Martin Hackworth
Epic Trails: WHITE CLOUDS

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THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION

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THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
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Negotiating the Rubicon Trail with “razor sharp performance” is a regular occurrence for a UTV like the Polaris RZR.

Photo Credit: Jon Crowley, UTVGuide.net

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I’VE BEEN MAKING rounds the past few months to encourage OHV enthusiasts to join as many organizations as they possibly can. It’s a simple matter of survival. Though we have a seat at the Public Lands table, our numbers are orders of magnitude less than preservationists groups.

The more organizations we join and support the more our numbers speak.

Everyone who supports fair and equitable access to Public Lands should, at the minimum, be a member of their local club, a statewide organization and a national organization like ours. Joining organizations that stand for access should not be an either or proposition. If you want to make a real difference – join. In most cases you can join your local club, your state organization and a national organization for about the cost of a tank of gas for the truck you use to haul around your toys. And the money you spend with these organizations is money well-spent.

Let’s talk for a moment about membership in Sharetrails/BRC. I joined the team here at Sharetrails/BRC in April 2015. Getting our membership numbers up has been one of my highest priorities during that time. The graph on this page (top right) represents our membership trend from 1/15 through 9/16.

As you can see, the trend is in a good direction - up. The quarterly membership average (brown line) is the best predictor of growth. We are moving in the right direction but this is still not enough. At the moment we are too dependent on special events and promotions to increase membership. While anyway that we can get a member is good, and while we really appreciate everyone who works with us on...
special events and promotions, we are not as successful at retaining members from these events after their membership expires at the end of a year. We retain nearly all of our core members from year to year (our average member retention is greater than 82%) but experience more difficulty retaining members who came to us through promotional events. The shape of the brown curve is influenced by membership non-renewals from previous year events, hence the peaks and troughs.

So the less than great news is that we are not where we need to be. The better news, however, is that we are absolutely bucking the trend among most non-profits who’ve generally seen membership plummet in the last decade. That is a credit to all of you and the strength of Sharetrails/BRC. We crossed the 6000 member threshold for the first time in many years recently. If we can sustain the present rates of growth (roughly 20%) we’ll top the 10k mark before the end of the decade. But I’d really like to do that a lot sooner and it would behoove us all to make it happen.

I know that I sound like a broken record because I say this in almost every issue of Sharetrails Magazine but we really do need for everyone to help recruit new members. If nothing else just bring one. If you are a member of a Sharetrails/BRC member club or organization please encourage everyone in your club or organization to become an individual member of Sharetrails/BRC. The Mile High Jeep Club, this month’s club spotlight, did just that and it was a huge boost for us and a win for access. Also please consider joining a statewide organization like COHVCO (Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition) this month’s organizational spotlight). These organizations need your support as much as we do.

By way of illustration, the entire access community recently achieved a tremendous victory in Southern California when the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals rejected appeals from the Center for Biological Diversity and upheld the BLM’s Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (Glamis) management plan – restoring areas lost to OHV access for over a decade. This ruling helps all of us, no matter where we live and ride, because of the precedent that it sets. This was a joint effort on behalf of about a dozen groups that took years to shepherd through the legal system. If you are a member of any of those groups your support and patience helped make our OHV world a better place for everyone.

Now think of what we could accomplish if everyone decided to get involved instead of spectating from the sidelines.

So please - join, join and join! If you’d like to see more victories like Glamis we need more healthy and robust OHV organizations. Together, and with your support, it’s proven that we can make a difference.

Just a little side note, if you have not been to our new website sharetrails.org, you should check it out. While you are looking around, keep your eyes open for any Easter eggs (you could win a free t-shirt if you find one).
As I sit and write this, I am wondering where the year went. It has been a good year for Sharetrails as I look at what we have done. KLIM and Sharetrails.Org/BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) completed the CowTag event in June, and it was a great success. We have our attorney involved in many legal cases and Land Use and Access issues again. We are seeing your generous donations come into the organization to keep the fight on for access. I thank you for being such great contributors to Sharetrails and the work we do.

How do we get people involved in advocacy in this information superhighway that we have today? It was not that long ago that we did not have internet, cell phones and all this high tech stuff we do today. Today we have Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and probably a few others that I am not using myself. At Sharetrails we use those to get information out to our members, and we have also returned to producing a magazine again. Is the magazine not a return to the old rock and chisel though? We do have members that are not attached to the internet, smart phones, Facebook and all of the other social networking stuff that a good percentage of us use on a daily basis. For those that are very connected and don’t want to read a paper magazine, you can download our magazine in a digital format. The cool thing there is our advertisers in the magazine have hyperlinks to their business. I do read the paper magazine and then download the electronic version to my iPad to share with folks when we meet them out on the trail.

Being so well connected these days, it is easy to get information out to members that are connected when we hear about an issue around the nation. The alerts can go out...
electronically and to all of our social media outlets quickly. We have seen some good responses on many of the alerts on our Facebook page, while others don’t get much traffic. How can you help? Make sure you follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and share the information that we post. When you share it, your friends who have not liked our pages yet, will go do that. Then they can share our information and you can see how quickly this can all snowball into helping get our Advocacy in the Information Age word out.

We are in the process of planning for our fall board and membership meetings the weekend prior to the start of the SEMA show and the NAMRC meeting. Please come to Las Vegas early and come visit with the board during the meeting.

My wife Larisa and I just finished a trip to Pocatello for a meeting with the board, staff and contractors. It was very productive and helped set up the path forward for the rest of the year and into next year. From there we ran down to Ely, Nevada, to see my parents for a few days and get in some four-wheeling with them and their club. Had a blast hanging out with them, but it is good to be home. We logged just under 2100 miles on our truck and trailer and about 700 miles on the Jeep. It was a good trip, and we met lots of great people along the way.

There is a group trying to get another monument in Utah for the Bear Ears area. We have people engaged in this process and will keep everyone informed on what you can do to help.
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This issue of the magazine is dedicated to “advocacy in the information age.” As always, we have our unique perspective on this topic here in the Legal Program. An appropriate subtitle might be “the good, the bad, and the ugly.”

Let’s start with the good. As in many aspects of our life, advancing technology has improved our ability and efficiency at formal advocacy. Most readers know we do not have trials on public lands issues, but instead submit the “administrative record” for review by the court. The court generally defers to the agency on questions of fact, and one challenging agency action must show some technical legal violation or a factual position that cannot be rationally squared against the administrative record. This record for your typical travel plan contains tens of thousands of page views. Back in the day, someone retrieved physical documents from an immense storage facility, copied them, and organized them, all by hand. A record that previously weighed hundreds of pounds in dozens of banker’s boxes is now contained on a single external hard drive, in digital, searchable and sortable formats. Starting in about 2003 we transitioned to electronic filing in the federal court system. We no longer maintain hard copies of documents on pleading boards, as we can easily monitor or mirror pdf dockets maintained by the court system. These advances improve the quality and accessibility of information, and save time and money.

However, there can be a bad side to this abundance of readily available information. Information without comprehension can be worse than blissful ignorance. There remains a market for skilled lawyers and other professional advocates because they know how to find and sculpt the relevant details in a minefield of information. Too many people equate availability and portability of information with quality of insight or analysis. Particularly on complex topics like legal issues, the quickest word may not necessarily be the best word.

