

KING RANCH FEASIBILITY REPORT

Executive Summary & Complete Project Document

**TEM RECREATION CONSULTING
John Day**

February 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Note to reader: The Complete Project Document contains material supporting the study's Executive Summary recommendations and conclusion presented here.

PURPOSE

This study was to determine the opportunities that exist for an off-highway vehicle (OHV) park in the area known as the King Ranch/Unity Staging Area.

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the feasibility and make recommendations based on statistical data; site suitability; and identified management, environmental, social, and economic issues.
2. Make recommendations for mitigation, solution, and/or resolution of identified issues, including recommendations regarding purchase and feasibility.

METHOD

Several techniques were used gather information leading to the recommendations that follow, including:

- 1) Public meetings
- 2) An informal telephone survey of users, land managers, and local ATV businesses in the area.
- 3) Searches of the subject national, state, and local literature
- 4) Interviews with managers of existing OHV sites were conducted, in which each was polled regarding riding areas under his/her management.
- 5) Several on-site visits by TEM Consulting contractors were made to investigate and study the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

The property known as King Ranch/Unity Staging Area would provide the OHV community with a unique opportunity for a riding/family experience.

IN SUPPORT:

- a. It would allow riders to enjoy a forest setting while riding in the Blue Mountains. The King Ranch/Staging Area would also allow riders different experiences, a place to stage, and to come together to experience a common outing.
- b. Keeping the OHV user as the focus of development, the property could be enhanced with the facilities that this user seeks out and desires. Such a development could provide opportunities for the whole family, by including not only riding, but also camping, fishing, exploration, panning for gold, and many other experiences appropriate to this part of Oregon.
- c. With minimal services and facilities, consideration of key resources, and good management, the King Ranch/Staging Area will compliment the OHV program already in use in the surrounding area by USDA Forest Service and BLM.

2. **RECOMMENDATION:**

A major effort in both the law enforcement and public relations arenas will be required to maintain a successful recreational site.

IN SUPPORT:

- a. Cooperation and goodwill among OHV users, landowners, and the public is a necessary component to developing a successful recreation product, due to the mix of private and public lands and historical use of the area.
- b. The user group would be new to the area and have an initial impression of it as a wide-open riding area.
- c. Landowners want to conduct business as usual without having to accommodate increased traffic on access roads. Nor will the landowners tolerate any other activities that would bring change to their farming and ranching operations.
- d. The public does not want the county to remove private lands from its tax rolls or use county funds to manage additional properties.

3. **RECOMMENDATION:**
Baker County administrators and staff should attend trainings, workshops and meetings with other OHV administrators to assist in designing future OHV site developments in the area.

IN SUPPORT:
This will greatly assist the user and Baker County in reducing conflict and improving management.

4. **RECOMMENDATION:**
The King Ranch/Staging Area should provide the OHV user with a variety of experiences for hill climbs, physical barriers, terrain jumps and trail challenges.

IN SUPPORT:
The better the design of trails and play areas, the less likely users will leave the designated area and travel onto private lands, thereby trespassing.

5. **RECOMMENDATION:**
Design of the project should include an area exclusively for youth, in which they can learn and receive training, and an area for adults who want to display skills, warm-up, and test their machines.

IN SUPPORT:
This would assist in creating a safer place to ride. A safety management tool is to provide riding areas that match the riders experience. On-site safety training supports user etiquette.

6. **RECOMMENDATION:**
The sighting of trails and areas will be designed to place them outside any of the creek basins and wetland areas.

IN SUPPORT:
The creek areas are of critical concern and must be protected through good management, appropriate sighting, and thoughtful trail design.

7. **RECOMMENDATION:**
All OHV crossings of water bodies are to be via bridges that are perpendicular to the flow of the stream.

IN SUPPORT:
Insures protection of wetlands, water quality and stream side vegetation.

8. RECOMMENDATION:
Additional facilities could include several staging day use areas, a campground with full services including a host, water, and wastewater disposal systems. Consideration might be given to have a portion of the sites be reservation-only, with full hook-up including electricity, water, and sewer.
- IN SUPPORT:
Camp host assist in user information, educated riders need less law enforcement. Reservation sites are desirable for those who come from a distance, insuring them a place to stay.
9. RECOMMENDATION:
Consider including features such as wash stations for noxious weed management, quality trail and facilities maps, and quality information stations.
- IN SUPPORT:
It is expected that non-motorized users will also enjoy the area as a destination and will benefit from these services. Wash stations assist in the prevention of the spread of noxious weeds.
10. RECOMMENDATION:
It is recommended the area not be closed to non-motorized use, but not encouraged.
- IN SUPPORT:
- a. One of the user groups on OHV trails are mountain bike enthusiasts. They desire to hold events and other activities in many of the same facilities. Management will play a key role on how this use should be approached.
 - b. A common element regarding “other users” is: if an event is held, so will training, practices, and related general usage, creating possible conflict.
11. RECOMMENDATION:
Baker County should be prepared to mitigate environmental and economic issues.
- IN SUPPORT:
- a. Based on the on-site review, public meetings, and individual contacts, all can be mitigated. This is true for both King Ranch and Unity Staging Area. Both will provide an excellent opportunity for OHV riding.
 - b. A majority of adjacent landowners and members of the public attending the meetings opposed the proposal with comments and issues raised such

as: “no not here,” “not in my backyard,” “we moved here/live here to be away from development,” safety on Whitney Road, emergency services, enforcement, financial stability, and “too far away from community to benefit those communities.”

