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CORVA – California Off-Road News and Updates

fighting for your right to access public land

What do we want.....POLITICAL POWER!

When do we want it.....NOW!

I know these are old slogans, but with everything happening it should be clear that the greater OHV community lacks enough political power to influence politicians to protect our community. CORVA is starting a campaign to regain what we have lost over the years. It's all about relationships and connections with elected representatives....(and their staffers). At CORVA we're here to help you and we have the same goals – increasing our political power until we represent a true political force. It's not about one or two people influencing politics, it's about every constituent contacting their representatives and telling them why off-road access is important to you and your family. That personal touch means everything. To check on your state elected officials go to: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>

State Of California

Recently the off-road community was made aware that Daphne Greene, the long-time Deputy Director of the OHV Division was informed by Governor Brown that her appointment to her post would be terminated as of December 31, 2011. This notice sent shock waves throughout the community, and everyone from on-the-ground enthusiasts, law enforcement, members of the conservation community and numerous county supervisors have petitioned the Governor to reappoint Ms. Greene. If you were ever in doubt of the importance of political connections, this should convince everyone out there of the necessity to *be involved*.



Jeff Gaffney, Daphne Greene, Phil Jenkins (RTF)

Grant meetings scheduled:

Southern California: January 9 - 10, 2012, Location: Doubletree Inn, 222 North Vineyard Avenue, Ontario, CA

Northern California: January 12 - 13, 2012, Location: Red Lion Inn, 401 Arden Way, Sacramento, CA 95815

Agenda: First day, 9:30am – 4:30pm, OLGA Refresher/Overview, Second Day, 7:30am – 5:00pm

For more information, go to: http://ohv.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=1164

All the agencies that apply for grants are looking for suggestions for this year's grants. Become part of the process, offer suggestions and ideas.

Budget Battles: January 10th marks the beginning of the budget battle in the legislature, and the prognosis doesn't look good. It has already been rumored that the majority of the funding for Boats and Waterways will be taken from that fund, and we are going to have to work hard to protect what is ours. Don't be surprised by CORVA alerts as information is released that our OHV Trust Fund is under attack, but anticipate this will be the case, and get ready to act....yet again. The harder we fight, the better chance we have of keeping our funding.

Hold Your Elected Officials Accountable, Let Them Know What's Important To You!

Bureau Of Land Management

BLM Bakersfield: Thanks to all that commented on these plans, Stewards of the Sequoia did an exemplary job of working with the Bakersfield Field Office making sure that routes important to off-roaders were included in the plan. Likewise, Marshall Havner of Tule Gem and Mineral worked closely with the Field Office to retain access to areas important to rock-hounders. Thanks to Bruce Whitcher of CORVA for holding a Comments Project class to teach stakeholders in the area to write substantive comments.

Clear Creek Management Area: Is no news good news? It's hard to say, but we do expect to see a final plan released by January or February of 2012. Controversy is sure to ensue. San Benito County has also passed a resolution to ask members of Congress to create a National Recreation Area designation for CCMA, a step that will hopefully lead to the reopening of Clear Creek.

Desert Advisory Council (DAC): New and reappointed members of the DAC; "*Francis A. Muth, Ph.D, of Palm Desert who will represent wildlife; Zachary N. Scrivner, Kern County Supervisor, who will fill one of two elected official positions; and Mark Murray of Long Beach who will represent public-at-large interests. Council members re-appointed to a second three year term are: Dinah O. Shumway, of Apple Valley, representing non-renewable resources; and Randy Banis, of Leona Valley, representing public-at-large interests.* Thanks to Randy Banis for representing the interests of the greater off-road community in an exemplary fashion. Meetings are open to the public, if you love the desert, get involved!

Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan: One of the most important ongoing processes is dedicated to mapping for renewable energy projects in Southern California. This remapping of desert lands serves to accommodate an executive order issued by Governor Brown in April of 2011. The process, like many other governmental procedures, was designed from the beginning to treat motorized access as less important than other uses. Check out this link for more information: <http://www.drecp.org/about/index.html>

Recreation Access Council of California (RACC): There is an ongoing process to map areas in California that are important to ALL forms of recreation. An ad hoc committee of concerned recreation enthusiasts have been meeting once a month to gather information to map as much information as possible to protect these resources from other plans, including the DRECP. Check the website at: <http://recaccesscalifornia.com/racc/> there is a self-imposed deadline of January 15th to gather as much information as possible. If your favorite area has been left off the map, please contact me.

