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Voice of the BlueRibbon Coalition

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I HAVE TWO PARABLES that I live my life by, and I want to share them here.

The first is a story I heard many years ago about PT Barnum. Tradition has it, PT Barnum would oversell the big top at every show (kind of like an airline overselling tickets on a plane). At first it was out of expectation that not everyone would show up, but as the popularity of Barnum’s Circus rose so did the likelihood that folks would not only show up, but that they would show up on time.

Barnum didn’t want that to cut into his profits, so he created a maze of sideshow attractions around the circus. As customers entered, many would get caught up in things like seeing the bearded lady or the man-eating chicken. Never at any one time was the Big Top full. Legend tells us that only a select few saw through Barnum’s ploy and were able to get the full value of their big top ticket.

Our job is to keep trail access open or to reopen additional trail systems. Period. End of story. Done.

We’re not here to have fun, that’s your job! Our job is to keep adventure alive for YOU. I have no problem listening to the endless woes of Congressional leaders, clubs, businesses, riders and other land use advocates but at the end of the day we refocus and head to the big top. We don’t get sidetracked by the bearded lady or the armless lion tamer. We open our email, we look at current legislation, we study legal strategy and we get to work.

The second parable is one you may have heard retold in some form in the movie Charlie Wilson’s War. It goes something like this. On the eve of his 14th birthday, a young boy is given a horse. The town’s people proclaim what a lucky boy! The town Sage quietly replies, we shall see.
Two years later the boy is thrown from his horse, crushing his leg. The town’s people all condemn the horse and pity the boy. The town Sage again proclaims, we shall see. Two years later and all the young men in the area are conscripted into military service in a war with a bordering city. Fortunately, with his bum leg the young boy is prevented from service! What a lucky boy says the towns folk--We shall see replies the town sage. Two years later the war has ended and the town is overtaken by the victors of the war. All the able-bodied men and women are forced into labor except for the boy, who is jailed because he is deemed useless. And so, we see that we can either be victims of our circumstance, or as the Reverend Charles F. Aked remarked, “It has been said that for evil men to accomplish their purpose it is only necessary that good men should do nothing.”

I am NOT suggesting those that oppose mixed use are evil. I am saying that if we sit and wait, we will always be behind. We will watch as acre after acre

6 Ways to Support Sharetrails / BRC

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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
   (For details, see: http://bit.ly/smileBRC)
acre is taken. Today it’s OHV, but tomorrow it might be the Green New Deal and its $74 trillion-dollar price tag and the end to public lands.

We are fighting battles all over the country in state legislatures. We are fighting battles in the US Congress and we are fighting lawsuits all over the West. We are doing more than we have ever done. I am in awe of everything our founder Clark Collins accomplished through pure grit and determination. He wasn’t a political or policy strategist, but he knew how to lead, and he knew how to roll up his sleeves and make it happen.

We need that spirit today, and I am proud to stand and fight alongside all of you. I hope you’re watching us in Nevada, West Virginia, Ohio, Utah, Idaho, Washington DC (I can keep going), because we aren’t going away. We will win some, and we will lose some, but we will always be in the arena to fight.

This year you will be getting fundraisers for your area, highlighting local fights we are engaged in. You are the key to our success. You are our eyes and ears and you are on the front lines. Thank you again!

Spencer Gilbert (left) testifying in front of Utah Legislative committee.

Spencer Gilbert (center-right) at a meeting with West Virginia Governor Jim Justice (center-left) to open up new OHV opportunities in West Virginia.
I LOVE THE WINTER and the snow. Snowmobiling is the activity that led me on this passionate path to help ensure continued access to the beautiful places in this country. What happens next is always amazing and welcomed...SPRING.

