

### State Legislative Highlights

For Oregon's young riders, a [second requirement](#) goes into effect on Jan. 1. Part of a [two-phase](#) all-terrain vehicle safety program, the new rule requires riders under the age of 16 to complete an online class and a hands-on training course related to the off road vehicle they drive.

In Wisconsin, two bills ( [A 327](#) and [S 235](#) ), which make changes to age restriction of ATV drivers in the state and to safety certification requirements, were introduced into the state legislature.

For Massachusetts riders, a number of new [regulations](#) go into effect on Feb. 1, including safety training requirements for ATV operators under the age of 18.

Republican State Representative Kevin Priola recently [sponsored](#) (PDF) a new bill that would require ORVs to display license plates on the front and rear of the vehicle. This is a strong first step to identifying users that are riding illegally and begins to address a problem identified in the [Duran go Herald](#). However, the bill is [opposed](#) by the Colorado Municipal League and [Colorado Counties Inc.](#) among others as it takes away local control of ORV use and for safety concerns. In fact, the [Daily Summit reports](#) that Rep. Millie Hamner stepped out against the bill saying it would "undermine local control in [the state's] more rural areas that are full of natural resources."

Republican State Senator Steve Kettering [introduced](#) a new bill to deal with the ongoing problem of ORV riders riding illegally on the streets of neighborhoods and towns. In December, a similar but unrelated issue forced county officials to [hold](#) a public forum where many residents aired their grievances about the disruptions caused by reckless off-roaders. Kettering's new bill could help address those problems by requiring license plates on ORVs of sufficient size to be readable from a distance of 100 feet during daylight.

At the beginning of February, Rep. Bryant Clark introduced a [bill](#) in the Mississippi Legislature that would require ORVs to obtain a certificate of number and display plainly visible identification numbers issued by the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. The fee for a certificate of number shall not exceed \$10 and will go to defray administrative costs and improve law enforcement.

In Maryland, Delegates Stein, Frush, McMillan, Myers, Norman and Wilson sponsored a [bill](#) to address off-road vehicle safety. In addition, the bill would require a permanent decal for the vehicle through the Motor Vehicle Administration. The Administration would be required to establish guidelines for the decals.

### Diverse Voices Advocating For Change

Watch and read the personal stories of Westerners who have been directly affected by the activities of reckless ORV riders and why they think visible identification and stricter penalties will help curb this growing problem.

•[Frank Adams](#) , 40-year veteran of law enforcement and former Executive Director of the Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association

•[Dale Bosworth](#) , former chief of the U.S. Forest Service

•[Sage Dorsey](#) , Central Oregon rancher

•[Jack Duggan](#) , Vietnam veteran and fourth-generation tree farmer in Oregon

•[Bill Sustrich](#) , life member of the Colorado Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

•[Derrick Reeves](#) , co-chair of Idaho Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

•[Shannon Raborn](#) , director of Responsible Trailers America and Colorado outdoor enthusiast

•[Ambers Thornburgh](#) , second-generation rancher near Redmond, Oregon. Ambers also penned an op-ed in *The Oregonian*, "[Trespassing by ATV: We need to protect ranching and recreation](#)" **M**

### Montana: Man Convicted of Cutting Illegal ORV Trail Required to Pay Restitution

A Montana man convicted of building an illegal ORV trail in Gallatin National Forest was required to pay \$25,000 in restitution. USFS officials estimated it would cost \$7,600 to dispose of downed trees and \$25,948 to restore the land and prevent erosion. Read the full story at the [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)

. According to Ron Archuleta, Livingston District Ranger, "These types of illegal trails are not uncommon on National Forest System lands. They are usually located in the worst possible sites causing erosion and weed infestations."

### Idaho: Reckless ORV Riders to Pay to Restore Damage they Caused in

## Popular Recreation Area

“When we see illegal ATV use like this, we want to both help users understand the environmental damage caused by their actions and correct the behavior,” said Steve Bryant, Law Enforcement Officer for the Palouse Ranger District. “Then we turn to restoring function on the damaged land. In this case, the perpetrators’ actions were so egregious they were required to pay substantial fines, providing the agency with the means to begin restoration work.” Click here to read the story from [KLEW in Lewiston, ID](#) .

## 9 out of 10 Sportsmen Agree: Tougher Penalties for Illegal ORV Riding

A survey conducted by Eastmans’ Hunting Journal found that nearly 94% of sportsmen support tougher penalties for ORV riders that illegally ride in closed areas. The most common response was also the most severe – nearly 38% of respondents believe ORVs should be confiscated in addition to loss of hunting privileges for a year. Read the entire poll results along with candid quotes from sportsmen [here](#) .

## Award Winning Local News Catches Off-roaders Trespassing on Rancher’s Property

A Bakersfield, CA news station caught off-roaders illegally riding on the property of ranchers Jeremy and Brandie Dunn. Below, you can see the damage they’ve done to the Dunns’ property and watch Brandie’s encounter with an off-roader trespassing on her property. *Note: This article was given an Associated Press Mark Twain Award for Investigative Reporting.* Read the whole story [here](#)

## GAO Recommends Examining Penalty Structures for Reckless Riding on Public Lands

The investigative arm of Congress found widespread habitat damage from reckless riding, mounting enforcement challenges and evidence of conflicts with other users. Their survey of federal land managers from across the country found:

- ORV damage has occurred on almost 20% of federal lands and in some areas as much as 80%. 20% of federal lands is roughly the size of California.
- Conflicts are occurring with other trail users, private land owners, and irresponsible ORV

users.

- Enforcement is the top challenge to ORV management. Nearly 3/4 of field unit officials cited staff resources for enforcement as a great challenge; nearly 2/3 cited enforcement as a great challenge.

- Current penalties do not deter reckless riding.

- A majority of land managers said they cannot sustainably manage ORVs, citing lack of human and financial resources.

The GAO recommended examining current penalty structures, as well as implementing better planning at BLM and USFS, and enhancing communication with the public through user-friendly maps and trail signs. To view the full report, please [Click Here](#).

### **Montana: ORV Riders Concerned Reckless Few Threatening Access For All**

A survey of off-road vehicle riders by the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research found that state ORV enthusiasts are worried that a few reckless riders are threatening access for all. Respondents most often cited access to trails (60 percent) as the most important issue facing ORV recreation, while nearly 23 percent mentioned safety, particularly personal responsibility. Many comments expressed concern that the irresponsible behavior of a few reckless riders was ruining riding opportunities for all. As reported in the Summer 2009 Montana Business Quarterly, the report's author concluded that, "A viable future for OHV use includes a balance that promotes responsible riding." [Click here](#) to read the whole report.

### **Public Land Users Are Hurt By Inconsistent Penalty Structures**

A June 2009 study from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) indicated that the method for establishing fine schedules resulted in widely varied fines across the country, making it difficult to educate ORV riders and other recreationists about the consequences of illegal behavior.

The GAO study recommended that the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior direct U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to examine fine amounts across various U.S. district courts to determine the range of fines for ORV-related violations.

A [report](#) from RTA attempts to do just that. The paper details RTA's findings, shares anecdotal evidence of the problems caused by the current system and offers a solution. To view the full report, please [Click Here](#) .

### **BHA's ATV Abuse Reporting Reward Program**

Listen to Conservation Director, Holly Endersby, in a radio interview on Northwestern Outdoors Radio concerning BHA's ATV Abuse Reward Program. [Listen here](#) .