From the bad can sometimes come the ugly. The author admittedly mixes use of state of the art technology with a Luddite caution of social media bordering on paranoia. That is fancy way of saying I’m not on Facebook, not even LinkedIn. Knee-jerk tweets or in-the-moment wall posts can be misleading, even dangerous. They have instantly transformed
decorated four-star generals into criminal defendants. The social media world is designed to burn hot and fast in real-time. The focus can sometimes emphasize less than ideal human tendencies or provoke efforts to scoop and one-up colleagues or competitors. These trends can often be counterproductive to the recreation community’s collective advocacy efforts. We try to provide timely and meaningful updates, but we ask for your patience. We do not intend to emphasize immediacy over quality in some ever-intensifying thirst for “breaking news.”

At BRC Legal we will be among the first to applaud the ways technology has enhanced our advocacy effort. Yet we ask that you reflect on the use of technology in public lands advocacy, particularly when something seems too easy, too cheap, or too good/bad to be true. While a lot changes with time, the fact remains that important questions usually require consultation with skilled professionals, and the willingness to accept some answer beyond the one gleaned from a ten minute stroll through the search engines.

Your support of Sharetrails.Org/BRC’s Legal Fund is invaluable. These days, all too many of our opponents would rather eliminate your recreational areas in court. Sharetrails.Org/BRC, along with its allies and member organizations, is all that stands in their way...

To make your donation right now, visit: bit.ly/sharetrails-legal or call 208-237-1008 ext.”0”

You can also send contributions by mail to: Sharetrails.Org/BRC; 4555 Burley Drive, Suite A; Pocatello, ID 83202 (be sure to note on your check that this donation is for the Legal Fund).

DONATE TODAY and help us protect your recreational access!

All donations to the Sharetrails.Org/BRC Legal Fund are tax-deductable.
THE WHITE CLOUD MOUNTAINS are gems of the Central Idaho backcountry. This compact range, located east of Stanley and south of Clayton, has a lot to offer to a wide variety of backcountry users including hikers, skiers, mountain bikers, motorcyclists, ATV riders, snowmachine enthusiasts, Jeepers and equestrians. This area, once in danger of being lost to OHV interests as Wilderness, is now part of the Sawtooth National Recreational Area with minimal impacts on most existing OHV use. It’s a bucket list type of place to visit.

One of the best ways to experience the best of this area is by traversing it from south to north via Grand Prize Gulch, Little Boulder Creek, Big Boulder Creek, Railroad Ridge and French Creek. This 50-mile route, which consists of single track trail, Jeep trail and roads, crests two of the highest passes in the state of Idaho which are legal for mechanized travel. Not all of this route is legal for all modalities (only motorcyclists, equestrians, mountain bikers and pedestrians may traverse the entire route as described). But, at least in bits and pieces, there is something there for nearly everyone.

Your journey begins just north of ID-75 west of Galena Summit where a variety of dirt roads and ATV trails head northeast from the highway toward Pole Creek. About eight miles from ID-75 these trails begin to converge as Pole Canyon narrows. The best route forward takes trail 259 to trail 112, the Grand Prize Gulch trail, which is single track. Take this east and southeast about 12 miles to the Bowery trailhead on the East Fork of the Salmon.

From Bowery trailhead travel north along East Fork Road some half-dozen miles to the Little Boulder Creek trailhead on the left. This is a single track trail that, when ridden from south to north on a dirt bike or mountain bike, is 15 miles of intermediate difficulty coupled with spectacular views. The iconic photo that is part of the new Sharetrails.org logo of Castle and Merriman Peaks was taken on this trail. One of the highlights of this section is cresting the 9500' pass between the Little and Big Boulder Creek watersheds with its magnificent view of the White Clouds. The descent along Big Boulder Creek ends...
at Livingston Mine (7200’).

Next on your tour of the White Clouds is a spectacular three thousand foot jeep road climb to Railroad Ridge (10,440’) - one of the two highest spots in the state of Idaho accessible by motorized vehicle. Though frequently swept by storms during the summer months, Railroad Ridge is a wonderful place to loiter for a few hours, when conditions permit, amidst breathtaking views in all directions.

The final portion of your journey is the 11-mile descent from Alpine vistas down French Creek. Part jeep trail and part single track, this trail encompasses some of the more breathtaking vistas in Idaho. French Creek is of only moderate difficulty when ridden from south to north. Be very careful near the end of the trail just south of Hwy. 75. Do not ignore the “No Trespassing sign” and cross the narrow strip of private land between you and the road. Stay on the trail as it bears left and skirts private property.

This route is open most years by Mid-July and stays open into October. Along the way I have encountered a variety of large wildlife including bear, moose, elk and wolves. Stay alert.

This entire route lies at relatively high elevation in a very remote region of the state. Cell phones will not work anywhere in this region. Though parts of the route (Big and Little Boulder Creeks, Railroad Ridge) are reasonably well-traveled (at least on weekends), you are not likely to encounter anyone most of
The entire area is subject to rapid and extreme changes in weather - for which you must be prepared. Do not venture up onto Railroad Ridge in any open vehicle when electrical storms are present.

"I can be here because you stood up for access. Thanks - from myself and my friends."

— JR
The trap could have decapitated an unsuspecting mountain biker or runner.

A piece of barbed wire was suspended about four feet off the ground, and it stretched across a downhill section of a road that was popular with motorcyclists, OHV users and mountain bikers in Custer County, Idaho.

"Somebody had to have hung that wire up," said Martin Hackworth, who was shocked when he saw the trap. "There was no other reason for it to be there. It was designed to hurt somebody."

Luckily, the sinister trap was taken down before anybody was hurt. But officials across the western and northeastern states have been advising trail enthusiasts, such as mountain bikers, hikers and campers, to be on the lookout for a variety of dangerous threats, ranging from booby traps to assassins.

Last month, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation issued a warning because wire cables were found stretching across trails in four state forests. According to a spokesman with the agency, the intent of these cables was to cause harm to bikers and hikers.

At around the same time in Colorado, mountain bikers found multiple concrete blocks with 3-inch nails mounted in them along the Little Scraggy Trail south of Denver. The blocks were buried along a one-mile stretch of the trail, with the nails poking through the dirt. The protruding nails reportedly caused numerous flat bike tires.
But it’s not just booby traps that have been threatening trail users. Authorities in Arizona’s Pinal County have recently cautioned outdoor enthusiasts to be on the lookout for bands of Mexican drug assassins called sicarios. These assassins are looking for gangs that steal drugs and money from smugglers transporting narcotics across the U.S.-Mexican border.

According to an article in Adventure-Journal.com, Paul Babeau, the county sheriff, even said that campers and hikers traveling to the county’s southwestern portion, where the sicarios are located, should be armed.

Despite these problems in other states, there have not been any trail warnings issued in Idaho. Hackworth serves as the executive director of Sharetrails.org, a 50-state organization that seeks to promote multi-use trail access. He said booby traps are actually a rare occurrence in the Gem State.

In his 50-plus years using trails, Hackworth has seen two booby traps, including the barbed wire line in Custer County. However, he said most of the trails he accesses are very isolated.

“One of the reasons we don’t have these problems like other areas is because of Idaho’s low population density,” he said. “You don’t see thousands of people on the trails like you would in more populated areas, so there’s less conflict.”

