while occupying any public right-of-way in the city, shall operate any noise-creating device for the purpose of drawing attention to the source of the noise.

(b) The prohibitions of this section shall include, but not be limited to, the following activity or conduct:

(1) Discharging fireworks or any exploding device.

(2) Firing a starter pistol.

(3) Sounding a bell or whistle.

(4) Rapid throttle advance (revving) of an internal combustion engine resulting in increased noise from the engine.

(Ord. No. 02-300, § 1, 6-5-2002; Ord. No. 04-173, § 2, 4-21-2004)"

The MTC agrees with the October 19th letter submitted by Ride with Respect that identifies many drawbacks of the three actions that Grand County and Moab City passed on October 20th. Reducing speed limits specific to street-legal ATVs lacks precedence, increases the exposure time, and decreases traffic flow / productivity / fuel economy. Indefinitely prohibiting permits for ATV events crudely preempts those that are charitable in nature / limited to much-quieter models / outside of residential areas / outside of tourist season, and the prohibition incentivizes event organizers to operate under the radar or adjacent to Grand County. Indefinitely prohibiting new ATV business licenses discourages renting as an alternative to vehicle ownership / tours as an alternative to unguided recreation / competition among businesses to serve customers and the community, and it does nothing to increase the quality of use let alone decrease the quantity of use. Besides, decreasing the quantity of use should only be done after optimizing the quality of use, and after carefully determining the most equitable means of rationing.

Regarding the Mayor's pursuit of legislation to prohibit non-residents from using all three types of street-legal ATVs on city and possibly county streets, we question the feasibility of changing state law for one location, and the extent to which the city or county would have to sacrifice its other interests in order to make a deal with the legislature. If the street-legal ban came to pass, parking lots would overflow and people would be tempted to park along Sand Flats Road, Westwater Road, and Kane Creek Road among others. The BLM is spending roughly \$200,000 to improve the Poison Spider Trail parking lot (not to expand it, just to improve the existing lot). Before pushing legislation, consider whether it's worth the millions of dollars to expand trailheads instead of spending those limited public funds on other infrastructure, not to mention trail maintenance.

Further, when registering a Jeep or other 4WD vehicle as Type III ATVs, the DMV has told owners that they won't be able to switch back and register them as regular cars in future. Even if a prohibition wouldn't affect residents, second homeowners and longtime visitors apparently would be unable to register their Jeeps and other 4WD vehicles as cars even if they reinstall mud flaps and other stock items. In other words, they would have to trailer their Jeeps and other 4WD vehicles (often with diesel trucks that are louder than Jeeps) from their homes to reach anywhere, even if the vehicles were returned to their stock trim. Our point is not to argue that certain equipment (like 44" tires) or certain

vehicles (like UTVs) should be on city streets. That's for the state to decide. Our point is that this lobbying effort, just like the ATV speed limits and moratoriums, has a host of negative side effects and does virtually nothing to actually make the vehicles quieter.

Perhaps the most negative side effect of these recent actions will be the erosion of relationships with potential partners. For the past year, the MTC has generated good will with motorized trail enthusiasts while performing trail work, promoting responsible visitation, and faithfully informing the public as health guidelines rapidly developed this past spring. We have positioned the Moab community to secure state OHV grant funds for trail work, education, and even noise mitigation projects. We seek to unite the Moab community when expressing noise concerns to the state legislature and the OHV industry. The reduced speed limits, event moratorium, new business moratorium, and lobbying for a street-legal ban will divide us and weaken our voice outside the county.

The MTC respectfully asks that you "push the pause button" on these actions in order to give our recommendations a chance. Some of them can be implemented right away and, while others will take longer to achieve in full, they will resolve noise concerns in a lasting manner. Our recommendations would actually make UTVs quieter, and make other vehicle-types quieter, and do so across the whole county (possibly the whole state). Constructive solutions tend to depend on consensus, which tends to depend on suspending any actions that would appear cavalier (however tempting they may be). Please try changing tack so that we can most effectively assist you in serving the common interest.