Special Recreation Permit Process: There has been a committee made up of concerned members of the public from all different forms of recreation that has been tasked to redefine the Special Recreation Permit process. For more information go to: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/prog/recreation/recpermit.html>

Western Mojave Off-Road Vehicle Designation Process (WEMO): "*The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has scheduled eight public scoping meetings to gather public comments and recommendations on the preparation of environmental assessments for eight travel management areas within the West Mojave Planning Area.*" To access the home page for the WEMO project, go to: http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd/west_mojave_wemo.html
For information on the public meetings, see the following press release: http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/newsroom/2011/december/CDD1217_wemoscope.html

The BLM is still considering comments on the plan, look on the home page or press release for contact information, but key to the process will be the participation of the public in these upcoming scoping meetings.

They will be held in the 8 identified travel management areas. Meetings for areas under the Barstow Field Office will be held at their offices at 2601 Barstow Road, Barstow, CA 92311. Meetings for areas under the jurisdiction of the Ridgecrest Field Office will be held at the Kerr-McGee Bldg, 100 West California Ave, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 from 4:00pm – 7:00pm. The subject of each meeting will be concerning one management area at a time. Written comments will be accepted for those unable to attend in person: <mailto:cawemopa@blm.gov>

January 9 th – Barstow	Area 1	February 9 th - Barstow	Area 5
January 18 th – Kerr-McGee Center	Area 2	February 14 th – Kerr-McGee Center	Area 6
January 26 th - Barstow	Area 3	February 16 th - Barstow	Area 7
February 6 th – Kerr-McGee Center	Area 4	February 21 st - Barstow	Area 8



Forest Service

Forest Plan Revisions & Sierra Cascades Dialog Sessions: The Forest Service has identified three forests for the first new planning efforts in California – The Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra. *This planning effort is said to include Subpart A analysis, the part of Travel Management intended to 'minimize the road system'. What does this mean? We still don't know, so we have to stay involved in with your local forest.

The Sierra Cascades Dialog Sessions are held roughly once every two to three months, and are intended to prepare the forests for the planning process, and define the important characteristics to retain in our forests. Up to now there has been no recreation representative on the steering committee, but I am pleased to announce that I have been selected as the recreation representative to the steering committee, and will protect off-road access to the best of my ability.

Forest Service figures out that recreation brings money to local communities! National Forests in California provide benefit to local economies: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/news/2011/NVUMreport.shtml>

Motor Vehicle Use Maps: http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/ohv_maps.shtml

Seasonal Closures: This winter we have seen just how ill-advised fixed seasonal closures are for our forest. With changeable weather patterns in play, we are seeing forests closed to recreation just as we are experiencing the best weather for riding and driving. It is has been a dry winter up to now, and that is more proof closures should be predicated on moisture levels in the soil, rather than dates that have been arbitrarily chosen.

Woodcutting and Campfire Permits: Reminding everyone that both the 2011 woodcutting and 2011 campfire permits expire on December 31. Permits for the new 2012 year will be available at all Forest Service Ranger Stations beginning January 1st.

Eldorado National Forest: As of January 1st, seasonal closure restrictions will go into force on the Eldorado closing all native surface roads to wheeled vehicles (see note above on seasonal closures).

Rubicon: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Rubicon Trail Easement and Resource Improvement Project Is Available! Notice of the release of the document was published in the Federal Register on December 16th, with the mandatory 45 day comment period all comments are due by January 30th. Find the documents at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/eldorado/projects/rubicon/index.shtml> and submit comments either through that page, email in .doc, .txt or .rtf format to: <mailto:comments-pacificsouthwest-eldorado@fs.fed.us> or sent by SNAIL MAIL to Kathy Hardy, Forest Supervisor, 100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667.

Mormon Emigrant Trail: As of November 23rd, Mormon Emigrant Trail at Silver Fork Road was closed to passenger traffic, and open to off-road vehicles! This news release restores the traditional use of Mormon Emigrant Trail in winter, and allows off-roaders to have some fun with their families. The only problem this year – no snow. While the weather isn't cooperating, kudos to the Eldorado National Forest for helping with this issue.

Pacific Ranger District: There is a new District Ranger, Richard Thornburgh, who comes from the San Bernardino National Forest is no stranger to off-road recreation.

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit: The first of a series of meetings of the Tahoe Meadows Winter Recreation Group has been scheduled for January 29th in Incline Village. I am proud to be a member of this group, and will be attending the meeting to make sure snowmobile rights are protected. Please contact me with pertinent information regarding winter recreation in the Tahoe basin.

Lassen National Forest: Each forest must develop new Motor Vehicle Use Maps for 2012. With completion of mitigation projects, the map should reflect increased trail opportunities. If it doesn't, contact your local forest and raise a fuss.

