

Rangers for Responsible Recreation

More than a dozen of America's most seasoned law enforcement and natural resource management specialists from every major public lands agency and several different administrations are taking a stand to end irresponsible off-road vehicle abuse of our public lands.

Meet the Rangers for Responsible Recreation:

*** Ron Kearns, former U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Refuge Officer/Biologist, Arizona**

Ron Kearns is a wildlife biologist specializing in desert bighorn sheep management and Arizona Sonoran desert ecology and flora. He worked for 25 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was at Kofa National Wildlife Refuge as a biologist and law enforcement officer for 18 of those years. Mr. Kearns is also an Army veteran.

"I have observed a dramatic increase in the use and misuse of off-road vehicles on the Kofa since I began my law enforcement duties there in 1982. The abuse involves driving off the 300 miles of designated roads on Kofa resulting in irreparable damage to desert pavement and pristine lands. The Fish and Wildlife Service must increase law enforcement efforts."

*** Ed Patrovsky, former U.S. Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service Law Enforcement Ranger, California**

Ed Patrovsky served for 25 years as a National Park Service and BLM Law Enforcement Ranger. BLM duties included intensive patrol work enforcing rules and regulations in off-road vehicle open areas. Ranger Patrovsky coordinated a ground-helicopter patrol operation which substantially reduced illegal off-road vehicle use in the Rand Mountains Special Management Area, which contains prime Desert Tortoise habitat near Ridgecrest, California.

"Lawless and inappropriate off-roading causes significant environmental damage, as well as reducing recreational opportunities."

*** Dan Heinz, former U.S. Forest Service Ranger, Nevada**

Dan Heinz had a 25-year career with the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado as a District Ranger and in Montana as a range and wildlife management staff officer, implementing many tough off-road vehicle management projects. He has followed that with a 24-year career working with conservation organizations, pressing for responsible off-road vehicle management.

"Motorized touring of our wildlands to enjoy nature is a long established part of the public lands recreation, but 'challenging, thrilling, exciting and entertaining' off-roading is not, and is destructive by its very nature. It must not be permitted anywhere on public lands."

*** Don Hoffman, former U.S. Forest Service Ranger, Arizona/New Mexico**

Don Hoffman served with the U.S. Forest Service as Wilderness Program Manager for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona and New Mexico. During his career he served as Special Use Officer, Developed Recreation Field Supervisor, Wilderness Ranger and Trail Crew Foreman.

"Rapid population growth, accelerating off-road vehicle sales and ineffectual regulation have combined to make the indiscriminate use of off-road vehicles the greatest threat to Arizona's quiet, wild places."

*** Kevin Emmerich, former National Park Service Ranger, Nevada**

Kevin Emmerich served for 16 years with the National Park Service in environmental education and resource management. Kevin is now self employed and restoring wetlands in the Mojave Desert of Southern Nevada.

"In two decades of living in the Mojave Desert, I have witnessed harm to fragile desert ecosystems by increasing off-road vehicle use. I have recently seen a desert stream lose eighty percent of its vegetation and have seen the air quality of the desert in Amargosa Valley, Nevada be polluted because off-road vehicles have removed large tracts of vegetation and soil crusts. Clearly, off-roading on public lands needs more regulation."

*** Jim Baca, former BLM National Director, New Mexico**

Jim Baca has served as Mayor of Albuquerque, New Mexico State Land Commissioner, Director of the Bureau of Land Management and is now serving as New Mexico's Natural Resource Trustee.

"There is no greater threat to our country's public land treasure than Off-Road Vehicles. Additionally, they are killing and injuring too many young people because of improper training, operation and inherent safety deficiencies."

*** Jim Furnish, former U.S. Forest Service Deputy Chief, Washington, DC**

Jim Furnish served as Deputy Chief of the Forest Service under Chief Mike Dombeck, and was regarded as one of its most pro-environment senior officials. He also served as Siuslaw National Forest Supervisor in Oregon, and District Ranger at Bighorn NF in Wyoming.