Sincerely,



Clif Koontz

Motorized Trails Committee Chair



Ride with Respect
395 McGill Avenue
Moab, UT 84532
435-259-8334
501(c)(3)

February 4th, 2020

Mary McGann
Grand County Council
125 E. Center Street
Moab, UT 84532

Dear Mary:

Thank you for requesting a summary of the suggestions I made at our January 24th meeting with other county staff, city staff, local outfitters, and state/national organizations representing off-highway vehicle use (OHV use, which includes off-highway motorcycles, ATVs, side-by-sides, and some 4WD vehicles).

Noise concerns, particularly from side-by-side vehicles (which some people call UTVs and which the state classifies as Type II ATVs), have persisted for over five years. I generally stand by the [opinion piece I wrote in 2016](#). Efforts like the City of Moab's lobbying to remove street-legal side-by-sides from city streets seems like a waste of taxpayer money when the resulting bill (a) is quite unlikely to pass the Utah legislature, (b) alienates side-by-side enthusiasts from being part of the solution, and (c) would do nothing to resolve noise concerns everywhere else in the county.

By the same token, to deny that noise concerns have any merit would be equally fruitless because (a) the concerns clearly extend beyond the traditional adversaries of OHV use, (b) OHV advocates who simply deny noise concerns won't be in position to ensure that the remedies are OHV-friendly, and (c) unresolved noise concerns breed animosity that needlessly threaten trail access and other OHV interests.

Since resolving this issue will take a combination of measures, we should be open to considering new ideas, but we should also recognize when subsequent investigation yields limited potential. Reducing the speed limit hasn't done very much to reduce sound from side-by-sides. Encouraging side-by-side drivers to use alternate routes would be great if non-residential streets existed around Moab, but they generally don't. Granted, marking the primary routes to various trailheads could help to increase efficiency, which is essentially navigational marking rather than the marking of alternate or preferred routes. But again this impact will be limited since most noise concerns do not result merely from lost drivers.

Therefore we suggest focusing on three remedies in the following order. First and foremost, invest in more education by improving the Throttle Down campaign and then going beyond it. Something like the Moab Area Travel Council's "5 Great Tips..." video could be more widely distributed, especially at OHV rental businesses. This could be done on a voluntary basis, or it could follow [Florida's model for renting personal watercraft](#) (aka Wave Runners), in which rental customers must watch a brief video followed by a simple exam that takes a total of less than twenty minutes. In fact, such an operator license could be required of all adults who operate OHVs, whether they rent or own. [Oregon requires all adults to complete a two-hour course](#) before operating OHVs, while most other states including [Utah require only](#)

[youth to complete a course](#), which takes several hours to complete. This multi-hour time commitment may be unrealistic for rental customers, but any educational course should be long enough to cover more topics than noise (such as RWR's motto of "caution ~ consideration ~ conservation" that represents respecting oneself, others, and the land, itself). Mandating adult OHV education would need to involve (a) OHV groups, (b) the OHV Program of Utah State Parks, and ultimately (c) the state legislature. In the meantime, Grand County could do even more than it already has done to reach people voluntarily.

Second, since vehicle sound is not only a function of the operator's behavior but also of the vehicle's equipment, Grand County should utilize the stationary sound-testing procedure that the OHV industry developed so that mufflers could be measured in the field (not just in the laboratory). With this procedure, known as SAE J1287 or the "twenty inch" test, a cap of 96 dB prevents the failing of any stock (unmodified) vehicles as well as those outfitted with aftermarket mufflers that are advertised as being 96 dB or less when measured by J1287. Simply educating OHV operators of the 96 dB standard and offering educational sound testing (which RWR can perform) would help raise awareness of the importance of effective mufflers. The 96 dB standard could become a requirement locally or statewide, as it is in a dozen states including New Mexico, [Colorado](#), Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana. Similar standards could be required for street motorcycles (based on [SAE J2825](#)), automobiles (based on SAE J1492), and even snowmobiles (based on SAE J2567). Grand County should work with the affected user groups before pursuing these requirements but, for the OHV user group specifically, we can assure you that the J1287 test has worked well for nearly forty years. Even merely requesting compliance with the standards of these industry-funded sound tests could help to reduce the outliers, which are the unusually-loud vehicles that are responsible for a lot of the noise concerns.

