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ON LAND AND WATER

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## **Tread Lightly!'s Tips for Responsible Use of ROVs**

**Travel responsibly** on designated roads, trails and areas.

- Travel only in areas open to recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs).
- It is not appropriate to drive ROVs wider than 50 inches on most designated all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails.
- Minimize wheel spin.
- On switchbacks, avoid roosting around the apex of the turn when climbing or brake-sliding during descent, both of which gouge the trail, causing erosion.
- Drive over, not around obstacles to avoid widening the trail.
- Cross streams only at designated fording points, where the trail crosses the stream. Cross slowly at a 90 degree angle.
- Comply with all signs and barriers.
- Do not carry passengers in the bed of an ROV.
- Buddy up with two or three drivers. Driving solo can leave you vulnerable if you have an accident or breakdown. Designate meeting areas in case of separation.
- When winching, always inspect your equipment, use the right winch for the situation, find a good secure anchor, and never winch with less than five wraps of wire rope around the drum.
- When using a tree as an anchor, use a wide tree strap to avoid damage to the trunk of the tree.
- Listening to headphones or ear buds can make it difficult to hear and communicate with other recreationists. In some areas it is illegal to operate vehicles with both ears covered.
- Don't mix riding with alcohol or drugs.

**Respect the rights of others** including private property owners, all recreational trail users, campers and others to allow them to enjoy their recreational activities.

- Be considerate of others on the road or trail.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- If crossing private property, be sure to ask permission from the landowner(s).
- Yield the right of way to those passing you or traveling uphill.
- Yield to mountain bikers, hikers, and horses.
- When encountering horses on the trail, move to the side of the trail, stop, turn off your engine, remove your helmet, and speak—you want the horse to know you are human. Ask the rider the best way to proceed.
- Around horses and pack animals proceed with caution. Sudden, unfamiliar stimulus may spook animals—possibly causing injury to animals, handlers, and others on the trail
- Do not drive around in camping, picnicking, trailhead and residential areas. Use these areas only to access trails. Keep speeds low around crowds and in camping areas.
- Keep the noise and dust to a minimum.

**Educate yourself**, prior to your trip by obtaining travel maps and regulations from public agencies, planning for your trip, taking recreation skills classes, and knowing how to use and operate your equipment safely.

- Obtain a map, motor vehicle use map where appropriate, of your destination and determine which areas are open to ROVs
- Make a realistic plan, and stick to it. Always tell someone of your travel plans.
- Contact the land manager for area restrictions, closures, and permit requirements.
- Check the weather forecast before you go.
- Make sure you and each passenger in the vehicle wears a seatbelt, helmet, eye protection, and other safety gear.
- Prepare for the unexpected by packing a backpack full of emergency items.
- Know your limitations. Watch your time, your fuel, and your energy.
- Take an off-highway vehicle driving course to learn more about negotiating terrain with an ROV.
- Make sure your ROV is mechanically up to task. Be prepared with appropriate tools, supplies, spares and an oil spill kit for trailside repairs and cleanup.

**Avoid sensitive areas** such as meadows, lakeshores, wetlands and streams, stay on designated routes. This protects wildlife habitat and sensitive soils from damage.

- Other sensitive habitats to avoid include cryptobiotic soils of the desert, tundra, and seasonal nesting or breeding areas.
- Do not disturb historical, archeological, and paleontological sites.
- Avoid “spooking” livestock and wildlife you encounter and keep your distance.
- Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not allowed in designated Wilderness.

**Do your part** by modeling appropriate behavior, leaving the area better than you found it, properly disposing of waste, minimizing the use of fire, avoiding the spread of invasive species, restoring degraded areas, and sharing information with your trail community.

- Carry a trash bag on your vehicle and pick up litter left by others.
- Pack out what you pack in.
- Practice minimum impact camping by using established sites or durable surfaces and camping 200 feet from water resources.
- Observe proper sanitary waste disposal or pack your waste out.
- Prevent unnecessary sound created by a poorly tuned vehicle or revving your engine. Use proper silencers on exhausts, which meet regulatory decibel levels.
- Before and after a trip, wash your ROV and support vehicle to reduce the spread of invasive species.
- Build a trail community. Get to know other types of recreationists that share your favorite trail.