At some point we begin to tire of the winter and look forward to the change to spring. In anticipation of the Spring, we prune back the fruit trees and the flowering trees in attempts to control and manage their growth. We do that to assure the trees continue to grow into a desired shape and size. We recognize that the uncontrolled and spindly growth does not support healthy fruit and abundant blossoms. We also begin looking for the lovely, lavender winter crocus coming up through the fallen leaves and for the little white snowdrops that sometimes have to push their way through the snow toward the sunshine.

This pruning and reshaping of the trees is always hard for me as I know there is potential fruit and blossoms hiding in those branches and twigs. It is hard, but I know it has to be done in order to ensure a robust, healthy tree that will bear for years to come without breaking branches and maybe even splitting the trunk. Sometimes some of the
twigs can be saved for later grafting on a younger tree. A similar process is necessary for cane berries.

Our own organization, Sharetrails.Org/BRC, has recently gone through a “pruning” or re shaping process if you will. We have pruned back the spindly and unhealthy growth to create a more robust, well-defined organization that can take us into the future and continue to bear fruit for our members. I only recently saw the similarities between the recent and sometimes agonizing changes we made to help our organization fit in the

new year and the changing of seasons we must deal with every year in nature and on the farm. 
Now and in anticipation of Spring, we have HOPE!

Special thanks to Tierra Del Sol for their continued support...
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Supporters like TDS4WDC allow Sharetrails/BRC to continue with its vital mission to protect YOUR recreation access!

ALL YEAR ROUND,

We Support Motorized Access to Public Lands.
THE
LEGAL CORNER
By Sharetrails.Org/BRC Lead Legal Counsel
PAUL TURCKE

Paul Turcke stands in front of the U.S. Supreme Court.
A TITLE SHOULD AT LEAST INTRIGUE, but infuriate can be an acceptable response. So it’s OK if you are curious or even mildly offended at this title’s implication that our right to recreate on public lands is a “game” or is characterizing the sanctified institution of “the law.” Keep reading, we’re going deeper.

If prompted in word association, most would probably respond to “law” with “justice.” And when many think of justice the next words they think of are “right” or “fair.” However common those answers, they aren’t very helpful, maybe even wrong. For illumination, I turned to the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) motto – Qui Pro Domina Justitiae Sequitur. You’d think we know its source or translation, but instead DOJ’s website has a 1,232 word summary of numerous but “none entirely successful” efforts to that end. The “most authoritative” opinion says the motto refers to the Attorney General/DOJ “who prosecutes on behalf of justice (or the Lady Justice).” So the Department of Justice seeks justice. Really? Lady Justice has a blindfold, a balance, a sword and flowing robe – an “allegorical personification of the moral force in judicial systems.” Another definition offers that “justice” is “based on numerous fields, and many differing viewpoints and perspectives including the concepts of moral correctness based on ethics, rationality, law, religion, equity and fairness.” Do you feel the clouds obscuring your quest for clear vision?

Public lands issues involve complex administrative law. There are myriad, ever-lengthening statutes and regulations to decipher, and environmental documents that are now measured in the hundreds or thousands of pages. The longer I participate in these processes and their eventual scrutiny by a judge, the more I am convinced these cases are decided on that fabric of viewpoints and perspectives factoring in the law but also ethics, rationality, religion, equity and fairness. With rare exceptions, such as failing to meet an explicitly defined jurisdictional requirement, there are no legal trump cards. Often, through hindsight, we realize a case was decided on what I describe as a “visceral level.” You don’t have an unqualified “right” to be on public land and certainly not to be riding upon it on a motorcycle.

Some will refuse to accept this answer, assume I am just wrong, and search for a more comforting view outlining a just-articulated constitutional right to motorized recreation. These people don’t hire me and occasionally seek to inspire BRC to find my replacement. Their quest for truth has gone unsatisfied, squanders limited resources and breeds division within an already-stressed community.

