

**Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation
Strategic Plan Update
OHMVR Commission Meeting
March 24, 2007**

Introduction

The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division of California State Parks and Recreation will develop a strategic approach for all aspects of the OHMVR Program. The Strategic Plan process will serve as the first step. The Strategic Plan will formulate a source of information on the current status of the program, program core principles, trends and opportunities and ultimately formulating future preferred responses to those trends and opportunities.

The Strategic Planning Process is focused towards a **visionary, yet practical** guide to achieve short-term actions with a focus on long-range goals. Key aspects of the plan are;

- An assessment of internal and external issues and trends/opportunities;
- An analysis of a broad spectrum of options and strategies;
- An action based plan to address those trends and opportunities; and
- Assessment methods to determine successes/shortcomings and to make appropriate adjustments.

Process

The legal foundation for this planning effort is contained in PRC 5090.32(N), which, in part, states the OHMVR Division will:

“Complete a strategic planning process that will identify future OHV recreational needs including but not limited to OHV parks in urban areas to properly direct vehicle operators away from illegal or environmentally sensitive areas. This strategic planning process should take into consideration as a minimum, environmental constraints, infrastructure requirements, demographic limitations, and local, state and federal land use-planning processes. The initial plan shall be updated periodically.”

Efforts to date, have produced preliminary information and strategies that will, be coalesced into a more formal **Strategic Plan**.

The framework for the plan closely follows, the Department of Finance Strategic Planning Guidelines;

- **Environmental assessments: An assessment of internal and external factors that can influence the success in achieving the agency mission.**

Process: Extensive review of past and current research materials along with focused group meetings with OHV recreationists, businesses, environmental representatives, federal, state, county and local partners were conducted in various locations around the state in an effort to gain a clearer perspective of the opportunities that lie ahead.

- **Mission statement that describes the agency's unique reason for existence.**

Process: Utilize the current Mission Statement as follows:

“The 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 (SVRAs), and to otherwise provide for a statewide system of managed OHV recreational opportunities through funding to other public agencies. To ensure that quality recreational opportunities remain available for future generations by providing for education, conservation, and enforcement efforts that balance OHV recreation impact with programs that conserve and protect cultural and natural resources.”

- **Principles that summarize an agency's philosophies and values:**

The Core Principles are the unique aspects of the Division that are the basis of its day to day operations and the foundation for the primary activities that must be accomplished in order to fulfill its mission.

Process: Utilize the current Philosophy and Values Statements which include:

- *Excellent Customer and Public Service - as exemplified in the provision of quality off-highway motor vehicle recreational facilities and experiences.*
 - *Resource Management - by ensuring adherence to a balanced resource protection/management program*
 - *Financial Responsibility - by providing financial assistance to local governments and agencies of the federal government for off-highway motor vehicle recreation and maintaining a fiscally responsible Division*
 - *Advocacy and Public Awareness - through the development and administration of educational forums and interaction with stakeholder groups*
 - *Organizational Efficiency - by allocating and maintaining key staff at the SVRA's and Division levels to work towards common goals that foster creativity, focus on results and require accountability throughout the organization for greater efficiency and overall effectiveness*
 - *Productive Partnerships - collaborating with federal, state, tribal and local governments, private organizations, and businesses working towards a shared goal and expanded opportunities*
- **Vision of what management wants the agency to look like in the future:**

Process: A professional facilitator at the May 2006 Commission meeting helped the commission identify a variety of common as well as diverse areas of interest. A series of public conference calls were conducted to gain further public input on the vision statement and to solicit general comments on the strategic planning process. Focus the OHMVR Strategic Planning staff, with assistance from an OHMVR Commission Sub-committee, to refine and formulate a shared vision. A proposed Vision Statement follows:

“The California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Program will affirm its place as the recognized leader in the field of off-highway motor vehicle recreation. The OHMVR Program will pursue recreational opportunities, which

are improved in quality and quantity to meet the changing and growing interests of OHV enthusiasts. As the statewide leader, the OHMVR Program will; promote responsible care of California's natural and cultural resources; adopt best-management practices for the resources of State Vehicular Recreation Areas; administer grant programs that support responsible stewardship; and sponsor educational programs that encourage safe and sustainable practices."

