

Policies & Positions

Introduction

As Sharetrails.Org/BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) continues to grow and prosper, it has become evident that we need to be able to clearly explain our organizational position on a wide variety of issues and topics. Some of the issues that need to be addressed include:

- [Private Lands \(Adopted 12-03-02\)](#)
- [Route Designation](#)
- [Route Design and Diversity](#)
- [Environmental Protection](#)
- [Wilderness](#)
- [Wilderness Crowding](#)
- [Backcountry Designation](#)
- [Signing](#)
- [User Fees](#)
- [Vehicle Sound](#)
- [Use of Alcohol & Drugs](#)
- [Unlawful Activities \(Adopted 05-08-14\)](#)
- [Safety](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Shared Use](#)
- [Vehicle Emissions](#)
- [Hunting and OHV use](#)
- [Law Enforcement](#)
- [Irresponsible Advertising \(Adopted 04-27-02\)](#)
- [Volunteerism](#)
- [Politics](#)

All inquiries in reference to BlueRibbon Coalition Policies & Positions should be made to the Board President and the Administrative Director, (See [Contact BRC](#)).

Private Lands (Adopted 12-03-02)

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the rights of private landowners to determine how and by whom their land will be used. We encourage landowners to make their lands available for responsible recreation, including off-highway vehicles, where possible and where such use is compatible with their use of the land. We support the reform of state liability statutes to protect landowners from claims by people using their land for recreational purposes even if fees are charged for such use. Where valid public rights-of-way exist, we support appropriate measures to allow the continuation of reasonable public access in conjunction with respect for the private owner's subservient estate.

Route Designation

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the policy of limiting wheeled off-highway vehicles (OHV) use to existing roads and trails, in areas where cross country use of OHV has been adequately studied and shown to cause adverse impacts. An open classification, which includes cross-country travel, can be appropriate in areas such as sand dunes, borrow pits, play areas, and other open lands. In areas where existing trails are causing unacceptable impacts, relocation, or reconstruction should be evaluated before closure is considered. Where trail closure is required, additional trails should be developed to offset the lost mileage or opportunity.

Additional trails and connector routes should also be developed in areas where existing roads and trails are not providing the necessary quantity and quality of recreation experiences.

The BlueRibbon Coalition acknowledges that an essential aspect of the snowmobiling experience is the freedom to travel off groomed routes to explore scenic snow-covered landscapes. The establishment of groomed and ungroomed snowmobile trails should be determined by appropriate agencies in cooperation with state and local snowmobile organizations, other land management agencies, private landowners and other publics. The BlueRibbon Coalition recognizes that limiting snowmobiles to groomed routes may be appropriate in unique areas such as Yellowstone NP, and in other areas as determined by land managers using a thorough analysis and public involvement process.

Route Design and Diversity

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the use of OHV Master Performers, those individuals recognized as having exceptional skills and expertise, from within the agency and from private sources, to assist in OHV system

planning, trail location, trail design and trail development. Proper trail location, design, construction or reconstruction has been shown to significantly reduce impacts caused by OHV recreation and improve enthusiast experience.

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports providing a range of opportunities and experiences in OHV riding areas. This range of experiences can vary from short easy loops for young riders and families to longer very difficult trails for more experienced riders seeking a higher level of challenge. Available experiences can also range from more concentrated areas with interconnected loops to long distance, point to point, trails for those seeking a linear trail experience.

Environmental Protection

The BlueRibbon Coalition strongly supports enthusiast education and, if necessary, enforcement to reduce irresponsible use. We also encourage active management by the agencies to redesign or relocate recreation routes that are causing problems to reduce these impacts. We recognize that recreational travel can cause unacceptable adverse impacts to the environment when used improperly, in the wrong locations or on poorly designed trails.

Wilderness

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the designation of Wilderness in areas that truly meet the characteristics identified in the 1964 Wilderness Act, and where obvious evidence of human development, such as roads, does not exist and has not existed. We also support management of Wilderness areas for the use and enjoyment of the American people as required in the Act.

Wilderness Crowding

The BlueRibbon Coalition recognizes that some areas in Wilderness are overcrowded resulting in a decrease in the quality of the Wilderness experience. However we also recognize that virtually all of this overcrowding occurs within a relatively short distance from trailheads and access points. To resolve these problems, BlueRibbon Coalition recommends a policy of establishing use quotas, redirecting visitors or improving access into less crowded areas.

Backcountry Designation

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the establishment of Congressionally designated backcountry where motorized use can co-exist with mountain bicycles and other recreational uses as well as other management activities while still preserving the backcountry character of the landscape. One major attraction for OHV enthusiasts, and others, to public lands is the primitive, backcountry character of much of these lands. The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the preservation of this backcountry character, where it exists, and supports continued motorized access into these areas. The Forest Service planning process is a dynamic and transient process; therefore congressional designation is needed to preserve these areas.

Signing

Use of clear and effective signing is critical to ensuring that public land visitors know where to go, where not to go and what is expected of them. For this reason, the BlueRibbon Coalition supports a policy of route management that uses the concepts of “encourage”, “allow”, “discourage” and “prohibit”. Routes where OHV use is encouraged should be well signed to direct visitors to and along the routes. Areas where use is prohibited should be signed as closed and visitors should be informed of the reason for closure. All other routes should require minimal signing since the use will be allowed and the sense of exploration will be emphasized. We also encourage the effective use of educational and interpretive signing to enhance visitor understanding and experience.