Plumas National Forest: Sierra Access Coalition (SAC), a multiple-use group based in Quincy, CA and CORVA, along with Butte County Board of Supervisors and Plumas County, are filing suit against the Plumas National Forest. This is a landmark lawsuit citing violations of NEPA during the Travel Management Process. For all those outdoor recreation enthusiasts who suffered through the indignities of Travel Management, this is your chance to make a difference. SAC, CORVA and the Counties are taking a stand against the Forest Service, and asking you to help. Every dollar and every letter of support makes a big difference. For all those that asked over and over again during Travel Management when we would strike back – well, this is it. CORVA is taking a stand for you, and we need your help. Email me at amy.granat@corva.org for more information.

Sierra National Forest: Check the website for the forest at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/sierra/home/?cid=stelprdb5315989> for information on which OHV trails or open, and which are closed. This week I heard some disturbing information about incursions on the Dusy-Ershim Trail when it is closed. The Dusy could have no better advocates than the Four Wheel Drive Club of Fresno, and they open and close the trail according to conditions. Respect the closures and respect the trail.

Shasta-Trinity National Forest: There are real dangers with illegal marijuana growing in our national forests. Besides being a considerable environmental hazard, there is also dangerous to approach the area. Check out the interesting poster prepared by the Forest Service: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5167047.pdf

Stanislaus National Forest: We are still awaiting a decision from the Judge in the case of the Wilderness Society vs Forest Service, where an off-road coalition served as interveners to repel the call for road and trail closure.

Tahoe National Forest: *The Forest Service is working to correct errors on the Tahoe National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) and hopes to re-issue them by the end of the calendar year, stated Tom Quinn, Forest Supervisor. "We have been carefully assessing these complex maps to identify errors and the reasons for the errors. We are working hard to make the changes so that the public will have them soon."* For the meantime, Tahoe National Forest cannot implement the Travel Management plan because of the lack of a Motor Vehicle Use Map. So go out and enjoy the forest, be careful of rutting and potential sedimentation. We don't want to trail conditions to deteriorate from travel during wet weather periods.

Four Southern California Forests: Because of a settlement of a recent lawsuit, the Forest Service was forced to conduct negotiations with various stakeholders regarding the inclusion of both user-created and designated trails into Inventoried Roadless Areas that could preclude maintenance or question the continued viability of those trails. Information has been relayed to the judge, along with some recommendations from the Forest Service.

Inyo County

"Inyo County, using a pilot program, has been granted authority to explore options for developing a greater network of linked Off-Highway Vehicle trails; they will be allowed to designate combined use highways on unincorporated county roads for up to 10 miles, subject to CHP approval. This program will remain in effect until January 1, 2017. (AB 628, Conway)"

State Water Resources Control Board

CORVA formed a coalition of off-road, hunting, equestrian and interested individuals to comment on the proposed plan for forested roads and trails. Due to our comments, both written and before the board, the board did not vote to adopt the proposed Forest Service waiver, which would have significantly harmed the ability to access and perform maintenance on our roads and trails. CORVA is working with other organizations to present more appropriate procedures.

CORVA Accomplishments - 2011

- ✓ CORVA Comments Project: held 3 workshops, 2 dedicated to Johnson Valley, 1 for the Bakersfield Field Office Travel Management
- ✓ American Land Access Association joins CORVA, bringing the power of thousands of rockhounds to our membership
- ✓ California Houndsmen for Conservation joins CORVA, bring the power of thousands of houndsmen to our membership.
- ✓ Support for OHV Division of CA State Parks: brought together over 30 organizations of off-road enthusiasts, race teams, rockhounds to deliver letters to Governor Brown and Secretary Laird.
- ✓ Tahoe Meadows Winter Recreation Collaborative Group: CORVA represents snowmobiler's rights
- ✓ Special Recreation Permit Process: 2 board members on subcommittee
- ✓ Desert Recreation Renewable Energy Conservation Plan: CORVA has representative on committee
- ✓ Recreational Access Coalition Council: mapping desert uses, CORVA BOD member chair of committee
- ✓ Forest Service LEO Task Force: eliminating bias against OHV enthusiast in national forests
- ✓ Vote Smart! Voter Guide: geared towards educating off-roaders about the candidates running for office
- ✓ OHV Advocate Day in Sacramento: "Information and Access 411" for politicians
- ✓ Pursuing legal action with the Sierra Access Coalition and Butte County against the Forest Service
- ✓ Organized "Off-Road Coalition" working together to counter efforts by the State Water Resources Control Board to restrict access in the 17 forests in California to OHV access
- ✓ Working to protect access to Rubicon, snowmobile and important OHV areas in WEMO
- ✓ Working with other groups to Save Johnson Valley