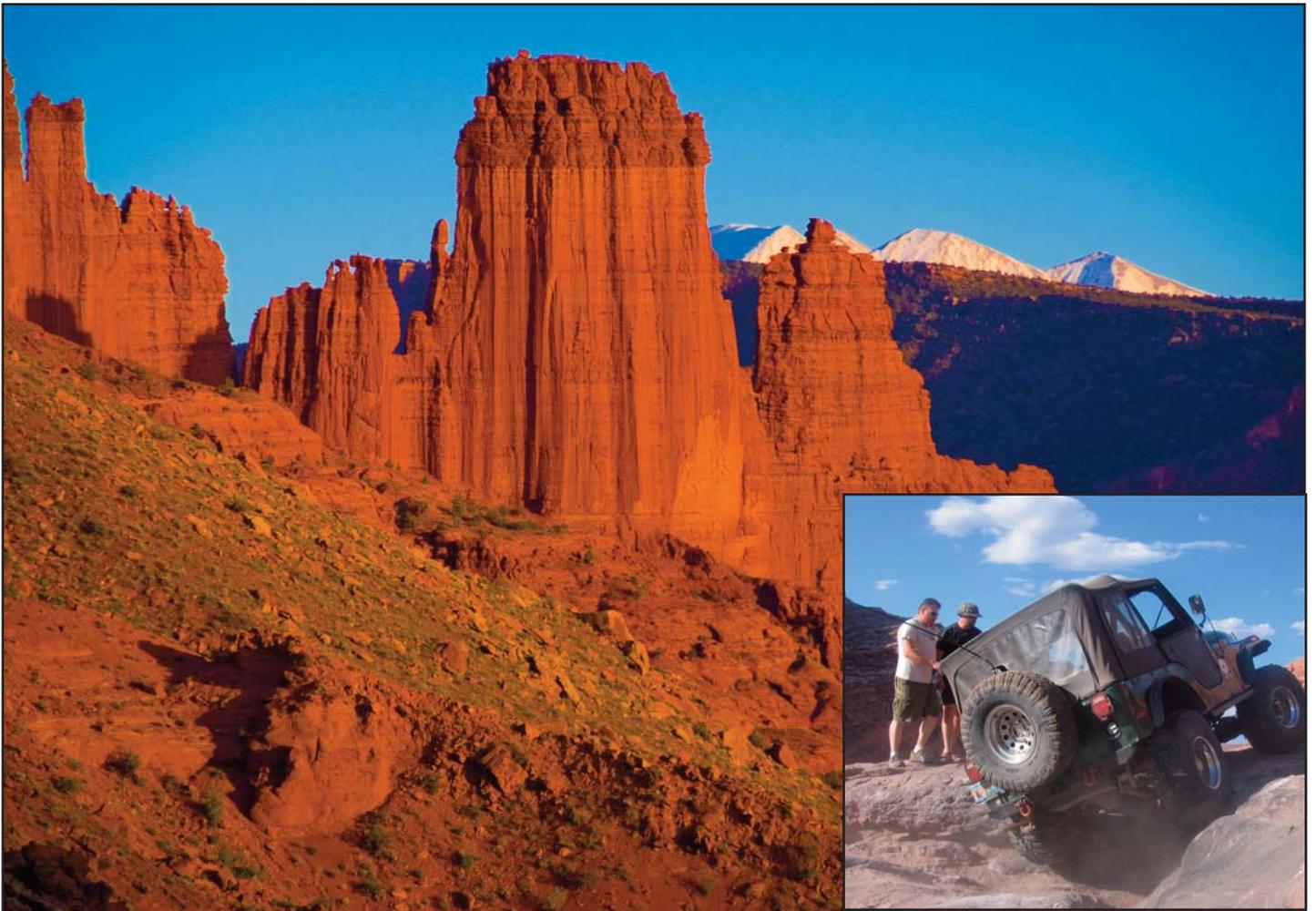


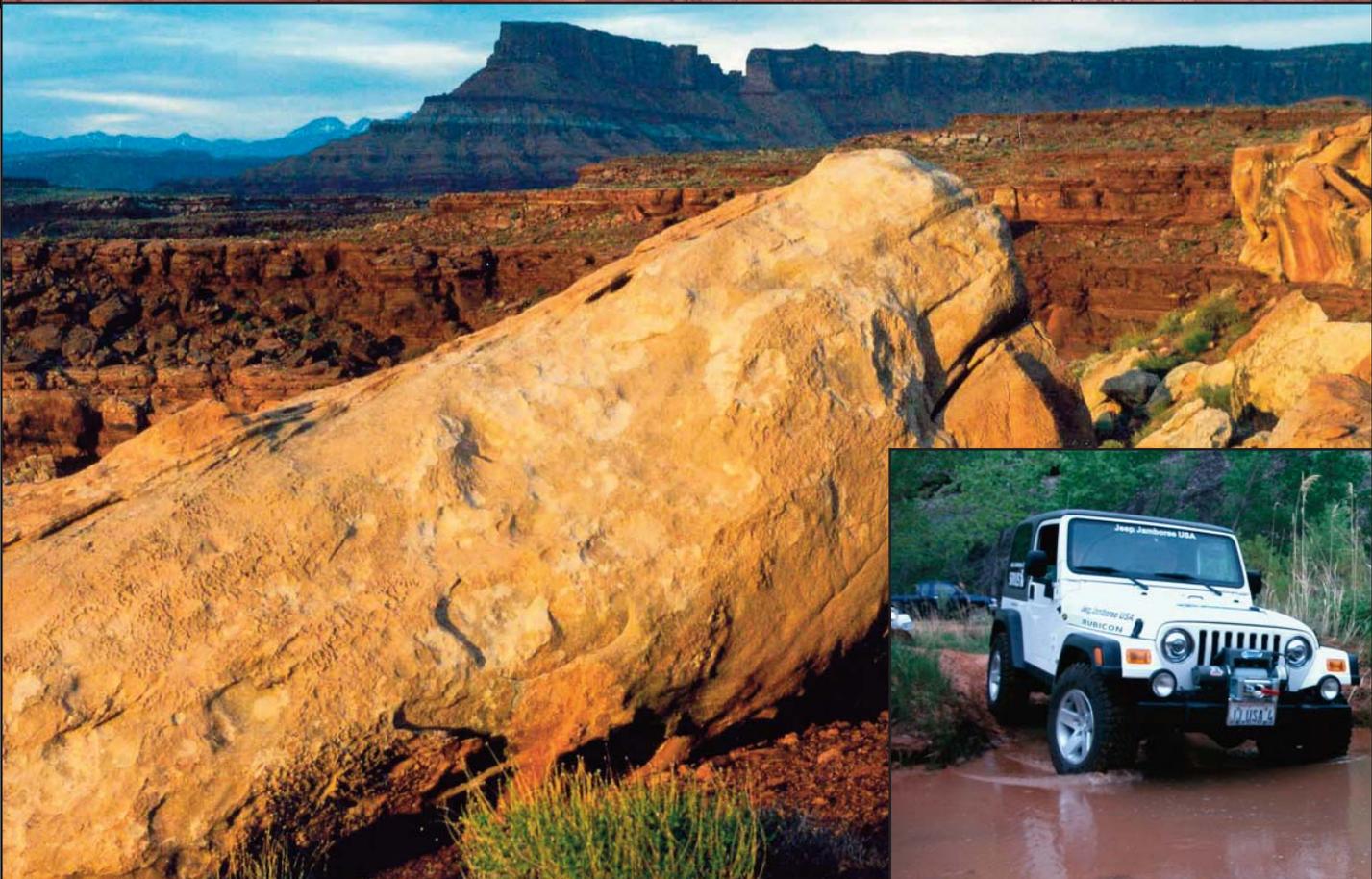
BLM Travel Plans Will Endanger Cultural Resources and Undermine Protection of Roadless Areas on Utah's Public Lands

