



September 21, 2007

Dear Representative,

We, the members of the Grand County Backcountry Council, urge you to sign the attached letter requesting that Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne protect cultural resources and inventoried wilderness values when designating off-road vehicle routes in six ORV plans throughout the state of Utah over the next several months. As businesses located in Grand County, Utah, based in the Adventure Capital of Moab, our continued success is very much dependent upon the splendor and solitude of the public lands in our surrounding area. The loss of preserved non-motorized open spaces would be most detrimental to some of our business' missions and purposes in serving non-motorized users who visit the red rock region.

The current draft ORV plans for the Moab area will designate routes in areas such as Fisher Towers, Labyrinth Canyon, Goldbar Canyon and Beaver Creek – areas that have been inventoried by the BLM as possessing wilderness character and which have not been inventoried for any cultural resources that may be present. The BLM should err on the side of caution in their management by not designating any new ORV routes in these inventoried road-less areas. Once the BLM designates routes into road-less, wilderness-quality areas, such quiet areas are lost forever.

In our experience, when motorized routes are designated in previously road-less areas, visitors and local hikers alike abandon these areas because of the noise and pollution that inevitably follow, diminishing the primitive travel experience. Additionally, many people visit southern Utah for the experience of immersing oneself in the ancient ways of native cultures, whose artifacts are found on many wilderness quality lands in the area. Designating motorized routes on wilderness quality lands will inevitably increase visitation and resulting impacts including resource damage like looting and vandalism at archeological sites.”

Please help us protect these resources and our businesses by signing this letter to Secretary Kempthorne urging the protection of inventoried road-less areas and the cultural resources yet to be identified therein. This growing threat to our heritage must be addressed before it leaves no land for our clients and Guests to enjoy in solitude.

Sincerely,

Dave Bodner
Board Member