

# **BLM's National OHV Strategy: Guidance for Local Solutions**

## **Process and Time-line**

### **Background**

On January 10, 2000, the Bureau of Land Management announced that it will develop a national strategy for ensuring environmentally responsible Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on BLM-managed public lands. Working in partnership with all interested parties and the general public, the BLM will develop the strategy to address land-management issues prompted by the growing popularity of OHV use.

The BLM is developing its national strategy in response to the convergence of several factors that have made OHV use a more pressing issue in the West, where the region's rapid growth and changing demographics are affecting public land resources. Off-highway vehicles and other forms of recreational transportation – sport utility vehicles, motorcycles, and mountain bikes – are more popular than ever before. Much of this use is occurring on BLM-managed lands that, as a result of urban and suburban growth, are nearby or even adjacent to numerous communities and subdivisions. These communities are both convenient to and affected by activities on BLM lands, adding to the complexity of the Bureau's land-management decisions.

Moreover, OHV use is taking place on land designated by the BLM as “open” to cross-country travel based on land-management plans that the Bureau drew up in the 1970s and 1980s, when OHV use was comparatively small. Many of these land-management plans are outdated, not only because of increased OHV use, but also due to concerns regarding threatened and endangered species, soils and watershed, wildlife habitat and/or visual resources found on BLM lands. What is more, the BLM's budget-related resources – including the number of recreational specialists and law enforcement personnel – have not kept pace with the past decade's growth in recreational and other uses of public land. All of these factors, plus litigation over OHV management issues, create the need for a national OHV management strategy.

### **Strategy Goal:**

Review the management of motorized vehicles on lands administered by BLM through a public involvement process.

## **Strategy Product:**

As needed, develop appropriate program guidance by 11-30-00 to promote environmentally responsible OHV use, incorporating public comment.

## **Strategy Key Message:**

The national strategy is a process designed to facilitate dialog with the public on the OHV program, policy and issues so that BLM can issue program guidance, if needed. The strategy is not meant to be a “top down” approach, but a way to use a public process to take a collective look at what is happening with OHVs throughout the entire West. The product will essentially be “national guidance for local solutions” to ensure environmentally responsible OHV use on public lands. Local field offices will implement this guidance through the land use planning process as applicable. This strategy process will not preclude any State from proceeding with any action it needs to take to remedy immediate OHV problems.

## **Strategy Objectives:**

Using a public participation process:

- 1- Inform and educate the public and BLM staff about the OHV program, policy, and issues
- 2- Determine if current OHV program, policy and guidance is adequate
- 3- Make recommendations on short and long-term OHV program and policy direction
- 4- Identify and prioritize areas needing immediate attention

## **Four Elements of the Process:**

- 1- General public involvement
- 2- BLM national and state listening meetings
- 3- RAC local meeting(s)
- 4- National OHV Team and Team Advisors

## **Process Overview:**

BLM will issue any needed program and policy guidance on its off-highway vehicle program to all of its offices on November 30, 2000. This guidance will incorporate broad and extensive public involvement. In order to meet this goal, a series of steps will be taken over the next few months.

First, the Director wants to ensure that any guidance that results from this effort will serve as an aid to the local BLM field offices in managing their OHV programs well into the future. It will be imperative that a local outreach effort by State Directors and Field Managers on this national strategy occurs, in the form of local briefings and meetings with key agencies, tribes, clubs and organizations from all sides of the issue. This will provide an opportunity to understand the concerns at hand and be informed as to the methods of participation in the strategy.

Second, an internal national OHV team will be assembled, which will coordinate the overall process, carry out strategy work assignments and produce the final guidance product, incorporating substantive public comments.

Third, during the summer of 2000, public input will be collected in 3 ways: (1) written comment (2) comment through a series of formal "listening" meetings and (3) comment through local Resource Advisory Council (RAC) meetings. To help focus respondents in providing solution-oriented comments and suggestions, a set of "Key OHV Questions" will be developed and used as a foundation for public comment throughout the process. All public comments collected throughout the process will be analyzed and organized into a final report via contract.

Finally, any needed program and policy guidance for the BLM OHV program will be issued to field offices on November 30, 2000. Public comment will be incorporated into the guidance document, and it will be reviewed internally before it is released.