Problems and Fixes





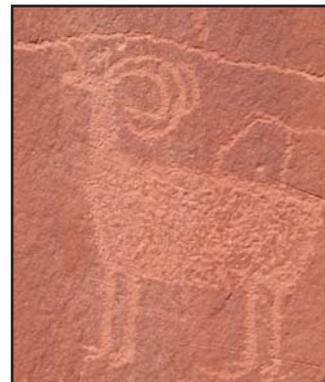






BLM Travel Plans Will Endanger Cultural Resources and Undermine Protection of Roadless Areas on Utah's Public Lands

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently drafting off-road vehicle (ORV) travel plans that will dictate ORV use and the associated impacts to cultural, wildlife, and wilderness resources, on 11 million of the 23 million acres of Utah's public lands. **Existing law requires BLM to protect the public lands and resources, first and foremost, and to manage ORV use to minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources and minimize conflicts with other uses (43 § C.F.R. 8341.2).** BLM is proposing to designate a dense network of ORV routes across Utah's spectacularly scenic and archaeologically rich public lands with little consideration for archaeological artifacts, roadless and wilderness values, and the growing conflict between ORV use and other uses of Utah's iconic landscape. BLM intends to finalize six new ORV travel plans for public lands in southern and eastern Utah by mid-2008.

