Del Albright
Four-Exploring
DESERT STYLE

Martin Hackworth
Epic Trails:
MOJAVE ROAD

Matt Westrich
Winter 4x4
JAMBOREE
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This is the third of our themed issues of BlueRibbon Magazine – this one 4 wheel-themed. One of the things that we hope to communicate to all of you with by rotating magazine themes between the various modalities we represent is that we think that all of you deserve access to the lands that, as Americans, are part of your birthright. More on that below. We hope that you will continue to consider our magazine a valued feature of membership in Sharetrails/BlueRibbon Coalition. We are not finished growing the magazine either. More details about big things to come in the next issue.

By the time you read this I will have been Executive Director here about a year. What a year it's been! The learning curve, as you might imagine, is steep when it comes to exploring the nuances of running a 50-state land-use organization. Fortunately most others in our line of work have been very helpful.

One of the things that is a source of continuing marvel to me as an outsider in land use advocacy making the transition to insider is the intransigent fragmentation of our community. My standard posture at my desk each morning after reading the email that has accumulated in my inbox overnight is an eyes closed grimace with my head in my hands. That’s because there is hardly a day that goes by when my email is not liberally interspersed with a festival of libelous accusations, call downs, insults and look-at-me chest-thumping. When you’re in the middle it sucks the marrow right out of your bones.

I’ve heard it all. A fair number of snow machine folks evidently don’t much care for either snow bikers or skiers. Quad and side by side riders don’t get along with mountain bikers (and vice versa). Motorcyclists frequently toss shade at Jeepers. As fascinating as it all is to watch from an anthropological perspective, this infighting does none of us a bit of good. We in the motorized/mechanized community really need to learn to put aside our relatively minor differences and stick together in the face of much greater challenges.

Eyes on the prize folks. I assure you that the groups who oppose us dislike all of us with equal vigor. We ought to be much more concerned about that.

The infighting between various motorized/mechanized communities pales in comparison to the internecine conflicts between various organizations within the access community.
When groups who ought to be on the same page are squandering resources arguing with each other, that’s a catastrophe. There’s plenty of that going around too.

When I made the rounds after assuming leadership of Sharetrails/BRC I got an interesting introduction to the world of access advocacy. Though most of the folks I met were positive and helpful, a fair number were not. Many of the latter had no reservation launching into a full-throated criticism of our group (and others) within 30 seconds of making my acquaintance. OK, fair enough. And because I’m curious by nature I hardly ever reject data out of hand (even if the messenger seems to have questionable motives). I extended to all of the naysayers the courtesy of taking their grievances seriously, which is something I have reason to doubt would occur should our positions be reversed.

The good news is that, after nearly a year of introspection, I’ve concluded that within the realm of what’s possible Sharetrails/BRC is doing a pretty good job. Have we made some mistakes? Certainly. Will we continue suffer the occasional misstep? Yes - unless the universe spins off its axis the laws of probability start working in some new way. The world is an imperfect place and to straighten that out you’re going to have to get in line. The standard is not perfection, it’s doing the best that we reasonably can and learning from our mistakes. I’m confident we acquit ourselves well if the latter is the measure. And in that light I’ve eschewed most suggestions that we remake ourselves in an image more pleasing to others. I think that we articulate our core mission, using legal means to defend access, pretty darned well. I’m very happy about our current trajectory. Changes are coming, but they will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

All it takes to make us more successful is to grow, and thanks to you we are doing just that. So you keep the issues coming and I’ll figure out a way to pay for them. Crafting legislation, defending access in court, testifying before governing groups, advising land managers – that’s what we do. Our ability to devote more resources to all of the above is a valid measure of our success.

You may rest assured that many of the groups who oppose us are better organized, better able to put aside petty differences and better resourced than we are. It behooves us then to quit arguing among ourselves and present a more unified and professional front – if, that is, keeping trails open is more important to you than scoring points on some silly ancillary debate.

I personally don’t care who did who wrong way back when. That was then, this is now. Get over it. If you need help, that’s what we’re here for. We need for every club and organization out there in the access world to be humming along on all cylinders. There is no positive outcome for having less of you fighting for access. Divided we fall. So get onboard. Or at least, barring that, please get out of the way.

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6 Ways to Support BRC

1. Join and renew your membership
2. Sign up for alerts and use the info to contact the agency mentioned
3. Contact your representatives, let them know you support trails
4. Thank the National Forests and BLM agencies in your riding area for keeping trails open
5. Contact BRC if you find changes or closures on your favorite trails (see page 4 for contact information)
6. Add BRC as your charity of choice when shopping on Amazon.Com (see promotion on page 21)
AS I WRITE THIS after watching the Super Bowl, I wonder how I can work the Bronco's win into this article. I look at what it took for their team to make it to the Super Bowl and that win. It's a long hard battle all season long to get to this big game. How does this same theme look for Sharetrails.com/BlueRibbon Coalition? We usually join with partners going into a land use battle, make a game plan and then execute it over a very long time in most cases. These fights can take years to win for our members. This game plan can, and usually will, include possible court battles that may make it all the way to the Supreme Court. Our legal team has been successful in front of the Supreme Court as well as lower courts.

There has been a rumble the last few years to take back federal lands from the federal government and return it to the states. I personally know very little of these battles and truly wonder why folks want this to happen. In my eyes, I see this to be a losing battle for OHV recreation once the states have control of OUR public lands. Do the states have the funds to adequately manage the forests? Do they have the expertise to manage the forests and public lands? Do I think we would be able to maintain our access to these public lands if they are returned to the states? In all cases, I think the answer is no to all of these!

Most states are not flush with cash to be able to manage the public lands that would be dumped into their lap. The environmental groups would eat up the states in court and the states would lose the ability to keep our lands open for recreation.

The states usually do not have the expertise to manage the public lands that would be returned to them. As we know at Sharetrails.org, all of our lands are under constant attack for various reasons from different environmental groups. The public lands all have unique actions that are required to keep them open for recreation, and if the states are not able to adequately manage these lands, the environmental groups would force the states to close these lands to recreation.

In my opinion, when groups are working to get OUR public lands returned to the states for them to manage and maintain, this is allowing

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The BlueRibbon Coalition (Sharetrails.Org) would like to express special thanks & appreciation to Rocky Mountain ATV/MC for their EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT.

Supporters like RMATV-MC allow BRC to continue with its vital mission to protect YOUR recreation access!
the environmental groups to lick their chops in the anticipation of this happening, and getting the paperwork ready to file suit against the states for lack of action to protect the forest from US!

ShareTrails.org/BlueRibbon is making plans to have a summer meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, at the Unlimited Off-Road Expo (http://offroadunlimitedexpo.com) in June from the 3rd thru the 5th. We are partnering with Southern Four Wheel Drive Association (http://www.sfwda.org/) and United Four Wheel Drive Association (www.UFWDA.org) to bring a Land Use Summit to the event. We will have a board meeting that will be open to the public, and we will provide information on our web site and Facebook pages as soon as things get firmed up on this. I have also talked to the event organizer, Axel Stammel, and he has let me know that there will also be other OHV associations present, we will work to bring them into the summit also, perhaps even a mini North American Motorized Recreation Council (NAMRC) meeting and public forum.