Third, since throttling down and meeting the 96 dB standard wouldn't be quite enough to completely resolve the noise concerns with side-by-sides, Grand County could request that manufacturers produce their line of side-by-side models to consistently exceed the federal standard for sound. (The federal standard for OHVs is 82 dB from a distance of fifty feet as the vehicle passes by, which requires a laboratory setting for accuracy, hence the stationary sound-testing procedures developed to provide an equivalent standard of 96 dB at twenty inches that can be measured accurately almost anywhere.) The vast majority of side-by-side models already exceed the federal standard (by measuring between 87 and 92 dB via the stationary sound test). Unfortunately a few of the most popular side-by-side models measure between 93 and 96 dB. On top of that, these models have continuously-variable transmissions (CVTs) that require operating at a higher engine speed (i.e. RPM) in order to propel the vehicle forward. Further, some of these models produce a sound quality that is more distracting to the majority of people. In contrast, motorcycles that likewise measure between 93 and 96 dB generally cause fewer noise concerns because their sound quality is less distracting, their transmissions allow riders to shift into a higher gear in order to keep the engine speed down, and their lower weight tends to allow for lower engine speed. (The typical weight of off-highway motorcycles is 200-300 lbs compared to 1,000-2,000 lbs for side-by-sides.)

For these reasons, manufacturers should agree to make all their side-by-side models exceed the federal sound standard by four decibels (or more). [This four-decibel reduction actually refers to a target of 92dB via the stationary sound test, which may translate to less than a four-decibel reduction via the pass-by sound test.] This is entirely possible without significantly compromising the power, weight, or cost. It simply depends on getting all manufacturers—probably through their trade association—to recognize that reducing side-by-side sound by a little bit would help their long-term outlook a lot. In response to

Grand County's request, side-by-side manufacturers are likely to point out that (a) they oppose side-by-side use on streets and other paved surfaces, (b) they paid millions of dollars for SAE to develop stationary sound testing that could ensure the use of effective mufflers, and (c) noise concerns are largely a function of the operator's behavior which warrants education more so than vehicle redesign. Therefore it would be important for Grand County to clarify that (a) noise concerns extend beyond residential neighborhoods to campgrounds / trails / livestock range / wildlife habitat, (b) Grand County will utilize the stationary sound-testing procedure in some fashion, and (c) Grand County will continue investing in the development and distribution of educational materials to promote responsible riding practices (although CVT models leave the operator with less ability to reduce sound). In order to persuade a billion-dollar industry to self-impose a more stringent standard, Grand County would need to demonstrate that it's utilizing the available resources, and that those resources aren't quite enough to resolve the noise issue.

Grand County should also demonstrate that it is working with OHV groups including RwR. Finally we encourage you to engage the new Motorized Trails Committee. If asked, the MTC could develop recommendations, and it could assist with implementation.

Thanks to you and the other Council members for trying to resolve noise concerns while maintaining OHV opportunities as a critical component to the lifestyle and livelihood of our community.

Sincerely,



Clif Koontz
Executive Director



Ride with Respect
395 McGill Avenue
Moab, UT 84532
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October 19th, 2020

Grand County Commission
125 E. Center Street
Moab, UT 84532

Moab City Council
217 E. Center Street
Moab, UT 84532

Dear Commissioners and Council Members:

Thank you for addressing vehicular noise concerns. Since Ride with Respect (RwR) was founded in 2002, we have strongly encouraged operators to use quiet mufflers and to reduce sound upon passing other trail users, campgrounds, etc. That message was part of the first Sovereign Trail kiosks we installed in 2003, and was soon refined to specify mufflers that meet the 96 dB standard based on the J1287 procedure (aka "twenty-inch test"), as you can see below in my op-ed about responsible riding ethics from the Moab Times-Independent in 2006. In other words, we have shared concerns about excessive sound even before ATVs became street-legal, and before UTVs became popular.

