

# ADVOCACY AWARENESS

Moab, Utah is a world class riding destination. Each year, riders come from all over the world to sample Moab's diverse network of fun and challenging trails. There's something here for every appetite from hard enduro to endless miles of adventure bike exploring through a landscape that is staggeringly beautiful. Yet thanks to an organization called the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA), our access to thousands of square miles of public land via roads and trails is being taken away.

To make a long story short, SUWA sued the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for not closing enough motorized routes (roads and trails) in the agency's 2008 Travel Management Plans (TMPs) across the southeast half of the state. Many motorized recreation groups like Moab-based Ride with Respect, the Trails Preservation Alliance, and the BlueRibbon Coalition intervened on behalf of the BLM to defend the original TMPs. In 2017, the BLM settled with SUWA and agreed to redo the TMP for twelve specific areas in southeast Utah. Moab's Labyrinth Rims / Gemini Bridges is the third area to be re-evaluated, meaning that there are nine more areas left.

In Labyrinth Rims, the 2008 TMP closed nearly a thousand miles of existing routes, and the BLM's new decision closes an additional 317 miles, leaving us with less than half of the routes that were on the ground and open 15 years ago.

Closures may already be in effect, but thankfully the fight isn't exactly over. The state of Utah and several motorized recreation groups intend to appeal the BLM decision. They'll also request a stay of the decision which, if granted, would probably leave the 317 miles open for months while the case is reviewed.

If Moab matters to you, and it should, here's what you can do: ride responsibly by staying precisely on the trail and reducing speed when encountering other users to avoid creating negative impacts used to justify closures. Comment on the TMPs for the next nine BLM areas. Many advocacy organizations put out great comment outlines and provide talking points you can use to construct your comments. You can engage here: [Link](#). Support local organizations like Ride with Respect [Link](#), state organizations like The Trails Preservation Alliance [Link](#), and national organizations like the BlueRibbon Coalition [Link](#). Follow these groups so you get updates on Moab and the other access issues.

The scary thing is that SUWA isn't the only organization out there working to vastly expand the amount of wilderness area that prohibits all mechanized travel. All over the country, riding opportunities are under attack – so we all need to get involved to help save our sport.

Editor's note: This is a new feature of Upshift, and as such (and always) we would love feedback on how we can make this content better. The goal here is to spread the word on advocacy-access issues, so if you or your organization has a trail advocacy issue in which we can help spread the word, please reach out.

Information presented herein was obtained from the Trails Preservation Alliance.

By Chad de Alva