We use the law when we can use it, but we need more. The law can best work for us when it

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resonates with some deeper sense, enveloping the awkward realms of ethics, philosophy, morality. For many the response has been “we like doing this and we’re not really hurting anything.” That isn’t going to cut it. We need to accept that “conservation” is an almost universally-held goal. We need to show that properly-managed recreation leads to a more effective and culturally inclusive brand of “conservation” than “management by closure.” Many emphasize rural communities and socioeconomic benefits, but “we” don’t have exclusive claim to that realm and even if we did you can bet in today’s world that a judge with a lifetime appointment is going to err on the side of caution balancing an endangered invertebrate over the chamber of commerce. We need to consider the argument that hunters, even anglers, must make – that their activity (even killing) actually conserves the environment better than doing nothing.

I’ve said it before and am saying it again. We need to quit dreaming of a Hail Mary and invest in experienced and qualified professionals, prioritizing those in the fields that can make a difference.
JEEPS DESCENDED on the West Virginia State Capitol Saturday, February 2nd, 2019, to show their presence in West Virginia and the importance of this 43-billion-dollar industry. The West Virginia Jeep Club and the Ohio River Four Wheelers were there as well as the vice-president from the Southern Four Wheel Drive Association, Al Sweney, who drove his jeep all the way from South Carolina.

They were here to support a Senate resolution urging congress to open federal lands to all forms of recreation in West Virginia and get West Virginia on the map as an eastern destination for scenic jeep trail rides.

Thanks to Nikko Bowden for putting this ride together welcoming legislators to see up close what this hobby is all about. Thanks to the Senators that took part in the ride. Also thanks to Aaron Roddy for making the trek all the way from Cincinnati and Stephen Austin for supplying the ride for me, Deborah, and Senator Patricia Puertas-Rucker in his orange JK.

[More photos from this ride on page 14]
How ORVs shaped my life

By Senator Mark R. Maynard (R)
West Virginia Senate

WHEN I WAS BORN, my father, Richard Dale Maynard was involved in recreational trail riding. He became involved with a local 4wheel drive club known as the “Original Ridgerunners 4-Wheel Drive Club” they had Friday night club meetings and Sunday trail rides. I spent my youth in his white ‘71 Chevy Blazer with 35” gumbo muders, 4.56 gears and lockers in both ends. It actually shaped my life, gave me purpose, I spent so much quality time with my Mom, Dad, and my sister, always making it a family affair.

I learned to love the outdoors, picnic lunches, and the pleasure of being challenged to tackle difficult terrain, showcasing not only the ability of your vehicle, but demonstrating your driving skill.

I later would perform these same driver skills I saw my dad do so many times. This was our recreation life until the end of the 70s. During 1980 my Dad built and campaigned a 78 Chevy sand drag truck. He raced semi-professionally in West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, and Indiana. I was 8 years old at the time, and spending time at the races with other 4WD enthusiasts, from all over the eastern United States really showed me what special friendships could be made, plus a hobby that occupies your time and gives you a sense of fulfillment. I graduated from Marshall University with two BBA’s all while keeping abreast on the ORV hobby, while also riding my Broncos.

Since that time I have remained active in the industry, and after being elected to the state Senate, I decided to take my love of motorized outdoor recreation and promote it in my home state, and grow it to the potential I know West Virginia has.
THE EMERY COUNTY BILL, which just passed the Senate 92-8 as part of a package (S. 47), should serve as a dire wake-up call that legislation harming motorized and even mechanized (bicycle) recreation can apparently keep all OHV representatives in the dark—even keep neighboring county/state/federal representatives in the dark—without facing any consequence for this blatant shirk of transparency. As soon as the unprecedented bill was introduced last May, Ride with Respect received tremendous help from thirty Utah-based OHV clubs and a dozen national groups including BRC, but our collective effort simply came up short. If we don’t grow, our form of recreation will die, slowly but surely.

