



OFF-ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER—SUMMER 2004

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ISDRA AND THE PMV

Over two years ago, ORBA teamed with the American Sand Association and the San Diego Off-Road Coalition on a petition to remove the Peirson's milk-vetch (PMV) plant from the "threatened" list under the Endangered Species Act. The same groups funded studies by a well-known biological firm to study the status of that plant in the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA) over a four-year period. The studies show clearly that the plant is not endangered now and never should have been listed in the first place.

Lawsuits by anti-access groups over the PMV led to the closure of almost 50,000 acres of the ISDRA to vehicle access late in 2000.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), under court order to issue a decision by the end of June 2004, filed its decision early in July to keep the PMV on the "threatened" species list. The off-road groups involved will be challenging this decision in the courts!

Shortly after the USFWS decision, the anti-access groups filed a petition to list 16 insect species that they claim exist only at the ISDRA—bugs, beetles, bees, etc. This is obviously an attempt by the petitioners to convince the courts that there are too many important little critters in the ISDRA to allow vehicle-oriented recreation there. One can only wonder how they have survived this long. Little, if any science is available to support the proposed listings. Once again, the off-road groups will be doing everything possible to prevent the listings.

Recently the BLM, without input from users or approval from its own TRT, funded an exhaustive monitoring survey in the ISDRA on the PMV and other plant species of concern. The study cost almost \$1 million and was paid for by camping fees paid by dunes users. ORBA's President was called to Washington, DC to testify before a House Subcommittee regarding the fee demo program. He pointed out to the Congressmen on the Committee that the fees being collected at the ISDRA are being used for environmental monitoring studies that are outside the scope of the intentions of the federal fee demo program.

This testimony led to two actions in Washington: 1) Congressman Duncan Hunter, with

IMPORTANT NEWS BREAK: YAMAHA MOTOR CORP.

Mike Schmitt, Yamaha Division Manager, signed Yamaha Motor Corporation as an ORBA member shortly after ORBA's presentation to the SVIA in July!

support from Congressman Richard Pombo, proposed an amendment to the Appropriations Budget for the Dept. of the Interior that includes language stating that, in the future, fees paid by users cannot be used for environmental studies; and 2) Assistant Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett, who met personally with ORBA's President and its lobbyist Pete Conaty, recently had \$450,000 appropriated to the BLM for the ISDRA to partially pay back the user fee money spent on the plant monitoring effort.

Also, at the request of ORBA's President, Congressman Hunter and Congressman Bob Filner have each written letters requesting an increase in annual appropriated funding for the ISDRA of \$2 million. Congressman Filner has also requested an additional one-time grant of \$1 million from the Transportation Committee for access improvements to the ISDRA.

The BLM has announced that fees will not be raised at the ISDRA for the coming season. Hopefully, the grants requested will be approved to help make that commitment possible.

ORBA IN NEVADA

During November of last year, ORBA's President was invited to participate in a National Recreation Forum hosted by Kathleen Clarke, National Director for the BLM in Las Vegas, Nevada. During that meeting, Denner met with Bob Abbey, Nevada State BLM Director. They discussed land use issues in Nevada, including concerns about the Sand Mountain Recreation Area. Mr. Abbey indicated that he is very anxious to get OHV interests involved early with land planning efforts taking place for BLM managed lands in Nevada... over 48 million acres!

During June, at Denner's request, Abbey met with leaders of four OHV groups: ORBA, BlueRibbon Coalition, Friends of Sand Mountain and the Pine Nut Mountain Trails Association. At that meeting, Abbey reconfirmed his desire to get OHV interests involved with BLM planning efforts. Abbey also invited Denner to organize a small group of OHV leaders to make a presentation to his field managers and key staff at their quarterly managers' meeting in July.

The presentation went well and a news release approved by Director Abbey is available on ORBA's website at www.orba.biz. The Director is asking for support from OHV interest groups to identify trails systems and intensive use areas to make sure that they are included in new BLM plans for the state. ORBA and BRC representatives will be working with Director Abbey and his Deputy Director at the State level and local recreation groups will assist in the trail identification effort for specific OHV areas.