Starting in 2016 RwR provided more detailed solutions for the community, culminating in the following three recommendations submitted to the Grand County and Moab City last February:

1. Improve education efforts, possibly by requiring a course for adults (like Oregon does) and/or for renters (like Florida does with PWCs),
2. Require the 96 dB standard based on J1287 for all OHVs (in Grand County or statewide), possibly for other types of vehicles as well (using the corresponding stationary sound tests for snowmobiles, on-highway motorcycles, automobiles, and even heavy trucks),
3. Persuade UTV manufacturers to make all models 92 dB or less based on J1287, just as most models already do.

Note that, while we absolutely encourage trying to get the state of Utah on board with these measures, Grand County can act independently if the state is unreceptive. You can require a brief educational course for renters. You can require the 96 dB standard for based on J1287 for all OHVs (and any other type of vehicle) so long as it merely enforces compliance with existing federal standards. You can approach the UTV manufacturers about reducing the sound produced by a few outlying models. They would take this suggestion more seriously after you take RwR's suggestions about education and sound testing more seriously.

Local Efforts Thus Far

Grand County did take education seriously to the point of producing Throttle Down yard signs, placards, radio PSAs, and of course the video "5 Great Tips for an Awesome Adventure in Moab." However RwR

has said all along that, particularly for UTVs which typically have continuously-variable transmissions (CVTs), the Throttle Down campaign will not fix the problem on its own. In response to the issue of permitting Rally On The Rocks, Grand County and Moab City have started to consider remedies more closely, and I provided both entities more details about event permitting and general sound mitigation from October 5th through the 12th.

On October 12th Mayor Niehaus replied to me that she appreciates RwR's recommendations, but they do not go far enough, and she is looking for serious compromise. I don't mean to complain, but if you want to know the compromises made, let me mention a few of the relationships that RwR risks with its recommendations:

1. OHV organizations statewide, which are key partners for RwR, will worry that adult OHV-education requirements would be coopted and made overly burdensome in order to restrict OHV use,
2. OHV riders, who are members of RwR, will resist vehicle sound requirements if they have installed a loud muffler or failed to maintain their stock one, and
3. OHV manufacturers, which have faithfully supported RwR's trail maintenance projects, will naturally bemoan any expectation that they surpass the federal standards already in place.

I think that compromising RwR's funding sources and professional relationships qualifies as serious. In regard to RwR's set of recommendations not going far enough, they would almost completely resolve noise concerns with OHVs. Granted, they are not overnight solutions. However, if the city or county had started adopting RwR's solutions in 2016, we could've resolved the noise issue by now, so the important part is get started down the right path.

The October 13th Moab City Council meeting included a presentation that provided a good overview of certain options, and the city staff have been quite cordial to me, but the overview of the "noise-metering devices and citations" option was totally inadequate. It failed to distinguish between the fundamental differences of enforcing an event-based ordinance (such as the city's existing one) and a vehicle-based ordinance (which can be tested almost any time in any place). Further it didn't distinguish between pass-by procedures (which are not designed for street enforcement) and stationary procedures (which are designed for street enforcement). The overview implied that enforcing vehicle-based stationary sound-test standards would require setting up a checkpoint (involving court affidavits, tends, and several officers) despite that I had just painstakingly explained to city and county staff why checkpoints are not required.

Also at the October 13th meeting, a council member questioned the feasibility of measuring vehicle sounds at these checkpoints because the J1287 procedure requires "traveling along the road at a certain throttle." Actually the entire point of stationary sound-testing procedures is that they can be conducted while the vehicle is stationary. Further he said that measurements can be taken from any distance and simply compensated. Actually the twenty-inch distance is what prevents ambient sounds from interfering with the test results, and it's important to follow the procedure so that any citation could be defended in court. Finally he said that J1287 is complicated by calling for different "throttle speeds" ranging from redline, half of redline, or still another specified RPM. Actually J1287 always specifies half of redline (i.e. half of the rated engine speed), and the OHV industry updates its list of target RPMs to include new models each year. I had sent a copy of this industry update showing all of the target RPMs to the council member along with other city and county staff, and I would be happy to demonstrate the procedure anytime, as it only takes a minute to perform.