- ***General Public Involvement***

Respondents will be able to submit their written comments in 2 ways: either electronically on the BLM national web site or via a national OHV strategy comment flyer that can be mailed back to BLM in Washington DC. The "Key OHV Questions" will be used as the basis for the provision of comment.

- ***Listening Meetings***

At least one formal "listening" meeting would be held in each State, and one in Washington DC. The goal of each meeting will be for BLM to primarily listen to and record public comment, based on the Key OHV Questions. Each State Director will serve as the meeting moderator for a set of invited panelists.. The audience will include invited agencies and organizations representing a mix of viewpoints, BLM employees and the general public. In regards to BLM employees, a pre-determined number and mix will be present, identified with name tags, sit with the audience, and will serve as listeners who will help ensure that public comment is included in the final product.

The order of the meeting will include a standardized presentation by the BLM of the OHV program and policy. The moderator will then introduce a panel of 6-8 invited individuals, representing OHV, environmental, county, State, tribal, landowner and recreationist viewpoints,

selected by the State director at the recommendation of their own constituents. Their panel discussions will answer the Key OHV Questions. A public comment period will follow. At the end of the event, there will be time for informal discussion. Handouts of presentations will be available and methods of written public comment will be described. A listening meeting “how to” packet will be developed by the OHV team for State Directors.

- ***RAC Meetings***

Mirroring the listening meetings, Field Managers would request that RACs facilitate local public input on the national OHV strategy through either their regularly scheduled meetings or special sessions. The specific format for these meetings will also be determined by the national OHV team, through a “RAC Pack”, that will contain a letter from the BLM Director, briefing materials, all the information necessary to host a local meeting and will be followed up with a phone call from the respective State Director. With the assistance of the local field manager, RACs will determine whether an invited panel would be best, given the needs of the local area and constituents represented by the RACs or whether the RAC would best serve as its own panel. The RACs and BLM would be responsible for submitting the written Key OHV Question responses and recording and submitting public comments to the contractor via the national office for consolidation. RACs could submit resolutions based on Key OHV Questions or guidance agreed upon as a result of their meeting(s). This process may vary somewhat State to State (i.e., Wyoming does not have a RAC) and among RACs, based on local issues.

## **National OHV Team**

An instruction memorandum will be prepared requesting the participation of staff from various levels of the organization to fill the positions needed below:

*Management Sponsors:* Henri Bisson, AD Renewable Resources and Planning  
Sally Wisely, Utah State Director

*Membership (9 members):*

- Team Lead (1) Deb Smith, National Trails Coordinator, W.O.
- Field Manager (1)
- Recreation Planners (3)
- Public Affairs (1)
- Renewable Resources Advisor/Natural Resource Specialist/Wildlife Biologist (1)
- Wilderness/Special Areas Specialist (1)
- Non-Renewable Resources Advisor/Mining/Range/Realty Specialist (1)
- Administrative Support to the Team: Administrative Assistant

## **National Team Advisors/Special Resource Support**

- Social Scientist
- Transportation Specialist / Engineer
- Law Enforcement
- Graphics Design
- Web Site Development
- GIS/Remote Sensing
- Budget Guidance
- RAC manager
- Land Use Planner
- BLM NACO representative
- Natural Resource Advisor
- Correspondence

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### Assistant Director, Planning and Renewable Resources

- Sponsors the project
- Serves as liaison between the Director and OHV National Team
- Disseminates information and provides direction to the ELT
- Provides direction to the National OHV Team
- Coordinates between affected ADs

### State Directors

- Provide direct involvement (e.g., moderator) for the listening meetings
- Coordinate with RACs on all phases of the initiative
- Provides direction to the managers regarding the RAC meetings

### Team Leader - National OHV Team

- Facilitates the National OHV Team
- Provides logistics for team meetings
- Develops agenda for meetings, conference calls, etc.
- Provides meeting notes and other communication items to the team and all involved
- Serves as liaison between the National OHV Team and the Assistant Director, Planning and Renewable Resources
- Provides communication items, briefing materials, etc., to External Affairs Group Manager/recreation leads

### National OHV Team

- Serves as liaison to the states regarding national developments
- Develops detailed procedures for the listening meetings and the RAC Meetings