- ***Goals and Strategies/Objectives that identify the results an agency desires from planning, generally after 3-5 years:***

Development of Goals and Strategies to address the internal/external issues and opportunities identified through the environmental assessment process, which in turn is the basis for key assumptions, is the next primary step of the process.

Process: In an effort to gain comprehensive input, the Division will be conducting a series of regional workshops and a statewide summit throughout April and May.

- ***Action Plan provides a detailed description of the strategies to implement each objective. An Action Plan includes staff assignments, resource allocations and completion dates.***

Process: The Action Plan will be developed by the Strategic Planning staff in conjunction with the OHMVR Division Management Team, Commission Subcommittee, staff specialists and other interested stakeholders through a series of regional meetings and a statewide summit, with a completion date no later than June 2007.

- ***Performance Measures that gauge work performed and results achieved.***

Process: Upon completion of the action plan specific performance measurements will be established to provide an overall assessment of progress and allow for adjustments as necessary.

- ***Monitoring and Tracking to keep the work on schedule and progressing as planned.***

Process: A system of tracking and monitoring criteria tied to the performance measures will be developed for program managers and the Division Executive Team to assess the overall and periodic success of this effort.

The Strategic Plan will assist the California OHMVR Division, Commission, policymakers, off-highway enthusiasts and other interested participants with a vision, mission and key goals to meet future opportunities and to focus on the **OHMVR Program as "an entry point" for the growing and widely diverse populations enjoying this activity.**

Assumptions

1. Rapid Population growth.

The face of California is constantly changing and the population five, ten, fifteen years from now will look dramatically different from what it is today. Along with the increase in sheer numbers (34.8 million in 2000, projected 44 million in 2020 and 55 million in 2050), the racial and ethnic diversity of the state will continue to expand in a way that will create the need to examine the desires of future recreationists. By the year 2020, the following specific increases in populations are projected:

- The Hispanic population will see a projected increase from 11 million in 2000 to 19 million in 2020, 22 million in 2030 and so on.
- For Asian/Pacific Islanders the projected increase from 3.8 million in 2000 to 5.6 million in 2020 are significant.

The importance in both of these cases suggests a number of scenarios relative to these populations as new participants, educational requirements, public safety, economic opportunities or lack of and most importantly being relevant to their interests.

- The X, Y, Z generations are becoming more prominent in terms of growth, sophistication levels and diversity of interests
- The senior population in the State is expected to double.

The opportunities here suggest a need to address the concept of an expanded family with involvement from young grandchildren to the now older recreationists.

2. Interest in off-highway motor vehicle recreation is expanding.

Californians have an intense passion with the great outdoors. Of the over 34 million residents of California, 14-15% or 3.5 to 4 million, are off-highway vehicle recreation enthusiasts. A desire for a broad range of outdoor recreation activities and experiences is exemplified through the use of motor vehicles that are being used off-highway for recreation or to access other types of recreation. Historically, the most common perception of OHV recreation in California centers on the use of motorcycles, ATVs, four-wheel drive vehicles, snowmobiles and dune buggies that are driven off-highway for a recreational experience. However, more recently in California off-highway vehicle recreation has evolved to include, and is further defined in the California Vehicle Code as, any type of vehicle that is operated off-highway for recreation or to access other forms of recreation.

As mentioned previously the change in diversity of the state is also reflected in the off-highway recreationists coming to federal, state and local sites. The Hispanic community, made up of families and some individuals as part of organized groups or clubs, for one has developed a keen interest in off-highway use.

The changes in recreation participation and use patterns, along with shifts in the type of recreation preferred, will require the OHMVR Program to increase coordination and collaborative efforts with local, state and federal agencies to address the changing demands of OHV recreation.

