

So what does this mean for the typical hunter with an ATV? It's simple. If ATV users are irresponsible with the use of their machines, then there will be increasing pressure on land and wildlife management agencies to restrict ATV use during hunting season. Already there are people, among them other hunters, who are asking for a total ban on ATV use during hunting season.

Nobody likes regulations; but if irresponsible ATV use continues to cause unacceptable impacts, then regulations will become necessary to ensure protection of public lands. A better alternative would be for ATV users to recognize the impacts

their activity can cause and voluntarily take steps to reduce those impacts. ATV users are not unique in this respect — as more and more people use public lands for recreation, the potential impacts of these activities are growing fast. Virtually all recreation users — jeepers, horse enthusiasts, rafters, snowmobilers, hikers, campers, rock climbers, motorcyclists, anglers, and mountain bikers — are being asked to reduce the impact of their activities, so that public lands can be enjoyed by this and future generations.



### Know Wyoming Off-Road Vehicle Laws

- All ATVs and trail bikes, including those owned by non-residents, are required to display a Wyoming ORV permit while operating on designated roads, trails, areas on public lands and state trust lands. This \$15 annual permit may be purchased from selling agents across the state or by calling (307) 777-7477. When on roads, operators must have a valid drivers license.
- ORVs are mostly restricted to travel upon only established roads and trails. They may be operated upon public lands only when on roads, trails or areas designated "open" for motorized travel by the appropriate local land manager. Contact the local land manager's office to see what is open for ORV use.
- When on ROADS (Forest Service, BLM, state park or other) designated part of the ORV Program, operators must have a valid driver's license; the ORV must have brake lights, taillights and headlamps if operated from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise.
- When on roads (state, county, local or other) NOT designated part of the state ORV Program, an ORV may be operated only if it is street legal and has motorcycle plates; the operator must have a motorcycle operator's license and carry proof of liability insurance.

- It is unlawful to molest, stir up, rally or drive, in any manner, any game animals or game birds with a motorized vehicle.
- It is unlawful to shoot from or across the traveled portion, shoulders or embankments of any road maintained by a government entity.
- It is illegal to operate an ATV or trail bike off trail or on any trail area closed to that specific type of vehicle as designated by the land management agency or land owner.
- Operating an ATV or trail bike off roads or trails in a manner that damages or unreasonably disturbs the land, wildlife or vegetative resources is prohibited.
- ATVs and trail bikes must be equipped with approved and operating spark arresting mufflers and comply with sound regulations.
- No person may enter private land to hunt, fish or trap, without permission.
- It is illegal to shoot from any motorized vehicle, EXCEPT for holders of a valid WG&FD Permit for Hunters with Qualifying Disabilities.

Remember...

tread lightly!  
LEAVING A GOOD IMPRESSION



For more information regarding this and other hunting or motorized access subjects contact the following:

BLM, Wyoming State Office  
P.O. Box 1828  
Cheyenne, WY 82003-1828  
(307) 775-6256

Wyoming State Trails Program  
Barrett Building,  
2301 Central Avenue  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
(307) 777-7477

Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
5400 Bishop Blvd.  
Cheyenne, WY 82006  
(307) 777-4600

Wyoming Office of State Lands  
Herschler Bldg. 3W  
122 W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
(307) 777-7331

Bighorn National Forest  
2013 Eastside 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Sheridan, WY 82801  
(307) 674-2600

Bridger-Teton National Forest  
PO Box 1888  
Jackson, WY 83001  
(307) 739-5500

Black Hills National Forest  
Bearlodge Ranger District  
PO Box 680  
Sundance, WY 82729  
(307) 283-1361

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest  
Thunder Basin National Grassland  
2468 Jackson Street  
Laramie, WY 82070-6535  
(307) 745-2300

and  
Hell's Canyon Ranger District  
1225 Washington Street  
Newcastle, WY 82701  
(307) 746-2782

Shoshone National Forest  
808 Meadow Lane  
Cody, WY 82414-4516  
(307) 527-6241

