



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contacts: See below

San Diego County in need of legal OHV recreation areas. New Park would provide legal OHV opportunity and help curtail damage and trespass

Off-Road Vehicle and Conservation Interests Continue to Work Together to Identify Common Solutions

A coalition representing off-road vehicle and conservation interests continues to work together to find common solutions to concerns associated with off-highway vehicle (OHV) use.

Over the past year and a half, the groups have been exploring opportunities of joint interest through a site evaluation and strategic planning process funded by California State Parks' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division.

Off-Road groups have been working for the past 25 years to establish new riding opportunities in Western San Diego County. Conservation groups are working to protect the County's fragile and diminishing natural habitats. Together the motorized and conservation communities are working in partnership to identify areas for legal OHV recreation, to improve the law enforcement efforts to reduce unauthorized riding, and to help restore areas damaged by unsanctioned riding.

"We see San Diego County as an area with one of the highest needs in the State," said Daphne Greene, Deputy Director of the OHMVR Division. "The Division believes we can help identify an OHV park which would provide a legal place for the motorized community and which would help address the problem of unsanctioned OHV riding in the region."

The coalition, which includes representatives of the American Motorcyclist Association, the San Diego Chapter of the Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, Desert Protective Council, Endangered Habitat League, San Diego Off-Road Coalition, Sierra Club and Tierra Del Sol Four-Wheel Drive Club, has been working together to find mutually acceptable solutions to this basic challenge.

These solutions include enhancing law enforcement efforts, setting aside additional land for habitat protection, restoring damaged habitat areas, and creating new local OHV parks in addition to providing benefits for local communities.

“We have been working for a long time to come up with safe and legal opportunities for local riders,” said Harold Soens of the American Motorcyclist Association. “We understand, however, that if any new riding opportunity were to result, it must be designed to be a good neighbor to the surrounding community.”

The coalition will continue to meet over the next year and a half, focusing on the Western part of the county. Together they will conduct site investigations and formulate a workable law enforcement strategy.

“We are anticipating that by the end of this process we will have identified strategic approaches for several different parts of the County,” said Terry Weiner of the Desert Protective Council. “Each planning area will have a set of specific strategies identified, which in addition to possible riding opportunities, may include conservation, restoration, non-OHV recreation, enforcement and education. We believe this approach can result in a net benefit for the environmental, local, and recreational communities.”

“What have been most remarkable about this process have been the shared views rather than the differences,” said George Kropp of the Tierra Del Sol Four-Wheel Drive Club. There is an enormous respect for the land and agreement from all who are involved in this process. If practical solutions to this challenge are not found, everyone may lose in the end.”

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