

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
OFF-HIGHWAY MOTOR VEHICLE RECREATION COMMISSION**

**P O L I C I E S**

**For Local Assistance Grants and Cooperative Agreements**

**Approved on April 29, 2003**

***Preamble***

The following proposed policies are presented for the consideration of the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission (OHMVR Commission), public comment, and adoption pursuant to the Commission's role as established by Public Resources Code section 5090.23, which states:

The commission shall establish policies for the general guidance of the director and the division regarding all aspects of the system and the program.

Compliance with executive orders issued by Presidents Richard Nixon (1972) and Jimmy Carter (1977), in conjunction with current regulations, will significantly improve off-road vehicle recreation and management on federal lands. These orders require federal land managers to:

- Designate legal off-highway vehicle (OHV) roads, trails, and areas.
- Monitor the effects of motorized vehicles on soil, vegetation, watersheds, wildlife, and cultural and historic resources.
- Minimize environmental impacts and conflicts with existing or proposed recreational uses.
- Ensure compatibility in populated areas.

The OHMVR Commission supports these goals for federal lands and will use the local assistance program to assist federal land managers in achieving them. Grants should supplement federal appropriations, however, and should not be used as a surrogate for federal funding to carry out land management responsibilities.

There have been significant changes in the California OHV program since the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act of 1988. The population of the State has continued to grow at a rapid rate, resulting in increased demand for OHV riding areas, and increased urban encroachment which threatens existing OHV recreational opportunities. The increase of both population and demand for OHV recreation has created further concern for the environment and the need for effectively managed OHV areas, expansion of recreational opportunities, and ecologically sensitive recreation programs.

The following are the key elements of a successful OHV program:

- Having a designated system of roads, trails, and areas, or having a plan for completing a designation process.

- Providing sufficient environmental documentation to show sustainable opportunity and meet CEQA compliance.
- Restoring permanently closed routes and damaged areas.
- Reopening adequately repaired routes (closure of areas and trails should not be used in place of sound management).
- Restricting cross-country travel of wheeled vehicles to designated roads, trails, and areas (boundaries of open areas need to be clearly defined on user guide maps and marked on the ground).
- Improving wildlife habitat protection and monitoring.
- Addressing and minimizing conflicts with residents, landowners, and non-motorized users to sustain or enhance OHV recreational opportunity.
- Protecting air and water quality.
- Repairing and maintaining a system of routes designed to encourage and promote responsible use while providing quality recreation for all OHV skill levels.
- Identifying new areas for OHV recreation, and having an appropriately detailed plan for their acquisition and development.

The OHMVR Commission will give priority to those grant applications which address one or more of these elements and can demonstrate the overall success, or potential success, of their program within this context.

The OHMVR Commission, through formal identification of the priorities listed below, seeks to: (1) inform and educate applicants in the importance of understanding these issues and priorities, and (2) guide the OHMVR Deputy Director and the OHMVR Division in implementing the grant program and its regulations. Consistent with Public Resources Code 5090.23 and 5090.24(f), the allocation of funding to grant applications and establishment of the funding priority list for grants will be based on the compatibility of the applicant's project and overall program with the OHMVR Commission's goals and priorities. Additionally, applicants should support sound resource management and OHV recreational opportunities. The OHMVR Commission's priorities are identified in the policies set forth below.

### ***Conservation***

Priority will be given to conservation grants that address the following:

- Restoration of off-route impacts to minimize and/or eliminate resource damage, maintains the integrity of the routes, and prevents closure.
- Restoration of closed routes or damaged areas within inventoried road-less areas.
- Restoration and reconfiguration of routes and areas that have suffered significant resource damage.
- Completion of resource inventories and surveys to aid in the accomplishment of route designation.
- Implementation of appropriate measures to protect wildlife and cultural sites when studies or monitoring indicate a route is having an adverse impact.

- Monitoring and repair of existing resource damage and prevention of future damage.

### ***Recreational Opportunity***

The vision of the OHMVR Commission is a balanced approach to restoration, conservation, and law enforcement activities designed to protect the environment and sustain OHV recreational opportunity. To obtain funding and support for enhancement of opportunities or development, applicants should demonstrate a compelling need and the technical ability to maintain existing opportunities in a manner that exhibits sound resource practices and care for the environment. The OHMVR Commission would consider the following activities a high priority for funding:

- Where feasible alternatives exist, reducing dense trail networks and replacing them with trail systems designed to disperse use and extend the distance between the recreational activity and urban interface areas.
- Developing trails which have an educational or interpretive component.
- Developing destination trails and/or extended loop trails.
- Providing long distance motorized corridors designed with a minimum degree of challenge for a heightened outdoor recreational and educational experience.
- Where feasible alternatives exist, rerouting steep, poorly located, and eroding trails.
- Performing consistent trail maintenance to prevent erosion and/or unauthorized creation of alternative routes.

