

## All the Good Stuff You Missed: COHVCO's 2011 OHV Workshop

by Marilyn Liebetrau and Jerry Abboud

The setting for COHVCO's 2011 OHV management workshop took place June 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> at the historic Abbey in Cañon City, CO. This magnificent Tudor Gothic Abbey sits in the midst of a beautifully landscaped campus, just off US Hwy 50 in Cañon City.

The management workshop was in partnership with COHVCO, the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council, NOHVCC) the US Forest Service, BLM and Colorado State Parks. Motorized recreation on public lands provides many opportunities for a wide variety of recreational uses. Maintaining and building on these opportunities for the future enjoyment by all requires a great deal of dedication and commitment from land managers and enthusiasts alike. The purpose of this management workshop was to develop skills and partnerships that would result in long-term sustainability and improvement of the trail systems.

Prior to the start of the workshop, additional optional training was provided. Sue Anderson of Volunteers of Outdoor Colorado spoke on getting the most out of volunteer projects: planning, management and implementation. Dave Lindeman, ASI and dirt bike instructor, provided optional dirt bike safety training.

The primary direction of this year's management workshop was focused on sustainable OHV trails for Colorado by managing, keeping, and building for the future of sustainable OHV recreation, and by moving forward with Travel Management after implementation of the first MVUM's resulting from the 2005 Travel Management Ruse. It was discussed how to develop and utilize resources available in the form of funding, volunteer labor, and more. Most of the participants attending this OHV Workshop have received OHV Registration Grant Funds for trail projects, had local trails maintained by Good management teams or have used the services of the statewide OHV trail crew for larger projects (which is also funded by the OHV Registration Program).

By working closely together, enthusiasts and their partners within the agencies can help create solutions that will ensure the sustainability of roads and trails that are, and will be designated open for motorized use. These efforts will enhance opportunities for all motorized recreation enthusiasts.

Tom Crimmins, retired USFS and NOHVCC consultant, opened with the workshop objectives and speakers. Russ Ehnes, NOHVCC executive director, addressed the audience on the needs and desire of the OHV Recreation public. Quality of experience was emphasized over mere quantity. An update on the Federal and State OHV planning efforts, policies and legislation were discussed. Jack Placchi, Travel Management and Trails Coordinator, Colorado BLM office, covered the BLM Travel Management program and ongoing plans for designating BLM routes. Chris Spori, USFS, R2 Regional Landscape Architect and Recreation Planner, covered the USFS Sub Part A Travel Management Rule and Tom Metsa, CO State Parks OHV program manager, reviewed the DOW/Parks merger at its current state. That's one issue that is near the top of the agenda for 2011.

Resource management goals and concerns for OHV trail system planners and managers including soil, hydrology, riparian and wildlife issues were covered in detail by Kalem Lenard, Outdoor Recreation Planner, and Dave Gilbert, Riparian/Fisheries Biologist, both of the BLM Royal Gorge Field Office. This year's workshop was to impress upon the BLM Field Office the desire of the OHV community to work together...a message that came across loud and clear and opened new doors for future possibilities.

Tom Crimmins discussed the 4E's – Engineering/Education/Enforcement/Evaluation. These are gaining prominence with the agencies and the discussion as to how to respond to each "E" was an excellent primer on dealing with both the agencies' and preservationist's demands for more enforcement and

evaluation while the OHV public doesn't intend to ignore those "E"s it was clear engineering and education heavily influence the former.

Tom discussed the identification and development of a sustainable system of high quality roads, trails and areas. Also discussed was how to provide management tools, concepts and ideas that can be applied to a specific route system. NOHVCC provided a manual showing these procedures. The attendees then worked on table top exercises of how to plan and design for success using NOHVCC's step-by-step process: create the vision, build a resource map, inventory what you have, plan a complete system, create Travel Management Objectives (TMO), and design parameters to be considered.

Another area covered by Tom Crimmins included topics that must be addressed to plan a successful trail system and provided tools that can be utilized to improve the quality of the recreation experience. Those areas include: plan for success, use of roads, converting roads to trails, play areas, support facilities, multiple use trails, sound issues, wildlife issues, liability, and use of TMOs, trail maintenance and rehabilitation methods/techniques/considerations and the use of volunteers.

Several groups spoke on their success stories of interagency and public-private partnerships that leverage resources to improve and increase OHV recreation opportunities. They were Rod Mead from RRMMC and COHVCO, Alan Robinson from Friends of Four Mil, Chris Spurl, USFS, R2 Regional Landscape Architect and Recreation Planner and discussing the Turkey Springs EA Project/Pagosa Ranger District and Drew Stoll of AECOM.

Positive Impact of OHV Recreation on Economic Development and Jobs were covered by Scott Jones, COHVCO Board Member, who talked about the Colorado OHV Economic Impact Study and Jack Terrell, NOHVCC Senior Project Coordinator, who spoke on the Paiute Trail, Utah and Croom OHV Area.

