

# Fighting for Access One Trail at a Time

*Colorado's Trail Preservation Alliance*

by Bill Alspach

Formed in Colorado in 2008, the Trails Preservation Alliance (TPA) was the idea of Don Riggle and a small group of like-minded motorcycle enthusiasts who were concerned by the loss of off-road motorcycle riding opportunities, especially single-track, on public lands throughout the western U.S. Faced with rapidly diminishing and disappearing recreational opportunities for single-track motorcycle riding, the TPA was created as a grass roots, not-for-profit (501c3) organization based in Colorado with influences across the West.

The TPA is not a membership group but a focused advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring fair and equitable access for motorized recreation. Primarily a volunteer organization composed of

motorcycle trail riders wanting to preserve access to public lands and motorized trail riding; the TPA often partners with other advocacy groups but the TPA remains the sole regional activist organization for motorcycle trail riders. While the TPA's primary goal has always focused on preserving the sport of motorized single-track trail riding, all forms of OHV recreation are supported by the TPA's efforts. The work of the TPA has been accomplished through working with federal land management agencies, namely the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of

Land Management. The TPA also leads the education of user groups on appropriate trail etiquette, supporting likeminded organizations and assisting Colorado based off-road motorcycle clubs.

Reviewing the past 25 years of USFS and BLM



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travel management decisions, it became apparent to Don Riggle, his fellow TPA founders and the TPA Board of Directors (all unpaid volunteers), that there had been a concerted effort by land managers to reduce or eliminate OHV recreation on public lands. Riggle states "That if one compares the recreational opportunities for OHV use with the significant increase in wilderness area designations, expansion of ski areas, and commercial enterprises on public land, almost every form of leisure time activity has received a reasonable share of access to public lands, with one exception - motorized vehicle recreation."

## WATCHING CLOSELY

The TPA's volunteers along with a few select technical and legal consultants are constantly on the watch for upcoming land use decisions and projects undertaken by both the USFS and BLM, and in some instances State land managers and agencies. The TPA staff often partners with and works with State of Colorado outdoor focused organizations and agencies such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Outdoor Recreation Office, regional recreation COOPs and others. With these partnerships, the TPA advocates for off-road motorcycle use and OHV recreation and takes whatever actions are necessary to help ensure land management agencies allocate a fair and equitable percentage of access to motorcycles and OHV recreation on public lands. To help ensure success of on-the-ground projects that enhance motorcycle and OHV recreation, the TPA occasionally provides funds to purchase tools, signs and matching monies for grants.

In the past 13 years, the TPA has sponsored and assisted with the formation of numerous off-road motorcycle clubs throughout Colorado encouraging and mentoring the clubs to build



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positive relationships with their local land managers. The TPA also assists and helps fund similar advocacy efforts for OHV recreation in Utah through its partnership with Ride with Respect and in New Mexico with NMOHVA. Likewise the TPA routinely partners with the Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition (COHVCO). The TPA and COHVCO recently worked together to produce impact studies documenting the economic contributions of OHV recreation and associated tourism across Colorado, which is widely viewed as the best source for this economic information in the region.

The TPA is funded entirely through donations,







financial contributions and proceeds generated from the Colorado 600. This funding is provided in part by industry supporters that include KTM USA, Rocky Mountain ATV/MC, Klim, Motion Pro, Dunlop Tires, MotoMinded LLC, Billet Racing Projects, DoubleTake Mirrors, Scotts and E-Line along with several generous, anonymous donors that believe in the TPA mission. In addition, to help build the TPA's reserves and ensure adequate operational capital, the TPA's annual Trail Symposium Workshop, the Colorado 600, is the TPA's largest fundraiser. This yearly event is a five-day, off-road motorcycle ride and educational symposium through the mountains of Colorado. Each day, in the morning and evening, riders learn about the challenges facing trail riding enthusiasts and issues surrounding persistent reduction of motorized trails in Colorado and surrounding states. Riders have options to enjoy riding single-track, dual-sport or adventure bike routes or rides. The event often includes speakers from the motorcycle industry, USFS, BLM, clubs and organizations around the country. Proceeds from the event directly support the TPA but they also contribute to positive economic prosperity of the many small communities and counties that host the event.

To maintain communication with TPA's financial contributors and supporters, updates are regularly posted to the TPA website (<http://www.coloradotpa.org/news/>) and sent to subscribers using email. At year's end, the TPA summarizes its activities and achievements



in an annual report to TPA supporters via email and postings to the website. Moving forward the TPA will also be using additional social media avenues to expand its communication efforts.

**The Future:** The TPA recently selected and hired an Executive Director to lead the TPA into 2021 and the future. Chad Hixon brings over 16 years of proven experience in leading organizations and building successful businesses in Colorado. Chad is a skilled off-road motorcyclist and has a proven record as a multiple-use trail advocate. This new leadership position for the TPA will focus on fundraising and ensuring the TPA has sufficient funds to operate long into the future. Additionally, Chad will work to increase the TPA's support of our affiliated motorcycle clubs along with enhancing the TPA's regional recognition through marketing efforts that spotlight TPA activities to protect the sport of motorized trail riding and OHV recreation on public lands.

For more information about Colorado's Trails Preservation Alliance visit: <http://www.coloradotpa.org> or email [info@coloradotpa.org](mailto:info@coloradotpa.org)