On the other side of the Green River in neighboring Grand County, Utah, Ride with Respect has performed nearly 20,000 hours of trail work for all the federal and state land managers since 2002. We have endured national-monument threats like the Greater Canyonlands campaign that applied to the Grand and Emery sides of the Green. I greatly favor compromise solutions even if they give up significant access or potential and, in return, get only leverage to defend the remaining access rather than outright guarantees. Along with improving the outlook for OHV riders, I want to improve the outlook of conservation and nearby communities. Unfortunately, the Emery County bill accomplishes none of this when viewed in the long term.

Details about the bill can be found online: http://www.sageridersmc.com/land-use-issues.html (all dashes are part of this address). Basically, the bill as introduced last May lacked the previous bills’ assurances, such as legislatively codifying the current travel plan so that BLM could only do temporary closures or permanent reroutes (not permanent closures outright), preventing subsequent national-monument proclamations in Emery County, and clearly directing BLM to not manage the remaining acres like wilderness. The May bill did half-heartedly attempt to “cherry stem” all county Class D primitive roads to keep them outside of the National Conservation Area (NCA) designation that was initially proposed for the San Rafael Swell, but that got immediately canned in Congress for being unfeasible and ineffective at actually ensuring access.

From June through November we respectfully made four reasonable requests, such as removing language that preemptively and categorically
prohibits motorized route construction in the Swell. We don't expect major trail expansions but think the BLM should maintain the authority to consider minor links to make the existing trails more useful, not to mention constructing a simple campground loop to concentrate the impacts. By November the bill sponsors, Rep. Curtis and Sen. Hatch, at least inserted language allowing for motorized route construction in the case of rerouting/realigning, which was a good start. They also changed the proposal for the Swell from an NCA to simply a "recreation area," which is also a step in the right direction, although the area's stated purpose of "recreation" became increasingly outnumbered by the conservation-oriented purposes of "natural," "wildlife," and "ecological." Yet we continued trying to negotiate in good faith.

In December the bill sponsors disclosed another 115,134 acres of wilderness designation, but wouldn't say where the wilderness would be designated, not even to Sen. Lee. Consequently Sen. Lee blocked the bill, but they still wouldn't say where the wilderness would be designated, not until January 8th when they reintroduced the bill in a new session of Congress (this time with Sen. Romney co-sponsoring the bill in place of the retired Sen. Hatch). We discovered that the 115,134 acres would permanently close 74 miles of county Class D primitive roads that were no longer "cherry stemmed" as they had been the previous May. Plus, the 115,134 acres included areas where BLM had found no "wilderness characteristics" or decided not to manage for those characteristics. We immediately expressed these concerns to the bill sponsors and Emery County commissioners/staff, but were assured that the routes were already closed, despite that fact that the BLM's current travel plan is blatantly incomplete/indefensible in the southern half of the Price Field Office (which the agency is working to rectify from 2019 through 2021). Once the federal government got back up and running in late January for us to confirm the proper interpretation of current BLM rules, we approached the bill sponsors and Emery County again, and they did manage to reduce the surprise wilderness expansion to 114,844 acres and the permanent road closures to 73 miles. But please note that the total wilderness to be designated is 642,963 acres, which is FIVE TIMES more than the wilderness designated by the
Washington County bill a decade ago.
These facts finally reached some neighboring counties and state legislators who are now furious by the bait and switch of a bad deal made worse. Granted, the counties and state will benefit from a 64,000-acre state-federal land exchange to consolidate School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) property, which could generate at least $50M. However, such exchanges have been accomplished in multiple ways that don't involve designating wilderness, let alone designating 10 acres of wilderness for every 1 acre of exchange land. Further, most of that revenue is a one-time gain, whereas the revenue of actually utilizing the land lost to wilderness (by any mechanized means, even a hand cart for trail work) could have been ongoing. Adding insult to injury, when you consider that the Emery County wilderness constitutes half the wilderness designated by the S. 47 package, you realize that sacrificing mechanized access in Emery County is essentially purchasing the support of "conservation" groups who would otherwise oppose the more development-oriented bills. That's great for those other counties and states, but for Emery County and some of its neighbors, it leaves them in a situation where they've essentially sold the farm.