I have also solidified our partnership with BFGoodrich and our work with them on the Outstanding Trails program. Sharetrails.org will be involved in the sharing of information when BFGoodrich is looking for trail nominations, and we will have someone on the selection committee again this year. There were over 200 trails nominated last year and it was tough to pick the top 4 trails and clubs. I know for me since I don’t know most of the trails that are on the list, I have to look at what the club has done for the trail, and what they plan to do with the award once they win it. I know it will be a tough battle again this year and look forward to Sharetrails.org’s participation in this worthwhile program from BFGoodrich. Until next time...
Monsanto congratulates the Blue Ribbon Coalition for being the force behind the National Recreational Trails Fund Act.

Since enactment, the Trails Fund Act has helped to maintain and make possible the continued sustainable use of thousands of miles of our nation’s recreational trail system.

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IN THE LAST SEVERAL issues we’ve attempted to provide broad insight to recreation law challenges. In this article we’ll take a more practical look at our current workload. Consider it a stylized “legal update.” As always, we are trying to respond to member inquiries, take the initiative on key recreation/access projects, and maximize bang for the legal buck on behalf of BRC members and partners.

Our effort starts with “BRC General” which is covered under a monthly fixed retainer agreement. Basically, anything can happen here, so long as it advances BRC goals and has not been designated a specific litigation project. This can include new lawsuits that we are tracking, like the one filed in late January against the Kaibab National Forest (AZ) travel plan to allow cross-country vehicle access for legally taken big game retrieval, or “retired” lawsuits like our still-ongoing involvement in winter use management in Yellowstone, or the implementation of OSV designations in California National Forests. At the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area we have made recent progress to address procedural shortcomings. We are working with our Utah partners in what may be the “push to the finish line” for the unprecedented Utah Public Lands Initiative spearheaded by Representatives Bishop and Chaffetz. Some of these efforts take months, even years, to pay off, necessitating a knowledgeable, steady approach. On a daily basis we are monitoring and participating in current issues and communications, including media, legislation, agency initiatives, and regional/local projects.

There are several pending litigation matters where the BRC Legal Team plays a meaningful role. Recall that these can include matters where approval has been formally approved under a separate account by the BRC Legal Action Review Committee. BRC might be the lead party and oversee the effort at reduced rates from our legal counsel, or BRC might be a named party and provide contribution to a partner managing the effort. Current cases include:

**UT RMPS (UT)** - this litigation involves challenges to six (6) BLM land use/travel plans. Initially filed in the U.S. District of Columbia in 2008, the case was transferred to the District of Utah, where one Field Office plan (Richfield) has been litigated and is on appeal to the Denver-based Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. Briefing there will occur from March-July 2016. Concurrent proceedings in the district court will next focus on plans in the Vernal and Price Field Offices. These cases have important implications for “minimization,” National Historic Preservation Act, air quality and climate change issues.

**IMPERIAL SAND DUNES (CA)** - BRC worked in the initial stages of this litigation over 15 years ago and the case(s) are still going. We are happy to report the current version is an appeal by Center for Biological Diversity et al. to the Ninth Circuit, meaning THEY don’t like the case that our side (and BLM) WON in the district court. Part of the decision at issue “reopened” areas closed during settlement of the initial lawsuit. The Ninth Circuit recently scheduled oral argument in the case for April 14, 2016, in San Francisco.
GREATER SAGE GROUSE (NV, DC, WY, UT, ID) - BRC is not yet a formal party, but is closely tracking and working with legal counsel for one or more parties in Greater sage grouse lawsuits in the U.S. Districts of Nevada, District of Columbia, Wyoming, Utah and Idaho. The BLM/USFS lawyers have largely defended these cases so far by claiming the plans involved have not resulted and will not immediately result in concrete impacts to daily activities on any federal lands. BRC Legal is evaluating and will take formal action when specific impacts to recreation are sufficiently threatened or recreation interests can be advanced in one or more of these (or additional) cases.

TEN LAKES SUIT (MT) - BRC is participating in a suit led by the Ten Lakes Snowmobile Club and Montanans for Multiple Use, North Lincoln County Chapter, which challenges certain aspects of the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle Forests Revised Forest Plans. The issues raised include Recommended Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and local coordination. A collection of preservationist and Wilderness advocacy groups recently intervened in the case, without objection from us, which we take as a sign of their recognition of at least some concern about our claims. A proposed administrative record has been submitted and the case is in its early stages, with briefing on the merits potentially occurring in the summer of 2016.

No matter how we describe our efforts, we have learned that someone will legitimately wonder “why aren’t you involved in our project in X [location]” or “why aren’t you working on a Y [vehicle/species] project?” We can’t be everywhere for everyone. This is your legal program. If you want to put us to work, we are a phone call or an email away. We get many of our ideas, project leads, and financial support from our grassroots. Don’t just wonder whether BRC can or should be involved – let us know and let’s work together on our best game plan.
FOUR-WHEELING, whether in a Jeep, Toyota, side-by-side or other 4x4, is more than just bouncing around in rocks doing hard core trails. Stacie and I do our share of rocks like the Rubicon Trail and Moab, UT, but we have also found that exploring, or overlanding, or jeep camping, or just 4x4 touring really has some fun side benefits. And yes, we don’t break our rigs nearly as much!

“Four-Exploring” as we call it is taking out your 4x4-equipped rig, even stock, and finding someplace cool to explore, some part of the countryside you’ve not seen before, or visiting a ghost town in the desert. It’s about picture-taking, critter watching, plant identification, cultural heritage learning, and letting your 4x4 take you away from the stress of everyday life.

After the SEMA show this past Fall, we found some new territory to explore down by Needles, CA, right along the Colorado River. We both agree that finding new places to “four-explore” is in our blood and we let our fingers do the walking sometimes (on a map), or just jump at opportunities to see what the USA has to offer.

We found an OHV-friendly RV park/lodge/resort just south of Needles called the Pirate Cove Resort (www.PirateCoveResort.com) and the awesome staff there put our motorhome right on the river in one of their many RV spots. Oh, they also have cabins and trailer rentals for the non-RV folks. Did I mention that this business also happens to be a BRC member and supporter? That’s important to us in our travels.

We convinced Jim Nakashima the Resort Operations Manager to show us around as he’s also an off-roader. Our traveling companions,
Eric and Peggy Schanz followed along in their side-by-side. Jim didn’t waste a minute and before we knew it, we were “four-exploring” to beat the band!

The deserts are full of old mining sites, vintage rusty cans (trash in those days), and even abandoned vehicles and settlers’ property. It’s great to look and take pictures, but generally what you see should be left behind for someone else to see. That is one reason BRC/Sharetrails fights so hard to maintain your access so you (and your relatives who can’t walk very well) can enjoy these treasures of the past.

At one old abandoned mining site not far off the Colorado River, we found a real bonus – what appeared to be an old, hand-dug grave of some unfortunate who probably didn’t die an easy death in those days. The rocks lining his gravesite left little doubt that someone had taken care to “bury him right.” They probably “spoke a few words” over the grave, as we hear said in today’s westerns.