Deb Tiller, recreation and trails supervisor with the U.S. Forest Service, said she can only remember one case in Southeast Idaho where her agency found a potentially dangerous trail booby trap. Like the case in Colorado, somebody had installed tire-flattening spikes along a trail.

“Luckily, officials found and removed them before they caused any damage.

“It’s not prevalent,” she said. “We don’t know what else the motivation was except to rip a bike tire.”

However, like the barbed wire in Custer County proves, booby traps can be found on the trails from time-to-time, and the results can be extremely dangerous.

Hackworth knows this from his own experience. Years ago, he was running on a trail when he tripped on a wire deliberately placed there by somebody looking to cause misery.

“It tore up the left side of my face,” he said. “I was bleeding all over and I was limping for quite a while afterward.”

But why would somebody deliberately place a snare trap that can injury an unsuspecting trail user?

According to Hackworth, it’s difficult to speculate. He said it could be landowners upset about a trail near their property or it could be one trail user group that’s upset with another trail user group.

Or, most likely, it could just be some sadist with a twisted sense of humor who enjoys inflicting pain on unsuspecting people.

To protect themselves from any booby traps, Hackworth said that hikers, bikers and all other trail users should be alert when using the trails.

“Pay attention to what you are doing out there and always be aware of your surroundings,” he said.

David Ashby is an Associated Press award-winning writer who works as the Outdoors Editor at the Idaho State Journal in Pocatello, Idaho. He is also the webmaster of the award-winning outdoor website Xtremeidaho.com and writes extensively on wildlife, biking, trails, national parks, hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing and conservation issues.
THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION THROUGH HELPING HANDS
The Solution to Successful Volunteerism and a Better Future for All

VOLUNTEER EFFORTS from churches to charities to clubs and organizations must engage the concept of "helping hands" in order to build better bridges to a successful future. That was the theme of a recent talk I gave at an off-road/four-wheeling event in Empire, Colorado, (August 1, 2016) called All-4-Fun conducted by the Mile-Hi Jeep Club of Denver, Colorado.

Too many volunteer efforts (including clubs) fall apart because of egos, personalities, bickering or even jealousy. Turf battles take over meetings and conversations. People drop out right and left, and find something else to do -- or another club/place to do whatever it is you were doing. It has to stop if the effort is to survive at all. For off-pavement recreationists and 4x4 folks, it has to stop or we can just park our junk.

Club in-fighting or personality-driven efforts are becoming one of our own worst enemies. Pissing contests, if you will. I see this all over the country to some extent. Don’t get me wrong, I understand that some personality issues will always be present in any human interaction, but in the off-road world, we seem to have strong, independent opinions that are unbreakable and wrapped tighter than our winches. This leads to conflict that drives us apart -- and makes our entire sport vulnerable.

In some cases, it might just be one person driving wedges in your club. Did you know it is OK to fire a volunteer? Yeah, you can fire someone who can’t be fixed or helped to fit in more with the rest of the club. There is no rule or law against firing a volunteer! Just DO IT rather than have your club break up or fall apart. In an ideal world, we would all get along, sing Kumbaya and keep all our trails open. But I do have a more realistic suggestion.

The best solution is to encourage everyone involved to use their "helping hands" to save the cause; keep the sport alive; or the charity strong; or the trails open, by working together to build a bridge that will get everyone to a better future. "Helping hands" is the phrase I’ve coined to drive home the point that we can no longer be our own road blocks. We have to help each other.

To build a "bridge" each person uses the strengths they have to "lift" and install the part they are assigned, then turn and help the person next to them do the same. With everyone using their "helping hands" the bridge is quickly built in a team effort that helps everyone achieve a better future. When we started Friends of the Rubicon (FOTR) in 2001 this was our unwritten credo. We tossed out any hidden or open hostilities, and all worked together to save this trail forever, and for everyone! It still works today.

I would hope that everyone would share the spirit of cooperation and helping hands to amplify the effect of all of us in one cause, working towards a common goal, whatever that may be.... for sure, in my off-pavement motorized recreation world, that would be more trails saved and open, and a stronger future for all of us with a bridge that cannot be torn down!
SAN JACINTO, CA, based Seat Concepts may just be the best friend that you didn’t know that you had if you ride a motorcycle or pilot an ATV. Seat Concepts, you see, is in the business of mitigating one of the greatest aggravations of modern motorcycles – ill-fitting, ill-designed seats made of whatever materials which occupy the industrial source level below godawful and in function double as torture devices.

As Seat Concepts owner Lendon Smith explains, “All production motorcycles involve some compromise on parts to make them affordable.” Seats, according to Lendon, are often one of those items frequently compromised to keep MSRP reasonable.

I’ll second that.

Seat Concepts not only has the ability to improve over OEM quality but to give customers choices concerning height, width, padding, etc. for a product that in almost every case will be a vast improvement over stock. You are hearing this from a person who’s derriere rarely touches his motorcycle saddle while riding unless is a boring drone down a straight dirt road. When my bum does touch down I want the seat to do what it’s supposed to do: provide appropriate levels of control, grip and comfort. Seat Concepts has got you on all counts.

About a year ago I asked my friend and ace counter man Jason Weeks of Let’s Ride in Burley, ID, to locate a complete seat for my CRF450x Tour of Idaho bike that I was taking to the AIMExpo show in Orlando. My old seat cover and foam (replaced many times) and seat pan were shot. About a month later a box from Seat Concepts arrived. It was love at first sit. I introduced myself to Lendon at AIMExpo to thank him for the seat and let him know that it was the only seat I’d be recommending to Tour of Idaho riders going forward. It really is that good. Fast forward a few months to March of this year when Lendon was gracious to take us on a Tour of his expanding facility. Business is good - and it could not be happening to better people.

Seat Concepts is able to produce exceptionally high quality seats by keeping almost all design and manufacturing in house – a process that begins with acquiring a seat-donor bike or quad for measurements. A fiberglass mold is then made for the improved seat after which
various types and thicknesses of foam may be molded and cut to see what will work the best for various seat configurations. The last step is selecting an appropriate cover for the seat. All of this is done at Seat Concepts. That’s right, Seat Concept products are manufactured entirely in the USA.

The day we visited Seat Concepts there were dozens of new projects in various stages of design or implementation. The number of seat molds, foam compounds and seat cover options surely numbers in the thousands at a minimum. It’s truly an impressive operation. Lendon and his staff have been making seats for a long time and they’ve got it down. As happy as I am with the seat for my 450X I’ll be hitting them up soon to see if they have anything for my new Super Duke R that’s washable - a useful feature for that particular bike.

I encourage anyone who wants to discover what they’ve been missing to visit Seat Concepts via their website seatconcepts.com or hit up their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/SeatConcepts-285977991427449 (include dashes in web address).
GOOD THINGS DONE

EVEN WHEN JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING we hear on the news is bad these days, we still have lots of people doing extremely good things. My club for example, volunteers to take a bunch of special needs folks up to Courtright reservoir in the Sierra National Forest. We usually have about 15 Jeeps and other 4x4s to move the participants out to Voyager Campground for a day of camping, fishing and Jeeping.

It is a wonderful experience to see the joy on their faces as we run down the trail in the Jeeps. Other folks will bring in all the food and their camping gear for the weekend. We will pick them up at the Forest Service office in Clovis, California, and head up the hill.