- c. Both the King Ranch and the Unity Staging have excellent potential. However, purchase of the property and moving ahead to address the social and economic issues would be difficult.

FINAL CONCLUSION

In the professional opinion of TEM Recreation Consulting, it is our belief there are other - and potentially better - alternatives that will achieve a more desirable social and economic result than development of the King Ranch/Unity Staging Area property.

Our recommendation is that Baker County pursue these other alternatives, which will have less cost and negative impact, and provide the county with a greater return. The alternatives will also provide a better product for the OHV community, while having less impact on adjacent landowners.

~ TEM Recreation Consulting
January 2005

THE COMPLETE PROJECT DOCUMENT

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The scope of this document is to provide the Baker County Commissioners and staff with information that will enable them to make a decision as to the purchase of the King Ranch property for an OHV recreation site. Information contained in this document and additional discussions will provide the basis on which to make that decision.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Bonnie Clugston, who is not only an adjacent landowner and Forest Service employee, but who possesses the foresight and knowledge which will greatly assist Baker County's future potential.

INTRODUCTION

The area known as King Ranch has been a part of a grazing/cattle management and forest products area for more than a century. It has always been in private ownership with small parcels of BLM “land islands” inside the property.

Mineral rights and patents exist that are reserved, and the area includes water rights which are active on Burnt River, China Creek, and Second Creek. At the old King Ranch location (known historically as Aubrey City), an old mill and a small stage stop community once existed. It was also the site of a rare Oregon lynching.

The area has also historically been used as a staging area for local cattle ranchers when moving stock to the range allotments on federal lands, and is still used for this purpose.

EXISTING PARTICULARS OF THE AREA

Location

King Ranch (privately owned) and the Unity Staging Area (cooperatively owned) are located in Baker County, the east central part of Oregon. The property is within the Burnt River Drainage; adjacent to the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The communities of Unity, Hereford, and Whitney are nearby. King Ranch is located on the County road known as Whitney Road, (which bisects the property), between State Highway 7 and 245.

Elevation

4,000 - 4,500 ft

Climate

Average daily maximum temperature is 55 degrees with a range of 20 to 80 degrees. Winter precipitation is generally in the form of snow, with summer thunderstorms providing additional moisture.

Access

Access to the subject property is available via Whitney Road, from either State Highway 7 or 245.

Property composition and zoning

King Ranch is composed of four separate and discrete deeded parcels. Of its 4000 acres, 3472 acres are zoned Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) and the remaining 528 acres are zoned Timber-Grazing (T-G). The parcels are in the Big Game Habitat (Deer & Elk). Both zonings under “conditional use” allow recreational opportunities. For EFU: private, semi-public, and public parks, playgrounds, hunting and fishing preserves, campgrounds,

and community centers. For T-G: Maintenance of outdoor recreational activities and related support services

Setting

The area is part of the Basin and Range and the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon. It is relatively flat, surrounded by some significant mountain ranges: the Elkhorn Mountains, Dooley Mountain, and Table Rock/Monument Rock Wilderness. The setting is unique as it is on the fringes of the timbered pine/fir forest and the sage and juniper open rangelands. King Ranch has a south-facing aspect which allows for early snowmelt, dry summers, and some early and late seasonal recreation opportunities.

Features: geographic and historic

Key geographic features include the North Fork of Burnt River and China Creek. One 40 acre parcel of BLM land is located inside the parcel.

Both King Ranch and the Unity Staging Area provide some excellent scenery. Many venues offer outstanding viewing and opportunities for “escape.” Both properties occupy zones that transition from heavy forest to sage and juniper steppe environments, and comprise a most unique recreation setting.

Use of the area:

Historic and existing use

King Ranch includes 4000 acres (+/-), historically used as a cattle and timber production area. The Unity Staging Area is a 30 acre (+/-) parcel adjacent to a small water storage area which is managed as part of an irrigation district for the area’s nearby ranches.

King Ranch also includes the visible remnants of the old Martin Mill (lumber); a rock quarry which is a viable source of road maintenance material; and a staging area for local ranch stock, currently used to move cattle back and forth from allotments and “home” ranches.

CURRENT RECREATION USE IN THE KING RANCH AREA

Due to its privately-held status, relatively little public recreation has occurred in the area of the King Ranch. However, since it exists adjacent to a national forest and close to Unity and Philips reservoirs, a significant number of recreation activities have occurred *adjacent* to the property.

An OHV trail system has been established less than a half-mile from the ranch itself, and is in current use. The Unity OHV Trail System is comprised of about 30 miles of trail open to motorcycle and OHVs. It connects to a larger trail system known as the Tower Mountain OHV Complex.

The area's primary recreation activities have included dispersed camping, hunting, fishing, and driving for pleasure. Whitney Road offers some unique scenic opportunities as well as places to stop and enjoy some of the area's historical significance. Easily accessed via paved roads and main travel routes, goods and services are just 20 miles away.

Recreational use of the area is minimal, as it remains undiscovered. This is due in part to users' concern regarding trespass, as there is a significant amount of private land in the area. The mix of private and public lands creates a conflict between the private landowners and the people seeking a recreation opportunity. In addition, the adjacent communities do not market themselves as recreation destinations, except for hunting and fishing. Increased opportunity for certain materials, goods, and services that cater to the recreationist will improve the area's viability and economic opportunity.