Speed Limits

In addition to looking more closely at RwR's recommendations, I ask you to look more closely at your draft actions. Making an OHV speed limit of 15 mph on all city roads, and one that's 10 mph slower than what's posted on any county Class B roads, is concerning in terms of legality, effectiveness, and side effects. Municipalities in Utah have posted OHV speed limits only on streets that are designated for OHV use, which are streets open to OHVs not registered as street-legal ATVs. The rationale is that the OHVs lack certain equipment such as brake lights and blinkers, so they need to go slower than other vehicles. Since street-legal ATVs have the additional equipment, they may drive the same speed as other vehicles, and municipalities with OHV speed limits have not applied them to street-legal ATVs. For the same reason, municipalities have not posted OHV speed limits on streets that are closed to OHVs, though they are open to street-legal ATVs. While there is precedence for posting OHV speed limits, there is not precedence for applying them to street-legal ATVs, nor to posting them on streets that are closed to OHVs.

Moab has already lowered the speed limit (to all vehicles) on streets in 2017, yet residents on those streets continue to express noise concerns, which is exactly what RwR forewarned in its 2017-02-12 letter to Moab City. Most UTVs produce roughly the same volume at 20 mph as they do at 25 mph or 30 mph. If you strictly enforce a 15 mph speed for UTVs, the volume will be somewhat lower, but the exposure time for any given residence will be significantly longer. At that low a speed, motorists behind the UTVs may be inclined to rev their engines or honk, which is more distracting than UTV sounds.

One side effect is decreased safety as the flow of traffic is disrupted. The concept of a separate OHV speed limit on streets designated for OHV use works because it doesn't generally occur in a congested downtown and because the OHV operators make it easy to pass. In contrast, operators of street-legal OHVs are accustomed to driving like anyone else because their vehicle is equipped to do so. Moab streets generally don't have room to safely pass, but of course some people will still try. Passing will cause conflict between motorists, and those who don't pass will become aggravated by the delay.

A third side effect is decreased productivity as getting stuck behind a street-legal ATV could mean taking twice as long to get up or down the valley. Drivers on the Wasatch Front may laugh at lamenting a ten-minute delay, but they don't expect to drive four hours to see a medical specialist. As a Moab resident, I expect it to take four hours to drive to a specialist, but I also expect it to take four minutes to get across town. When these delays are multiplied by thousands of people each day, the decrease in productivity is significant. Even in a tourist town, efficiency matters, particular when residents are trying to get to work... and most of all when trying to escape after work is done!

A fourth side effect is the roughly 25% increase in fuel consumption that results from driving 15 mph instead of 25 mph according to EPA statistics. Of course this increase will vary depending on the type of vehicle and the rate of acceleration among other factors, but fuel consumption will absolutely increase as speed decreases (since friction from wind and tires is negligible at these lower speeds). The same 2017 city council meeting that introduced lowering the speed limit also resulted in "Establishing Renewable Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goals." One way to reach those goals would be to avoid lowering the speed limit on more streets. (Of course there may be other compelling reasons to lower the speed limit for all vehicles on a given street, such as safety in front of the post office.)

Considering that OHV speed limits posted on all city streets and paved county roads would affect street-legal ATVs and all the vehicles behind them, the two draft ordinances would increase fuel consumption in Spanish Valley on the order of a hundred-thousand gallons each year. Meanwhile noise concerns wouldn't alleviate much more than they did in 2017.

Event Permits

The joint resolution to categorically deny county or city permits for events that involve traditional ATVs, UTVs, or rock crawlers (i.e. 4WD vehicles that are registered as all terrain type III vehicles) is simply too broad of a brush. Grand County officials were clearly irritated by permitting negotiations with Rally On The Rocks, and perhaps those feelings were justified. However there are many kinds of events, for example an ATV ride for disabled veterans, or a UTV ride that's specific to much-quieter models. Events may simply pass through Moab such as going from Kokopelli's Trail to Rimrocker Trail. They may occur in the off-season between November and March. These events would need to avoid the following triggers for a county permit:

1. fees are charged,
2. retail sales are conducted,
3. vendors offer goods or services,
4. races, concerts, dances, exhibitions, lectures or a public assembly, such as a parade, rally or celebration, whether open to the public or not
5. where daily total attendance may exceed one hundred persons, or
6. that have quantifiable impacts to county services or the health, welfare, or safety of citizens.