Lest you think I'm overstating the harm of designating at least 114,844 acres of unsuitable wilderness, let me address the phenomenon of displacement. Displacement can affect non-motorized use when motorized use is inconsiderate, which is why we encourage a trail ethic such as Tread Lightly!, in order to make trails shared and actually enjoyed by multiple uses. Conversely motorized use is the most severely displaced by excessive wilderness expansion. For example, in December the Emery County bill more than doubled the Labyrinth Canyon wilderness acreage, immediately closing half of the Itchy And Scratchy mountain-bike trail and preventing similar trails from contouring the slickrock rim of Labyrinth Canyon. That kind of bicycle trail providing glimpses into the canyon would draw even more tourists to Green River and Hanksville, while OHV trails could be developed in the adjacent San Rafael Desert, a relatively-flat sandy area where BLM sanctioned many motorcycle races years ago. This bill will push the bicycle-trail development over to the San Rafael Desert, which could push OHV-trail development to...
basically the corridor of Interstate 70, neither of which would effectively draw more tourists. And exactly what natural resources will benefit from banning mechanized use so far beyond Labyrinth Canyon? Essentially nothing benefits, except the portion of non-mechanized recreation that is both non-developed (i.e. not accessible trails for families of all ages) and non-commercial (i.e. not guide services or even wilderness therapy programs that need to group more than a dozen people in order to break even). It makes the sandbox smaller, constricting the ability to zone uses, and to prevent conflicts or even manage resources in a cost-effective manner.

A silver lining is that the Utah legislature is considering HB 78 to ensure that counties promptly and accurately inform the state (not to mention neighboring counties) about public-land bills they intend to endorse. You could argue that the Emery County bill is great, but you can't argue that such a serious decision should not be made in the dark, as all three levels of government should weigh in. Another upshot of the Emery County bill is that many OHV riders have woken up to the fact that, if a bad bill can pass in OHV-friendly Utah, it could pass anywhere. We must encourage all enthusiasts to join/participate/donate to their local clubs, state associations, and national groups including BRC. That way the Emery County bill's overreaching ban on all things mechanized will not be in vain.

—Clif Koontz is the executive director of Ride with Respect, which conserves shared-use trails and their surroundings. Visit them online at www.ridewithrespect.org.

Voice of the BlueRibbon Coalition
Board Member Spotlight

https://sharetrails.org/board

Highlighting one outstanding member of the dedicated and unpaid members of the Sharetrails.Org/BlueRibbon Coalition Board of Directors

JOHN STEWART

ADVOCATING ACCESS to public lands carries a responsibility to be part of the solution for managing the lands. As a strong proponent for participation to make a difference, John moved from working in the public sector to being a full-time advocate for recreation.

As a Natural Resources Consultant working from his home base in Lakeside, California, John represents California 4 Wheel Drive Association interests before local, state, and federal recreation and land management agencies. Participating with the Giant Sequoia National Monument and Sequoia National Forest on monument planning, travel management, and forest plan revisions, John assisted in forming the non-profit Giant Sequoia National Monument Association to promote volunteer partnerships with Monument and Forest management and served as Chairman of Board for the Monument Association for five years.
Forming the Association evolved from mediated discussions with Forest Service officials to develop a Monument Plan that was acceptable to recreation, property owners, local governments, and environmental interests. During the discussions it became evident that Forest Service needed a volunteer cadre to assist with plan implementation phase. Forming the association provides a group of volunteers to assist with managing visitors and publicity of the Trail of a 100 Giants, a very popular hiking trail within a large redwood grove.