“What has been lacking is the assurance of tough enforcement and the backbone needed to bring the runaway problem under control. Folks visiting our public lands expect enforcement that protects natural resources, ensures visitor safety, and reclaims a family-friendly atmosphere.”

*** Bob Abbey, former U.S. Bureau of Land Management Nevada State Director, Nevada**

Bob Abbey worked for more than 32 years with state and federal land management agencies before retiring from the federal government in July, 2005. He served eight years as the Nevada State Director for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. As the BLM Nevada State Director, Bob provided direction and oversight for 48 million acres of public land managed by the BLM. He managed a staff of 700 employees in eight field offices and the state office and an operating budget of \$51 million.

"The irresponsible use of off-road vehicles on our public lands is one of the greatest challenges facing land managers today. There appears to be a total disregard by many off-roaders of the impacts from their actions. The public land managers have no other option than to close more of these lands to off-road vehicle use unless off-roaders begin exercising responsibility and better judgment."

*** Jeff Aardahl, former U.S. Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service Wildlife Biologist and Natural Resources Manager, California**

Jeff Aardahl served for over 30 years as a biologist and manager with BLM in the Mojave, Sonoran and Great Basin Deserts of California, and in Washington DC. He also served as a biologist with the NPS at Death Valley National Park in California and Nevada. Mr. Aardahl is also an Army veteran.

"Opportunities for diverse and quality recreation experiences on public lands are increasingly threatened by excessive and illegal off-road vehicle use. Federal agencies, particularly the BLM, provide for inappropriately high amounts of off-road vehicle use of our public lands to the detriment of landscapes with significant scenic, biological, physical and cultural values. Of particular concern is the inability of the BLM to properly manage off-road vehicle use, stem the tide of increasing illegal off-road vehicle use, and manage our public lands for the benefit of current and future generations."

*** Matt Chew, former Arizona State Parks Ecologist, Arizona**

Matt Chew is an ecologist who formerly served as Natural Resources Planner for Arizona State Parks. He now writes about the history and philosophy of conservation and teaches the history of biology at Arizona State University. He has driven off-road vehicles at work and play for over 30 years.

"Some off-roaders are responsible stewards, but far too many are weekend wild men who mistake our public lands for a "Mad Max" theme park. Far too few of our politicians and public officials have the courage to stand in their way."

*** Tom Egan, former US Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service Wildlife Biologist, California**

Tom Egan is a Wildlife Biologist who served an 18-year civil service career with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Veterans Administration. As a BLM Wildlife Biologist, Mr. Egan assisted in preparing several off-road vehicle area plans, developed biological screening criteria for use in vehicle route designation, and participated in designing the West Mojave Vehicle Use Network, the largest effort of its kind conducted to date in the United States.

"Uncontrolled off-road vehicle use is without a doubt, the single greatest threat to natural resource sustainability on our public lands and in our national forests."

*** Laura Cunningham, former Ranger and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Geological Survey – Biological Resources Division, California Department of Fish and Game, and National Park Service, Nevada**

Laura Cunningham has served as a Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, the California Department of Fish and Game, and as a Ranger for the National Park Service in the California/Nevada Death Valley region.

"I've seen numerous instances of damage to sensitive habitats from uncontrolled off-roading, including direct tire trampling of Pacific tree frog eggs in Surprise Canyon, as off-road vehicles drove up the desert stream. I have been threatened by dangerous off-roading behavior while hiking. I have also had trespassing off-roaders on my land in the Mojave Desert, who acted rudely when I told them that they were off-roading on private property, crushing native shrubs and scarring the desert with long-lasting tracks."

*** Kim Crumbo, former National Park Service Ranger, Arizona**

Kim Crumbo served for 20 years with the National Park Service in Grand Canyon National Park as a Ranger and later as Wilderness Coordinator. Kim is a Navy SEAL veteran, and as a result of his military service, Kim earned several combat decorations, including a Bronze Star.