OHV-related businesses in Nevada are learning about this important effort and are showing their support by becoming members of ORBA.

This is an extremely important opportunity for ORBA to be part of

a balanced land planning effort for the entire State of Nevada early enough to hopefully avoid mass closures of public land to public use without good scientific data showing the need for such massive closures!

ELKO, NEVADA

ORBA representative Meg Grossglass attended the "invitation only" Summer Adventure FAM Tour put on by the Elko Convention & Visitors Authority. Organizers invited media representatives to discover Elko's great OHV recreation opportunities. Meg enjoyed driving all types of off-road vehicles over Elko's great trail system.

ORBA AND SEMA

ORBA's President and Membership Director met with SEMA's President, Chris Kersting, and accepted a donation to ORBA's litigation efforts. A news release describing the event is available on ORBA's website at www.orba.biz.

ORBA representatives attended a SEMA-sponsored luncheon for several off-road oriented companies who are members of SEMA. Most of the companies invited are also members of ORBA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss SEMA's plans to become more active in the off-road marketplace. During February, in Indianapolis, SEMA will be holding an off-road show in conjunction with their annual SEMA show at the Indiana Convention Center.

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE PROTEST RALLY

ORBA's President Denner, along with two State Senators and a San Diego County Supervisor, were speakers at a protest rally held at the Carlsbad office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The rally was arranged by the American Sand Association to protest the use of the Endangered Species Act to close lands to public use.

OHMVR DIVISION AUDIT

CA State Senator Bill Morrow, assisted by Josh Mackenroth, attorney retained by ORBA, made a plea to the CA Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) to per-

form an audit on the State's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of Parks and Recreation to account for the expenditure of tens of millions of dollars of OHV trust fund money every year. This was in response to a request letter sent by the American Sand Association, the San Diego Off-Road Coalition and the Off-Road Business Association. The JLAC voted 8 to 1 to proceed with the audit.

SAGE GROUSE LISTING ATTEMPT

Environmental groups have filed a petition to list the sage grouse as a "threatened species" under the endangered species act. If listed, this bird will impact public use of public lands nationwide—possibly a more serious impact than the spotted owl. ORBA is working with, and has contributed financially to, the Partnership for the West organization out of Denver to attempt to prevent this listing.



ORBA President Denner with members of the SVIA

ORBA AND SVIA

ORBA's President was invited to give a presentation to the Board of Directors of the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA). Representatives from the major All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) manufacturers sit on SVIA's Board including AlphaSports, Arctic Cat, Bombardier, Honda, John Deere, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha. Kawasaki has been an ORBA member for some time. All company representatives are familiar with ORBA

and ORBA's accomplishments. They promised to consider ORBA when planning next year's budget.

UPCOMING OFF-ROAD SHOWS

The show season is coming. ORBA will be promoting ORBA member companies and encouraging off-roaders to purchase their off-road products from ORBA members at the following shows: The Sand Sports Super Show in Costa Mesa, CA September 17-19; The Off Road Expo in Pomona, CA October 9/10; Advanstar's Dirt Expo show in Las Vegas, NV October 8-10; ATV Industry Magazine's ATV Expo in Louisville, KY October 14-17; the SEMA Show in Las Vegas, NV November 2-5; and the Arizona Sand Expo in Phoenix, AZ December 10-12. In 2005 look for us at Advanstar's Off-Road Impact show in Las Vegas, NV January 20-22; the SEMA Off-Road show in Indianapolis, February 4/5; the San Diego Off-Road Exposition in El Cajon, CA February 12/13; and Advanstar's Dealer Expo 2005 in Indianapolis, February 19-21.

ROADLESS RULE

The Bush Administration is overturning the Clinton Administration's "Roadless Rule" which seriously curtails the use of roads and trails in the National Forest system. ORBA is working with, and has contributed funding to, the American Land Rights Association out of Battle Ground, Washington, to convince Forest Service Managers to support Bush's proposal.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Desert Fabrication
- Palomar Communications
- Carson RV Toystore
- Motorsport Journal
- Michael's Cycle Works, Inc.
- Carson Jeep Nissan
- Nevada Offroad Buggy
- Yamaha Motor Corp., USA
- Sand Addiction Magazine