

**OFF-ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION, Inc.**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FEW FACTS SURROUND PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF LARGE PORTION OF JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA BY U.S. MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER AT TWENTYNINE PALMS**

***JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA IS APPROXIMATELY 189,000 ACRES AND IS LOCATED IN THE HIGH DESERT OF CALIFORNIA, JUST EAST OF LOS ANGELES. THE AREA IS A MECCA FOR OFF-ROAD RECREATION AND IS HOME TO MANY EVENTS INCLUDING OFF-ROAD RACING AND COMPETITIVE ROCK CRAWLING.***

**BAKERSFIELD, CA** (March 24, 2008) In recent months rumors have been rampant that the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) located in Twentynine Palms, California is looking to expand into the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area. Recently those rumors reached a fevered pitch when an unofficial copy of the Marines' proposal was posted on the AMA District 37 website's bulletin board.

As a result of that post, Pirate4x4, a popular four wheel drive enthusiast website, held a virtual rally on March 12, 2008 to voice their concern over the possible loss of this popular area. Nearly 1500 people posted comments and pictures of their experiences in Johnson Valley during the four-hour online rally. In the same time period, the website had 27,000 hits. It is important to note that the majority of the postings expressed support and gratitude to the men and women who serve in the armed forces. Most were hopeful that another solution, or compromise, could be made that fulfills the training needs of the Marines while still allowing OHV recreation to continue in the area treasured by so many off-road enthusiasts.

Johnson Valley OHV Area is currently owned and operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Officials with the BLM have not seen any formal plans for the expansion and did not initiate this action. ORBA has tried to contact Marine officials about the proposed expansion but so far no one from the Marine Corps has responded to these inquiries. Fred Wiley, Executive Director of ORBA, stated "It is our hope that the expansion of the Marine base will follow the NEPA process and that no land change ownership before that process is complete. The Ft Irwin expansion followed the NEPA process **after** the military had already acquired the land. The public felt like its input was not necessary since the military had already acquired the property. The NEPA process was only followed to ensure the military could use the property as they needed."

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***ORBA is a national trade association composed of off-road related businesses united to promote common goals that support the prosperity and growth of the off-road industry.***