One fun thing to do is just ride desert washes (where trails/roads exist) and enjoy the geology and rock formations that make the southern deserts so unique and interesting. Many times I’ve seen where uplifting, upheaval and other normal volcanic and geologic processes have created unique and beautiful rock patterns that make you put on the brakes and break out the camera.
THE 140-MILE Mojave Road is a popular dirt bike/dual sport/JEEP/UTV ride through Southern California’s Mojave National Preserve. The Mojave Road traverses not only a cross section of desert terrain but of human history as well. Though not a great trip for the summer months it is technically doable year-round (with October through May being optimal). Travel is easy across most of the route and under most conditions and appropriate for all levels of skill. Street legal vehicles, however, are required everywhere within the Mojave Preserve.

The web abounds with information concerning the Mojave Trail and a brief Internet search will yield many useful resources. A GPS map of our route is available here (bit.ly/MojaveMap-042016). The bulk of the information you’ll find on the web is aimed at the Jeep/ATV crowd and we’ve found that most length of time estimates for a Mojave Road excursion (several days) to be overstated. Unless you are traveling in an actual wagon train the trek takes only a single day – especially on a motorcycle. Two at most.

The route described here begins on the shores of the Colorado River near Laughlin, NV and ends 150 miles west near Yermo, CA. The Avi Casino, a few miles south of Laughlin, is a wonderful place to stay the night (and park your rig) before arising very early to begin.

Your Mojave Road journey begins on Old Government Road a few miles west of the Avi. The first 20 or so miles of the route traverses the scenic range of hills west of Laughlin.
along the Nevada-California state line. After crossing into California at the crest of the hills the road heads west toward US 95 and the Piute Valley.

After crossing US 95, Old Government Road ascends gentle slopes on the western side of the valley toward the Piute Mountains. A gated road requires a detour south from the old Mojave Trail at Fort Piute to Cable Road which leads up and over the crest of the Piute Range. On the other side of the pass one encounters the Joshua tree covered Lanfair Valley. It’s a short jog north at the base of the pass to reconnect with Old Government Road and once again west. At times the sand in sections of the Lanfair Valley is quite deep – a harbinger of things to come.

After 20 miles of Joshua trees and sandy expanses one encounters the Ivanpah-Lanfair Road. A short jog to the south and Old Government Road heads again west toward the New York Mountains. Here the trail crisscrosses Cedar Canyon Road (a veritable dirt superhighway) a few times. Just beyond the first crossing those in 4wd vehicles will encounter one of the few stretches of the Mojave road that require much attention. This section is short and fun to navigate.

Just beyond the crest of the New York Mountains the Mojave Road wanders through granite boulders and through some old ranches and wells south of Cedar Canyon Road. Be sure to pay attention to any “Keep Out” signs that you might encounter as some of these dwellings may be contaminated with hantavirus.

Old Government Road eventually merges with Cedar Canyon Road and heads downhill into a broad valley. After a few miles one encounters old broken pavement and shortly thereafter an intersection with Kelso-Cima Road.

This is just one small part of the Mohave Road map, which is quite extensive. For the entire map (as a gpx file, an image or a Google map), visit: bit.ly/MojaveMap-042016

It’s here, 60 miles from the Colorado River that the quality of adventure really begins to pick up. Ahead one encounters a sweeping vista that includes the Kelso Dunes, the Beale and Marl Mountains and Cima Dome. Your
entrée into this spectacular landscape is via 10 miles of sandy whoops leading to Marl Springs and beyond. One of the world’s best Joshua tree forests is off to the north (definitely worth the side trip). Above Marl Springs at the pass near Powerline Road one is greeted with yet another stunning vista of Soda Lake and the Devil’s Playground off to the west.

Not far from the top of the pass one encounters the famous Mojave Road Mailbox. Be sure to stop here and sign the register. The next section of trail, the Willow Wash, includes more deep sand. Here, however, the sand occurs in patches between firm and often rocky terrain that winds through ancient lava flows. You may assume that any bit of rock that you see innocently poking up through the sand is akin to the tip of the iceberg that sank the Titanic and, as an additional feature, is bolted directly and firmly to the center of the earth.

Another 10 miles west you’ll cross KelBaker Road (paved) and a bit further Hidden Valley Road (dirt). After that another 20 miles of sandy expanse leads to one of the most impressive features of the Mojave Road - Soda Lake (formally Lake Tunedae). Soda Lake is a vast seasonal lake south of Baker, CA (during rainy season you’ll have to ride around the lake to avoid getting stuck in the mud). The Mojave Road crosses the southern part of the lake. Be sure to stop and visit the Traveler’s Monument on the right.
side of the road near the center of the lake bed. Please stay on the road while crossing the lake as the rest is off-limits to OHV travel.

The group of buildings north of the trail on the western side of the lake have an interesting history. They were formerly the site of the Zzyzx Mineral Springs and Health Spa and now the Cal State Desert Studies Center. The mineral springs are located at the end of Zzyzx road which follows the western shore of the lake north to 1-15. The name Zzyzx was given to the area in 1944 by Curtis Howe Springer who established the Mineral Springs and Health Spa. Unfortunately the spot he chose was on federal land that he failed to gain permission to use. For 30 years Springer used the springs to produce bottled water and imported animals from around the country to attract visitors to Zzyzx.

Springer squatted on the Zzyzx ranch until 1974 when he was arrested by U.S. Marshals for misuse of the land as well as alleged violations of food and drug laws. Afterward the land was reclaimed by the government and is now the site of the Desert Studies Center.

The trail west from Traveler’s Monument leads to the Rasor OHV area 103 miles from the Colorado River. A short side trip (5 miles) up Rasor Road leads to a gas station (24 hour gas) and convenience store. If one has sufficient time the Rasor dunes area is well worth exploring.

Not far west of the Rasor Dunes one enters historic Afton Canyon following the railroad tracks west. Afton Canyon is a wildly scenic place with some of the most interesting riding of the entire trip and several water crossings. The last few water crossings, just after exiting the canyon itself near Afton Canyon Road, may be quite deep.

If you are on a one day schedule you’ll be following the low rays of the sun out of the Afton Canyon Recreational Area and enter the Mojave River wash in fading daylight. The deepest sand of the entire trek is found here. Twelve miles west of Afton you’ll exit the Mojave Wash into the Manix Wash. The end of the route is a few miles west at Manix where the wash intersects Yermo Road. Manix is a fairly out-of-the-way place (albeit within eyesight of I-15). From Manix, depending upon the exact route taken, it’s about 10 more miles to Yermo which may or may not be mostly dirt. One of the better ways to get to Yermo, if time permits, is to cross beneath I-15 and take a brief trip north to the Calico Mountains then drop into Yermo from the north.
THE WINTER 4X4 JAMBOREE in Hurricane, Utah—put on by the Desert RATS, (Desert Roads And Trails Society)—was an awesome success last season. It’s not too late to start planning to attend next year’s event.

What is the Winter 4X4 Jamboree, you ask? Only one of the most rockin’ events in the west! It is a great time with friends and family. The Desert RATS are a group that was formed in March of 2014 of diverse but like-minded individuals interested in promoting and protecting use of our public lands by all kinds of recreationalists.