Our club has been doing this community service for about 15 years that I know of. We don’t expect anything in return other than happy faces from the campers, and we always get that.

All of the food is donated by local groups and companies for the time in the woods. If you leave hungry from this weekend, you are probably too picky of an eater!

Once we get the campers to the campground, we will drop them off at their camp where everything is setup for them. They will relax for a little bit if they want. Once we have our tents and stuff setup, we will give them rides up Chicken Rock, and for some reading this, they will recognize that as the start of the Ducy Ershim trail. This trail is 33 miles long and splits two wilderness areas. The Dinky Lakes Wilderness area and John Muir Wilderness area. Most of the campers will want a ride in a Jeep to the top of Chicken Rock for pictures and the great views of the lake. Once back at camp, there is usually a pontoon boat to take them out fishing if they want.

Sunday morning, we will tear down our camp, leaving it cleaner than when we arrived, and pick up the campers to take them back out to the parking area or to Clovis and the Forest Service office.

When you leave that parking lot on Sunday afternoon, you feel like you have done something to brighten someone’s life that would normally not be able to experience camping, riding in a Jeep or fishing.

It just makes you feel good in these trying times on the news!

by Todd Ockert
President
Sharetrails.Org/BRC

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STM
After attending numerous meetings and field trips over the last few months with users and agency staff, I am more strongly committed to the collaborative process as a strategy to bring land agency staff and the trail-based recreation community together with a common goal of both protecting resources and providing a high-quality outdoor experience.

Much of the collaborative or stakeholder process is centered on attending meetings where information is shared, values are appreciated, and relationships are formed.

However, it has been my experience that “out-of-the office” field trips where private sector partners invite agency staff to review the management history of an OHV area are the most important element of the stakeholder process.

Throughout the West on National Forest/BLM units, managed recreation didn’t start with the 2005 Travel Management Rule. Rather, it has been a multi-decade process where the 1960s-era mining, firebreak, or logging road-based route network was gradually converted to a sustainable trail system that consists of engineered contour trails, soil loss structures, and road-to-trail conversions.

Managed federal OHV trail-based recreation programs are hard to sustain on current (and future) recreation budgets appropriated by Congress. In some regions of the country, the Forest Service and BLM receive grants from state funding sources such as the CA OHV Division Grant Program or OR’s ATV Grant Program.

In the 21st Century, successful OHV trail programs must also rely on partnerships with the private sector such as OHV clubs, conservation groups, and other local stakeholders. Those entities can be the source for the agency’s professional volunteer workforce where users are given chainsaw certification classes or other trail maintenance training.

I strongly support and commend those user groups and agency units where an all-hands-approach has been adopted and implemented. It can take a lot of agency staff time to manage a substantive volunteer program. However, a robust volunteer corps can play a supportive role in helping the agency obtain non-federal resources/monies (i.e. grants to help manage their trail program, fund projects such as an OHV bridge, or donations for construction labor/materials).

The collaborative process is a two-way street. Don’t wait for agency staff to call for a meeting or workshop. As a private sector partner, looks for ways to engage your federal contacts either at meetings, field trips, or volunteer work parties. Be willing to do some heavy lifting yourself.

It is important to remember this trail axiom that the quality of our trail future is directly proportional to the quality of the collaborative process/stakeholder involvement with your Forest or BLM partners.

Editorial by
Don Amador
Western Representative
Sharetrails.Org/BRC

FMCA 4-Wheelers’ Donate $5,000 To Help Support Recreation Access! (www.fmca4wheelers.com)
I AM CHAIRMAN OF A GREAT ORGANIZATION which fights for recreation access to public lands. I also work full-time. So when I get the chance to go out and enjoy one of my OHV hobbies it is not as often as I would like. Bottom line, we all fight to keep open access to public lands so we can enjoy our sports and so that future generations have the opportunity to enjoy that right.

COHVCO (Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition) was formed in 1987 by a group of leaders from the Four Wheel Drive, Motorcycle, Snowmobile, and ATV communities. COHVCO is a state-wide coalition working to protect the right to enjoy public land! COHVCO works to promote legislation and regulation favorable to OHV recreation.

COHVCO’s mission is to represent, assist, educate, and empower OHV recreationists in the protection and promotion of off-highway motorized recreation throughout Colorado. COHVCO is an environmental organization that advocates and promotes the responsible use and conservation of our public lands and natural resources to preserve their aesthetic and recreational qualities for future generations.

As COHVCO Chairman I find myself enjoying advocating for open access to public lands as much as riding and Jeeping. I love my OHV sports. All parts of them, which includes my organizations and the work we do.

There is so much we need to do to make sure our OHV hobbies have access to public lands. I am younger than a lot of people who have taken up the battle to keep our trails available for you to use. I get to educate my step son and his friends on proper trail use, so they can have it for the future.

Education is one of the biggest things we can do to help get people involved. We have a great program in Colorado, the sole purpose of which is OHV education. It’s called “Stay The Trail.” COHVCO formed Stay the Trail after seeing that there was a need to have a form of education out on the trails and public lands. Then there is the whole Lobbyist and legal side, this is where COHVCO and BRC (Sharetrails.Org/BlueRibbon Coalition) fit in. Which I feel is probably the one area that gets the least support. Some just don’t have the background to write bills and lobby at the capitals. It takes Lawyers and Lobbyists to do this for us which does take money. So how do we get that done? We get this done by supporting COHVCO and BRC. COHVCO and BRC have lawyers and lobbyists who work to keep our right to open access. We work to form relationships in all avenues of our sports.

So what can you and I do? It takes effort from everyone who is involved in our sports. It can be as little as picking up trash and staying on the trail, to as big as forming work days and getting public support. Support our OHV rights by joining clubs and your hobby’s state and national associations. The biggest thing is to support your OHV organizations by joining and donating, on the state level like Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Collation, and on the national level like Sharetrails.Org/BRC.
On December 15, 2016, the gates will open to another season of snowmobile access to Yellowstone National Park. This access will be regulated by the Final Regulation to implement the Record of Decision (ROD).

According to the Park Service, the ROD provides a framework for more effectively managed access for snowmobiles and snowcoaches in Yellowstone National Park while minimizing impacts on visitors, air and sound quality, and wildlife. The final regulation will guide management of winter use in the Park and will implement the preferred alternative in the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

This 2016/2017 Winter Season the Park will permit up to 110 "transportation events" daily, initially defined as one snow-coach or a group of up to 10 snowmobiles, averaging seven snowmobiles per group per season. Up to 50 transportation events may be groups of snowmobiles. Management by transportation events is an impact-centric approach designed to minimize the impact of over-snow vehicles (OSVs) on air quality, soundscapes, and wildlife rather than focusing solely on the number of vehicles allowed in the Park. Under this approach as many as 500 snowmobiles could be allowed in the Park per day this winter.

In addition, another important part of the Final Regulation is that four transportation events per day (one per gate) would be reserved for non-commercially guided snowmobile access. Please note: A lottery was held in September based on requests entered into the Recreation.gov website. This lottery determined initial non-commercially guided access to the Park this winter. Please remember that any dates not allocated by the lottery for non-commercially guided groups will be available in November. For additional information on Yellowstone and winter access, visit us at: www.saveyellowstonepark.com.
Volunteers of the organized off highway vehicle clubs and associations realize how critical their positions are in order to keep all of our roads and trails open for motorized recreation. But the officers of these groups must frequently deal with complaints from their own numbers and volunteers, yet receive very little help or thanks for their efforts.