Ashley National Forest  
Flaming Gorge Ranger District  
PO Box 279  
Manila, UT 84046  
(435) 784-3445

Wasatch-Cache National Forest  
Evanston Ranger District  
1565 Highway 150 S., Suite A  
Evanston, WY 82931  
(307) 789-3194

Caribou-Targhee National Forest  
1405 Hollipark Drive  
Pocatello, ID 83401  
(208) 524-7500

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<http://wyotrails.state.wy.us>

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# Hunting and ATVs



Photo courtesy Wyoming Game and Fish

## Responsibility or Regulation?



## Issues with ATVs

ATVs provide many advantages to hunters, and as a result the use of ATVs during hunting season has increased dramatically in the last 10 years. While ATVs have made access to some backcountry areas and big game retrieval easier for many hunters, their increased use has created some problems:

- **HUNTER CONFLICT:**  
Conflict is occurring where ATVs have increased access into areas that were lightly used in the past.
- **NOISE:**  
The sound of an ATV may chase deer and elk away from other hunters. This creates hard feelings among hunters who used stealth and stalking skills to get into a prime spot only to have their efforts spoiled by an ATV.
- **CLOSED AREAS:**  
Operation of an ATV in areas where they are not allowed irritates other hunters who have specifically selected their hunting area to avoid motorized vehicles.
- **OFF-TRAIL USE:**  
Cross country travel on ATVs can create a network of new travelways that cause soil erosion and damage to fish and wildlife habitats.
- **FAIR CHASE:**  
Increasing numbers of hunters are actually hunting with their ATVs rather than on foot. This behavior raises concerns of "fair chase" and can reflect poorly on hunting and hunters.

### Interesting Facts:

- Elk use declines in areas adjacent to roads open to motorized vehicles.
- Slow-moving vehicles on primitive roads and trails are more disturbing to elk than fast-moving vehicles on highways.
- As motorized vehicle access increases, the quality and amount of elk habitat are degraded. An open road density of three linear miles of road per square mile of land seriously reduces the value of that area for elk. An open road density of six linear miles per square mile can reduce elk use to near zero.
- Hunter check station information has shown that hunters using ATVs are often less successful than other hunters.

## What Can You Do to Reduce the Impact of ATVs During Hunting Season?

### Here are a few tips:

- Know the vehicle use regulations for the area you are hunting. Contact the local BLM Field Office, Forest Service Ranger District, Office of State Lands or Wyoming Department of State Parks office for travel management information before you go. Respect road and area closures.
- Stay on existing roads or trails. Do not contribute to resource damage and habitat destruction by creating new travelways for others to follow.
- ATV travelways within riparian zones or on steep slopes inflict vegetation damage and soil erosion. Don't make the problem worse by continuing to use these routes.
- To increase your chances of success and cause less disturbance to hunters around you, access your hunting area on existing roads and trails before shooting hours, then hunt on foot.
- Retrieve harvested big game during the middle of the day (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) to reduce conflicts with other hunters. Travel off trail only if travel regulations permit.
- Have respect for other users. Slow down or stop your ATV when you approach others on the trail. When meeting equestrians, approach slowly, pull over and stop, turn off your engine, remove your helmet and ask how best to proceed.
- Avoid the use of ATVs in wet areas or during wet conditions. Even though the

lighter weight and low-pressure tires reduce impacts, ATVs can still do serious damage to wet areas.

- Keep your ATV properly tuned and muffled to reduce exhaust sounds and emissions.
- Don't widen single-track trails by forcing your ATV down the trail.
- When overtaking others, pass in a safe and courteous manner.
- Limit ATV use in and around campgrounds. Be respectful of other campers' desires for quiet and minimal disruption.

These are simple things, but they can go a long way toward reducing the impact of ATV use. They will protect the habitat and improve the hunting experience. Following these guidelines will reduce the need for more regulations and help retain the ATV opportunities that currently exist.