The Jamboree is one of the group’s best events of the year. It has trails, dinner, a vendor show, a short and informative presentation on land use and a wonderful raffle! Funds raised at the event go to protecting public lands. This year the event raised over $20,000 that went to the Utah Public Lands Association, the Utah 4-Wheel Drive Association and the BlueRibbon Coalition.

The locale of the event is Hurricane, Utah, which is a great location. The people are friendly and it is still a little-known place to wheel. It’s a quaint little town, where all the shops even help out when you break down.

There are trails all over the area. Rated from a 2 to a 10, you can’t help but find a trail that is right for you, with names like: Arrowhead Canyon, Double Sammy, Fault Line, John’s Trail, Milt’s Mile, Nasty Half, Renegade, The Barracks, The Maze, Toquerville Falls, West Rim Trail, Zen Trail, West Rim Lite Trail, The Voyeur Trail, The Dutchman, Sliplock Gulch, Plan B, Milt’s Mile Lite, Joint Effort, Honeymoon Trail, East Rim Trail, DeKleined and Birthing Cave and Lone...
Pine Arch! The event brings you wonderful scenery, great trails, outstanding food, terrific prizes and the greatest volunteers!

Events like this couldn’t happen without the support of vendors like Dixie 4Wheel Drive, BFGoodrich, Warn, Teraflex, LowRange Off-road and more! Please remember to support companies that believe in keeping Public Lands Public by giving them your custom.

These guys care about your recreation access!

Next year’s event is planned for Friday and Saturday, January 20th and 21st, 2017. You can find out more at Winter4x4Jamboree.com. You can also see a video of the event on “At Your Leisure” and “CrawlZone.TV.” Please remember, Utah’s trails are America’s trails, let’s keep public lands public.
WE ALL HAVE PARTNERSHIPS whether it is in our personal life, our business relationships or our land-use organization management. As the President of Sharetrails.org/BlueRibbon Coalition, I cherish all of the partnerships that we have with members, organizations and businesses. They all have a role in how “YOUR” organization is managed.

Our Individual member partnerships are truly our grassroots folks on the ground who feed us information and issues within their sphere of influence. This is how we find most of the issues that we tackle on a day-to-day basis. This is also the group that generates a lot of the money from donations that we ask for to run the organization. In 2016 we are depending on this partnership to generate a significant percentage of our income, like 30 percent. Our membership gives a lot to this organization, but as you have probably seen, we need every member to recruit one new member. Our Individual member count is just under 5000 members and that is about half of what we had at one time in OUR organization. If you were a member, and left, please let me know why, as I want to try and fix what we did wrong at the board level. You can email me at brtodo@sharetrails.org to let me know.

Organizations are another important partnership that we have within our organization. These are organizations that could be someone like Southern Four Wheel Drive Association (www.sfwda.org) or Cal4Wheel (www.cal4wheel.com) that do land use issues like we do. If you want to know who are our partner organizations, please visit our web page at http://www.sharetrails.org/about/member-organizations. We also have clubs that join at the organization level and they are the biggest category of our organizations within this group. These organizations are the ones that bring us probably the most land-use issues and concerns, as they usually have people working for them that can keep an eye on the land-use landscape in their state or area. They are in touch with the political presence of their area and understand how to approach a specific land-use concern. If your organization is close to California where I live, and would like for me to speak to your organization, drop me a note at the email address above and give me the basics of meeting dates and times.

Our business partners are the ones that really depend on us to get the job done in saving our favorite form of recreation. If we fail, they could close their doors. We as an organization depend on this group to help us raise a bigger portion of our budget with donations for auctions and special projects that we work on to keep lands open for recreation. These are the folks that make the products that we install on our 4x4’s, bikes, ATV’s or SxS’s for recreating with. This is where the members can be vocal and let the business know that they are a member, they use their products and how they use them also. Thank them for supporting Sharetrails.org/BlueRibbon Coalition.
I would try and list some of the business supporters here, but I do not have that much space in this article without having to leave someone out. You can find this list at the web address listed above.

All of our partners have an equal share in OUR organization, and if you don’t like how something is going, or we are not active enough in your area, please let us know. Our board is coast-to-coast and we are trying to get board members to more events across the country to help spread the word. You as a member can do that also by placing YOUR Sharetrails.org/BlueRibbon Coalition decal on your vehicle of choice. When people ask you about what club that is, you can let them know that we are the “National Land Use and Access” organization “Protecting Access for All.”
EIGHTY-FOUR CLUB MEMBERS from the Havasu 4 Wheelers (H4W) and 36 from the Havasu Side by Side Trails Association (HSXSTA) teamed up to conduct a desert clean-up effort Tuesday, January 12, 2016. The groups concentrated on two popular illegal dumping & unregulated shooting areas on the north side of Lake Havasu City. This is an annual effort for the H4W, but this year we were joined in the effort by HSXSTA, a new club formed to serve the expanding ORV population.

These clean-ups are conducted as part of the clubs’ conservation efforts to ‘give back to the desert areas we all use and enjoy’ and the responsible use of our public lands. This is the first time for the Havasu Side by Side club as they recently formed in 2015. This collaborative effort was proclaimed a great success by club Presidents Tom Christiansen and John Geyer.

The clubs also joined forces with the BLM Lake Havasu Field Office and Tread Lightly!, an off road nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship programs.

Mike Yahrmarkt, H4W clean-up coordinator surveyed the area prior and stated, “I knew we had a challenge waiting for us considering the size of the area and the amount of trash scattered all over the terrain.” Jeff Brest, HSXSTA Trails Maintenance Coordinator assisted in the efforts and stated, “We had a great turnout and a successful day.”

The club members set out first thing in the morning collecting trash and various materials
strewn thought the area. Discarded furniture, TVs, appliances and other trash was found either shot to pieces or burned and left to rust. Half a day of work resulted in two 40 cubic yard roll-off trash containers filled with 11,000 pounds of debris.

Mark Corder, another member, stated, “As an off-road enthusiast and sport shooter I am dismayed at what we keep finding. It’s not OK to shoot stuff to pieces and then just leave it in the desert. This gives both activities a black eye and leads to land closures. A few will wreck it for everyone. Please help keep our desert areas clean and open for family OHV and shooting sports.”

We were assisted by employees from the BLM Lake Havasu Field Office and Mohave County. Republic Waste Services provided the trash containers at no cost and About Time Portable Toilets supplied a portable restroom for the day.

The clubs will be continuing their desert conservation efforts in conjunction with the BLM by installing route markers on the area’s numerous off-road trails.

http://havasu4wheelers.org
http://havasusxs.com
MOST OFF ROADING, four wheel drive kind of people figure that when they see dirt flying, rocks being conquered or mud being flung that most likely it’s a guy doing the driving. Big tires, horsepower and lots of metal mashing; that is what some of the ladies that I am going to write about are doing these days or just plain old trail riding. Time to move over guys ‘cause these gals can do this too.

Personally I have been involved with the off road 4 wheel drive scene for almost 20 years now and I have seen the sport grow and become somewhat of an obsession to build our rigs with parts from an ever growing industry of aftermarket products from a wide range of vendors.

I have owned many 4 wheel drive vehicles over the years, including several Jeeps, but my current ‘go to’ trail rig is my beloved Land Cruiser named “Elsie.”