The setting exudes a remote and historic atmosphere, ripe for discovery. It is places like the King Ranch, well described during the public meetings related to this study, which generated remarks similar to "this is why I live here." These same reasons are why people choose this area for recreation as well. "Come to Baker County and the communities of Sumpter and Unity - and discover the past." Begin this discovery on an OHV and open up recreation opportunities for people of all ages and motilities.

POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE KING RANCH AREA

Location

Most opportunities for recreation are found in forest, water, or dry land settings. The transitional zones this area encompasses are unique, as is its southern exposure, which would allow for shorter winters and potentially longer recreation seasons.

Potential usage

The King Ranch/Unity Staging Area offers an excellent setting for recreation, particularly trail-oriented recreational opportunities. The site could include a mix of motorized and non-motorized uses, and a variety of year-round experiences could attract a diversified recreation audience.

Climate

Peak OHV riding and use season would be from late April thru mid-November. Other uses during the winter months: snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. In addition, there could be fall activity with camping associated with hunting.

Technology

New technology has presented a variety of opportunities to the user. Today's equipment is faster, more efficient, and more fun. Future equipment will be different as it is rapidly changing to meet the demand and market competition. The OHV program is a multi-billion-dollar industry with no ties among the industry, the land managers, and the users.

King Ranch and Baker County have the opportunity to provide diversity in use and state of the art management while meeting the expected future needs of OHV recreation.

There is opportunity to provide riding for all three classes of vehicles: motorcycle, sport/utility quad, and 4X4. To make it work will require properly designed trails and (in some cases) development of areas for specialized use, such as rock crawls, hill climbs, and youth and warm-up play areas.

King Ranch has the potential to be a showpiece of riding opportunity in the Blue Mountains. Such a destination is greatly valued by the user, due to the increased number of closed public lands like the King Ranch, and which are much desired by users. It also has the potential to address many of the factors that influence recreation over time, the only exception being near urban areas. This factor possibly results in fewer spontaneous trips, but trips that require more planning.

The varied terrain makes King Ranch a versatile riding area, accommodating all ages and physical abilities. The vast size and usable land accommodate activity separation, population growth, and less confusing multi governmental jurisdictions.

OHVs are here to stay. As seen by the growth and expected growth of 6% to 10% per year there will be increased conflict and failures if places like King Ranch are not considered and placed into riding opportunities of Oregon. King Ranch will play a significant role in successes or failures of land managers, users, and the industry. It is up to the land managers and potential managers to “refine” the users programs and facilities to provide the present and future generations with such needed opportunities.

In addition to recreation opportunities, King Ranch could still provide grazing and forest product management. An added benefit would be utilization of the excellent rock and quarry site located on the property. Management of the site would be a cooperative and coordinated effort with benefit to all interested parties. These opportunities could also produce revenue for the county (grazing fees and harvest/rock receipts.)

Recommended Facilities for King Ranch

Overall Perspective

King Ranch is unique in its setting and location. It could play a vital link in the overall scheme of OHV use in the Blue Mountain area. Although not close to a larger community, it is within easy access of Baker City, Ontario, and John Day. It is very close to the smaller rural towns of Unity and Sumpter.

The OHV user does not regard distance as a negative factor in the quest for a quality experience. What is considered is the opportunity to ride at a destination that is legal, with at least minimal facilities, and which allows for a desirable quality experience. The OHV user is also seeking a family experience. This should also be the objective of any program manager: to design and develop facilities for the family. Such an objective will positively assist management in the reducing conflict and the number of undesirable users.

It is anticipated, due to the location of King Ranch, that a majority of all users will travel a minimum of 50 miles to get to the site. Travel to the site could be via pickup with OHV trailer or by motorhome. Perhaps the starting point for the riding experience could be in Sumpter, Unity, or from other Forest Service campsites. The key to success is variety, dispersal, and opportunity, all of which provide the users an experience enticing them to return.

Managers of King Ranch will need to facilitate coordination between other land managers, both public and private, to determine the best facilities for the future. To do this is to recognize opportunity, growth, demand, conflict, and natural resources. The future of King Ranch will be based upon good planning, design, and monitoring. It is recommended that the area plan with a theme and a purpose. Following are our recommendations:

Overall Area Concept

1. Signage placed to direct people to the area. Maps and other media to show locations, facilities, and the system of trails.
2. Sign and delineate the area boundary.
3. Signs with a name and number for the trail systems, play areas and other facilities.
4. Delineate designated trails by user type and difficulty levels. Of the trails designated have 25% easy, 50%, moderate, and 25% difficult. Indicate alternatives for difficult areas to be by-passed by less-qualified users.
5. Develop a list of user courtesies and “responsible user” ethics for the area.

6. Work with the county road manager to provide safe access and egress onto Whitney Road including road crossings, cattle guards, and signing.
7. Allow the users to think that this area is open, but in reality it is designate trails only. This allows for freedom of use, a place to be taken care of or be lost.

Facilities

1. Staging and camping areas

Develop two day-use staging areas: One near the forest boundary and the other a mile east of the King Ranch cattle corrals. One of the staging areas should be designated for 4X4 use and the respective trails leading out of the area. Each staging area should be delineated with a limited number of points for entry and egress to prevent excessive speed and showing-off in the staging areas. Develop the main camping area at the King Ranch site.