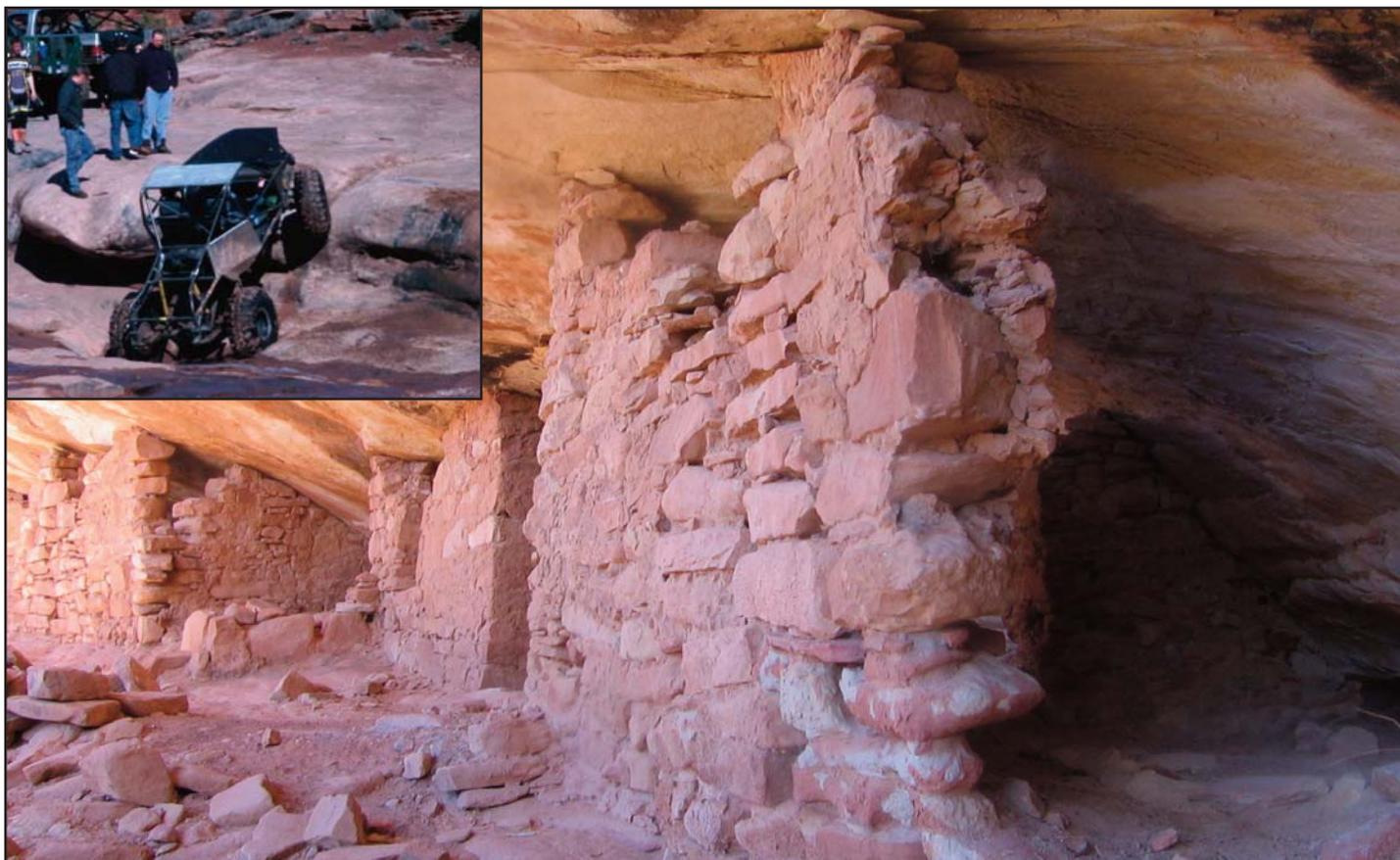


PROBLEMS

1. Cultural Resources: Unsurveyed and at Risk

People have roamed the lands in Utah for thousands of years, and traces of their lives are found on the ground and on canyon walls – a vibrant historical record of humans throughout the past millennia. From mammoth hunters to agrarian pueblo dwellers, ancient peoples have left behind clues of their lifestyle and their means of existence, pieces to a puzzle that is still being assembled. The character and spirit of these remarkable lands require protection so that we can continue to learn from the archaeological libraries left here by earlier generations.

- ♦ Professional archaeologists and BLM's own experts agree that archeological sites become more vulnerable from illegal and inappropriate activities, whether intentional or inadvertent, as ORV use in areas with cultural artifacts increases. Damages include intentional vandalism and looting, as well as unintentional disturbances.
- ♦ BLM, by its own accounts, has surveyed less than 6% of public lands, including those in Utah, for cultural resources.





In BLM’s proposed ORV plan for the Moab area, there are approximately 6000 miles of motorized route—approximately the distance between Moab, Utah and Glacier Bay, Alaska.

- ◆ Although BLM is bound by law to protect these resources and to initiate meaningful and informed consultation with Native American tribes and groups, BLM is ignoring the law and proposing ORV routes in areas known to have unsurveyed and unrecorded cultural resources. BLM’s proposed ORV plans put these irreplaceable resources, such as those found in Arch Canyon, Labyrinth Canyon, White Canyon, and Red Rock Plateau in harms way.

2. BLM-Inventoried Roadless Areas will be Degraded with ORV Routes

BLM has recently inventoried a portion of Utah’s public lands and determined that these lands are roadless and have wilderness character and values. Specifically, BLM has determined that approximately 3 million acres have wilderness characteristics.

The BLM-inventoried roadless areas include stunning and deep, steep-walled canyons, cliffs and high mesas with scattered forests of pinyon-juniper trees, buttes and badlands, slickrock domes and hidden alcoves, and winding rivers lined with towering cottonwood trees. Although the vast majority of Utah’s public lands were roadless and undeveloped only 75 years ago, much of these lands have been lost to development. Today, BLM-inventoried roadless areas comprise only 14% of Utah’s public lands.

BLM’s proposed ORV travel plans would slice and fracture these remaining roadless and undeveloped areas with ORV routes. Existing wilderness values would be lost. Cultural resources that have remained relatively undisturbed due to their remote location from roads will be at greater risk of looting and vandalism.

BLM's proposal for ORV routes in these roadless areas fails to comply with former Sec. Norton's promise to protect these wilderness quality roadless areas, using any of a myriad of tools in BLM's tool belt. (BLM Instruction Memorandum 2003-275 (Change 1) (Oct. 23, 2003). BLM's current actions could not be more counter to the former Secretary's pledge, as millions of acres of wilderness quality roadless lands will be blanketed with ORV routes.