I bought Elsie “bone stock” and quickly took off the running boards and mud flaps and quickly swapped out the stock tires for a set of 33’s and I was on my way. With the addition of a few other modifications—like custom front/rear bumpers, rock sliders and a 2.5 inch lift—I was ready to play with the ‘big boys’ ... well sort of.

When I first started out in the off road world it was typical that pretty much only the guys bought, built and primarily drove their rigs for off road fun. It didn’t take long for the rock crawling/racing event scenes to start popping up all over the country and there were very few women who were involved at that stage of the game but that was going to change soon.

This brings me to one of the first, of many, amazing women that I have met over the years, Charlene Bower of Bower Motorsports. Basically Charlene started off as an event promoter of sorts and now her business has taken off and has grown into a motorsports power house with big name clients, her own clothing line and even an internet talk show called “The Bower Power Hour” which features well known names in the industry as guests on the show talking about the off road lifestyle and

The Butte Fire in Northern CA burned over 72 thousand acres in 2015. After being evacuated for several days, Stacie returned home and decided to volunteer her time and 4x4 to get to people in remote areas who couldn’t get to the relief centers on their own and personally delivered much needed food, water, pet supplies and basic shelter needs.
of course racing.

Next up is a fantastic lady that I recently met out in Pennsylvania at a big Jeep event (go figure), who is the President of Torq-Masters that makes the all new TORQ Lockers here in the USA. Cora is also a long time off road enthusiast and former Aussie Locker sponsored rock crawler who recently raced in the now famous and grueling King Of The Hammers race, which is considered one of the Top Ten most difficult off road races in the world.

Last but not least and only scratching the surface of all the awesome off road 4 wheelin women is Darlene Henke. I have to hand it to this lady, she really made her way to the top by working hard and playing harder and is the Owner/President of Audit Logistics, a company she started about 15 years ago that oversees the renovations of hotels worldwide, she is a busy gal that travels a lot. For fun, she and her husband love to race and go to 4x4 events throughout the country. “We spend most of our money on building our race team and vehicles for D Squared Racing. We’re not looking to be famous or anything like that and sometimes I
wonder why we even do this, and it seems crazy but it’s what we like to do, and we get to do this together.”

I have only covered a very small handful of the amazing women that I know that are rock crawlers, buggy bouncers, welders/fabricators and full on racers. The sport is growing every year and I suspect that more and more women will be among the ranks and joining in on the action so move over guys, here come the gals.

Darlene and Husband Darren doing what they like to do the most together, off road racing on either man made courses as seen here or other races like Best In The Desert.
THE SNOWMOBILE MANUFACTURERS have a unique relationship with their customer base. The relationships and the friendships begin on the trails and in the mountains. The manufacturer employees, beginning with the Chief Executive Officers, Marketing Managers, Accountants, and Production Teams love to snowmobile. Folks involved in the production, the promotion, and distribution of a snowmobile go snowmobiling so they understand the excitement of snowmobiling and the fun it brings to winter. Enthusiasts involved in snowmobiling at any level are active students of the weather and watch for snowy winter forecasts on a continuing basis. We all cheer together when the snow begins and always hope for just a little more.

The manufacturers are financial supporters of snowmobile clubs and associations across North America. They attend many events sponsored and coordinated by club members - their customers. The manufacturers participate in snowmobile shows open to the public along with racing events and more.

To help support the education of the general public and the media, the manufacturers help sponsor and participate in Enlightenment Snowmobile Rides and introductory rides for new customers and the media. Through the manufacturers’ international association, ISMA, they help to sponsor and coordinate military rides recognizing the dedication and service that so many young men and women provide in the US and Canadian Military. The Military personnel and their families are thanked for their service and sacrifice and they also have a great time snowmobiling on some of the amazing trails and riding areas available for all snowmobilers to enjoy.

ISMA, with input from the customer base, created the Safe Riders! You Make Snowmobiling Safe safety campaign. The campaign encourages snowmobilers to make safety a top of mind issue and encourages safe riding behavior. The Safe Riders! campaign provides, free of charge, information that can be used for educational and promotional use.

The manufacturers, through ISMA, are major sponsors of the American Council of Snowmobile Associations and the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations – two national enthusiast associations representing snowmobilers throughout North America. The manufacturers have established a very active Grant program available to all association members of ACSA and CCSO. The program is used to support many activities undertaken by the enthusiasts. The manufacturers and snowmobilers join together in defending their right to snowmobile and enjoy the great outdoors. They also work together on a consistent basis to promote responsible snowmobiling and reasonable input into land use discussions with public land managers.

The unique partnership between the manufacturers and their customer base began more than 50 years ago and was initiated by the common desire to develop a snowmobile trail system and riding areas throughout North America. The years of hard work and partnership have paid off as there are more than 220,000 miles of groomed and marked trails available for snowmobilers to enjoy throughout the snow-belt of North America. The same trails that are used on a daily basis in the winter by snowmobile enthusiasts are also enjoyed by snowmobile industry employees – who like the rest of snowmobilers – enjoy their weekends participating in their favorite winter pastime – snowmobiling.
A FUNNY THING about BRC board members is they wear many hats. I do not know the exact number but most of us run state level organizations. For me, as a BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) board member, it is the Ohio Motorized Trails Association (OMTA). For board member Danny Hale, it is the Vermont All-Terrain Vehicles Sportsman’s Association, Inc. (VASA). I could run a list but I won’t, you get the idea. BlueRibbon Coalition is a true national organization. Just ask the board members like myself that are east of the Mississippi.

This January representatives from OMTA and BRC attended the Muddy Buddys’ expo. The Expo drew over 6000 folks. I am sure most of the folks who came were already into off-pavement recreation. It was fun to open the eyes of those who had no idea. It was an opportunity to enjoy our sport and spread the word. What is the word? Our sport is fun, our sport is responsible. We need everyone to belong. We had lines of folks wanting to know where to wheel and ride. With printed answers for all, the two messages we repeated over and over were first “Join your National and State organizations.” Second join a local club. You will learn where you can ride from belonging to a club and protect your riding by supporting your National and State organization, BlueRibbon Coalition and for Ohio riders OMTA. Our literature gave them their answers about riding and clubs. We hope they follow up for everyone’s benefit.

Muddy Buddys is an active riding club. The pictures, from the show and in the dirt, show they are a club to be part of. When you experience the Bridge run or the Vinton County Run you see what we mean. There were children hand drawing pictures of their parents’ jeeps and how they see them. Kids on their parents’ shoulders and in strollers. When you see this, you know this is a family activity.

When you look at the pictures from the expo and from the club’s ride, understand this is all about families. These are not just any families, these are working families. Off-pavement recreation is about folks who provide, not take. You would not think “government” would punish the recreation of the producers. We all know what it takes to ride and wheel, from the cost of equipment to the cost of insurance. These are costs well before travel, gas and maintenance.
As citizens involved in legal recreation we need to be involved. Motorized recreation should be targeted by travel and tourism as important to rural communities. Why is our recreation vital to remote communities? Folks who live out there in rural communities need stores and fuel as “city” folks do. If there is not enough commerce to pay the bill, facilities close and small communities suffer. Basic services have a cost. Bringing tourism dollars to rural areas is critical. Off-pavement recreation is literally the vehicle to bring in money. Anyone who says they want to be “out in the wild” but who does not understand the base cost, is a liability to the community, not an asset.