3. Land is at a premium

Potential recreation lands are being lost across the state due to urbanization and other factors. Urbanization claims approximately two acres of farmland per minute in the United States. California is currently the second most urbanized state in the nation. As the development wave spreads across the State, OHV opportunities are threatened due to land use allocations and regulations, zoning laws, and increased environmental concern. The remaining lands available for OHV opportunity are rapidly receiving increased use ultimately resulting in potential impacts to the recreation opportunity, the outdoors experience, and the natural and cultural resources. This changing situation creates the need for proactive management to address the rapidly diminishing recreation land base.

4. Environmental concerns delay project approval and completion of much needed sites.

Resource damage as a result of intense activity throughout the ohv areas has been touted as a clear-cut reason for the program to be reduced or eliminated in some areas. The inability to protect natural and cultural resource sites in areas that have limited law enforcement capabilities fuels the controversy and perception that the OHMVR Program is not meeting its mission. However, resource monitoring and management efforts and soil standards as an example, are a direct result of OHMVR Program funding and are having positive effects.

5. Educational efforts are not clearly delineated or coordinated.

As interest and population targets grow relative to the OHMVR Program, the need to expand educational efforts in general along with focused programs to meet new OHV recreationists groups, is absolutely essential. The growth in recreationists of all ages, from young participant to the aging baby boomer, suggests a need to provide educational materials and forums that address recreational opportunities, public safety, environmental concerns just to name a few. A key aspect of this effort is the need to coordinate more closely with the variety of service providers in an effort to create a unified message and common method for recreationists to understand there is common ground and unified application of laws and expectations. New public information efforts must be developed to promote an understanding and appreciation of OHV recreation as a legitimate part of multiple-use management, as well as the importance of rider responsibility and accountability. These same public information efforts must be tailored to the emerging cultural diversity that exists throughout the state and is being seen in the OHV arena as well as towards the public who may not be participants but must become supporters if future funding and land use issues are to be resolved in favor of OHV recreation use.

6. Technologic changes in equipment are not always in sync with site design and carrying capacity

Given the limited funding for deferred maintenance along with potential environmental constraints on park and facility maintenance it becomes imperative that design criteria allow for the greatest flexibility given new equipment that is bigger, has wider wheel bases, faster and more durable. However, it is also important for the ohv industry to

commit to strategizing with ohv park managers and designers to be sure that sites are compatible with new design and that design takes into consideration potential limitations of those sites.

7. OHMVR Program funding needs to be solidified.

The recent Fuel Tax Study (September 2006) provides a bleak overview of the current funding picture for the OHMVR Program. Although available acreage continues to diminish, the number of participants increases (green sticker registration reached 1 million in 2006) along with the increased economic impact statewide of the ohv recreation industry is a clear indication the OHMVR program is not going away. Efforts to identify public resources, at all levels, along with a more strategic partnership with industry and manufacturers' time have come. While some may suggest a reduction in funding of the program would be preferred, funding which supports resource management, monitoring and protection, law enforcement and public education would be jeopardized if funds were eliminated or even reduced to any great extent.

8. Grant program needs to better address programmatic needs of the OHMVR Community.

The past several years have suggested the need for a more programmatic approach to the distribution of grants funding. Distribution of funds should more realistically address the needs as expressed by both the agency and the off-highway recreationists along with support for on-going programs that can be seen as model programs. As shown in the past few grant cycles, funding for key areas of need are not necessarily supported, in terms of funding levels, to truly address the impact of those program areas. Accountability has to become a standard practice for both Division and grant applicants in order to substantiate funds were appropriately spent as intended.

Timeline

- March 24:.....Commission Input on Key Assumptions
- April 2:Two Regional Meetings on Key Assumptions
- May:Statewide Summit on Key Assumptions
- June:.....Refine Goals and Objectives
- June/July:.....Develop Performance Measures
- August:.....Develop Action Plan
- September:Finalize Strategic Plan
- October/November:Commission Public Meetings
- November:Begin next Planning Process

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