In BLM's proposed ORV plan for the Moab area, for example, there are approximately 6000 miles of motorized route. Approximately 100 miles of these routes—less than 2%—are in BLM-inventoried roadless areas. BLM must modify its ORV travel plan proposal to protect these areas that the agency itself has found to be "roadless" including Fisher Towers, Labyrinth Canyon, Hatch Canyon, and Beaver Creek.

Committing to keep ORV routes out of these BLM-inventoried roadless areas would help protect ancient cultural sites, which are often located in canyons and on canyon rims, along streams, and far from modern civilization, where, for the most part, their very remoteness has provided protection for harm. The unroaded and undeveloped character of these areas must be protected in order to preserve the library of archaeological treasures that are located in these areas of great natural beauty and seclusion.



FIXES

BLM is moving in the right direction to better manage ORV use on Utah's public lands, by designating ORV routes, rather than continuing to allow the generally unmitigated ORV use that is currently taking place. However, BLM must propose ORV routes that protect the public's resources, including roadless and wilderness values, and archaeological resources pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the ORV regulations at 43 C.F.R. § 8341.2. BLM's ORV plans must comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires meaningful and informed consultation with Native American tribes (16 U.S.C. §§ 470 *et seq.*), and the ORV plans must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. §§4321 *et seq.*).

Congress has appropriated over 300 million dollars since 2000 to BLM to update and revise management plans that will better protect cultural, wildlife, riparian, and wilderness resources and will provide for balanced recreation and development uses on our public lands. The Utah BLM has spent million of dollars drafting proposed ORV plans.

Please tell Sec. Kempthorne that:

- ◆ BLM must protect the cultural resources and wilderness values in Utah's spectacular canyon country from damaging ORV use in roadless areas;
- ◆ In order to protect the unique cultural resources and outstanding wilderness values, BLM's ORV plans must not approve routes, or allow ORV use, in Utah's BLM-inventoried roadless areas;
- ◆ Utah BLM has been working on six draft ORV plans for over six years. BLM must provide adequate time for the public to review and assess these six ORV plans instead of rushing to finalize them over the next year.