Loss of trail access nation-wide, specifically in the west, is an ongoing threat to the 4x4 community, which is why volunteerism and dedication to service is how they battle this issue.

If we all could work together instead of as separate groups we could gain so much more. Volunteer- ing is a difficult job typically with very little thanks and no compensation. The only compensation is that these people are dedicated and believe in what they are doing or they won’t do it.

A larger united group carries more weight with the planning agencies and has the ability to work with them in local and state issues. Organized groups give us the power to be a voice in road and trail planning, but also be a stakeholder in meetings with the local, state and federal agencies. These agencies include the BLM, Forest Service, Game & Fish/Fish & Game, State Parks and other municipal and federal agencies. When our clubs and associations are willing to volunteer their services for cleanups, signage and trail building it is a huge plus considering the fact that many agencies are on very strict budgets.

With limited budgets and a small group of volunteers the motorized community has been fighting anti-access groups for over 30 years. Most impressive is what has been accomplished toward keeping trails open, in re-opening trails that had been closed and in creating hard-core trails in cooperation with federal and state land management agencies. But, also in being recognized as an actual recreational sport.

We all need to work together to keep our access open and free. Look at what has been lost over the years. The larger 4x4 vehicles have fought for our access to keep our roads open. But as time goes by we began to lose our trails to the hiking and bicycling groups. We organized and fought a good fight and kept some of our trails.

In time the full size vehicles have been losing their trails to the other motorized groups. The single track groups started to organize and began to also work with the agencies, which in turn caused the full size vehicles to start losing their trails not only to the non-motorized but also to the single track. The latest to effect full size is the ATV/UTVs.

As the smaller vehicles improve and become a little more affordable, it causes other groups such as the full size vehicles lose out on what is available. I would consider this the natural
evolution of motorized off highway vehicles. Now the UTVs are in the same boat as the full size vehicles due to their advancement and technology. These vehicles are getting shut out of areas because they have advanced and are larger than the arbitrary 50” rule the agencies have used for years.

If all of us to work together to keep as much of our trails and roads open it would be a win for all. The full size vehicles that run the trails are the same group that helped keep those roads open to the staging areas where the smaller vehicles now access those trails.

Everyone is calling for “fairness” I tend to agree when it comes to how we treat our motorized communities. We are all after the same thing, but in different sizes. We want to be able to use our public lands and not get shut out, but that is going to take some work. All motorized groups need to work together for the same goal, our roads and trails.

If all classes of motorized users started to work together and try to find ways to share what we have, we could have an amazing win for our recreation. Why couldn’t we have multi use trails that lets all of the users in? Consider the number of trails we might be able to keep or open if we included all users from single track to full size.

The best way to win is by numbers, presenting a united front. Not everyone wants to volunteer, not everyone has the time to volunteer a lot of their time. But if we all joined organizations and associations that do have the volunteers and the backing we could accomplish more.

The anti-access groups have accomplished this and more over the years. They have one goal in mind – to keep you out! These groups have very large annual budgets, paid staff, paid lawyers and lots of donations. With their large budgets and staff, it is easy to see why and how we are losing roads, trails and public lands. I am surprised that we have any roads and trails left!

Imagine how many more roads and trails would still be open if we had the income and donations that, as an example: Friends of the Earth, the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), et al, have at their disposal.

Friends of the Earth have a budget of more
than $10.5 million (2015); CBD more than $13.3 million (2013). Donations are made from the use of slick advertising through social media mail donations—donating to such causes makes people feel warm and fuzzy. Rarely do the donors actually go out and enjoy the land they are supposedly “protecting” from us.

Being the current secretary for the BRC, an office holder in the Arizona State Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs (ASA4WDC) and in my local club, most of my time is spent trying to keep people informed on issues facing our sport. At the July BRC board meeting in Idaho the main discussion was motorized clubs, organizations and state associations being fractured, with clubs dropping out to do their own thing or join internet clubs. We are losing club support leaving a small dedicated group to fight for your continued access to your public lands. No, it is not fair.

The Internet has also added to our loss of organized clubs and associations. This is all well and good, but we need those people to help us achieve our goal of keeping motorized access open to all. A lot of people don’t want to belong to organized groups for all sorts of reasons. But this is not helping our sport.

Dues that are paid to the BRC and local clubs and organizations, help support your continued access to these roads, trails and “our” public land. Fighting for your access is a full time job for our volunteers with no compensation, unlike the anti-access crowd that have the benefit of paid staff and lawyers. BRC has a very dedicated staff, board and volunteers all over the county who have kept us updated on issues that affect our sport. All this is handled on a very limited budget provided by your dues.

Being a member of your local club or association is a small price to pay to keep our voice in planning processes in your area. Being a member of a national organization helps promote motorized recreation and across the United States and other countries.

For example, the ASA4WDC year per member dues are $25.00, a Basic membership in Sharetrails.Org/BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) is $20.00 a year/per member—that is a total of $45.00, about what you spend on a tank of gas for a day of 4 wheeling. The off highway vehicle community would very much appreciate your support.

Belonging to an organization is one of the best things you can do to keep your recreation alive. When you look at the amount of income, the anti-access groups get from the general public compared to what is received at local, state and national levels for motorized recreation, it is amazing that we have accomplished what little we have over the years.

Personally, I have fought for motorized recreation for many, many years while I worked full time and took care of my family. It is a tough job, in fact it was my third job for years after my regular full time job and taking care of my family.

I have always believed in what can be accomplished with the help of other like-minded individuals getting together to fight for the same things.

If we all work together instead of separately in different groups we could accomplish much more. Join a club, organization or association, but also consider a membership in Sharetrails.Org/BRC. With your help we could accomplish much more.
In 1987, the National Forest in my home state of Indiana banned OHV travel. Totally - zero miles of trails! As an avid off-road motorcyclist, I vowed that if this issue ever came up again in my local area, I was going to do my part to keep every possible trail open to motorized and non-motorized enthusiasts. In 1997 that challenge presented itself in Kentucky’s Daniel Boone National Forest when an anti-OHV lawsuit once again threatened motorized recreation and access. I, along with an army of volunteers, worked to influence the planning process, repair trails and raise money to support a pro-OHV lawsuit should that be necessary. And it was.

Enter the BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC)! With a Legal Defense team and fundraising processes already in place, our lawsuit efforts in Kentucky were greatly simplified. Additionally, BRC supported our efforts through personal involvement of its Executive Director and founder, Clark Collins. And the BRC staff was invaluable in helping us get the word out to garner financial and political support.

While we didn’t get everything we’d hoped for in Kentucky, we did show that we can be a force to help shape the future when we organize and use our resources well.

This is the same action-oriented philosophy upon which Sharetrails.Org/BRC is founded and one I totally buy into. In the late 1990s I was a member of the BRC Board of Directors where I saw firsthand the passion and tireless work of staff members, volunteers and supporters. And their ability to get things done. Not always victorious - but ALWAYS fighting for fair and practical solutions for multiple-use recreation.

