

As the first quarter of 2021 comes to an end, it has been busier than one may think! While much of the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) community has been in winter hibernation, indoors doing maintenance or planning for the post covid return to normalcy, there has been a ton of positive OHV related activity.

Let's get the detailed OHV regulation update out of the way.

OHV REGISTRATION UPDATE

As noted at the last update in 2020, the OHV stakeholders were successful in submitting a request to update NRS 490, the regulations surrounding most everything OHV. Currently, there are two bills in committee, with a total of five suggested amendments. None of them are earth shattering and none, if accepted, in their entirety would create a negative impact on OHV.

Most of the amendments are technical or structural in nature. With the removal of the OHV registration process from DMV (more on that in a moment), there is no longer a need for a representative from DMV on the Nevada Off-Highway Vehicle (NVOHV) Commission. The folks over at the Nevada Conservation League have suggested an amendment that replaces the DMV representative with a representative from NV Department of Wildlife. This is felt to be a reasonable fit as so many of the OHV are the backwoods anglers and hunters and we tend to ride in areas that cross paths with wildlife of significance. Having a non-voting member to provide advice and informational support to the commission does work well. The only area of heightened awareness is the change that is being proposed by Nevada Conservation League, a group that works to advance their agenda that, by omission or commission, champions land grabs and other restrictions that are problematic to the OHV user. It is reasonable to assume whomever the Director of Wildlife appoints to participate will be a supporter of the OHV program, but this will be an item we will keep an eye on for sure.

It was heartwarming to see six of the seven letters received for the bill were in support of the registration improvements. The seventh letter was a sole letter in opposition from the Motorcycle Industry Council's (MIC), Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROHVA). ROHVA is funded by MIC, as is National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC). This letter addressed an issue not even in the bill and focused on the operation of ATVs on roads*. This is problematic for a lot of reasons aside from this bill not changing anything about where we can ride, it was just odd, and an obvious "Form Letter" of opposition. The larger issue for us at the club level is NOHVCC, sister group to ROHVA, has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the NVOHV grant program. **Yes!** YOUR REGISTRATION DOLLARS are being paid to an affiliated group that just tried to undermine the improvement of our registration process.

Where one's head should feel free to explode, is that NOHVCC has three State Partners in Nevada: Bob Adams, Nye County; Mathew Giltner, Douglas County; and Larry Calkins, Lyon County. Yet it appears that not a single attempt was made by ROHVA to speak to anyone on the ground before sending a letter of opposition from their Virginia-based lobbyist. As of this writing, emails and phone calls to ROHVA's Scott Schloegel (full voice mailbox) over the second of half of March have gone unanswered.

Not all is lost, as one would be willing to bet that the next time NOHVCC applies for funds from the NVOHV Commission Grant program paid for by, YOUR OHV REGISTRATIONS, that will afford the opportunity for the answers we have all been seeking this month.

Overall, if passed, the NRS 490 re-writes will streamline the registration process, with the goal to make it easier and less cumbersome. As it stands now – again, if passed, we will simply log on to a website, and order the number of use stickers needed, and in a few days, they will show up in the mail.

We will keep everyone updated on the progress of these two bills as they go through the rest of the process before the Legislature adjourns the first week of June.

**ROADS - One of the Issues that comes up all the time is making the SxS street legal. This is not in either of the bills for a few reasons. The first is that the ability of a community to designate on-road use by ordinance. So, there is no need to fix what is not broken. Also, on a side note, Utah and parts of Colorado, which have allowed on-road use, are revisiting those regulations, as the realized financial benefits from the use are not outweighing the hazards created by the SxS user.*

PAINTED ROCK MINE

We are expecting the next phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the area surrounding Painted Rock Mine to come out soon for public comment. You may recall we submitted our concerns surrounding the increased traffic through the de facto staging at the end of Johnson Lane. If the next phase of the EA addressed our comments from last fall, hopefully there will be no need for additional comments.

Some more detail of the Public Lands that might explain why we in the recreational and access community have little room to chart the course.

The land from the end of Johnson Lane to the tribal border just west of the mine site is zoned for potential development at some point in the future. The land was identified years ago as a disposal area, meaning that the federal government will willingly turn the land over to the state, county and or a developer for development. An example of this is over on the east side of Yerington, where the Pumpkin Hollow tract was withdrawn from public inventory and ‘sold’ to the county, who then sold it to the [Nevada Copper mine](#). Also, there is a long-term plan for Hwy 395 to cut through the Pine Nuts and connect to 580. Yes, we all know how long it took for 580 to make it to Carson, so keep that calendar in the back of your mind.

These types of issues are why it is imperative the BLM publishes their updated Resource Management Plan. Without it, everything is stalled and we are waiting, arms crossed tapping our collective foot.

A very bad map from the Current Resource management lands marked for disposal in red (map 16) can be found [here](#).

We understand none of this is a feel-good bit of news, it just is the status. So, we at PNMTA can only work with what we have today.

MOONROCKS OHV MANAGED SPACE

For those who venture north to Washoe County to ride at Moonrocks, there is some good news and some more “Arms crossed, what about?” news as well.