Why incentivize organizers to avoid county and city permits? Why create a market for shadier organizers to operate under the radar, not to mention staging out of San Juan County but still impacting Grand County? Jeep Safari has proven that hundreds of large vehicles can roll into town without being a net loss for the community. The right event organizers can be important partners for the county and city.

Business Licenses

The joint resolution to categorically deny new business licenses for touring or renting of traditional ATVs, UTVs, or rock crawlers (i.e. 4WD vehicles that are registered as all-terrain type III vehicles) would do little to resolve noise concerns. Obviously it would do nothing to improve private use. If renting becomes less available, people may be more inclined to purchase their own vehicle, store it, and trailer it (all of which is more consumptive than renting on location). Tours offer a way to ensure responsible visitation, and to foster safety for less-experienced trail users. New businesses could open up in San Juan County and send their customers to Grand County. With less competition in Grand County, existing businesses may feel less compelled to satisfy customers or even municipalities. Instead of capping the number of businesses, why not start to ask more of businesses in terms of educating customers and doing their part to reduce excessive sound, then see which businesses rise to the occasion? If the point is to limit the use, RwR recognizes that there is a finite capacity to accommodate all forms of recreation, but we question whether categorically denying new business licenses is the best means. Also, before limiting the amount of use, we suggest improving the quality of use by making it quieter.

Conclusion

The best set of solutions would have a wide reach in terms of location (i.e. everywhere in the county, not just on paved roads) and the type of activity (i.e. all activity, not just special events or commercial use). Yet the best solutions would also be focused on addressing sound directly (i.e. adopting a vehicle-based sound ordinance and working with manufacturers to mellow out the loudest models, not just trying to use speed limits and commercial permits as proxies for sound).

In fact, the drafted joint action and ordinances would do so little to reduce sound that cynics might assume you're just creating congestion to pressure the legislature to let Grand County opt out of street-legal ATVs. However the legislature recently stopped letting Salt Lake County opt out (with the exception of certain types of highway), so I wouldn't bank on that option, especially because the legislature could tell you to try ready-made solutions like passing a new sound ordinance and enforcing the 96 dB standard based on J1287. Most of all, eliminating street-legal ATVs would do nothing to fix noise issues on public lands, not to mention the noise from other kinds of vehicle on the street.

Please understand that I don't mean to criticize any county or city staff, as this has been a very difficult year, particularly for emergency services. I just think that local government as a whole could do more about excessive sound, especially considering the funds generated by OHV tourism. By my calculations, Moab City and Grand County in combination receive about a million dollars each year just from their portions of the 18.25% tax on OHV rentals and 8.75% tax on OHV tours. Of course the tax revenue from other spending by OHV riders is even greater. I have advocated reinvesting some of those funds for trail work, even the promotional side of TRT funds, as a key component of promoting Moab is enhancing the product itself (which is primarily the trail experience). Likewise some of the OHV revenue should go toward resolving noise concerns.

Also note that RwR has loaned copies of the stationary sound-test procedures (for OHVs, on-highway motorcycles, automobiles, heavy trucks, and snowmobiles) to the Moab City Police and Grand County Sheriff offices. For any of these vehicle types, if you pass an ordinance enabling you to enforce the federal sound standards, then you should purchase copies from the SAE (which cost a total of \$390 when RwR purchased them).

Finally I should mention that, upon hearing of the October 20th commission meeting, the Motorized Trails Committee (MTC) discussed noise concerns and agreed to develop input for approval at its November 12th meeting. The MTC has members with decades of experience, and who have credibility among many motorized recreationists, so I hope you'll consider input from the MTC before taking action on this matter. Together we have an opportunity to resolve noise concerns for the benefit of Moab, Grand County, and beyond.

Sincerely,



Clif Koontz
Executive Director

PEOPLE

ations from Iraq ...

would remember me or any-

o let you know that news travels
ewhat slow!

over here in Iraq I got word
ed with my alma mater - GO

send out my congrats on a stel-
at Grand. Hard to believe that
headed kid that ran around the
g and messed around in the HS
same mountain of a young man
ell in all the sports and activities

gratulations to you Zane! And
family at *The Times-Independent*
s and the best of wishes to you

n the desert!