- Develops resource materials for the proper delivery and execution of the listening meetings and the RAC Meetings
- Develops resource materials for the listening meetings and the RAC meetings
- Assembles and analyze information gathered from the listening meetings, RAC Meetings and written public comment
- Develops recommendations for national OHV guidance
- Individuals may serve on work groups to complete specific work items
- Advises and trains the states on how to conduct the listening meetings and the RAC meetings
- Assigns an individual to each state to mentor, provide direction, address needs, and assist as needed

#### Advisors / Special Resource Support

- Provides needed information, skill, and products to the National OHV Team

#### External Affairs Chiefs

- Serve as liaison between the External Affairs Group Manager and each State Director and managers regarding communications materials
- Coordinate listening meetings and the RAC meetings that are held in the respective state

#### State Recreation Leads

- Serve as liaison between the Strategy Team Lead and each State Director and managers regarding strategy information
- Assist with the coordination of listening meetings and the RAC meetings that are held in the respective state

## National OHV Strategy Time-line

PROCESS/TIME-LINE		
Date(s)	Task	Who
Mar 10	Submit Proposed Approach (MIB)	TL
Mar 13-17	Review/Revise Proposed Approach (MIB)	TL
Mar 17	Director Approves Approach (Signed)	DIR
Mar 20-24	Meet with groups on Process and Time-line/NACO/ENV/OHV	GM
Mar 27-29	Draft IM for Process/Time-line/SDs on Process/Team Nominees/Strategy Qs and As	TL
Mar 27-29	Correspondence data-base Review	TL
Apr 3	IM Out for Process/Time-line/Team Nominees	TL
Apr 3	Staff Assistant	TL
Apr 17	ELT Mtg - Review Process/Time-line/Team	AD
Apr 24-28	National Team Mtg	TL
May 1	DSD Mtg - Review Process/Time-line/Team	TL
May 1-31	State Directors Brief SMTs	SD
May 1-31	<p>National Team Will Develop:</p> <p>(1) Plan Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Website/Correspondence</li> <li>-Flyer (Info Letter)</li> <li>-Briefing/Press Packet</li> <li>-News Release and Roll-out Plan (RAC/Listening Mtgs)</li> </ul> <p>(2) Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Key Questions Used in Data Gathering Process</li> <li>-Subject Matter Expertise</li> <li>-Listening Mtgs 'How To' Procedures</li> <li>-RAC Meetings 'How To' Procedures</li> <li>-Power Point Presentation (Standard)</li> <li>-Contract (Public Comment Analysis)</li> </ul>	NT
May 15-31	<p>Briefings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-WO (Hill, NACO, Governor's Assoc)</li> <li>2-State (Congressional Staffs, Local Govt)</li> </ul>	GM

Jun 1	Public Participation Begins 1-News Release With Appropriate Roll-out Plan (RAC/Listening Mtgs) 2-Website Available 3-Mail Flyer to Organizations (available to the public)	GM
Jun 15 - Aug 31	RAC Involvement 1-Local News Release for RAC Mtgs	FM
Jun 15 - Aug 31	Listening Mtgs Held (1 per State/1 D.C.) 1-Local News Release on Listening Mtgs	SD
Jun 15 - Sep 11	Public Comment Analysis (Contract)	CTR
Aug 31	RAC Involvement Ends Conclude Listening Mtgs General Public Involvement Ends	NT
Sep 11	Public Comment Analysis Completed (Contract)	CTR
Oct 16	Public Comment Report Completed (Contract) 1-News Release With Appropriate Roll-out Plan (Report Available) 2-Website (Report Available)	GM
Oct 16	Draft Guidance Completed (Internal Only)	NT
Oct 16 - 31	Internal Review of Draft Guidance	SD
Nov 1 - 13	Consolidate/Incorporate Internal Review Comments	NT
Nov 14 - 29	Prepare Final Guidance	NT
Nov 30	Guidance Released 1-News Release With Appropriate Roll-out Plan 2-Mail Guidance to Organizations (available to the public) 3-Briefing/Press Packet Available 4-WO Briefings (Hill, NACO, Governor's Assoc ) 5-State Briefings (Congressional Staffs, Local Govt)	NT GM

TL- Team Lead  
DIR- Director  
AD- Assistant Director  
SD- State Director

GM- Group Manager  
FM- Field Manager  
NT- National Team  
CTR- Contractor CTR- Contractor