Russ Ehnes, NOHVCC Executive Director, and Kalem Lenard, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM Royal Gorge Field Office, discussed NOHVCC and the BLM working cooperatively to identify and implement management steps that will improve trail system sustainability and the quality of riders' experience in the Texas Creek Management Area Pilot Project.

Tom Crimmins spoke briefly on how to establish and improve communication and cooperation between land managers and OHV enthusiasts.

An overview of the Colorado State Parks pilot monitoring program of OHV recreation on public lands with Stay the Trail Education programs was covered by Tom Metsa, Colorado State Parks and Valerie Douglas, Colorado Trail Patrol and Director of Stay the Trail Education Programs. The program combines education, volunteer participation, law enforcement and rehabilitation components.

The Colorado Roadless Rule, an overview of the Roadless Rule revision petition by the Governor of Colorado was extensively discussed and how OHV enthusiasts can get involved. Those speaking on this topic were Ken Tu and Pam Skeels, USFS R2 Planning Specialists. For more information on the Colorado Roadless Rule, please reference Jerry Abboud's article in this issue.

Success Stories were highlighted by Russ Ehnes, NOHVCC Executive Director, on the Highwood Mountains in Montana and Jack Terrell, NOHVCC Senior Project Coordinator on the Paiute Trail in Utah.

The workshop wrapped up with a field trip to the BLM Texas Creek Travel Management Area where many of the participants could review the results of the pilot program jointly being implemented by NOHVCC and Royal Gorge field office.

As part of the OHV management workshop banquet held the evening of June 17<sup>th</sup>, COHVCO presented awards to several groups and individuals for their dedication to helping maintain trails and roads for off

highway recreationists. Those receiving awards were Don Riggle of Trails Preservation Alliance as Volunteer of the Year. The OHV Club of the Year award was given to the San Juan Trail Riders club for their dedication to keeping and maintaining our OHV trails (receiving the award- Dustin & Ashley Wilkinson). Tom Morrissey with Colorado State Parks received the State Land Manager of the Year award. Chris Spurl of the Forest Service was awarded the Forest Service Land Manager of the Year award and Katie Stevens of the Grand Junction BLM office was awarded the Bureau of Land Management Land Manager of the Year award. Our many thanks to these individuals and groups who continue to help keep our trails maintained and open for everyone to enjoy and for making the workshop a great success.



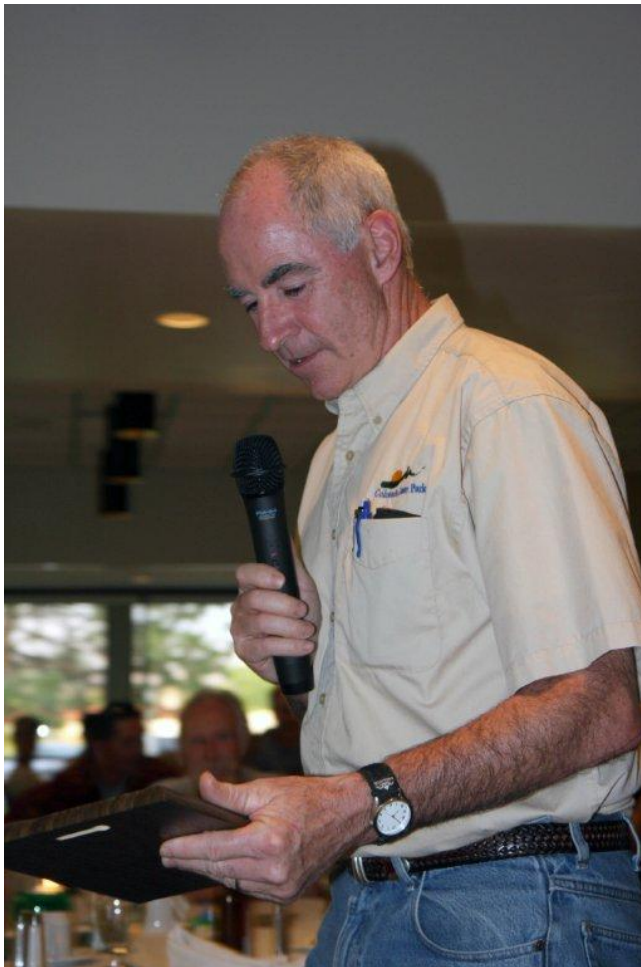
Don Riggle accepting the OHV Volunteer of the Year Award from John Bongiovanni



John Bongiovanni and Chris Spurl who received the Forest Service Land Manger of the Year Award



Dan Gourley, Mike Wilson and Jack Placchi accepting the Bureau of Land Management Land Manager of the Year Award for Katie Stevens who was not able to attend.



Tom Morrissey receiving the State Land Manager of the Year award



Dustin Wilkinson accepting the OHV Club of the Year award that was given to the San Juan Trail Riders.

(Photos by Marilyn Liebetrau)