- a. At minimum, the staging areas should have facilities for camping/day use, restrooms, and a loading ramp.
 - b. The four-wheel-drive site should have facilities for self-contained vehicles. This site is located next to an existing trails system and rock crawl and is close for spectators.
 - c. Keep all the staging areas on the north side of Whitney Road.
 - d. The primary camping should be located at the King Ranch corral site. These facilities should include water, electricity, sewer, and other amenities to attract users and generate increased fees, reservations, and control.
 - e. A kids play area is a must to promote family and growth of the sport. This could very easily be located in the bench above the corrals. This area would be provided for the use of youth under age 12 to ride and play, with an oval track and some very small bumps and jumps. The area should be developed close to the main staging area to allow for close observation.
- ### **2. Development of multi-class trail systems outside the staging area**
- a. Class II barrier crawls—Use as many of the natural terrain features to begin the trail system. Expand the trails by developing man-made features. Design rock crawls for all user levels, from beginner to expert. Most of the existing rock crawls are intermediate to expert.
 - b. Sport quad—Design areas for two-wheel-drive high-performance sport quads. These vehicles do not travel distances; in a small area, design climbs, sprints, and rollercoaster-type trail rides would be appropriate.

- c. 4X4 quads—These users need a challenging trails system that is much the same as the class II users, only in miniature. Climbs, barriers, slope, and side-slope trails add to desired challenges and trail characteristics. Area exploration is also desirable.
- d. Motorcycle—A trail system from beginner to expert, including climbs, jumps, rollercoaster and straight-a-way features. In addition, tight turns with supers and speed control within the trail design.
- e. Other uses—The development of trails and recreation sites will attract other users, both motorized and non-motorized. These other uses could include events or just general recreation. While other activities are ok and allow for mixed and multiple use, they can cause conflict. An event creates desires and the need for training, preparation, and general recreation pursuits.

Management of these events and other recreation activities is critical. It is recommended that King Ranch be managed primarily as an OHV area. Other activities and events should be considered secondary, preference being given to the OHV user.

3. Other recreation opportunities

The setting and a multitude of remote recreation activities are left open to the imagination of the recreationist. There are numerous onsite activities such as recreation gold panning, exploration of historical significance in the area, and the point of beginning for some very unique road trips for SUV and “street legal” motorcycles. In addition, there are many off-site opportunities such as fishing, backcountry travel and a trail system that takes people to Philips Lake, Unity Lake, Sumpter and many other points. The key is to get people off the road and onto trails riding an OHV to get there!

4. Season of Use

This could be a year-round use area if managed to its full potential. The only preventative is weather. King Ranch can become the jump-off point for winter sports and summer-time activities. Summer weather brings dryness and wildland fire potential and in winter, it’s the variable of adequate snow to support the winter activities.

ECONOMICS

Within King Ranch they County has the potential to develop a revenue source from campground fees.

Our initial review of the area is to recommend 200 fee campsites located within the King Ranch complex. These 200 sites* would be both reservations and non-reservations with a mix of semi-improved, full service, and non-improved services available.

Using 35% as a theoretical annual capacity** of a riding season that is six months in duration and daily/nightly rates that are comparable to other developed ATV/OHV riding areas, the following is a possible expectation of annual revenues.

50 semi-improve (water and electric hook-up)- \$10.00 per night X 180 days X 35% = \$630.00 X 50 sites = **\$31,500.00 annually.**

50 full service (water, electric, and sewer hook-up)- \$15.00 per night X 180 days X 35% = \$945.00 X 50 sites = **\$47,250.00 annually.**

100 non-improved (no services- open parking)- \$7.00 per night X 180 days X 35% = \$441.00 X **\$44,100.00 annually.**

Reservation sites could command an additional \$5 per night.

In addition:

2 group sites with a capacity of 50 people each - \$50.00 per night X 180 days X 35% = \$3150.00 X 2 sites= **\$6300.00 annually.**

An aggressive marketing plan must be developed and implemented to yield the forecasts as indicated about. Marketing to ATV clubs, associations, periodicals, as well as a public relations campaign that targets and leverages all travelers and tourist agencies, organizations, and media, is imperative to the success of this type of program.

*NOTE: A study complete with engineer specifications would be required to determine the exact number of campsites and their locations.

**NOTE: The contractors do not guarantee the 35% theoretical annual capacity, rather determine this figure as a standard.

A PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVE: RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Factors influencing recreation over time

A number of factors influence recreation users and enthusiasts: economic, social, and natural resources are among the most significant. Other factors that may influence one's recreation choices: where they live, work, and past positive experiences.

The economy

The overall economy affects recreation enthusiasts and their ability to take long distance and extended time vacations. When the overall economy is 'good,' more people are able to travel for longer periods of time and over greater distances. Conversely, when the economy is slow or depressed, shorter distance and day trips become the affordable vacation trend.

Socio-economic factors

In addition to the overall economy, there is an additional economic factor created by the industry itself. The manufacturers produce a variety of equipment at a variety of prices. They influence the economics of the specific sport or recreation by providing affordable entry-level equipment as well as equipment with advanced options, features, power, and/or accessories, thus appealing to a wide range of socio-economic consumer levels.

The manufacturers also provide equipment for specific sizes, experience levels, and age groups. All these elements widen their outreach to the consumer, thereby increasing the numbers of users profoundly (see "Demographics and Trends" elsewhere in this report.) This economic factor contributes significantly to the social influence of recreation as well. "Bigger, better, and more" (see "Demographics and Trends" - number of vehicles per use) stimulates the users' appetites, especially in competitive and highly visible recreation activities.