I’m super excited and honored to be working as the Eastern Representative/Ambassador for Sharetrails.Org/BRC. Since the amount of public lands in the east is relatively small, it is even more important that we easterners are involved and active in ensuring those lands are managed fairly and provide recreation opportunities for all Americans - motorized and non-motorized.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me about issues in your area...or even if you just want to go riding sometime!
THE PURPOSE of the Mile-Hi Jeep Club is to unite adventure loving people in worthwhile 4-wheel drive activities: to educate its members in the proper manner of all road driving: to protect and preserve the natural beauty and terrain; to participate, on a voluntary basis, in search and rescue and other humanitarian missions as the community needs; to share good fellowship while operating our vehicles in a manner so as to preserve and protect our land for all generations; and to extend the courtesy of the open road to all.

This is the philosophy that the Mile-Hi Jeep Club has lived by since its first meeting at the Kurland Service Center in Denver, CO, on August 20, 1956. 60 years ago this month, Gene Kurland, the owner of Kurland Service Center thought it would help sales of Jeeps if he started a club for people that owned Jeeps. So, he sent a letter to all Jeep owners in Denver inviting them to his dealership to talk about forming Colorado’s first Jeep club. Approximately 250 people showed up at the first meeting and Mile-Hi Jeep Club was born! In July 1957 Mile-Hi Jeep Club received its official charter from the state of Colorado. At this time Mile-Hi Jeep Club was one of only ten Jeep clubs in the country.

Mile-Hi Jeep Club is now the largest 4WD club in Colorado with over 400 dues paying members! Several years ago Mile-Hi Jeep Club started to allow members with any type of 4WD vehicle but over 80% of the vehicles in the club are still Jeeps. Mile-Hi Jeep Club is currently made up of 21 patrols, which are like smaller clubs within the club. This is one of the reasons Mile-Hi Jeep Club has been able to become so large, because members can find a patrol that they fit in with and do the things they like.

Land Advocacy is very important to the members of Mile-Hi Jeep Club. Currently the different patrols in Mile-Hi Jeep Club have eleven Adopt-A-Roads that they maintain and this August at their 50th Annual All-4-Fun event Mile-Hi Jeep Club did over 1,200 hours of trail maintenance over a six day period! In 2016 Mile-Hi Jeep Club purchased a BlueRibbon Coalition membership for...
every member and for the last four years they have purchased a Colorado OHV Permit for every member. Mile-Hi Jeep Club is also a member club of the Colorado Off Highway Vehicle Coalition and Tread Lightly. Over the past ten years Mile-Hi Jeep Club has been able to raise over $25,000 in donations for Stay The Trail.

One of the great things about the entire 4WD community is how much they all give back to the community and Mile-Hi Jeep Club has done a ton! At the 50th Annual All-4-Fun event Mile-Hi Jeep Club was able to raise just over $23,000 for the Children’s Hospital Burn Camp bringing their total raised for this charity since 1988 to over $300,000!! Mile-Hi Jeep Club has also hosted the Toys For Tots Christmas Caravan for Kids event for the past 13 years, collecting thousands of toys. The 14th Annual Toys for Tots Christmas Caravan for Kids event will be held on Saturday, December 3rd.

Every year Mile-Hi Jeep Club holds several events for its members: The Daisy May Run, where only women can drive for the day; Aspencades, which is a weekend of camping, wheeling and looking at the aspen as they change colors in the fall; the Hobo Run, where you can become a Hobo for a day as you look for treasures and clues along the trail; and the Creepy Crawl, where you can dress up yourself and your Jeep and go trick-or-treating as you look for clues along the trail. The biggest event that Mile-Hi Jeep Club holds every year All-4-Fun. This event has become one of the largest and longest running 4WD events in the country and just celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2016. There are great trails, camping, entertainment, lots of food and drinks, door prizes, kids’ games, and one of the largest vendor shows you will see at any event. In 2017 Mile-Hi Jeep Club will be holding the 51st Annual All-4-Fun event in Leadville, CO from July 29th through August 5th, 2017. Online registration for the 51st Annual All-4-Fun event will open January 1st, 2017, on Mile-Hi Jeep Club’s website.

For more information about Mile-Hi Jeep Club and all of their great events visit their website, www.mhjc.org or visit their Facebook page, “Mile-Hi Jeep Club.”
**GET INVOLVED & MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**THIS IS A FIRST PERSON STORY.** Actually, everything I write about is first person but I digress.

WE have all seen the different states’ campaigns to “watch out for motorcycles.” Look twice, save a life and variations of it. I have the unfortunate position of being the recipient of someone who did not. What does getting run over by a bad driver have to do with being involved in the system? Everything!

Why do folks who have such a bad record that no insurance company will sell them insurance have a driver’s license? Why does the state let them drive (In Ohio) on a state backed $25,000 bond? Anyone who has been in an accident that sent them to the hospital knows that 25Gs is insignificant. They do not think honest folks (on bikes too) are significant. There is a familiar line of thinking here. The reason the BlueRibbon Coalition was started was because government did not think motorized recreation was significant.

Pericles said, “Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn’t mean politics won’t take an interest in you.” Do not confuse being political with being partisan. Right now today the political races are heating up. I have my preferences and yours may be different. The common thread is motorized recreation. This is the time of the year you can make a huge difference on more than one level.

The first is local. Your local mayor, city councilman or commissioners need help to run. When you support them you gain political capital. These folks can help you with the next level, the state house. Your state has a house and senate. These folks are running too. They need local on the ground support. Are you looking to get areas for motorized recreation? Having capital with them makes it easier to get support for your projects. Are the anti’s trying to stop your sport? Friends in the state house are your first line of defense. Nothing is more satisfying than having your representative call you and gives you a heads up about what is going on.

Do you want to talk to your federal representatives? Your contacts in the state house can get you thru the maze and actually talk to your elected officials. Some folks, like me, are active with a party. I am on our county’s central committee. It is more interaction with elected officials. You have the reward of shaping local actions. You have more opportunity to present the story of motorized recreation.

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Supporters like these allow Sharetrails/BRC to continue with its vital mission to protect YOUR recreation access!
At this point three things come together. If you are part of a club you bring a larger, more significant group to the table. Numbers are important for your goals. Letting your elected official know gives your capital more weight. If your club also belongs to a state association you multiply your capital to get things done on the state level. And lastly your club and your state association belong to a national organization. When you combine local with state and national you can get things done and have a chance to stop bad things from happening. No matter what form of recreation, you enjoy having an inside line is important.

I received this question about joining our state organization. “What all does it entail and what are the benefits of being a member other than sending money to a good organization?” It is nice if an organization can get a discount card for its members or some freebee. If any of our active members got paid for their time the dollar cost would be astronomical! The fact is all of the above is priceless. Without the totality of membership we would be insignificant!
Get the low-down on fine off-highway products reviewed by the staff of Sharetrails.Org/BRC...

PRODUCT: inReach SE
MANUFACTURER: DeLORME
www.delorme.com
REVIEWED BY: Martin Hackworth
Executive Director
Sharetrails.Org/BRC

LAST YEAR AFTER WORKING WITH with Jimmy Lewis on his Tour of Idaho movie I decided to upgrade from my SPOT Connect to the DeLORME inReach SE. The reason for this was simple - two-way texting. My SPOT proved over many years to be a rock solid satellite communicator - but only one way. You could upload a text message but, flashing LEDs aside, there was no assurance that the message got through. The DeLorme inReach allows texting both ways. The peace of mind is invaluable to family you leave behind when you head into the great outdoors.

