



OFF-ROAD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER—SPRING 2004

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OHV GROUPS TO WASHINGTON AGAIN

They know who we are in Washington, D.C.! During May, ORBA President Roy Denner once again organized a trip to visit members of Congress and federal land management agencies in Washington. Representatives from seven OHV organizations from California and Arizona were accompanied by an Imperial County Supervisor and the Director of the Yuma Chamber of Commerce on this trip. OHV lobbyist Pete Conaty and an established Washington lobbyist helped Denner make arrangements for the trip and schedule appointments. Tom Porter from Congressman Duncan Hunter's staff, as well as staff from the House Resources Committee, also assisted.

During this historic visit, the OHV group was invited to make a presentation to the House of Representatives' Western Caucus. Congressman Chris Cannon from Utah, Chairman of the Caucus, expressed his agreement with the team's concerns about the continuing loss of public lands available for OHV recreation across the country. Before and after the Caucus presentation, the team split



Pete Conaty, Congressman Cannon, Roy Denner and Wally Leimgruber

into two groups that visited individual congressional offices to develop support for promoting off-highway vehicle recreation in this country. Members of the team also met with Lynn Scarlett, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, and Kathleen Clarke, National Director of the BLM.

ORBA PRESIDENT TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE

The U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands held a hearing in Washington, D.C. on the national Fee Demo Program—a program initiated in 1999 that authorized the collection of entrance and/or camping fees at several federally managed recreation areas as a test program. Eight people from various national interests were invited to testify—including a U.S. Congressman, an Assistant Secretary of the Interior and a Forest Service Director. ORBA's President, Roy Denner, was asked to testify on this matter as well.

Denner described the fee demo program that has been in operation in the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area (ISDRA). He explained that only \$200,000 of federal appropriated money goes to this world-class OHV recreation area, while the rest of the \$4 million it takes to run that facility—on a bare bones basis—is paid out of user camping fees (which tripled last year). He pointed out the fact that the BLM has conducted a species monitoring study to the tune of almost \$1 million, paid for by user fees, without any user input or Technical Review Team approval. At the ISDRA, the fee demo program has become a slush fund to be used as the BLM sees fit!

ORBA HELPS WITH SAGE GROUSE EFFORT

A nationwide effort is underway to list the greater sage grouse as an endangered species. If successful it will impact the use of over 110 million acres across the U.S. ORBA is supporting the Partnership For The West in its efforts to prevent this listing. Jim Sims, Executive Vice President of the Partnership says, "This campaign is already well underway and is leaving no stone unturned."

SAND MOUNTAIN, NEVADA

During the OHV group trip to Washington, D.C., ORBA President Denner met with Congressman Jim Gibbons, Vice Chairman of the House Resources Committee. They discussed the continuing attempts by the BLM to close the Sand Mountain OHV Recreation Area to vehicle access. Congressman Gibbons sent a letter to the Nevada State BLM Director stating "I am extremely frustrated with this pattern of closures as it is clearly affecting generations of good, honest taxpayers who simply want to utilize the lands which belong to them. This alarming trend must be reversed." Three cheers for Congressman Gibbons!

NAMRC

ORBA's President attended a meeting of the North American Motorized Recreation Council in Kansas City. Land use issues and legislative issues of concern to motorized recreation enthusiasts across the U.S. were discussed. ORBA is taking the lead to plan a major Washington, D.C. lobbying effort for the Spring that will include participation by OHV groups nationwide.

EXTREME MOTORSPORTS EXPO

The Extreme Motorsports Expo in Orange County involved many ORBA members as exhibitors. ORBA representatives were on hand to answer questions about ORBA and ORBA's involvement in many land use and legislative issues.

ORBA & SEMA

ORBA staff members attended a SEMA reception for Senators and Congressmembers in Washington, D.C. Legislators from across the

U.S. were welcomed and introduced.

