

Mr. Chairman, Members of Congress, I thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

The Shoshone National Recreational Trail System, a 337-mile proposed trail system in Northern Utah, provides an excellent opportunity to balance the needs of the area's rapidly expanding number of off highway vehicles (OHV-ATV's and motorcycles) while at the same time protecting the natural resources of the lands affected. Past land use activities such as ranching, mining, and timber harvesting left thousands of miles of old roads and trails that are being discovered by OHV enthusiasts. Some of this use is appropriate and some is not.

This proposal will effectively identify, designate, sign and map a trail system. It will provide outstanding riding experiences on routes that can be managed and maintained while simultaneously provide protection for the area's outstanding resources.

It is estimated that there is a total of 130,000 OHV's, both registered and unregistered, for the state. Over 50 percent of registered machines are from counties north of Salt Lake City. The number of registered OHV's have risen 197% in Utah just since 1997. OHV sales have increased nationally at 27-30 percent per year for the last five years. The increase in OHV sales is increasing much faster than the identification of appropriate riding areas.

With this growth, OHV users are seeking more opportunities. Since approximately two-thirds of all Utah lands are publicly managed, the riding public naturally turns to us. Results from a user survey conducted by Utah State University for the Division Parks and Recreation in 2001 captured these concerns:

- 1.) Of the more important issues affecting OHV use in Utah was "having enough places to ride," followed by "closing off too many areas."
- 2.) The average one-way distance traveled to get to an appropriate place to ride an OHV is about 100 miles.
- 3.) The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management should, "Recognize that trails and roads are an important aspect of recreation and should be given a high priority for inventory, signing, development of loop trails, and improving trail access."
- 4.) Remote ATV trails make special places available to many types of individuals including children and should receive more emphasis by federal and state land managers.
- 5.) Unregulated use leads to resource degradation, user conflicts and reduces the quality of the recreational experience.
- 6.) Riding on established roads and trails is the most popular with OHV owners.

In an attempt to find proactive solutions to these issues, the Utah Department of Natural Resources was asked to identify motorized riding opportunities in the northern part of the state, similar to the opportunities that are provided by the Paiute Trail. The Utah Division of Parks and Recreation, a division of the Department of Natural Resources, is responsible for the administration of the state's off-highway vehicle program and enforcement of state laws regarding use of these vehicles, and as such the division was asked to take the lead role.

The Paiute Trail is a motorized trail system that was developed in central Utah in the late 1980s. The system, now recognized nationally as a model for proactive OHV management on public lands, has 587 miles of designated trails that link 12 communities, two state parks, the Great Western Trail and many other

points of interest. In addition there are sixteen participating communities that are connected to the trail system. The Paiute Trail became the model for the proposed Shoshone National Recreation Trail System.

The Paiute Trail grew from very humble beginnings out of the very small central Utah community of Circleville in 1988. Two friends; one an employee of the Forest Service the other a Paiute County commissioner, sat on the tailgate of a pickup truck talking about the latest access challenges to their favorite hunting spots as the Forest Service was going to close down a major access road to ATV use. The two, not to be denied access, devised a plan to develop an alternative to closure. Their plan was endorsed by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and later the Utah Division of Parks & Recreation. The Paiute Trail has grown in popularity now serving over 60,000 riders annually. The annual Paiute Trail Jamboree attracts approximately 800 participants, 60 percent from out-of state. There are many positive things attributed to the trail, but perhaps the most important is its role in providing a proactive solution to the mis-use of public lands yet provides riding opportunities for a growing segment of recreational users.

Representatives from the Utah Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, OHV enthusiasts met over a 2-3 month period to identify trail riding opportunities, similar to those experienced on the Paiute Trail. The group was also encouraged to identify existing trails and roads, ones used but perhaps not properly maintained for OHV use. The group focused its attention on an area of the state that was within easy driving distance from the majority of registered users in northern Utah and was already being utilized as a winter snowmobile trail system.

The first conceptual plan was very promising: the group identified 337 miles of existing and open roads and trail, 172 miles of existing routes not designated open but possibly available by agreement, and found that only 12 miles to trail that would need to be constructed. The majority of the proposed trail system was located on U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management administered land, accessible to four counties and almost sixteen communities. The federal agencies responsible for administering the area previously identified the proposed routes in their travel plans and were in support of this conceptual plan. A few modifications were made, both additions and a few deletions that enabled the group to achieve the needed approval from land management agencies.

A series of community meetings were scheduled in each of the four counties adjacent to the trail: Rich, Cache, Box Elder and Weber. The meetings allowed community leaders and interest groups to review the conceptual plan, provide input, and voice their support. Representation at the meetings included, county commissioners, mayors, city council members, motorized and non-motorized trail users, environmental groups and other state and federal land managers. The proposal met with unanimous support. Even those who were against OHV use, viewed the proposed trail system as being positive. One participant commented, "Perhaps more developed trail riding opportunities would decrease the impact on more sensitive areas." A non-motorized trail user commented, "perhaps more motorized trail opportunities would reduce conflicts with non-motorized trail users."

