



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Idaho Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Public Outreach Campaign

Contact: Steve Stuebner, campaign coordinator, 208-484-0295; sstuebner@cableone.net

Hunters on ATVs urged to Stay on Designated Trails

Off-trail riding during hunting season continues to be a concern

BOISE - (Sept. 28, 2010) – Officials with the [Idaho Off-Highway Vehicle \(OHV\) Public Outreach Campaign](#) are urging people who use ATVs or motorbikes during hunting season to stay on designated trails and do their homework to ensure that the trails they plan to ride are open.

Officials with the [U.S. Forest Service](#), [Bureau of Land Management](#) and [Idaho Department of Fish and Game](#) say that hunters riding off-trail on ATVs or motorbikes continues to be a problem on public lands during hunting season.

"We are most concerned with instances where a hunter drives off-trail to scout for game or retrieve game," said Andy Brunelle, a spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service. "One set of tracks through the brush or in a meadow can invite others to do the same, and the impacts add up, damaging vegetation and causing soil erosion into streams."

According to several surveys, more than half of the approximately 240,000 people who hunt in Idaho (residents and non-residents) during the fall months are using motorbikes or ATVs to access their hunting areas.



Subtle but significant ... Hunters who venture off-trail invite others to follow their tracks, creating ad hoc trails where none should exist and causing soil erosion.

David Olson, public affairs officer for the [Boise National Forest](#), encouraged hunters to obtain copies of Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM's) from the national forest where they plan to hunt. MVUM's are available from national forest ranger district offices, and in

some cases, they are online on Idaho national forest web sites. The Idaho OHV Public Outreach Project's web site, www.stayontrails.com, has a link to online Forest Service MVUM's on its [where to ride page](#).

The Boise, Payette, Sawtooth, Caribou-Targhee and Salmon-Challis national forests have completed travel management plans and have published MVUM's to indicate what trails and roads are open or closed during the fall hunting seasons. The Nez Perce, Clearwater and Panhandle national forests are still working on travel management plans before they can publish final MVUM's.

BLM officials encourage hunters to check Travel Management Maps for BLM districts to see if the trails or roads they plan to use are open or closed. The BLM maps are available online on [BLM district office web sites](#) and hard-copies are available at district offices.

Under the Forest Service's [National Travel Rule](#), Olson points out that "it's incumbent on the user to know if the trail is open or closed" regardless if the trail is signed appropriately. That's because people have been known to shoot signs full of bullet holes, remove signs or vandalize them.

"It's very challenging to keep all of our trails signed" because of the vandalism, he said.

Hunters also should check Idaho Fish and Game regulations to check on trail or road restrictions in their hunting areas. The Idaho OHV Public Outreach Project produced a [YouTube video](#) that helps explain how to sort through MVUM maps and Fish and Game regulations to see if trails are open or closed.



Hunters violating gated road-closures is another common problem.

Jon Heggen, enforcement chief for the Idaho Department of Fish and game, encouraged motorbike and ATV riders to be sensitive to the fact that some people may be hunting on foot in the same area where they are riding their trail machine. "We want to remind hunters to stay on trails and be courteous to other users," Heggen said.

Idaho OHV campaign officials recommend that hunters check out 10 [hunting tips](#) on stayontrails.com to make sure they have a safe and legal hunting season. Idaho Fish and Game also has a [brochure](#) that reviews motor vehicle and ATV regulations pertinent to hunting.

About the Idaho OHV Public Outreach Campaign: To help raise awareness about the importance of OHVs staying on trails, five state and federal agencies in Idaho work on a statewide campaign called the Idaho Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) Public Outreach Campaign. The campaign encourages riders to ride safe, responsibly and reduce their impact on the land and other trail users. See www.stayontrails.com for more information.