HOUSE RESOURCES STAFF IN CALIFORNIA

Two key staff members from the U.S. House of Representatives' Resources Committee attended ORBA's Board of Directors' meeting in April. After the meeting, they accompanied ORBA's president on a visit to the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. They questioned the BLM's action that closed much of the ISDRA south of Hwy 78. They felt that it was Congress's intent that, with the closures to the north resulting from the Desert Protection Act, the rest of the ISDRA was to be committed to OHV use. Congressman Pombo, Chairman of the Resources Committee, has expressed his concerns about the closure as well.

OHV LOBBY DAY IN SACRAMENTO

ORBA staff and members participated in the annual OHV Lobby Day in Sacramento in March. It is clear that California State Legislators are aware of the OHV recreation community in California. Each year the number of legislators that attend the evening reception increases substantially.

ORBA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Brian Juhnke of Motoworld, Howard Hughes of Off-Road Warehouse and Cory Hove of Alba were reelected to their positions on ORBA's Board at the annual ORBA general membership meeting in February. Each year three Board positions expire, and any ORBA member in good standing is eligible to run for a position on the Board of Directors.

ORBA PRESIDENT TESTIFIES BEFORE STATE LEGISLATORS

Two California State Senators and four State Assemblymembers held a hearing in San Diego on behalf of Governor Schwarzenegger in May to take input regarding financial waste and mismanagement in California. ORBA's President Denner described the ever-increasing spending by the State's Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division—an amount that



has grown to over \$50 million annually. He informed the panel that the American Sand Association and the San Diego Off-Road Coalition joined ORBA in requesting an audit of the OHMVR Division's expenditures. These organizations believe that the California off-road community has a right to know where funds committed to off-road recreation in the State are being spent.

SPRING SEMA SHOW IN INDIANAPOLIS

ORBA participated in the Spring SEMA show in Indianapolis by conducting an educational version of the Jeopardy show called "Off-Road Jeopardy." Several SEMA officers and Council leaders participated as contestants in the Jeopardy game and were surprised to learn how unaware they are of off-road issues that may have significant impact on SEMA member businesses. All participants and attendees felt that ORBA has found a way to make an education program about off-road issues "fun."

POMBO ON ISDRA USER FEES

In an open letter to OHV enthusiasts, Congressman Richard Pombo, Chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Resources, stated: "I do not believe one dollar, let alone \$825,000, of your recreation fees should be used for a monitoring program. This money should come from the operating budget of the Bureau of Land Management."

He continues: "Using your fees on something far removed from recreation clearly violates the purpose for which the fees were established—to enhance your recreational experience. In fact, Roy Denner of the Off-Road Business Association recently testified before the House Committee on Resources, of which I am Chairman,

on proposed legislation to permanently authorize the Recreation Fee Program. Mr. Denner described the inappropriate use of fees at the ISDRA and requested that the Committee ensure that the situation is not repeated at ISDRA or at any other Federal recreation site."

Congressman Pombo concludes his letter with: "I can assure you that should legislation move forward to permanently authorize the Recreation Fee Program for the BLM, I will make certain your fees are used only to enhance your recreational experience with on-the-ground improvements."

Clearly, the OHV community has a good friend in Congressman Pombo.

DESERT TORTOISE SYMPOSIUM

In February, ORBA Vice President Jim McGarvie attended the Desert Tortoise Symposium. He was joined by Chris Sprofera of the San Diego Off-Road Coalition and our attorney David Hubbard. It was a three-day event in which a couple hundred people with an interest in the Desert Tortoise came together to listen to several scientists give presentations on various aspects of the Tortoise, usually reflecting papers they have published.

As you know, the Mojave Desert Tortoise is on the Federal Threatened and Endangered list, and occurs throughout the deserts in Southern California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah. The protection of the Tortoise is the primary goal of the various desert management plans, and the principal reason for the closure of so many OHV areas throughout the desert.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- Maier Mfg. Inc.
- Extreme Off Road & Repair
- Works Connection, Inc.
- Eibach Springs, Inc.
- East County Off-Road Center
- Marks Sand Trans
- Racer X Motorsports
- Dirt Sports Magazine/Off Road Retailer
- Liberty Production
- Sidewinders Motorsports
- Mile Marker Inc.