User Fees

Existing budgets for the active management of public lands are not adequate to accomplish all the necessary work. In many cases, outside funding is critical to the success of number of programs. The BlueRibbon

Coalition supports the continuation or establishment of OHV registration programs. We also support the dedication and use of fuel taxes on fuel used off highways for trail funding. In addition, we support development other enthusiast funded programs with the understanding that such funds will be used for the benefit of these specific user groups.

We support an increase of appropriated funds for recreation and trail management. We encourage agencies to place a high priority on funding recreation and trail activities. In areas, such as Wilderness and developed sites where funding is inadequate to maintain recreation experiences, and funding is not available from other user-supported programs, we support the implementation of user fees, subject to the following:

- Fees should be for a specific facility or discrete physical area, not just access to public land in general.
- Fees should be returned to the area from which they are collected.
- Distribution of funds to various projects should be done with full public involvement.

Vehicle Sound

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports application and enforcement of reasonable limitations on vehicle sound emissions. We recognize that excessive vehicle sound can cause social and environmental impacts. We encourage all jurisdictions to adopt the stationary sound test procedures as set forth in the S.A.E. J-1287 Jun. 80 standard.

We also strongly support continued research by manufacturers and aftermarket companies to further reduce vehicle sound. In particular, we support evaluation and research into the effects of reducing the sound limits of the vehicles to 94 dBA when using the 20" stationery sound test procedures. We strongly encourage vehicle users to maintain their vehicles in a manner that minimizes sound levels.

Use of Alcohol & Drugs

The BlueRibbon Coalition condemns the use of alcohol and illegal drugs while driving. The BlueRibbon Coalition condemns driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Use of alcohol has been shown to contribute to many vehicle accidents including off-highway vehicles.

Unlawful Activities (Adopted 05-08-14)

The BlueRibbon Coalition is a tax exempt nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing diverse forms of recreational access. Its members and supporters span all walks of life and points on the sociopolitical spectrum. BlueRibbon Coalition exists, in part, to channel frustration with the status quo through skillful, strategic efforts within the bounds of the law in administrative, legislative, judicial and media channels. BlueRibbon Coalition neither participates in nor condones knowingly unlawful activity of any kind.

Safety

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports safety education programs for youth and adults and supports the use of all available safety equipment when using OHVs. We understand that the risk of injury and, in some cases, death is present in OH V recreation, as it is in many other recreational activities.

Science

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports conducting scientifically defensible research and supports the application of scientific principles to address OHV management issues. Use of unbiased scientific information is critical to efficient and effective management of OHV activities on public land, just as it is for all activities.

Shared Use

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports and champions responsible multiple use of public lands. Multiple use includes sharing trails between varied recreational users and resource based industries where appropriate. Any restrictions on multiple use should be based on scientific analysis, public input and specific needs of the locale.

Vehicle Emissions

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the development of reasonable emission standards and encourages continued research to further reduce vehicle emissions. Use of internal combustion engines in off-highway vehicles, snowmobiles, automobiles and other equipment potentially may contribute to adverse environmental impacts. We strongly advocate that all riders make use of the current available technology, such as synthetic oils and oxygenated fuel, to reduce vehicle emissions.

Hunting and OHV use

The BlueRibbon Coalition requests that state fish and wildlife agencies actively work with land management agencies to ensure that OHV travel management requirements are included in hunter education programs, hunter booklets and on unit maps to ensure that hunters are aware of any vehicle restrictions. We support the use of OHV by hunters. We do recognize that inappropriate use of vehicles during hunting season may cause unacceptable environmental and social impacts.

Law Enforcement

The BlueRibbon Coalition supports the development and implementation of clear and precise OHV regulations and their strict enforcement. We also support uniform enforcement of all regulations governing land uses.

[Return to Index](#)

Irresponsible Advertising (Adopted 04-27-02)

One of the objectives of vehicle advertising is to influence the perceptions people have about the vehicle and its capabilities. Advertising that shows inappropriate or environmentally damaging activities can adversely influence the behavior of vehicle enthusiasts. The BlueRibbon Coalition supports adherence to the Tread Lightly! principles in all text and images in the vehicle advertising. Advertisements should always show safe and environmentally responsible behaviors. The Coalition encourages all members to contact the manufacturers whenever they encounter an advertisement that shows irresponsible activities.

[Return to Index](#)

Volunteerism

The BlueRibbon Coalition encourages all of our members to actively search out volunteer opportunities and to provide volunteer services whenever possible to help with management of public lands. We recognize that there is a significant need for volunteers to help with management of public lands, and those volunteers can and do contribute valuable expertise to the agencies.

[Return to Index](#)

Politics

As a 501(c)(3) organization, The BlueRibbon Coalition, Inc. does not endorse or oppose any political candidates, donate or contribute to any political candidate's campaign, participate or engage in political fundraising events, distribute statements for or against particular political candidates, nor engage in any other activity that may constitute favoring or opposing a political candidate.

[Return to Index](#)