Gibb, Site Operations Manager
wn & Root - LOGCAP III H3 -
Q'West Base Complex -Iraq

llar boondoggle ...

ush's 2007 budget, the adminis-
d its proposal to sell more than
national forests and other public
\$800 million during the next five
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Service list of 2,930 parcels in 34
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Land Management also is work-
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and there are appropriate times
s to sell or trade small tracts of
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g to cover its mismanagement of
et by selling off our public lands.
istration is spending billions of

and giving tax cuts to the rich,
ts suffer here at home. Millions

o health coverage. The victims
without housing. This has the
eing a billion-dollar boondoggle



Times-Independent GUEST EDITORIAL

Walk the Walk (*and Ride the Ride*)

by Clif Koontz

Gripping about trail closures is a popular pastime for motorcyclists, ATVers, rock crawlers, and even some mountain bikers. It seems like legal places to ride always shrink, and never grow. But it would be hypocritical to whine about restrictions if you were just adding fuel to the fire. So I devised a simple checklist to ensure that your land ethic is up to par. This list also serves as a way to evaluate others you encounter. If you affirmatively answer all the following questions, then you can protest with righteousness. Otherwise, you need to shape up. Happy trails!

SAFETY

1. Do I use a well-maintained vehicle and proper riding gear, while bringing along a rain jacket, map, extra food and water, tool kit, and first aid supplies? (*don't forget the TP*)
2. Do I use proper riding technique and stay in control? (*saving the beer for afterwards*)
3. Do I look out for others in my group? (*instead of playing your own episode of Survivor*)

LEGALITY

4. Does my muffler emit less than 96 decibels from 20 inches away? (*and no sparks*)
5. Do I properly register my equipment? (*including the OHV sticker that funds trail work and education programs, not just Johnny Law*)
6. Do I follow all applicable rules from federal, state, and local agencies? (*no trespassing, either*)
7. Do I stay on designated or established trails, where travel is restricted to them? (*not just the "trail" made by the guy in front of you*)
8. To ride off-trail, do I choose areas specifically set aside for unrestricted use? (*not just any place without a closed sign*)

ENVIRONMENT

9. Do I stage in previously-used sites, and practice minimum-impact camping? (*the desert doesn't generate enough wood for personal fires*)
10. Do I stay precisely on trails that are wider than my vehicle, following the most established path? (*four wheels don't fit on singletrack*)
11. Do I park or turn around within the confines of the trail, on slickrock or in active wash bottoms? (*U-turns and singletrack don't mix*)
12. Do I avoid sensitive conditions, such as mountains or clay-based soil when wet? (*wheel spin and hills don't mix*)
13. Do I yield to wildlife and livestock, viewing them only from a distance? (*they don't need help getting exercise*)

SOCIETY

14. Am I respectful to other land users, in the staging area and on the trail? (*they're not impressed by wheelies*)
15. When passing, do I slow down, minimize dust, lower RPMs, say "hello," and give others room? (*without leaving the trail bed, smarty pants*)
16. If encountering a horseman, do I shut off my engine and ask the rider for instructions? (*instead of playing Cowboys & Indians*)

ACTIVISM

17. Do I educate others to "tread lightly"? (*or let them continue to ruin your image*)
18. Do I pitch in with trail maintenance? (*"I pay my taxes" is not enough*)
19. Do I support organizations that promote responsible recreation? (*"they should do something"*)
20. Do I exercise my democratic voice in the management of public lands? (*"dang bureaucrats"*)

Clif Koontz is the program director for *Ride with Respect*, non-profit. Based in Moab, *Ride with Respect* maintains recreational trails and educates visitors.

Simply un-American ...

This is a letter of support and appreciation for Kaaron Jorgen and the Grand County School Board, relative to their opposition to the teaching of religion in the public schools. According to the

No choice but to respond ...

I don't usually respond to letters in *The Times-Independent* attacking our planning commission and county council but the guest editorial from Mike Suarez in last week's paper has left me no