We need to show our Representatives that we are the engine that allows remote communities to exist. Without us they do not thrive, they die. Do you write your representatives? Are you an independent? I have come to know of a number of folks who believe that a virtual club is as good as an in-person club. If the virtual club writes letters, pursues issues and makes their Representatives stand up and notice, I would say yes. I have asked “my” reps about these folks. They all say they want input and support, but it is the actual clubs who show up and do things that make a difference. A good example is the Ohio Horseman’s Council. With no permits and no registration, they have the most extensive “government-paid-for” trail system. They have more miles of trails than all the surrounding states combined. How do they do it? They are active. They write letters and they call their elected officials. They are real, not “virtual.”

Check out the pictures from the Muddy Buddys’ show. From the adults, kids and even the OSU Baja team, these are real people doing real things. Things your elected officials cannot ignore. When we go to Columbus, we can point out the “The Ohio State University Baja Team”.

The Ohio State Baja Team designs, builds and races off-road vehicles for intercollegiate competitions. They also get real-life engineering challenges. When you go to your Representatives, you are able to point out real things.

Get out, get involved and brag to your elected Representatives about what you do and what it provides. The world is run by those who show up, be that person. One more thing to remember is the one member challenge. If every member gets one more member, our impact more than doubles. Make a difference for yourself, your sport and your kids.
ONE OF THE THINGS that makes the United States a wonderful place to be is a relatively large amount of public land. Public land is land that is reserved for and owned by all 318.9 million of us – and it makes our country fairly unique in the world. Though some countries do have large marine sanctuaries and some protected dry lands (often associated with national landmarks), large swaths of public land like those encountered in the Western United States (as a percentage of total area) are relatively rare. In the British Isles, most of Europe, much of Asia, the Middle East and in large swaths of Africa public land is almost nonexistent. In Idaho we are fortunate enough to live in the midst of public lands that are not only more expansive than some states east of the Mississippi, but some entire countries.

We’re fortunate to have public land as a plentiful resource. In Europe, until recently, what we’d consider a national park here would have been reserved as a playground for nobility and their friends. Because of the manner in which our country evolved, sans a noble class, we think of public land as a belonging to everyone. The concomitant quality of life is one of the things that makes this country the greatest in the world.

Even paradise, I suppose, has a few harps out of tune. Along that line I am often amazed at the confusion that some feel concerning the weight that their 0.0000003% ownership stake in public land carries. In a moral sense only Native Americans have any sort of proprietary claim to public land. That aside, public land is supposed to be for the public – all of the public. And while I am generally sympathetic with the need to set aside some public land for conservation, biodiversity, historic preservation and other purposes, I do not agree with the onerously restrictive interpretation of public land management increasingly favored by Federal agencies under pressure from environmental groups.

When we start managing public lands in a manner that protects them from the public instead of for the public I’m simply not in. The last time I checked there is not a single endangered species responsible for bearing the costs of maintaining public lands. That falls on us. Increasingly the public is being asked to pay for maintaining lands that they are, at least in my opinion, unreasonably restricted from using – at least if you subscribe to the notion that public lands are a shared resource. My Aunt Margaret has just as much to say about how public land is used as the most ardent environmental purist and she’d not be able or inclined to walk into the heart of a Wilderness area to enjoy her stake in it.

My thinking on all of this has evolved over the years – though not as much as erstwhile friends imagine. I’m still not for the rape, pillage and plunder of wild lands. But it is true that when I was younger I mistakenly conflated the endangerment of species and environmental degradation with public access. But it’s become apparent to me that the most significant problem facing the Desert Tortoise, the Western Sage Grouse and other species in decline isn’t myself or my friends riding mountain bikes, dirt bikes or sleds on public land, it’s a planet with 7.4 billion human beings who build homes, farms, cities and industry, who
consume energy (warming the environment) and create the infrastructure necessary to support the advancement of civilization. If the Virgin River Chub had opposable thumbs and a bilateral brain it would probably be out there doing the same thing.

I’ve said it before but it bears repeating. I am all for reasonable restrictions on travel in public lands because they are a unique resource worthy of responsible stewardship. I think that exactly how we accomplish this is a valid topic for discussion and debate. As far as I’m concerned, hikers, climbers, equestrians, skiers, mountain bikers, dirt bikers, people in jeeps and environmentalists all pay taxes and deserve a seat at the table – something that is usurped by the use of things like The Antiquities Act and the ESA to limit the use of public land without adequate public involvement. If I get to make my argument and I lose, that’s on me. It’s not even having a real shot to make the argument for my rights of access on lands I help pay to maintain that I find objectionable.

A lot of the current deference to some groups over others when it comes to stewardship of public land is not only based on dubious, ideologically-driven research but seems, at least to me, to be rooted in a form of environmental noble entitlement – something that’s supposed to be the antithesis of what we are as a nation. How else does one justify pushing the boundaries of The Antiquities Act of 1906 to confiscate nearly 2 million acres of land in Southern Utah over the strident objections of nearly everyone in the Intermountain West? Are a relatively few individuals thousands of miles away somehow the sole repositories of wisdom on all of this? I personally think not.

I think that the ultimate goal of many anti-access groups may well be to stealthily turn large swaths of the West into gigantic nature preserves where the rest of us are not welcome. Once the public is onto that plan, good luck with it. But in the interim, unless there is a really good reason to the contrary, open areas should be open to as many groups as possible, not as few as possible. It’s not up to you, me or anyone else to decide for everyone else which forms of recreational access are implicitly worthy and which are not. Our public lands are vast and I think that there is room out there for all of us so long as we are not enamored of noble entitlement.
MOTOBATT (www.motobatt.com) makes a line of AGM (Absorbed Glass Mat) batteries for motorcycle, ATV/UTV and personal watercraft applications. Sealed AGM batteries have several advantages over lead acid batteries for these applications including no maintenance, vibration resistance and the ability to mount in a variety of positions.

We obtained a MBTZ75 from our friends at Battery Systems for use in a CRF450X dirt bike. The battery fits in the stock tray and a few twists and turns aside is basically a drop in replacement for OEM (the 4 post design really helps with this). It’s fully charged out of the box and ready to go.

After five months of use we are prepared to state that the QuadFlex is the best battery we’ve used in a dirt bike. The QuadFlex starts the bike right up even after weeks in an unheated shop during an Idaho winter. The QuadFlex has had no trouble dealing with a high-output stator or a rack of LED Lights. The battery has been dunked, crashed, rattled, subjected to extremes of heat and cold - and it just keeps working. Reviews on Amazon reflect my high opinion of this product.

Though not as light as lithium ferrous batteries we’ve used the QuadFlex is far more robust in terms of construction and operation. AGM technology encompasses all of the best features of both lead acid and lithium ferrous batteries - without the drawbacks.

Battery Systems provided me with this battery for review. Street prices vary, but the MBTZ75 is widely available for between $60 and $70. We recommend that you put your 15% Sharetrails/BRC discount at your nearest Battery Systems dealer to good use and obtain one of these.
WHILE WE WERE PICKING UP a couple of MOTOBATT batteries at Battery Systems, our friend and Powersports battery guru Scotty Hardenbrook recommended that we try a NOCO charger/tender for battery maintenance (http://no.co).