Natural resources

While recreation is growing due to socio-economic factors, public lands are becoming less available. More users at wider socio-economic levels and age groups equals surging user populations, while available lands are not increasing at the same rates. With more demand by users for separation, this factor is exacerbated.

Thus, our natural resources and land managers are more intensively impacted. It is critical that land managers make good land selections and choose appropriate management options to create areas conducive to each activity or sport while (at the same time) minimizing impact and conflict.

Additional factors:

Technology

Participants in the recreation industry are years ahead in what they propose to bring into the market. Manufacturers seek to increase profits; users are continually demanding new, faster, and better equipment. Some of this equipment may not be suited for the environment in which it is used. Industry competition and technology have combined to facilitate this increase. Competition within the recreation industry continues to produce newer, better, safer, more reliable toys at a rate exceeding anything seen in the past. Many of today's products did not exist five years ago. This is true in all forms of recreation equipment. We have clothing that keeps us comfortable in all climates and equipment that is reliable and easier to use, making us look and feet better.

With the media, social competition, and financial ability, technology currently directs recreation. Unfortunately, land managers and educators are behind in managing what the industry will produce, thus forcing land managers to manage by reaction, rather than pro-action.

Age

The recreation population age range is expanding. As technology advances, it provides the older recreation enthusiast with equipment that adapts to their physical strength and ability. Likewise, technology is providing equipment appropriate to the very youngest of users. This presents unique challenges to land managers to maintain a balance between the ages and still provide users a desired and safe experience.

Management jurisdiction

The variety of agency boundaries (Forest Service, BLM, state, and county) and management regulations, along with the ever-changing user designation and rules, have created confusion in the law and recreation. The older population is used to going out on their own without restriction, as land management jurisdictional "rules" were once minimal or none, while the younger population is coming up during a time of varied and fast-changing rules controlling where, what, and how they can recreate.

Both age groups are confused and lack the information and knowledge of the various jurisdictional boundaries, laws, and regulations. Users want to know where they can legally ride and not be in conflict with other recreation enthusiasts. This is especially true among ATV users. They are restricted and limited to a few areas and mired in the legalities that vary among land jurisdictions.

Urbanization

Individuals have chosen their place of residence based on lifestyle. This lifestyle does not limit them to a recreation activity of choice enjoyed only during a scheduled vacation. Residing in an area is only enhanced if it provides recreation opportunities nearby. In addition to recreational proximity, adults and youth alike are able to enjoy

a sport more often. Having a designed opportunity to ride or hike close to one's community allows for managed use rather than a negatively-impacted one.

Fuel cost

This is a significant factor when choosing where and how one recreates. With the present cost of fuel, the fewer miles a person drives to the destination before pursuing an activity makes it all the better. It takes less fuel to run an ATV than towing the vehicle used to transport it to the destination. The opportunity to spend more time on the ATV and less time getting there saves fuel money and allows more time for recreation.

Time to play

People are spending more money on leisure time equipment. They have more money to spend. To have more money requires more time working to meet everyday needs and to be able to afford the equipment. Some people will go to a place, put out the plastic, and plan hard expecting the biggest return for their dollar. This is why outfitters and guides are in demand. People have less time to explore and survey for their opportunities, they can however afford the fees. Having a limited amount of available time. Having known areas to recreate is necessary. It prevents violations and reduces illegal use. Having time to read and understand laws, maps and other material is time consumer. Additionally, private lands are generally not available and finding public private ownership is difficult at best. Public lands become the hub for mixed and conflicting use.

Extreme sports

Technology, media, and personal challenges have created a desire to pursue the extreme. Whether it is the biggest fish, largest game animal, highest peak or jumping the highest and farthest, recreation enthusiasts are seeking the latest rush, pushing equipment and their physical abilities to the maximum. As each new height is achieved, the bar is continually "raised" to seek out the newer and greater challenge. This creates a difficult situation for land managers who must anticipate upcoming extremes in order to best manage the resource that is part of the pursuit.

Activities separation

Technological advances in a variety of recreation opportunities and the increasing numbers of outdoor recreation participants (see Oregon Parks and Recreation Department SCORP document) contribute to conflicts among user types. Furthermore, imposed land use restrictions and public land closures exacerbate recreation conflicts. Mixing user types at different rates of speed on the same trail is cause for concern. Noise does not always alert the user to a potential safety concern.

Speed, terrain, expectation, and desired experience play a more significant role. For example, hikers enjoy a quiet, non-mechanical experience, while ATV users are less sound-sensitive and enjoy a sport dependent on a machine which generates a noisy experience. The result is a conflicting experience. Not only is noise an issue, but two individuals traveling at different speeds, also creates a concern for safety.

Terrain further enhances the safety issue and also reduces the distance that noise travels. In the past, land managers have used closure as the tool of choice regarding the OHV recreation enthusiast. Closure has contributed to the making of renegades in this user group, further frustrating land managers and non-motorized users alike.

Population growth

Oregon's population is increasing; so is the demand for outdoor recreation. With population growth, technology, and varied work schedules, someone is pursuing a recreation activity every day of the week, year-round. Seasonal recreation is now a thing of the past, greatly impacting today's land manager. A single activity can be pursued year round, *somewhere* on public lands.