Forest Service Region 5 (California) spent over ten years focused on travel management, inventorying and classifying routes. Over a four-year period during that time, John worked with a collaborative group of recreationists, environmentalists, business owners, and local government officials to develop a travel management plan for the Inyo NF. The results earned the group a “Spirit of the Inyo” award from the Inyo Forest Supervisor.

Water quality is a major concern when trails are involved. John worked with a team comprised of representatives from Forest Service, State Water Resources Control Board and other non-government organization to develop a Forest service Water Quality Management Plan for the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The results of that effort have been adopted as a Forest Service Handbook for use throughout the nation.

Working with a sub-committee of the BLM Desert District Advisory Council, John helped BLM develop a state-wide handbook outlining a consistent procedure to apply for Special Recreation Permits. That effort led to additional changes to the SRP process, some of which are subject to legislative changes requiring Congres-sional action. What started as an effort to get five BLM field offices in one BLM district to use a common permit application evolved into a state-wide handbook and now, congressional involvement.

As part of the California Motorized Recreation Council, John worked towards gaining permanent program status for the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation program. After many months of meetings, conference calls, and email exchanges, a group of off-highway vehicle recreation associations, representing off-road recreation enthusiasts throughout the state, developed legislation to provide reauthorization of the highly successful Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) program as administered by
the Department of Parks and Recreation. The State Assembly passed the legislation that provided a permanent status for the program. The State Senate concurred and the legislation was submitted to the Governor for signature. On October 3, 2017, the Governor signed legislation making the OHMVR program permanent.

This was a major win as the program faced periodic “sunset” reviews which created frequent fights to obtain the necessary re-authorization of the program. That win did bring about new challenges as the state has now begun a major re-organization of the entire State Department of Parks and Recreation. Obtaining a permanent statute for the program has not ended the fight for OHV recreation. It has changed the game and provided new challenges requiring a continued participation in the coming years to protect and provide for OHV recreation.

As an advocate for recreation, local issues often evolve into national issues, requiring resources and connections outside your state. Recognizing this, in 2010 John joined the Board of Directors of the BlueRibbon Coalition and is current Treasurer. As a member of the BRC Board, John has worked to develop policies and organizational changes to be able to rapidly adjust to a shifting political and economic environment where important issues today may fall in priority tomorrow.

John is Managing Editor of the OutdoorWire.com family of websites directed toward the four-wheel drive recreation market featuring news, technical articles, and information to promote, protect, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities.

As a long-time member of the Tierra del Sol Four Wheel Drive Club of San Diego, John has been active in club activities and has served on their Board of Directors and as Club President. As former Chairman for the Tierra del Sol Desert Safari, an internationally recognized four-wheel
drive event, he oversaw an event as attendance grew at a rate exceeding 11% per year, reaching over 1,550 registered vehicles in 2004. Desert Safari is one of the oldest and largest 4x4 events in the nation.

In 2002, John was elected as Director of Environmental Affairs for United Four Wheel Drive Associations and served in that capacity until May 2007. As Director of Environmental Affairs, he assumed responsibility for assisting member clubs and associations with their interactions with public land managers and elected officials. As a member of the UFWDA Board of Directors, he participated in developing corporate strategy and represented UFWDA interests with federal agencies and other national motorized recreation groups. Stewart was one of the architects of the 2007 UFWDA Business and Marketing Plan which laid the framework for many organization changes.

John holds a Bachelors Business Administration Degree and Computer Science and Information Technology Degree with a lengthy background in supervisory and management positions in the Information Systems Technology field involving network security monitoring, strategic planning, budget analysis, and program audits.

**Personal Philosophy Regarding Public Lands:**
“I believe and advocate that the best policies and management decisions come through full public disclosure and maximum public involvement. It is important to involve local elected officials, local organizations, and individuals representing all points of view before making land management decisions that have long-term effects on local communities. I believe that the strength of individual involvement is an important element to support an active access advocacy program. Each recreationist must be informed and educated on the issues affecting their recreation opportunities. The success of access depends on the commitment of the whole.”