The Genius G750 is a .75 amp intelligent charger that designed to work with batteries for most motorcycle and ATV/UTV applications. It detects and diagnoses some common battery faults and will revive fully drained batteries.

The G750 is the smallest unit in a line that goes up to 26 amps (G26000). All have similar features. Street price for the G750 is around $30 which seems to me to be a bargain for what you are getting (the $10 tender at the tool discounter store does not have the same capabilities). Amazon reviews for this product are very high reflecting our positive experience with this product. We recommend that you use your 15% Sharetrails/BRC discount at your nearest Battery Systems dealer and obtain one of these.

TUSK, A HOUSE BRAND of Rocky Mountain ATV/MC (http://www.rockymountainatvmc.com), has a complete line of replacement OEM wheels for most common off-road motorcycles. We have not yet had a chance to evaluate a front wheel, but if the rear wheel we obtained for our CRF450X is any indication the TUSK Impact wheels are the off road value of all time, space and dimension.

Wheel sets come completely assembled and include rims, spokes, bearing and spacers. You’ll need rim strips, wheel locks, tires, brake rotors and a sprocket for the rear. Rims are constructed from stout 7050 T-6 aluminum. Hubs are forged from 6061 T-6 and CNC machined. Spokes are 304 stainless steel. A variety of anodized color schemes are available. The entire look is as trick as it gets.

Tusk products are available exclusively from Rocky Mountain ATV/MC and their dealer network (I purchased mine at a local dealer). Prices for complete wheel sets currently run from around $450 to about $560. I’m really having a difficult time wrapping my mind around how Tusk is able to produce such a quality product for this amount of money. At this price a spare set of wheels isn’t a luxury anymore, it’s a necessity.
PRODUCT: ProLink / Flatlink
MANUFACTURER: Factor55
REVIEWED BY: Del Albright
BRC Ambassador

MANY OFF-PAVEMENT RIGS run winches for recovery operations and other uses, but nothing can lead to disaster as quickly as an “unsafe” winching situation. Whether running wire cable or synthetic rope, hooks and other winch ends can be dangerous, especially when not applied according to manufacturer’s specifications. Last year the folks at Factor55 provided some of their products for me to review in real life, four-wheeling situations, from the Rubicon Trail to Moab, UT.

Winch hooks (traditional) can break, lose their safety clip, or fly off the end of the cable behaving like a projectile. Adding safety to winching is something all off-roaders should consider.

One simple and safe way around issues with any winch line is a Factor55 ProLink or Flatlink (Factor55.com). Up to 5 times stronger than winch hooks with billet precision-machined construction offering a max load rating of 16,000 pounds. These units take the place of the hook and use a D-Ring for added versatility. This makes your winching a “closed system” for extremely safe operation.

I have experienced years ago a friend who had his fingers drawn into a standard winch cable/hook set up. It was a day I hope never to repeat. Factor55 stops this from happening.

PRODUCT: Giant Loop Gas Bag
MANUFACTURER: Giant Loop (GL)
REVIEWED BY: Martin Hackworth
BRC Executive Director

THE LATEST FROM GIANT LOOP (www.giantloopmoto.com), known for an extensive line of off road luggage and accessories for adventure motorcycles and other OHVs, is a 1 gallon (3.8 liter) collapsible fuel transport bladder. Those of you who ride dirt bikes, snow bikes, etc. to the edge of desert tank range (and beyond) will find this little ditty to be the best thing since the invention of sliced whole-wheat bread.

The GL Gas Bag consists of a flexible welded plastic bladder sewn into a ballistic nylon bag festooned with daisy chain anchor points and handles. I’ve used a variety of flexible fuel bladders and found that a gallon capacity to be a great compromise between enough and too much strapped on spare fuel. Each GL Gas Bag is individually tested and made in the USA.

I purchased this bag from Giant Loop to review for the Tour of Idaho community. It’s well-designed, durable (so far) and at $99 a relative bargain. Highly recommend for anyone who needs a flexible storage solution for spare fuel.
I HAVE BEEN GOING OUTDOORS and off-roading since I was a kid with my dad. Back in Michigan, it is called two-tracking, because most of the trails are just that. Many are closed now from land-use decisions over the years, and I am also now into my early 50s. But I remember those days of running through the woods with my dad in whatever he had for a 4x4 then. Sometimes it was an old Scout, a full-size Blazer or something like that. There were a few times that he got stuck and we had to walk out and make a call for help. We did not have lockers, winches or some of the cool recovery gear that we have now. But those were good times for sure and memories that last a lifetime.

Fast forward to today, and I enjoy taking our kids camping and off-roading to some of our favorite areas. We have a pretty setup Jeep and excellent recovery gear to go along with it. We have never had to use it though, as maybe I am too conservative with the kids in the Jeep. They are older than when I was off-roading with my dad also. I want them to enjoy the outdoors and the things that their freedoms as Americans brings them.

As we saw earlier this year, the President used his pen to designate 3 new monuments totaling close to 1.8 million acres of land. Local stakeholders had been working on legislation for the designation of these monuments. In the end though, our elected representative thought the process through Congress was not moving fast enough, and she chose to have the President go around the proper method of designating monuments. We will not know if we lost anything from what the local stakeholders had agreed to until we can read the designation language.

There is a process for creating monuments and other protected areas. I just wish that the President and our elected officials would let that process progress as it needs to. That way, all the represented stakeholders are involved, have their say and everyone is happy.

How does this relate to taking my family off-roading though, you ask? We won’t know what we can and can’t do on this land until the monument process is all done. We may not be able to camp, off-road or go work a mining claim once the final Record of Decision is signed.

This is where it benefits all stakeholders to be engaged in the process now once the current land managers get the designation language so they can start working on the process. This will require an EIS, DEIS, possibly following the NEPA process, alternatives leading up to the final decision process. Users and the local groups impacted by this designation will remain engaged in the process to ensure their members are kept informed.

This is where it is important to be a member of the user groups, Sharetrails.org, Cal4Wheel, Rockhounds, ATV/AMA groups and such, as they will have people at these meetings and discussions. Sharetrails has Don Amador as our Western Representative and John Stewart is the Cal4Wheel Southern Natural Resources Consultant. John is also on the Sharetrails.org board and between them, they will be our members’ voice in the process.
Being informed and engaged in the process ensures that your voice is heard. This process will seem like it takes forever to complete and people will get tired of attending some of these meetings. Being engaged, though, lets the agency know you care about the land, respect the land and want it managed correctly for all users in the future. This collaborative effort will also show the land managers that we care about the land and responsible recreation across this and all lands in their inventory.

Sharetrails.org will be engaged in this process for our members, but we are just one organization of many that have members that use the desert that has been designated. Please take the time to be engaged, read what the organizations publish about the process and if letters and other information are needed, be ready to provide it.

FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS I have felt it necessary to make regular trips to Washington DC to promote snowmobile enthusiasts’ access to public lands. These trips, initially prompted by the Clinton Administration’s proposed ban on snowmobiles in all National Parks, have given me a healthy perspective on the challenges facing those who petition Congress on behalf of “special interests.”