ATV knowledge, competency, and training

Most recreation managers have had years of formal education and career training in managing nearly all forms of recreation. This is not the case for ATV management. Only two universities are known to offer an ATV management program. Other managers have learned ATV management 'under fire.' This has led to some poor management decisions and direction. Successful programs have line officer involvement, a trained ATV manager, and an active ATV club or organization. Poorly managed programs lack line officer, specialist, and employee involvement. Generally, most land managers do not know how to, or even want to, manage an ATV program. Management's lack of understanding of the ATV user and the experience, combined with a lack of management training, result in problems that fail to find solutions as well as fail to prevent and mitigate problems.

SUMMARY

Technology is rapidly forcing managers to face some difficult decisions. Getting the most out of a recreation experience will likely conflict with someone else – someone who is also seeking the most from his/her experience. As in all cases, training and the ability to adapt and be dynamic is foremost. Motorized trail planning should be in constant flux. Planners, specialists, and managers should first acquire an understanding of ATV recreation and its participants; only then can the former more effectively implement an analytical approach to development, trail management, and facilities for the latter.

The key to a successful management program is to initiate a development program which deliberately partners with - and addresses - the factors that influence recreation. Such a program will be essential in the successful planning, designing, and monitoring of riding areas. Without such an effort, managers will continue to use closure as a default management tool, and users will relocate to areas where the 'management' impacts the experience the least. This will result in an unacceptable level of impact and conflict on the land. Land managers should recognize that with today's socio-economic pressures and the marketing of manufacturers, ATV recreation is here to stay. This program will not go away and there is not enough space to 'send it somewhere else.'

Demographics, trends, and economics

The following statements are from several projects in which demographic and trend data were collected. It is included here to give Baker County a cross-section of resource information from which to make decisions regarding the management of King Ranch.

**1. Source: “Discovering Today’s Motorcycling,” Motorcycle Industry Council.
Press release 2002**

- The motorcycle industry has seen an increase of sale of new machines over the last 10 years. In 2002 sales were up 9.4% from the previous years.
- In 2001: 850,000 new units were sold
- In 2002: 937,000 new units were sold
- Over 40% were **off-road** motorcycles
- Total retail revenue (new units, sales, parts, accessories, state taxes licensing) totaled over \$19+ billion.
- The typical motorcyclist is 38 year old, male, married, has attended some college, and earns \$44,250 annually.
- 1 out of 12 riders is female.

**2. Source: “Colorado State OHV User Survey,” Tom Crimmins, Trail Consultant.
January 1999**

- OHV rider is typically a 48 year old white male with 20 years of riding experience.
- Takes two trips per month averaging 4.7 hours and 29 miles each trip.
- Does not belong to a club, instead rides in a group of 3 to 4 people.
- Out of 784 respondents they owned 3524 ATV’s and average of 4.49 ATV per person.
- Riders expect free usage of trails on public lands.
- Riders want a high quality riding experience more than on site amenities.

3. Source: “National OHV Managers Meeting in North Carolina,” Oregon Off-Highway Vehicle Association Web site. March 2003

- The USDA Forest Service reported the number of ATV enthusiasts in the US as:
 - 5 million in 1972
 - 20 million in 1983
 - 28 million in 1995
 - 36 million in 2002
- The average ATV enthusiast spends \$500 per trip.
- 1998: \$18 billion was spent in ATV recreation, 2.7 in sales and \$10 billion in trip expenses.
- The average annual user household income is \$40,000 to \$60,000.

- 2002: 800,000 ATVs and 300,000 off-highway motorcycles (OHM) were sold.
- 1997-2002: ATV sales increased 171%
- 1997: An estimated 3.9 ATVs per user household and 2.0 OHMs per user household in the US.
- 70% of ATV use is on the weekend.
- ATV riders re 90% males and OHM riders are 95% male.
- In households that participate in ATV recreation, there are 2.9 riders.

4. Source: “Tourism Trends in the United States: North Dakota Marketing Survey,” reprinted with permission from Joanne Burk-Olson, Deputy Tourism Director.

- Baby Boomers will impact travel for the next 20 years, have more disposable income, have more travel time, and travel farther away from home.
- Baby boomers (ages 45-64) make up to 39% of the population.
- Age 55-64 will surge and peak in 2020.

5. Source: “Oregon ATV User Survey,” Oregon State University, Department of Natural Resources, Dr. Rebecca L. Johnson & Jessica Leahy, 1999

- Of the 492 people sampled, 365 were recreational ATV users and 124 used ATV for work.
- 57% of Oregon ATV users were between the age of 35 and 54.
- 78% were from towns with population of 50,000 or less.
- 25% or under had incomes of less than \$40,000; 23% had an income of \$80,000+.
- 50% of users were Class 1.
- 19% of users were Class 2.
- 31% of users were Class 3.
- 25% of the users purchased new ATV within the past year.
- 5% of the respondents belong to clubs.
- Average length of time individuals had participated in ATV recreation: 16 years; 40% had 20 or more years’ experience.
- ATV trips tend to be day trips.
- 74% weekend trips.
- 7% three-day trips.
- 19% longer than three days.
- Management responses by users:
 - Trails and parking areas, positive.
 - Law Enforcement, negative.
 - Trails grooming, positive.
 - Maps and Information, negative.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS IN OREGON

- \$29 million spent per year in trip expenditures
 - \$17 million from non-residents
 - 25% of trip was spent on lodging.
 - 18% of trip was spent on gas, oil, restaurants, and groceries.

- \$74 million annual expenditures were to purchase an ATV or support vehicle.
 - 39% towards maintenance, parts, and trailers.
 - 12% towards clothing accessories, insurance, and storage.

- *Expenditures related OHV recreation activities, per day:
 - \$45 Snowmobiles
 - \$40 OHVs
 - \$28 other motorized.