### ***Law Enforcement***

The primary mission of law enforcement is the protection of life, property, and the environment. Furthermore, patrol efforts provide a visible presence that tends to reduce crime and achieve compliance with laws and regulations.

In addition to accomplishing the primary mission, priority will be given to programs or projects which:

- Provide sufficient patrol presence and signage to keep riders on legally designated routes and/or within limited use or designated open areas.
- Provide a high number of user contacts emphasizing environmental education, user safety, and the ethics of responsible riding.
- Provide clear and informative route maps of the area at staging areas and trailheads, as well as during law enforcement contacts.
- Enforce closed areas effectively.
- Protect soils and watersheds.
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt law enforcement efforts to the changing needs of the area.

The OHMVR Commission supports grants for law enforcement activities. The OHMVR Commission particularly recognizes the need for Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers, Forest Protection Officers, and BLM Law Enforcement

Rangers to enforce various local, state, and federal laws and regulations on federal land.

### ***Proper Maintenance***

Funding priority will go to projects and programs that demonstrate the intent and/or ability to provide high-quality OHV recreation while implementing sound environmental practices designed to sustain OHV opportunity. Maintenance of roads and trails should be accomplished in a manner that conserves soil, prevents erosion, protects water quality, reduces potential resource damage, and sustains or enhances OHV recreation.

### ***Education***

For applications containing an educational component, priority will be given to those which:

- Educate current and future riders about the ethics of responsible riding.
- Promote rider safety.
- Emphasize environmental knowledge and responsibility.
- Emphasize compliance with appropriate laws and regulations.

### ***Local Grants***

Within the following general categories, the OHMVR Commission will give funding priority to the listed activities:

- Sheriffs, to address OHV problems on private lands.
- Cities and Counties, to develop local OHV areas where they can control and contain potential damage through intensive management and maintenance.
- Local entities to work collaboratively with federal, state, and other local agencies on specific OHV issues and/or to work collaboratively with groups and other agencies to conduct research to address resource and/or conflict issues.
- Non-profit organizations, to do conservation and restoration work.

### ***Public Involvement***

Priority will be given to applications that illustrate an effective process for involving a broad spectrum of interested parties. Grant applications should outline the applicants' past and future efforts to reach out and seek input from all interested members of the public, and demonstrate their past and future ability to gain support from the OHV, environmental, and local communities for their proposed activities.

### ***Urban Encroachment & OHV Compatibility***

Funding priority will be given to programs and projects which are designed to reduce conflicts with non-motorized recreationists, other existing or potential recreational users, and to protect residents, private property, and landowners adjacent to the area from noise, trespass, and property damage.

### ***Acquisition and Non-Motorized Buffers***

Funding priority will be given for land purchases contributing to:

- Mitigation of documented impacts.
- Buffers needed to reduce the deleterious effects to OHV opportunity resulting from urban encroachment.
- Preservation of existing and future OHV opportunity.
- Protection of important habitat by providing contiguous lands.

### ***Compliance, Development & Acquisition***

To sustain long-term OHV use, applicants should strive to insure compliance with all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and policies. Areas that are out of compliance will be low priority for development and acquisition funding. Exceptions may be made for development or acquisition projects that can demonstrate a direct affect on achieving environmental compliance and protection, can eliminate trespass and conflict, or can prevent closure of an area.

***The following general statements of policy are directed to applicants for further clarification and guidance.***

### ***Specific Deliverables and Fiscal Accountability***

Grant projects which will be able to demonstrate fiscal accountability by producing a product at the end of the grant period - such as a rehabilitated hillside, repaired routes, documentation of closure enforcement and signs, or a route inventory – will receive priority over those that will not. Applicants should insure all potential expenditures are accurately reflected in the project deliverables.

### ***Federal Agency Staffing***

To fund higher priority projects, the OHMVR Commission will give low priority to, or will reduce or eliminate grant funding for federal administrative overhead. The OHMVR Commission will give low funding priority for federal employees not directly involved in “on-the-ground” OHV management, conservation, resource restoration, monitoring, or law enforcement. Exceptions could be given in cases where coordination and oversight are required for “on-the-ground” project deliverables. Federal staff engaged solely in administrative activities, are in principle, the responsibility of the federal agency to fund.

***The following general statements of policy are directed toward the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division activities to provide further clarification and guidance.***

### ***Reporting***

For OHMVR Commission members to be better informed, the OHMVR Division would provide quarterly reports to the OHMVR Commission on the status of implementation of the local assistance program. Reports will include summaries

of grant expenditures, balances to date, results of field reviews at federal and non-federal sites, and implementation of grant requirements.

***Education***

To sustain and enhance environmentally sound OHV recreational opportunities, the OHMVR Division will, under the annual direction of the Commission, implement a campaign designed to reach out and educate recreationists throughout the State about the OHV program, its benefits, and the many recreational opportunities it provides.