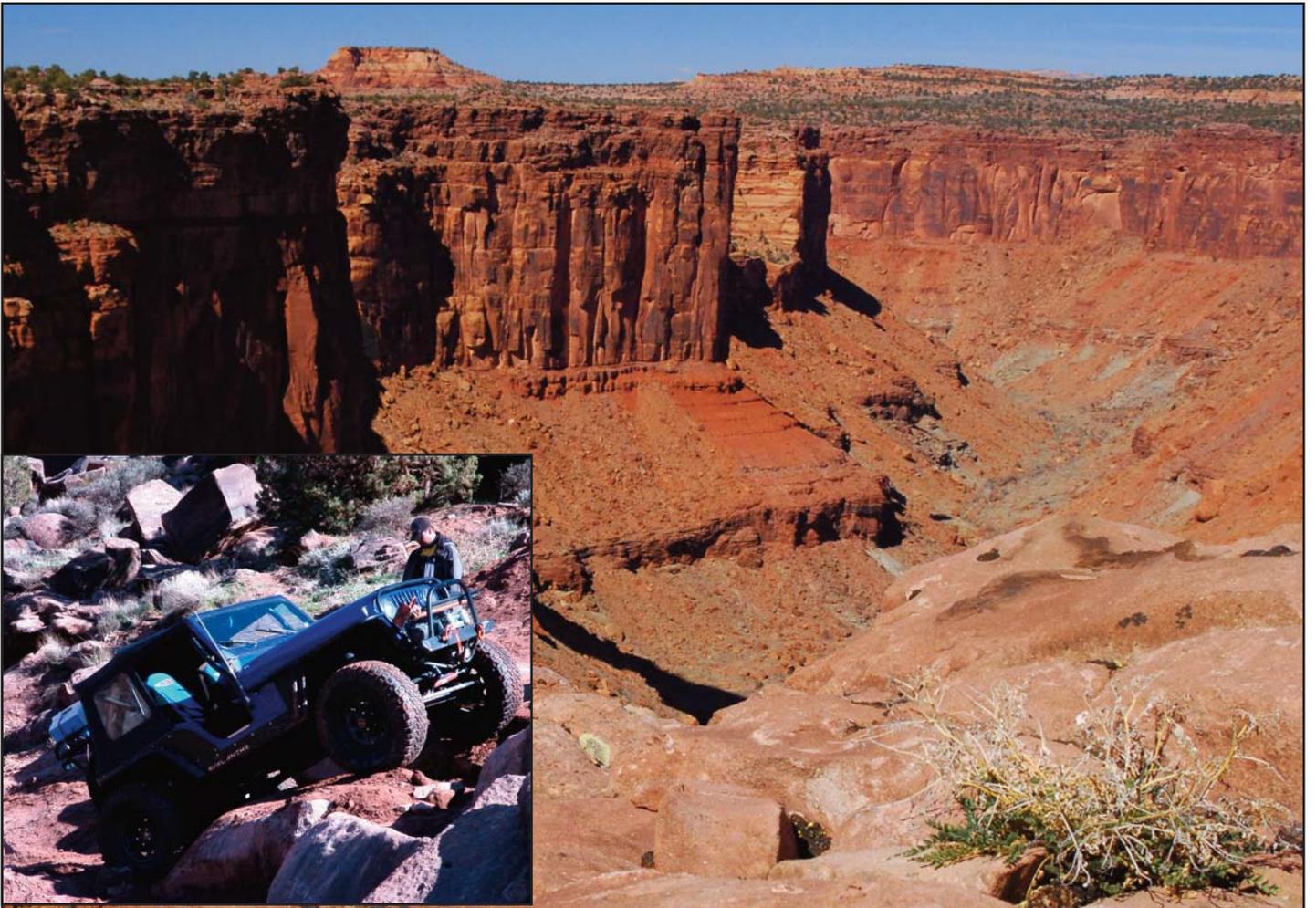
Existing Law

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*. NEPA, enacted in 1969, is the basic national charter for protection of the environment. NEPA prescribes the necessary process by which federal agencies must take a "hard look" at the environmental consequences of proposed courses of action. A fundamental objective of NEPA is to ensure that that an agency will not act on incomplete information.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 16 U.S.C. §§ 470 *et seq.*. Congress enacted the NHPA in 1966 to implement a broad national policy encouraging the preservation and protection of America's historic and cultural resources. The NHPA prohibits federal agencies from approving any federal "undertaking," including ORV route designations, unless the agency takes into account the effects of the undertaking on historic properties that are included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The NHPA requires that federal agencies consult with Native American tribes and entities to resolve any adverse effects before approving an action that could affect historical and cultural resources.

Federal Lands Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 43 U.S.C. §§ 1701 *et seq.*. Congress enacted FLPMA in 1976 in order to establish a mission for the public lands administered by the Secretary of Interior through the BLM. FLPMA directs BLM to manage public lands according to the principles of "multiple use" (the combination of uses that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people); to protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, water, and archaeological resources and values; and to preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition.

Federal Regulations for Designation of ORV routes, 43 C.F.R. §§ 8340 *et seq.*. Federal Regulations require that BLM designate ORV use areas and routes in the resource management planning process. ORV route designations shall be based on the protection of resources, promotion of safety, and minimization of conflicts among uses. In particular, ORV routes shall be located to (1) minimize damage to natural resources including wilderness quality lands, and to cultural and historical resources, and (2) minimize conflicts between ORV use and other recreational uses.







For more information, please contact:

Justin Allegro
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
(202) 266-0473
justin@suwa.org

The Wilderness Society
Kristen Brengel
(202) 429-2694
kristen_brengel@tws.org

Sierra Club
Myke Bybee
(202) 675-2389
myke.bybee@sierraclub.org

Photos provided by: Tom Till, Steve Mulligan,
Ray Bloxham, and Liz Thomas.



southern
utah
wilderness
alliance



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY