

STAFF REPORT

AGENDA ITEM: Public Safety Report – Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Training

STAFF: Jared Zucker, OHMVR Division

DATE: December 1, 2011

Issue: Due to the increasing popularity of side-by-side recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs), there is a need for a training program to promote safe and responsible operational practices for these vehicles. On October 28th, a one-day ROV *DriverCourse* was debuted at Prairie City State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) as part of a four-day *DriverCoach* course pilot program which has been developed by the Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association (ROHVA).

Background: Currently, the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division partners with the ATV Safety Institute (ASI) and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF), national leaders in off-highway vehicle (OHV) instruction, to provide training to State Park staff and the general public in the safe and responsible operation of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and off-highway motorcycles (OHMs). In the past, there has been no equivalent course designed to address safe and responsible operation for ROVs.

ROHVA, established in 2007, is an organization, similar to ASI and MSF, affiliated with the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA), who is engaged in developing training standards for ROVs, which are the fastest growing segment of the OHV industry.

Discussion: ROHVA currently offers an online e-course to facilitate public ROV training. The new, hands-on *DriverCourse* component provides a real-time experience to augment and reinforce the theories presented in the e-course, which serves as a prerequisite to the *DriverCourse*. This course is ROHVA's public training flagship with its first time public debut expected early in 2012, and will be the first industry supported public training program for ROVs offered anywhere in the United States and Canada. In addition, the *DriverCoach* course trains ROV instructors who can then teach the *DriverCourse*.

The *DriverCoach* course, which debuted at Prairie City SVRA, included students from the United States and Canada. Staff from both Oceano Dunes SVRA and Prairie City SVRA participated in this coach course. The *DriverCourse* included six students from the

OHMVR Division and Prairie City SVRA. After successfully completing the six-hour course, each student received a completion card and each coach candidate became certified as an ROV Coach. At this time, the ROV Coaches will be able to facilitate *DriverCourses* to other staff, and, perhaps the public, once the program is launched.

As a result of the success of the pilot training, ROHVA would like to regularly reserve Prairie City SVRA's Environmental Training Center (ETC) and other park areas for ongoing presentation of the *DriverCoach* course and the *DriverCourse*. The SVRA's new 4x4 area and natural features provide an ideal setting for the successful facilitation of the diverse training modules within the program.

In order to train staff in the safe and responsible operation of ROVs, and to specifically address California Vehicle Code §38007 which calls for the adoption of a course of instruction in OHV safety, operation, and principles of environmental preservation, the prompt increase in ROV Coaches will be a top priority.

Status: Active

Commission Action: For information only. No action is required.