I chose the inReach SE over the more expensive inReach Explorer because I already have several dedicated gps units and I wanted this solely for communication. Among other things that means that the Delorme inReach SE stays attached directly to me - which is better, IMO, than being attached to the bike. The inReach sends and receives up to 160-character text messages. It may also be used...
to send an SOS to the authorities and for anyone to track your trip on the web - all via satellite. It has, in a nutshell, every capability everyone’s satellite beacon has with the addition of two-way texting.

I’ve used the inReach SE for over a year now and it’s just as reliable as the SPOT (which was important to me). The unit itself is feature rich (more so than the SPOT) and very easy to use. When paired with the free Earthmate smartphone app the inReach SE makes a pretty good backup GPS - as long as you understand its limitations. The maps displayed on your optional web tracking page are better than the ones used by SPOT. DeLorme’s website is easy to navigate and their customer service is good. As with the SPOT you’ll ultimately pay more for the service than the unit itself but as with the SPOT there are many plans to choose from $11.95 to $79.95 per month.

PRODUCT: TJ/LJ Trackbar Systems
MANUFACTURER: TNT Customs
www.tntcustoms.com
REVIEWED BY: Del Albright
Ambassador Sharetrails.Org/BRC

TNT CUSTOMS out of Cheyenne, WY, are long-time member/supporters of Sharetrails.org/BRC and land use in general who engineer original and innovative designs for Jeep vehicles that withstand the test of trails. I’ve been running TNT suspension/steering products on my red Jeep for over 5 years and the quality, design, and function just plain hit the mark!

Besides my jeep, I’ve watched and evaluated several other jeeps running the TNT Customs products like the TJ/LJ Jeep Trackbar system and this product stands apart from others in the industry. For one reason, the TNT Trackbar system swings with the travel of the axle, never in a bind with rebuildable flex joints at BOTH ends that will last the life of the Jeep. Bob Levenhagen, the owner, designer and fabricator told me, “Before I do anything to a Jeep, I consider the entire layout/design of the rig and make sure the engineering is correct, especially the trackbar to drag link geometry.”

Bob is a dyed-in-the-wool jeeper and also a stickler for details and doing it right. That’s another respectable aspect of TNT Customs – they are true off-roader/jeepers.

Noticeably, TNT covers all contingencies for Jeep trackbars, whether your tie rod is flipped “over the knuckle” (OTK) with the drag link attached to the tie rod before the knuckle, or if you are thinking more of the crossover or high steer style steering where the drag link attaches at the knuckle.

TNT Customs was featured in JP Magazine with their trackbar system as a solution that saved the day for some rock crawling issues. They stand by their engineering and fabrication design, with all of their products manufactured in their 10,000 sq. ft. facility located at 216 N. Ave. D, Cheyenne, WY.

Mary Levenhagen, co-owner and Shop Boss personally makes sure the shipping, orders and questions are handled promptly and professionally. It’s a family operation with American pride built into it.

TNT Customs offers a full line of Jeep products, from JK Corner Armor, ZJ Rock Sliders, XJ suspensions, and all Jeep model bumpers, sliders, fenders and axle trusses.

TNT Customs TJ/LJ Trackbar System for Jeep
http://www.tntcustoms.com/jeep_parts/tj_lj_trackbar_system

Voice of the BlueRibbon Coalition

Sharetrails Magazine (#006-2016) — 33
LA-BASED EKS BRAND produces a range of relatively inexpensive goggles that are eminently worthy of your consideration for motorcycle and ATV use.

EKS BRAND goggles have a face fit that I’ve found to be unmatched. They are comfortable, ventilate exceptionally well and have optics that are commendably above average. Their durability is really good – especially for the price. Lenses are interchangeable between all adult sizes. EKS Brand goggles are available in several colors and styles from around $30 to $50. Check them out.

IT HAPPENS IN AN INSTANT - you are cruising your favorite single track when you clip a rock or log and the next thing you know you and your bike are 20 feet off the trail down in the brush (or worse in the water).

If you are with others when this happens it's generally possible to grunt, groan, heave and moan enough to get a bike righted and back up on the trail through numbers and sheer effort. I have, however, heard of this taking hours even with some pretty burly riders involved. Most dirt bikes weigh north of 250 lbs. loaded and that's a lot to drag up a steep incline through brush and/or rock. Often that's not possible even with a lot of muscle.

Most experienced trail riders carry at least a few accessory straps for various purposes including tugging on downed bikes (see our review of Tugger Straps) and towing when necessary. Add to that a couple of pulleys, a few carabiners and 100’ or more of medium-diameter climbing cord and you have the beginnings of a rudimentary bike self-rescue system.

Having spent many years in the mountains as a climber I am painfully aware of the difference between a great concept and its execution. Though it is entirely
possible to source and assemble a rudimentary self-rescue system with items readily available at the local outdoor store a much better option is to purchase a kit especially made for the purpose, dirt bike rescue, from folks who have the experience and know how to put something like this together with the best materials for the job. Enter Cascade Rescue and their customized bike rescue kit.

Dana Jordan, owner of Cascade Rescue, assembles kits to spec as requested by customers. You may, however, ask him for the kit recommended for the Tour of Idaho (pictured). You'll get a setup containing two locking carabiners, two SMC rescue pulleys (one a cam-locker) and 150' of ~7 mm cord.

See our bike self-rescue video (https://youtu.be/rde3k6dNrq4) to see how it all works. Under most circumstances it takes far longer to get the system out of its storage bag, deployed and then back into its storage bag than it does to recover the bike. Your only decision with this kit is which end to attach to the bike. It employs a 3:1 mechanical advantage if used in the manner shown in the video, i.e. the locking pulley (above in the photo) is attached to anchor, the other pulley is attached to the bike and you pulling down. In this configuration you pull three times a much cord through the system as the distance the bike moves but with 1/3 of the effort of a straight pull. If you attach the locking pulley to the bike, the other end to the anchor and then pull up the mechanical advantage is 4:1.

Whatever you do don't skimp on something like this - you'll rue the day when you have to use it. Basic kit $145.00, Pro Kit (the one used here) $285.00. Worth every dime too.

PRODUCT: Lift Strap
MANUFACTURER: Tugger
www.thetugger.com
REVIEWS BY: Martin Hackworth
Executive Director
Sharetrails.Org/BRC

A VERY NICE ACCOUTREMENT to the bike self-rescue system reviewed above is a Tugger lift strap, available for a variety of bikes from Highline Recreation of Logan, UT. Highline also makes a line of tow straps, bar savers and other useful straps for dirt bikes. They are worth checking out.

According to the Highline website Tuggers have been used at Erzberg, Paris-Dakar, Last Dog Standing, King of the Motos, Last Man Standing, 24 Hours of Glen Helen, the ISDE, Romaniacs – an
THE TRAIL TECH DIGITAL COOLING FAN KIT is the best motorcycle fan kit I’ve ever used. If you have a water-cooled bike with a cheap fan, or one without a fan, you need one of these. The TT fan kit is well-designed and built, easy to install bullet proof. It’s a setup that will tolerate even unreasonable abuse. I’ve even submerged my bike in a stream with the fan going full-tilt boogie (hydrolocking the engine) and the fan still worked when I got everything dried out and started a few hours later.