—For more about the members of the BRC Board of Directors, visit [http://sharetrails.org/board](http://sharetrails.org/board)
IN EARLY FEBRUARY 2018, the Virginia Four Wheel Drive Association (VA4WDA) was approached by a member regarding an ordinance before the Currituck County Board of Commissioners (CCBOC) that would charge for a permit to park on the drivable beaches north of the Corolla North Carolina Beach 4X4 Access Point (also known as the north beaches).

The VA4WDA attended the February 19, 2018, meeting. We learned that the CCBOC approached the issue as a policing matter and as such could pass an ordinance with only the commissioners’ votes and without any official public comment period. Attendees were allowed 3 minutes each at the start of the meeting to voice their opinions, which our Board of Directors and some members did. The vote was 6 yes and 1 no (a unanimous vote was necessary to pass), which delayed the process until the next meeting.

At the March 5, 2018, meeting of the CCBOC, the ordinance passed with only a majority needed and the same 6 yes and 1 no vote. However, while the BOC was writing the ordinance as we sat there, they did add a suggestion from the VA4WDA Vice President to make the ordinance effective for the Friday of Memorial Day to the Monday of Labor Day so the beach could be enjoyed the rest of the year for 4X4 access at no charge. The permit to PARK on the beach (you can drive, you just cannot park) is $50 for a 10 day permit or $150 for a permit covering the roughly 4 month season. However, Currituck County, NC, residents and property owners, can obtain as
many passes as they wish at no charge.
On June 21, 2018, the VA4WDA filed suit in Currituck County, NC, on the grounds that this ordinance violates the NC Constitution which says, “no person or set of persons is entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community but in consideration of public services”.

Our July 30 attempt in court to pass an immediate injunction for a cease of the permit system was not approved by the judge.

Our next day in court for the hearing is March 11, 2019. VA4WDA hosts a Carova NC Beach Clean each October. www.va4wda.org
Sandy Schneirla, VP VA4WDA
by ANDREW TAYLOR
CORE Secretary

THE CAPITAL OFF ROAD ENTHUSIASTS, or CORE, was formed in the year 2000. The charter members, from Washington D.C., Virginia, and Maryland, wanted to make a non-manufacturer-specific full-size club to promote and participate in responsible off roading and connect with others of a similar mindset. Our members have owned and driven Jeeps, Toyotas, Nissans, Lexuses’, Suzukis, Land Rovers, Rams, Fords and Chevys.

The club still thrives today nearly 20 years after it was founded. The last charter members have finally moved on to new adventures, but the club remains strong. Our secret is a solid foundation, a real purpose, and sense of community. In an era where everyone is making and joining “Facebook clubs” we’re proudly “old fashioned.” We hold 6 meetings a year, have bylaws, are registered as a non-profit, vote on issues, and have membership requirements based on participation in meetings and events throughout the year.

To some this may seem tedious, you just want to get off road right? But in reality this nurtures an actual community with purpose. Our bylaws allow for easy power transitions at the end of each year, something that kills plenty of “Facebook clubs” when the founders’ life priorities change. Our requirements encourage participation and actually meeting and connecting with our fellow wheelers. This community also has the power to organize and connect with other organizations to make sure our voice is heard regarding issues in our region that affect our access to recreational space! Our members are also proud members of the BlueRibbon Coalition, the Virginia Four Wheel Drive Association (VA4WDA), and the Maryland Off Highway Vehicle Alliance (MOHVA).

We’re also very active. Most recent years we’ve exceeded our goal of averaging at least one trail ride a month. Just in the last few years as a club we have wheeled in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. We enjoy trips to drive on the beaches of the Outer
Banks of North Carolina and Assateague in Maryland. We regularly camp and wheel and volunteer in the State and National Forests of Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland. The off-road parks of Pennsylvania also see regular trips from our members and guests. We host beginners’ runs, man a tent at the PA Jeeps Show, and participate in annual charity events like Wheelin’ for Hope and the VA4WDA Earth Day Cleanup.

