

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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In Reply To:

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EMAIL TRANSMISSION -
Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2003-057
Expires: 9/30/04

To: State Management Team

From: State Director

Subject: Off-Highway Vehicle EIS Priority Setting and Implementation
Team DD: 08/01/03

The Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Proposed Plan Amendment Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on June 18, 2003.

The ROD initiates a series of actions the BLM will take:

1. By December 18, 2003, the field offices will complete a prioritized list of areas for site-specific travel planning, in close coordination with the public and other partners. This list will be submitted to the State Director.
2. By June 18, 2005, the field offices will initiate site-specific planning on the high priority areas.
3. By June 18, 2008, the field offices will initiate site-specific planning on the moderate priority areas.

This IM provides guidance in two areas:

1. Developing the Prioritized List of Areas
2. Establishing an OHV Implementation Team

1. DEVELOPING THE PRIORITIZED LIST OF AREAS

a. Prioritized lists of areas for site-specific travel planning will be developed for all field offices that have not completed travel management planning for the entire field office or are not in the process of completing such planning. This direction excludes the following field offices: Missoula, Dillon, and Butte.

b. Delineation of Areas: Field offices will determine the scale, size, and scope of the areas to be delineated for site-specific planning. Selection of the appropriate area size should be based on the level of detailed analysis required and the potential to combine access and travel management planning with other analysis procedures. The various planning areas in each field office will be indicated on 1:100,000 maps with polygons. In addition, the polygon rating as high, moderate, or low priority will also be noted. A written description of the area will be included with the submission of the map. The description will generally list the drainage, mountain range or other descriptive features that identifies the area.

c. By October 1, 2003, field office specialists, in consultation with the Resource Advisory Councils (RAC), will develop a preliminary draft of travel planning priorities.

d. By October 15, 2003, the field offices will release this draft list of priorities to the public for comment. At a minimum, user groups interested in the proposed areas for priority listing should be contacted and provided the opportunity to comment. Additional public outreach may include public meetings, news releases, mailings, etc.

e. By November 15, 2003, comments will be collected and analyzed, and any changes in the priority list will be made by December 1, 2003.

f. Final priority lists for each field office will be submitted to the State Director by December 18, 2003.

g. Once priority areas have been submitted to the State Director, the field office should submit their high and moderate areas as projects in the Budget Planning System (BPS) and indicate their funding needs by fiscal year. When the field offices complete their submissions, the State Office will package the OHV planning needs for funding consideration.

h. Criteria for Prioritizing Areas: In addition to the written descriptions below, the attached matrix will provide guidance for setting priorities.

1. High Priority Areas: These are areas that currently have a high level of OHV use that has resulted in resource damage or other user conflicts. In addition, if most of the criteria on the following chart rate high for intensity or impacts, especially resource damage, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species, and public safety, then the area should be a High Priority. Site-specific planning in these areas will begin within 2 years.

2. Moderate Priority Areas: These areas may have some moderate rating level of intensity or magnitude on the criteria in the following chart. In addition, these areas could provide OHV opportunities and also minimize user conflicts and resource damage. Site-specific planning will begin within 5 years.
3. Low Priority Areas: These areas are the remaining areas and likely have negligible or low rating on the criteria on the following chart. These areas have minimal OHV use, with the exception of hunting season, and are somewhat remote. Localized resource problems in these areas are rectified with emergency closures until they are resolved. There are no specific requirements for initiation of site-specific planning for these areas.

2. ESTABLISHING AN OHV IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Purpose: To provide guidance, consistency, and oversight of the implementation of the Montana/Dakotas OHV EIS.

Membership: 7-member core team

- 1-MSO Resources-Recreation-Travel Manager: Team Chair
- 1-MSO External Affairs
- 1-MSO Law Enforcement
- 1-Field Manager
- 1-Field Office Recreation Planner
- 1-Field Office Planner or Assistant Field Manager
- 1-Field Office Engineer

In order to have balanced representation from across the states, the states will be divided into four geographic regions. A representative from each region will participate on the team to ensure that area-specific concerns are considered and addressed before policy and guidelines are implemented. Missoula, Butte, and Dillon are in the Western Region. Lewistown/Havre/Great Falls, and Malta/Glasgow are in the Central Region. Miles City and Billings are in the Eastern Region. North Dakota and South Dakota are in the Dakotas Region.

Role: Each team member will serve as a lead for the various issues. The team member shall be responsible for consulting with other staff in similar positions when examining issues and developing recommendations. For example, when dealing with law enforcement issues, the team representative will consult with other field office law enforcement rangers across all districts. Should additional specialists be needed (i.e., GIS), staff will be called in on an as-needed basis.

Process: The team will develop recommendations and guidelines and bring these to the SMT for approval. The Recreation Travel Manager will chair the team. Work will begin on the issue list generated by the SMT, with additions made as necessary. The initial meeting will be held on August 19-20, and will include members of the Interagency OHV Team. The Interagency OHV Team will provide a "lessons learned" session and answer questions specific to the implementation process. The team will provide

status reports and updates at each SMT meeting. The team will meet via meeting or telephone conference call at least once per month initially. Team members will work on assignments between meetings.

Nomination Process: Field Managers from each region and Branch Chiefs shall submit a prioritized list of candidates from the categories above. **Nominations should be sent to Cindy Staszak by August 1, 2003.** Candidates will be selected based upon achieving a balance of the categories above, with an attempt to select the priority candidate from each region.

Signed by: A. Jerry Meredith, Associate State Director

Authenticated by: Kathy Iszler, Staff Assistant (MT-924)

1 Attachment
1-Matrix (1 p)

Distribution w/Attm.
Assistant Field Manager, Havre Field Station
Assistant Field Manager, Glasgow Field Station
SO and FO Recreation Staff

ATTACHMENT #1: OHV PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

Rate each criteria on a scale of 1 (low intensity or magnitude) to 5 (high intensity or magnitude).

CRITERIA	<u>AREAS</u>					
High OHV use						
High User Conflicts						
Erosion problems						
Damage to cultural or historical resources						
Damage to vegetation						
Potential to spread noxious weeds						
Presence of riparian/wetland areas						
Wildlife and habitat concerns/ potential impacts to endangered or sensitive species						
Safety of all users						
History of user created roads being developed						
Opportunities to join other planning efforts. Coordination with other agencies & partners.						
Special management areas (Monuments, WSA's, Wild & scenic river)						
Opportunity to provide a variety of OHV experiences while minimizing resource damage & conflicts						
Need to resolve conflicts or deal with cross country travel.						
User needs & interest						
Area has high number of user created roads & trails						
TOTALS						