Installation of the fan kit is a breeze for most applications and may be accomplished with simple tools in less than a half hour. The fan computer allows changes in the display and the ability to set the temperature trigger point.

The ability to set the trigger point with this fan is actually a useful feature. On bikes like my 450X (which runs notoriously hot anywhere near idle), I set the computer to start the fan at 170 degrees Fahrenheit, a few degrees below the factory setting, and the bike stays very cool under almost any circumstance. I can now leave the bike running during summertime when I get off to open a gate, for instance, without worrying about overheating. Long technical single track ascents have not posed a coolant issue for me with this fan in place.

I’ve methodically tried all of the common tweaks to get my CRF450X to run cool at trail speeds. It has a Boyesen Supercooler water pump impeller, an IRP billet oil cooler, a Fluidyne Radiator, and it’s tuned to run rich. Though all of these tweaks have helped, the Trail Tech fan has had the greatest single impact - and it’s huge.

The only thing you’ll want to think about with the TT fan is that it does have the potential to draw some power - 30 watts in the case of the Honda kit. At trail speeds this might tax bikes with lower output stators (or weak batteries) if the temperature trigger is set to low and other accessories are also running (e.g., lights). The fan does have an automatic cut-off but will drain the battery a bit before shutting off. This is only an issue with low-output stators and weak batteries. It’s never been a problem for me. In fact I use the TT fan as a soak for the output of my 100-watt stator at high speeds.
**Backcountry Ascender Program Launched**

**BACKCOUNTRY ASCENDER** is a free and simple backcountry & avalanche educator. The application uses good-natured competition to help riders learn and improve their backcountry knowledge, skills, practical experience, and confidence.

The engaging and competitive application is composed of an industry and peer reviewed curriculum of self-directed lessons and in-person courses. Riders can earn points for completing lessons and courses to increase their rank as well as that of their club, state association, dealer, and snowmobile brand.

Industry sponsors are encouraged to provide prizes and coupon codes that are unlocked by riders who earn higher badge ranks. Currently avalanche knowledge dissemination is not effectively reaching enough riders and the many new mountain riders. There are knowledge gaps in avalanche education and backcountry skills. The social media is driving more riders to visit unfamiliar terrain.

Avalanche Training is important for many reasons. Many riders do not recognize avalanche terrain and are not checking forecasts or altering ride decisions based on the information they find. Many individuals have the proper gear but have not learned how to use it and are not practicing with it. The lack of training and proficiency in rescue is another leading issue of importance.

The objective is to make snowmobilers the most prepared and knowledgeable back country user group in the mountains. The Backcountry Ascender Program is not an online course but it is self-directed e-learning combined with traditional hands on learning. The learning program is based on a proven educational platform that was designed for professional development. The key to the program is that:

- It establishes peer accountability
- It is easy to implement
- It is localized, yet international in scope

The curriculum is based on a peer approved content starting with Avalanche Canada and the American Avalanche Association. The curriculum will evolve as new content is continuously added and updated.

The Backcountry Ascender Program is not disruptive but complementary. The intent of the Backcountry Ascender Program is not to replace traditional avalanche awareness safety courses, but to have existing courses fit into the level and badging structure encouraged in the program. The intent is to drive both knowledge and annually renewing the knowledge.

The snowmobile manufacturers of ISMA and the Backcountry Ascender team and avalanche trainers involved in developing the program have found that snowmobilers are thirsty for knowledge. We have also found that most snowmobilers pride themselves in being knowledgeable on their machines and their riding skills.

We are looking forward to expanding education of snowmobilers around the world and working with all interested parties in continually improving, sustaining, and expanding the plan.

The **Backcountry Ascender Program** was introduced at Hay Days 2016, on Saturday, September 10th, at 9:30 AM, at the BRP/Ski-Doo Booth. The Backcountry Ascender effort is sponsored by the members of ISMA – Arctic Cat, BRP, Polaris, and Yamaha. For further information, call ISMA at 517-339-7788 or email Ed Klim at EKlim@aol.com.

**Special thanks to**

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Supporters like these allow Sharetrails/BRC to continue with its vital mission to protect YOUR recreation access!
My Trail Advocacy Journey started in the late 1980s when I started to see a lot of popular OHV routes being closed on public lands. Little did I know that a perfect storm of anti-access legislation and regulations had formed that would impact both my personal and professional life for decades to come.

I felt pressed to get involved in an effort to protect trail access, so I started to look for an organization to join that shared my concerns. While perusing numerous off-road magazines, I kept coming across ads for the BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC). It looked legitimate, so I booked a flight and traveled to their 1990 board meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. At the meeting I met BRC’s founder, Clark Collins, and their public lands director, Adena Cook. After spending some quality time with Clark, Adena, and various board members, I made a commitment to jump into the land use arena with both feet.

Over the last 26 years, I have worked to use and develop my skillset to carry out Sharetrails.Org/BRC’s mission to champion responsible OHV use of designated roads, trails, and areas.

Development of my trail advocate skillset has evolved over the last 26 years by being intimately involved in many state, regional, and national public land campaigns. Those seminal issues included the Northern Spotted Owl, ESA Reform Movement, stolen funds from the CA OHV Program, Timber Wars, Bruce Babbitt’s Biological Survey, Ecoterrorism, Private Property Rights Movement, Wilderness Designation in CA’s Deserts, 1995 Forest Service Planning Triad, Politicization of Federal Land Agencies, Clinton’s National Monument designations, and the Clinton/Gore Roadless Rule.

While OHV realized some victories in those battles, history has proved that many of them were costly and counterproductive. There had to be a better way.

Over time, the two most valuable land-use skills/tools a trail advocate accrues are relationships and experience. They are the foundation blocks upon which effective advocacy are built.

Many of my personal and professional relationships today are based on my 1990s-era interaction with environmental leaders, agency staff, government officials, regulators, politicians, media, conservation groups, OHV clubs, recreation groups, and resource industry representatives.

Whether I am testifying before a Congressional committee, writing comments on a management or travel plan, meeting with stakeholder groups, participating in a collaborative process, or working with a club on an access issue, be assured that I am pressing forward on your behalf.

For the complete version of Don Amador’s article on his history with the coalition, visit us at: sharetrails.org/watercooler.
database, make sure donations and membership are entered or updated and membership packets and thank you letters are mailed out. If you have a question about your membership, I can give you an answer!

Speaking of membership, there are big changes afoot at Sharetrails.Org/BRC. We decided it was time to review our membership structure and try to tailor it for a better fit for our members. We now have a variety of different membership levels available, with different benefits (visit sharetrails.org/membership for details).

Please remember that regardless of the tangible membership benefits available at each level, the most important membership benefits are the intangible ones. For example, knowledge. When your family or friends are talking about a possible closure, you have the information on what to do and where to look for help and you have the knowledge that you are already helping to make a difference with your membership. Because without your membership, there is no Sharetrails.org.

For the complete version of Mary Jo’s article, and those of other members of the Sharetrails.Org/BRC staff and contractors, visit us at: sharetrails.org/watercooler.
WINTER OR SUMMER
We Support Motorized Access to Public Lands.