- Other recreation activities:
 - \$67 down hill skiing
 - \$43 general day use
 - \$31 fishing
 - \$29 water use
 - \$12 non-motorized

STATEWIDE ON-SITE SURVEY

- 186 people contacted represented and owned 654 ATV's, 3.5 people in a party.

<u>Vehicles</u>	<u>In State</u>	<u>Out of State</u>	<u>Total</u>
Class 1	258	89	347
Class 2	101	23	124
Class 3	150	36	186

<u>Vehicles</u>	<u>All- Oregon</u>	<u>w/o Dunes</u>
Class 1	40%	40%
Class 2	35%	-5%
Class 3	25%	55%

- States participating

Oregon	140	75%
Washington	42	23%
California	2	1%
Colorado	1	.5%
Canada	1	.5%

*Trips per year
 In State 10
 Out of State 2.7

- Group Size
 In State 6.04
 Out of State 5.59

6. Source: Oregon State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan - 2002.

- Motorized Activities for Oregon

Activity	% change 1987-2002
Four Wheeling	-3%
ATV Riding	+38.4%
Motorcycling	-3.3%
Dune Buggy Driving	-32.7%

7. Source: Oregon State Parks

OHV Sticker Sales between 1998 thru 2003

2003	62,000*
2002	58,040
2001	51,242
2000	42,996
1999	27,607
1998	25,524

* This is a projected figure; the tally was complete through July of 2003 but not completed for August-December of 2003.

8. Source: OHV Business World Powersports Business

September 2004:

Over 34 million people hunt or fish; of those, over 13 million were hunters. A significant number of persons include OHVs as part of their hunting equipment.

February 2004

Motorcycle Sales

2001	250,045
2002	273,368
2003	294,015

ATV Sales	
2001	729,054
2002	769,483
2003	799,358

Dual Sports	
2001	20,164
2002	20,613
2003	19,956

9. Source: Safety Vehicle Institutes of American Web site

ATV sales are on track nationwide for the 13th year of consecutive growth. In California, sales of new ATVs have more than quadrupled from 1998-2003.

An estimated 16.3 million Americans ride ATVs in the United States.

SUMMARY

The numbers of OHVs purchased and OHV users is on the rise. Projections indicate that there will be an annual increase of 20 to 25% in sales over the next 5+ years. This increase is due, in part, to the age of the riders, teaching new riders, technology of the sport, and the social/economic influences of recreation. Increases are also due to OHV recreation allowing young and old the ability to enjoy nature, escape from everyday stress, enjoy family and friends, and explore and rediscover attractions of areas away from permanent human habitation. They are using products of modern technology to reach into the landscape for a more remote recreation experience with a greater degree of comfort and convenience. The OHV has come of age, is looking for a place to go that is acceptable, and meets the criteria for attractiveness, experience, and challenge.

The typical OHV rider is finding fewer places to ride and is searching for opportunities that offer diversity and a challenge. The growth rate for this activity has exceeded 48% from 1987 to 2000. Most likely the user will be male, age 35-54, with a moderate income, who owns 3.9 machines for family use. He will take 10 plus trips per year. He has over 20 years riding experience and is looking for a place to go within 100 miles from his home; wants to ride for a single day with over 6 hours of riding activity. The majority of users come from smaller cities and towns, with populations of 50,000 or less.

Expect to see an increase in Class 1 and Class 2, due to the age of the riders/drivers and the ease of operation and a stabilization of Class 3.

Most users do not belong to a club and use the OHV activity to socialize and bring family and friends together.

Over the next 20 years expect to see a steady increase in use and a “baby boomer” surge and peak as younger users come on the scene. The “boomers” have more disposable income and are more willing to travel. The younger, up-and-coming user must find something closer to home due to affordability and available time.

APPENDIX

1. Exhibit A
2. Contractual specifications
3. Definitions
4. Contacts
5. Bibliography

Contractual Specifications

On September 9, 2004, Team Recreation Consultants (TEM) met with Baker County Commissioner Fred Warner to review the contract. On October 6, 2004, a signed contract was received and work on the project began. Public notices were posted to solicit the input of interested parties regarding the proposal. The meetings were held October 14, 2004, in Hereford; October 16, 2004, in Sumpter; and November 4, 2004 in Baker City. The meetings were well attended and provided a generous number of comments.

The contractual specifications for this report were attached as a separate document to the contract for the project, outlining the desired work to be completed. Each of the items was considered an action item. Following is a brief report relating to those specifications:

1. Provide consulting services

TEM Recreation was contracted and is completing the consulting services requested

2. Provide OHV use and demographics

OHV use is on the increase due to a number of factors:

- a. OHV use: An estimated annual increase in machine sales of between 5% to 7% per year, with an expected 20% to 30% increase over the next five years, beginning in 2002, is projected. (This is "new" units only, and does not account for "used" machine sales.)
- b. User demographics: For this area, user demographics would be influenced by technology, user age, urbanization, fuel costs, time to play, and availability of the OHV opportunity.

Primary users would be drawn from the Boise, Idaho/Ontario, Oregon area; the Interstate 84 corridor; and SE Washington. Users would also come from Portland, the Willamette Valley, and Central Oregon, respectively.

The primary user would be a "baby boomer," 48 years old, white male, with 20 years riding experience; not associated with a club, he rides with friends in groups of 3 to 4 people. He will spend an average of \$500 per trip, and has an annual average income of \$40,000 - \$60,000.