In each meeting the majority of participants viewed the creation of the trail as a proactive way to address the growing demand for motorized riding opportunities. The rural communities praised the plan for its potential economic benefit, citing the rural communities located near the Paiute Trail as positive examples of what could be achieved. It was noted, that Marysvale, a small central Utah town, had benefited significantly from the creation of the Paiute Trail. In the late 1980's Marysvale had only two businesses, now with the addition of the trail, boasts of over 20 businesses. The Marysvale Chamber of Commerce states that, "Because of the Paiute ATV Trail, we have become a destination community." The Sevier

County Travel Council boasts, "The Paiute ATV Trail has become the most important tourist attraction in our County. The trail not only brings thousands of ATV riders to our area, it also provides access to some of the most beautiful recreation areas in the state... and well over \$4 million is injected into the County annually."

In the two weeks prior to presenting this testimony in favor of creating the Shoshone National Recreational Trail, the Department of Natural Resources received letters of endorsement for its establishment from each of the four counties that are adjacent to the proposed trail. A letter of support from the Utah State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA), committing the use of roads and trails that cross lands under their jurisdiction was also provided. (see attachments provided)

The Shoshone National Recreation Trail provides a rare opportunity to satisfy a growing segment of recreational users in a way that assists land management agencies to better protect our natural resources. There is no major opposition in part due to the thoughtful and prudent manner in which the trails were identified. The majority of the proposed routes are open to OHV use and are already identified in Forest Service and BLM access plans. Lands identified as desired routes but not yet approved can be added at a future date in accordance with the National Trail System Act. If the desired additions involve private property, the additions can only be made with the approval of the owner of the land upon which the trail is to be located.

The Shoshone National Recreation Trail bill is one we enthusiastically ask you to recommend favorably. Executive Order 11644 made by then President Nixon, requires the establishment of policies and procedures that would ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands would be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands (Nixon, 1972). Thirty years later, public land managers have yet to fully address OHV use on public lands through these measures. The National Trails System Act is an option that is consistent with the objectives to more effectively manage OHV use. More importantly, it is a widely supported opportunity to meet the demands on an increasingly popular recreational activity while protecting (our) valuable resource base.

**DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT**  
Required by House Rule XI, clause 2(g)  
And Rules of the Committee on Resources

1. Name: David K. Morrow
2. Business Address: 1594 W. North Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84116
3. Business Phone Number: (801) 538-7323
4. Organization you are representing: Utah Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation.
5. Any training or education certificates; diplomas or degree or other educational experiences which add to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.

Graduated from San Diego State University 1972 with dual majors in Parks and Recreation and Public Administration.

6. Any professional licenses, certifications, or affiliations held which are relevant to your qualification to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.

Former peace officer, State of Utah, former OHV Safety instructor, Utah Division of Parks and Recreation.

7. Any employment, occupation, ownership in a firm or business or work-related experiences which relate to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.

Currently employed by the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation for 29 years. Held various positions of increasing responsibility from park ranger to Deputy Director. Considerable experience in resource protection, land management, and the enforcement of ATV and motorized vehicle law.

8. Any offices, elected positions, or representational capacity held in the organization on whose behalf you are testifying.

None

TESTIMONY OF DAVID K. MORROW

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES,  
DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT

Required by House Rule XI, clause 2(g)  
And Rules of the Committee on Resources

1. Name: Bryce R. Nielson
2. Business Address: 1407 West Chokecherry Drive, Garden City, Utah, 84028

3. Business Phone Number: (435) 946- 8830
4. Organization you are representing: Rich County Commission
5. Any training or education certificates; diplomas or degree or other educational experiences which add to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.  
  
Graduated from Utah State University, 1970, Fisheries Management
6. Any professional licenses, certifications, or affiliations held which are relevant to your qualification to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.  
  
Former peace officer, former mayor of Garden City, Utah, Bear River Association of Governments, Bear Lake Regional Commission.
7. Any employment, occupation, ownership in a firm or business or work-related experiences which relate to your qualifications to testify on or knowledge of the subject matter of the hearing.  
  
Currently employed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for 31 years. Extensive experience in natural resource related land use impacts, wildlife impacts, and tourism related activities.
8. Any offices, elected positions, or representational capacity held in the organization on whose behalf you are testifying.  
  
Rich County, elected Commissioner. Bear River Association of Governments appointed representative.

TESTIMONY OF BRYCE R. NIELSON

RICH COUNTY COMMISSIONER, CHAIRMAN  
RICH COUNTY, UTAH