



Interpretation • Education • Outreach • Partnerships

## Statewide Education Campaign

With the increased interest in off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation, the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division has developed a comprehensive statewide education campaign to inform the public about California's diverse OHV opportunities, safe and responsible recreation, and the importance of natural and cultural resource stewardship. The OHMVR Division is proud to support public outreach, interpretation, and education efforts at the nine state vehicular recreation areas (SVRAs) through partnerships with organizations and schools, and through the OHMVR Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program.

The OHMVR Division outreach team and State Park interpreters at SVRAs offer an array of educational programs at parks, schools, fairs, and major OHV events. These programs use traditional and innovative methods to teach safe and responsible off-highway motorized recreation and the importance of conserving and protecting resources. SVRAs provide traditional programs like campfire programs, wildlife exhibits, Junior Ranger programs, school programs and outreach booths at special events. Popular programs also use geocaching and other technology to teach visitors about local plants and animals, geology, and park management practices used to balance OHV recreation and resource protection. Social media will continue to be an important method of relaying information about park conditions and communicating education messages. ❖



## Science Programs

The OHMVR Division and SVRA staff work with schools to develop curriculum based science programs about California's diverse ecosystems, wildlife, and habitats. Schoolchildren participate in science camps and programs that span one day to several weeks. Using hands-on activities, students work alongside environmental scientists to learn about native plant propagation, habitat monitoring, and habitat restoration. In an effort to reach children who may not visit SVRAs, interpreters work with schools and organizations to offer after school programs that promote environmental stewardship and safe and responsible behavior. These programs engage younger generations in underserved areas to connect youth to nature and the outdoors.



For example:

- Each year, Ocotillo Wells SVRA staff teach desert ecology programs to 1,000 third and fourth grade students at 32 regional elementary schools.
- Hollister Hills SVRA holds an annual science camp in the spring. Sixth grade students, teachers, parents, and chaperones visit the SVRA to participate in curriculum based outdoor science education.
- Heber Dunes SVRA and Hungry Valley SVRA interpreters offer after school Junior Ranger clubs at local schools where children receive core based curriculum in the classroom. Children perform lab work, field studies, and learn about subjects like food chains, desert plants, and animals that live at the SVRA. ❖

## Safe and Responsible Recreation

State park employees and certified safety instructors teach motorcycle, recreational off-highway vehicle (ROV), and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety classes at SVRAs. The OHMVR Division has partnered with the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America, ATV Safety Institute®, Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association, and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation to provide the training. Each of the SVRAs has at least one approved OHV training range.

In addition, the Division outreach team teaches recreational safety at OHV events, county fairs, and other community events using a variety of hands-on activities, such as:

- **“Ride Safe!”**—A self-guided interactive computer simulation game teaches the fundamentals of using proper riding gear, choosing the right sized vehicle, conducting safety checks, and reinforces responsible recreation ethics.
- **OHV Safety Simulator** —A mechanical device that replicates the movements of an ATV. The simulator allows the rider to apply “active rider” techniques in a controlled environment guided by outreach program staff.
- **Radio Control Jeeps®** — Participants learn Tread Lightly!® principles and then apply them using radio controlled (RC) jeeps as they navigate through a course simulating the kinds of cross-county terrain four-wheel drive enthusiasts are likely to encounter.



- **The Environmental Training Center (ETC)** at Prairie City SVRA was designed to teach safe and environmentally responsible off-highway motorized recreation practices. The facility consists of a classroom, two training ranges, and a three-acre trail system landscaped with native plants from six different California ecosystems.

The OHMVR Division’s statewide Education, Interpretation, and Outreach Program proved to be highly successful during 2015 serving more than 233,000 people. ❖

## Grants Program

Five percent of the available OHMVR Grants Program funding is awarded to applicants that either provide comprehensive education that teaches OHV safety, environmental responsibility, and respect for public property, or provide safety programs associated with OHV recreation. During the 2015/2016 Grants Program cycle, \$1.3 million in funds was awarded and \$1.5 million was requested.

The following are examples of the work accomplished through safety education grants:

- In 2012, over 2,000 students received ATV safety training.
- The Southern California Mountains Foundation, in partnership with the San Bernardino National Forest, coordinated a program with 200 OHV volunteers (who contributed 12,322 hours of time) to teach education

and safety to OHV recreationists during the course of the project, which was funded through an OHMVR grant in 2014. Activities included school presentations; conducting outreach events at OHV dealerships and trade shows; hosting informational kiosks; conducting educational rides; printing U.S. Forest Service OHV maps and educational material; updating kiosks, brochures, and signs; and ATV Safety Institute OHV teacher training instruction. ❖



## Partnerships

The OHMVR Division collaborates with local and federal governments and organizations to provide fun activities that teach recreational safety and environmental stewardship while getting children outdoors in nature. The following are only a few examples:

- The Junior Lifeguard Program at Oceano Dunes SVRA is a fun and challenging aquatic course that teaches ocean recreation skills and environmental stewardship to local youth. The four-week program is open to children ages 9-16 who come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Partnerships with local businesses and donations provide the students with free transportation, supplies, and occasional lunches.



- The Youth Recreation Days event at the Castaic Lake Recreation Area is a collaborative partnership program with Los Angeles County; California State University, Northridge; Honda's Colton Rider Education Center; and the OHMVR Division. Held annually, at-risk youth from Southern California experience the benefits of outdoor recreation through activities such as boating, ATV riding, and an environmental education program that promotes responsible recreation and awareness of California's wildlife.
- Ocotillo Wells SVRA and Oceano Dunes SVRA have partnerships with local universities with an emphasis on field research where students receive college credits for their work. ❖

## Engaging the Youth of California with OHV Recreation!



## OHMVR Mission Statement

**T**he mission of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division is to provide leadership statewide in the area of off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation; to acquire, develop, and operate state-owned vehicular recreation areas; and to otherwise provide for a statewide system of managed OHV recreational opportunities through funding to other public agencies. The OHMVR Division works to ensure quality recreational opportunities remain available for future generations by providing for education, conservation, and enforcement efforts that balance OHV recreation impacts with programs that conserve and protect cultural and natural resources.



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