In 1972 an average 5 million users were estimated nationwide; in 2000 there were over 36 million. It is estimated there are currently more than 60,000 users - and the numbers are increasing rapidly.

3. Access, type of activities, facilities, and seasons of use

- a. Access: State Highway 7, Whitney Road onto County Road #529/523/Forest Road 19, or from State Highway 245 near Unity Reservoir. The specific route would depend on the user's point of departure for the destination.
- b. Type of activities: Camping, day use, motorized and non-motorized trail riding, fishing, gold panning, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting. Commercial operations such as guiding, educational opportunities, and youth organizations are also possibilities.
- c. Facilities: Designated trail systems, camping (including large RVs associated with motorized use), overnight use development ranging from full hook-ups to more self-contained facilities, staging areas for day use, designated play or warm-up areas, designated areas for youth, group sites, ADA improvements. Services to consider: law enforcement, hosts, volunteers, and management.
- d. Seasons of use: The subject area has potential for year-round use, including motorized and non-motorized trail use.

4. Management issues

- a. Managers: People must be trained and possess the skills necessary to manage a complex recreation program. The program is very demanding, requiring the ability to communicate, work with people of diverse backgrounds and skill levels, and maintain an inventory of equipment which, if left unmanaged, can result in undesirable impacts.
- b. Environment: The largest environmental issues are associated with the streams and wet lands in the subject areas. No trails should be located in or near these areas. The appropriate use of proven solutions to protect critical environments is quite important. Well-considered trail design, use of bridges, and an active maintenance program will be critical to the success of such a project.

There are no known TE&S, fish, animals, or plants located in the area, but there is highly desirable habitat for deer and elk. It is not designated as deer or elk winter range or calving, but herds inhabit the area year-round, depending on available food, shelter and degree of disturbance.

(Mitigation of environmental issues is possible, as proven in the adjacent national forest and the OHV trails located on those public lands.)

- c. Social Issues: The most significant issue of the King Ranch/Staging Area site, there is also a need to consider the existing cultural or historical issues.
 - d. Economic: The King Ranch/Staging Area site has potential to become an OHV destination, and if managed properly and in cooperation with the Forest Service, communities and businesses will benefit from the positive economic impact. Good marketing is a key element for success.
5. **Conceptual design**
Attached is a map (exhibit A) showing potential sites and opportunities.
6. **Final report**
This document is to be considered the final report.
7. **Coordinate with the planning department**
Contact has been made with the planning department; a report has been received and reviewed.
8. **Coordination with public and private landowners**
Meetings have taken place with USDA Forest Service officials and interested members of the public (three public meetings); one-on-one discussions with adjacent landowners have been completed, including the owner of the King Ranch/Staging Area.
9. **Coordination with county officials**
Coordination and notification with county regarding public meetings.
10. **Public meetings**
Three public meetings were held and the results are being tabulated.

DEFINITIONS

Class I, II, and III Vehicles, as defined by the **Oregon Vehicle Code:**

Class I Vehicles

801.190 All Terrain Vehicle means a motorized off highway recreational vehicle 50 inches or less in width with a dry weight of 800 pounds or less that travels on three or more low pressure tires, has a saddle or seat for the operator and is designed for, or capable of, cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland or other natural terrain.

Class II Vehicles

801.193 All Terrain Vehicle means a motorized that weights more than a Class I and less than 8,000 pounds; is designed for, or capable of, cross-county travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland or other natural terrain.

Class III Vehicles

801.194 All Terrain Vehicle means an off highway motorcycle with a dry weight of 600 pounds or less that travels on two tires.

CONTACTS

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As part of the research necessary in developing an overall understanding of the area and its potential, issues, and use, public input was solicited. The information collected was gathered primarily at three public meetings. In addition, several individual meetings with the subject property landowners, adjacent landowners, USDA Forest Service, Oregon State ATV Committee members, and private individuals took place.

The major issue, it was generally agreed, is the adjacent landowners' concern regarding this type of land use immediately adjacent to their properties.

Following is a summary of the concerns raised, divided into five categories:

1. User safety
 - Law enforcement
 - Emergency services
 - Impact and conflict on Whitney Road

2. User responsibility
 - Unlicensed vehicle use on Whitney Road
 - User compliance with State of Oregon Vehicle Code
 - User compliance with State of Oregon ATV permit and decal
 - Vehicle noise
 - Trash

3. Management
 - Baker County's ability to manage the site
 - Funding
 - Law enforcement
 - Tax collected on privately owned vs. publicly owned land
 - Open range and cattle being relocated
 - Noxious weeds

4. Trespass
 - Vandalism
 - Private land and boundaries

5. Other concerns

- Grazing
- Wildlife
- Weeds
- Water rights and wetlands
- Vegetation management including wild land fire, harvest, and
- Cost: who will bear the cost now and in the future?
- Not close enough to Unity or Sumpter for economic benefit
- OHV users are not good neighbors
- Outsiders will not care for the land like the locals
- Potential damage to irrigation ditch
- Utilize existing areas before purchase of new areas
- Look at the dredge tailings
- Liability issue and how it will affect adjacent lands
- Lost tax revenue

LAND MANAGERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES INTERVIEWED

Clugston, Bonnie; USDA Forest Service, Wallow Whitman National Forest

Pointer, Patti; Planner, Baker County

Turner, Steve; J. Freedman & Company

Wilson, Kent and Anita; landowners, King Ranch

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