We cannot emphasize enough that recreational off roaders should formally organize, participate, and work together. The benefits are measurable and the community it fosters is remarkable. Feel free to join us sometime. We’ll see you on the trail!

—For more information check out CORE online: www.core4x4.org.

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SINCE 1924, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) has advocated for motorcyclists’ interests in the halls of local, state and federal government, the committees of international governing organizations, and the court of public opinion.

The AMA is the world’s largest motorcycling organization, representing riders from all walks of life, who are navigating many routes on their journey to the same destination: freedom on two wheels.

Nick Haris and Steve Salisbury are members of the AMA Government Relations team who work with riders, elected officials, land management agencies at all levels of government and other access advocacy organizations to help protect and expand opportunities for responsible motorized off-highway recreation. Nick is based in California, Steve in Washington, D.C.

Q: What are the top issues facing off-highway riders today?
Steve: One of the big issues is the threatening loss of riding areas on public lands. The
U. S. Senate just passed a sweeping land use bill that created 600,000-plus acres of Wilderness in Utah and eliminated access to more than 50 miles of trails for motorized use. While the AMA supports Wilderness designations that meet the stringent conditions set forth in the Wilderness Act of 1964, for years now “no-use” advocates have been abusing the legislative process to ban responsible off-highway vehicle recreation on public lands. These threats arise regularly.

Nick: We also are working with the U.S. Interior Department in an effort to reopen the Clear Creek Management Area in California to recreational riding. It was closed in 2008 by administrative order because of the presence of asbestos. But testing has shown that the substance presents little threat to dirt bike riders. The CCMA encompasses about 75,000 acres of public lands. Reopening this area would help meet the pent-up demand in California for off-road riding.

Q: What actions does the AMA take on issues like this?

Nick: We do our best to stay ahead of issues and avoid the introduction of restrictive legislation. If a bill is introduced, we work with the legislators and rally AMA members, asking them to contact their representatives to oppose bills that run counter to the interests of motorcyclists. We rely heavily on the energy and
enthusiasm of our members. There is strength in numbers. And there are AMA members in every congressional district in the country. We work hard to connect our members to their elected officials because their constituents’ voices matter most.

Q: What successes has the AMA had recently?
Steve: One area we have been focusing on is the need for additional single-track motorized trails. We worked closely with local advocates to convince the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to add a small amount of single track in the Maumee State Forest. And we are in discussions with the Wayne National Forest in Ohio to get some single-track trails to augment the ATV trail system there.

Nick: The AMA also supports a proposal in West Virginia to add a trail system in the Cabwaylingo State Forest, which covers more than 8,000 acres. That state already has the Hatfield-McCoy Trails system, which is a highly successful public-private partnership that provides more than 600 miles of trails. More communities are understanding the recreational and economic benefits that come from promoting dirt bike and ATV riding and welcoming responsible riders to their towns.

Q: What can we do to help the AMA promote the motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling?
Steve: Well, the first step to take would be to join the AMA, if you are not already a member. As Nick said, there is strength in numbers. Then, help the AMA identify issues where you live and where you ride, so the AMA staff and other AMA members can get involved.

Nick: Another important component is the growing AMA State Chapter network. Every AMA member is automatically a member of their state chapter. We are recruiting volunteers to act as state coordinators, who act as a liaison between local members and our offices in California, Pickerington, Ohio, and Washington, D.C.

Steve: Everyone who cares about motorcycling should also sign up to receive all the AMA electronic communications (https://cqrcengage.com/amacycle/app/register?1&m=16006) including AMA Action Alerts and AMA News & Notes, to stay abreast of the latest news and to take action when needed.

To learn more about the AMA, see www.americanmotorcyclist.com or connect through Facebook at www.facebook.com/americanmotorcyclist
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