For motorized recreationists, the media’s assignment of a negative image to our “special interest” of maintaining public access to public lands complicates our mission. Specifically, Members of Congress from areas outside the snowbelt have been led to believe that our use of public lands is a net detriment to those lands. To counter this, most of my time in Washington DC is spent undertaking non-partisan educational outreach to Senators and Members of Congress from states where it rarely, if ever, snows. Because every vote counts, every newly elected Congressman or Senator receives a full briefing on our issues. From the most conservative district in Texas to the most liberal in California, Members and staff in each office are educated on the tremendous improvement in environmental performance from our sleds and the significant economic benefits generated by enthusiasts using a trail system painstakingly built and maintained by the dedicated volunteers who form the heart of every local snowmobile club.

As important as it is for me to educate the Members, it is even more important that you effectively engage your own Member of Congress or Senator to ensure that they are an advocate for your interests. While that may sound as attractive as a root canal to many of you, it is important that you use your constitutional right to petition your elected officials. To assist you in this effort, following are suggestions on how to be effective when interacting with offices.

1. **Research Your Topic Before Requesting a Meeting**

Prior to making a call, develop a thorough understanding of the issue you wish to raise and
the Member’s position (if any) on that issue. On emerging issues, your chances of securing a favorable outcome are enhanced if you contact the office before the Member has formed a policy position. If it is a settled issue, understand that Members rarely change a prior position.

2. Be Realistic in Your Expectations
A demand that Congress balance the budget in 2016 is unrealistic. Requesting a Member to embrace the tough policy choices required to generate a balanced budget by 2025 is realistic. And so it is with our issues: demand unfettered access to wilderness areas is unrealistic, while requesting reasonable access to non-wilderness areas is realistic.

3. Be Concise, Polite, and Positive in Your Discussion
There are slightly less than 800,000 constituents in each Congressional District. While 30 minutes of face time with your Congressman/staff does not seem like much to ask after an arduous trip to DC (or his/her district office,) if each constituent demanded 30 minutes of time with their member they would have a hard time doing the job we elected them for (whatever that is these days!) So:

• Craft a 5 or 10 minute script for your meeting and leave some time for dialogue with the person you are meeting with.
• Do not become agitated if the Member is neutral or disagrees with your position, as it never leads to positive outcomes. Offending a Member or staffer could change their attitude from a neutral opponent to a dedicated opponent.
• Seek out areas where a positive discussion is possible, and then ease into areas of potential disagreement. Keep your radar up and if the feedback is negative, pull back and find something else positive to discuss.

4. Be Patient – Don’t Expect Overnight Results or Miracles
Most Members – even the Speaker of the House – are very limited in what they can do. A determined opponent can be a formidable obstacle to the change you are seeking, so give Members a chance to advance your proposal. Call the office from time to time to make sure that the Member is up to speed on the latest developments on your issue. Offer to engage allies in other states to help generate support from other Members of Congress. And, make sure that your friends and neighbors are made aware of the effort being put forth by your Member of Congress.

5. Invite Them to a Community Event
During the 100 or so annual office visits in Washington I am amazed at the large number of people who are completely unaware of the work put forth by the local clubs to make snowmobiling such a wonderful recreational and economic activity. There is nothing like first-hand experience with a knowledgeable guide to open the eyes of policy makers to the importance of snowmobiling. Seeing truly is believing, so invite your Member of Congress for a ride with your club. The Congressional gift ban prevents them from accepting anything of value, so keep the trip simple and maximize the face time the Member has with the local club and businesses. Invite a staff member as well. They may have the time available and will pass on the good word.

6. Thank Them for Making Time for You
Never underestimate the power of a “Thank You.” A kind word of thanks will pay dividends for you and your fellow club members.

Best of Luck with your communication effort!
I DON’T WANT YOU TO FROWN at the title of this article and think that I am going to suggest you recycle your toilet paper or any other extremist radical-enviro malarkey, because that’s not the case. What I do suggest is that we all love four-wheeling and going the places we go, seeing the things we see. But we don’t enjoy seeing a pile of trash left behind or some idiot getting off trail and tearing up the countryside. “Green” wheeling is actually an acronym as well as a concept that helps solve these problems.

Admittedly, I have some “green” concepts that make full sense to me and what I leave behind for younger folks, such as 1) conserving and using our resources wisely; 2) keeping our outdoors clean; 3) cutting back on waste a bit; 4) using common sense to reduce air and water pollution; 5) making America more energy self-sufficient; and 6) curtailing illegal and outlaw behavior on public lands and water ways.

So when it comes to four-wheeling, here’s my suggestion for “GREEN.”

G = Get serious about land use.
R = Read the riot act to outlaws. (or Read from the Good Book?)
E = Educate yourself and others.
E = Eradicate trail trash.
N = Never be the drip.

Getting serious about land use means three things: JOIN, DONATE and VOLUNTEER. Join everything you can afford to join, including
national, regional, state and local clubs/associations that uphold what you believe in. Donate (beyond membership) at tax return time or when you have some extra cash. And volunteer your time and energy at least a few times a year to those causes/groups doing what you know makes a difference.

Read the riot act to outlaws means not letting someone tear up your recreational opportunities and trails. Ask them to stop; show them the error of their ways; or just report them (with pictures) to the nearest law enforcement authority. If there is a trail patrol or trail watch program, be a part of that. STOP the outlaws, AND the ill-informed from ruining our future.

Educate yourself and others on good trail behavior such as the BlueRibbon Coalition Recreation Code of Ethics and Tread Lightly principles. Carry handouts and freely offer ideas to others on how we can keep our trails open by “doing it right.”

Eradicate trail trash is just that – carry a trash bag and pack out more than you brought in. Set the example for others and stop and pick up that can alongside the trail when so many others may have driven by it. Proudly display your trash bag and fill it up as often as you can! Clean up messy left-behind camp fire rings, even those you did not create.

Never be the drip and set the example for having a rig that does not leave a fluid trail or sit and drip in camp. Maintain and fix your 4x4 so it doesn’t pollute the trail. Fix your muffler; tighten up hoses; replace seals; and stop any fluid leaks on the trail.

If we all practice this idea of Green Wheeling, our trails will be in better shape than ever, our image will improve immensely with those who watch us (or even don’t like us), and our future will be brighter.

BLUERIBBON COALITION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME_______________________________________
ADDRESS_______________________________________ CITY______ STATE______ ZIP______
EMAIL_____________________@____________ PHONE_____________________

Check One: ☐ Renewal? ☐ New Membership?

☐ Individual Membership — One year ($30)
☐ Lifetime Individual Membership ($500)
☐ Additional Donation of $_____________

☐ Basic Business/Organizational Membership — One Year ($100)
☐ Premium Business/Organizational Membership — One Year ($250)

Check One: ☐ Check Enclosed* Credit/Debit Card...

*Make check payable to: The BlueRibbon Coalition

METHOD OF PAYMENT

Send your application with payment to: The BlueRibbon Coalition • 4555 Burley Drive, Suite A • Pocatello, ID • 83202-1945

For faster processing, visit us online at: www.sharetrails.org/join

or call 1-208-237-1008
WINTER OR SUMMER
We Support Motorized Access to Public Lands.