



**PUBLIC EMPLOYEES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY (PEER)
RANGERS FOR RESPONSIBLE RECREATION**

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September 24, 2007

Hon. Representative – Members of **Rangers for Responsible Recreation** (a PEER project), a growing coalition of 16 of America's most respected seasoned law enforcement and land management specialists from every major public lands agency covering several different administrations, respectfully request that you sign on in support of the attached letter to Interior Secretary Kempthorne, urging him to protect archaeological sites, wildlife and wilderness values on certain public lands managed by the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** in Utah from **damaging off-road vehicle (ORV) use**.

We have a unique professional perspective on the harms caused by reckless off-roading, and see it as the single greatest threat to America's majestic western landscapes. This is especially true for the vast stretches of desert landscape in Utah that have been inventoried by the BLM and found to possess wilderness values. These areas are referred to as Wilderness Character Areas. As ORV use on Utah BLM lands increases, it continues to pose a **severe law enforcement problem**, draining ranger resources and causing extensive environmental damage. Indeed, BLM's own statistics show ORVs as the biggest single law enforcement threat on BLM lands in Utah, and in four other southwestern states (CA, AZ, NM and NV).

Under the **Federal Lands Policy and Management Act** (43 U.S.C. §§ 1701 et seq.), the BLM is required to manage public lands according to multiple-use principles. By permitting ORV routes through inventoried roadless areas – as BLM is doing with 6 on-going ORV plans in Utah – BLM fails to recognize the damaging impacts of off-roading on natural and cultural values, as well as to the vast number of other recreational opportunities provided by our public lands. Far **too many off-roaders have displayed a disregard for the law**, ignoring the existing trail boundaries and restricted areas, violating reckless driving and DUI regulations, and failing to meet proper safety standards for their vehicles. ORV abuse in Utah's pristine Wilderness Character Areas has already caused terrible damage to the landscape and created an unsafe environment for all other visitors, which will only get worse if the BLM continues to reward reckless ORV behavior and encourage more ORVs by designating official routes.

Visitors to America's public lands expect to enjoy nature, see breathtaking scenic views, breathe clean air and engage in safe outdoor recreation, not to hear roaring engines, get run off trails, see vehicle tracks in roadless areas, or have to worry about their immediate safety. For the BLM to **truly adhere to its multiple-use mandate**, Utah's Wilderness Character Areas must be protected from the proliferation ORV routes.

The Rangers for Responsible Recreation strongly urge you to take into account the harm to the environment and the law enforcement risks that will be caused by permitting ORV routes throughout Utah's BLM-inventoried roadless areas. Your signature and support will prove influential in **persuading Secretary Kempthorne and the BLM to revise Utah's ORV plans in a more responsible manner**.

Thank you for your time, consideration and action to protect BLM public lands,

Daniel R. Patterson
Director, Rangers for Responsible Recreation