The BLM Carson District office is finishing up the public comments section for the EA to revise the Moonrocks area from an “Open Area” to a “Managed Open Area.” This is good news for OHV, primarily because it identifies and pretty much locks in the OHV use moving forward. They have a quick timeline which is good, although a tad rushed in the opinion of some of the stakeholders. One point of contention, which was covered in PNMTA’s comments, is the lack of a permanent sanitary facility. Pit toilets were not included in the plan; instead, it was opted to install a concrete pad with portable toilets. This is aesthetically annoying; and with the Forest Service’s ability to build hundreds of pit toilets, it is remarkable there is not a similar solution in this plan. The answers received are along the lines of when the blue plastic toilets are vandalized, it is less expensive to replace them and is less of an environmental concern when someone shoots them up. This may be empirically true - plastic is cheaply replaced, but one would suggest a quality facility would be used and respected more. But as we see from time to time, the decision is likely already made.

There are some other interesting quirks to the timeline, including the program for trail maintenance and inventory is somewhat of a moving target and ambiguous at best. Options surrounding the ability to hold events with required permits are not included and there are concerns regarding the ability to access Moonrocks from other staging areas in Washoe; in particular, the Chickadee Drive staging area, which is quite popular.

And finally, the biggest item on the radar, is the inability of BLM to formalize any agreement that the area will not become a fee area. This is particularly important to the OHV community in Nevada as the BLM has received several hundred thousand dollars over the years to improve the OHV areas, specifically at Sand Mountain (a fee area). The thought of making Moonrocks another area that OHVers paid for the work and then need to pay again to ride there is unconscionable.

To be clear, PNMTA supports the transition to the Managed Open area. Our concerns expressed in the initial EA and the comments are of support to the transition, as well as groups like One Voice and ORBA. They may not make a difference, but they have certainly “marked the page” when we, the OHV community, need to jump back in and work for continued improvements to this or any other BLM Managed Public Lands.

PNMTA FIRST POST-COVID EVENTS

PINE GROVE - May 8

Late in first quarter of 2021, PNMTA received word that vandals have been removing the wood from the remaining buildings over at the Old Pine Grove Townsite on the Eastern Slope of the Sweetwater range and using it for campfires.

Pine Grove is one of the easiest accessible true “Ghost Towns” in northwest Nevada. We have been working with the leadership at USFS Bridgeport Ranger Station, the Public Lands manager for the Sweetwater Range. We are now entering into a stewardship agreement to help keep an eye on the area. Detail on the stewardship plan will be forthcoming.

Meanwhile, we are scheduling an outreach and education day at the Pine Grove site and partnering with folks from the “Nevada Backroads” group to make a difference at Pine Grove. The strategy is for PNMTA to have our traditional information table to discuss issues and good stewardship, OHV registration and its importance, and supply tools to do a clean-up day as well. Items we hope to accomplish, aside from picking up trash, is to cut a wildfire defensible area around the remaining buildings and take a photo inventory of all the remaining structures and artifacts.

With an overt ‘maintenance’ presence at Pine Grove, it is hoped the casual visitor will see this as an active space and, hopefully, not be so quick to continue dismantling the town.

The long-term strategy is to encourage another local group to formally adopt the townsite, something akin to “Friends of Bodie,” where this group would note the status of the town and, if needed, schedule a stewardship day. This event is scheduled for May 8 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

GOLD POINT, NV - May 29 – June 1

All Work and No Ride makes Pine Nutters Nutty

As a reward for your help over at the Pine Grove ghost town site, how about a little camping and riding at another Nevada ghost town. Until you have had the chance to camp, ride and dine in Gold Point, you have not truly experienced the Nevada Old West.

Memorial Day Weekend, some Pine Nutters will head south to camp and ride out of [Gold Point](#). The Dunes and Trails ATV club will be coming up from Clark County to join in the weekend as well. There is room for RV camping and some mine cabins you can rent for the night, as well. Camping is available with a \$5.00 fee, which is used to help maintain the townsite. YOU NEED to [make reservations](#) if you want to stay in one of the old cabins or camp in the town.

We will likely ride to the [Old Camp](#) and [Stateline Mine](#) site on Saturday and discuss options on where everyone wants to ride Sunday.

Please join us Memorial Day Weekend - Gold Point is 1 hour north of Beatty. Some more interesting reading on [Gold Point](#).

RENO AREA DIRT RIDERS COMING TO JOHNSON LANE – June 6

The Reno Area Dirt Riders (RAD) recently held a registration event in Washoe County up at Moonrocks. With their success at that event, BLM has asked if they were interested to doing one at Johnson Lane. PNMTA will currently be supporting this event and plans to coordinate with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office. We will provide more details as we get closer.

PNMTA PIC-A -NIC in July

Club Leadership is keeping a close eye on the lifting of COVID restrictions and may hold a formal meeting in June, but is currently planning for a summer picnic--likely in Genoa at the park – sometime in July. In addition to new and old members, we hope to invite the folks we have been working with to protect your access to public lands. By including other stakeholders, we hope to continue to grow our understanding of issues across all interests. Please contact the club leadership and let them know your thoughts.

PINE NUT CLEAN-UPS - TBD

Questions or comments can be sent to Mathew@trailnv.com