



WGFD

Conserving Wildlife, Serving People

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News Release

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GAME WARDENS: ORV MISUSE NOT ACCEPTABLE

GREEN RIVER—After a busy weekend for elk hunters in southwest Wyoming, wildlife officers with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department are troubled by the number and people using their off road vehicles (ORV's) in closed areas.

Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas says people using ORV's have been reported for violating Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service travel restrictions.

“Complaints have indicated that the ORV violations interfere with legal hunters and are not fair to sportsmen following the regulations,” Hymas said. “Newly-pioneered roads have destroyed wildlife habitat on public lands in some cases. However, more than just hunters are affected. For example, in September, on the Sam’s Creek Ridge north of Cokeville, persons on ORV’s not only violated the US Forest Service travel plan, but stole an electric fencing charger and solar panels that belonged to a local grazing permittee. Ranchers and sportsmen share public lands and usually work well together to protect each other’s interests. This is unfortunate for all ethical ORV users.”

Hymas added the department encourages sportsmen and sportswoman to report information on these incidents, or report any violations or thefts so that this type of destructive activity can be stopped. “True sportsmen can play an important role in protecting private property and our public resources,” Hymas said.

Green River Game Warden Dustin Kirsch and Evanston Game Warden Brian Baker expressed their concern over the increase of hunters driving off-road to retrieve game animals. Kemmerer Game Warden Andy Countryman says he is having troubles with campers illegally camping on a Hunter Management Area (HMAs) in the area.

“I saw several instances of hunters driving off-road on BLM lands and lands enrolled in the department’s HMAs near Evanston,” says Kirsch. “Some hunters are still driving into roadless areas to hunt or retrieve animals, causing immense resource damage.”

“There are specific ranch rules which apply to each HMA,” Baker added. “Many hunters do not understand that by breaking these rules they are jeopardizing their future access to these private lands.”

Hunter Management Areas are parcels of land where the department facilitates management of hunters for access to hunt. The area may be solely private lands or a combination of private, state trust land and federal land within ranch boundaries. All hunters who wish to hunt these access areas must obtain a printed permission slip. The hunter pays no fee for receiving permission for access for specific times only and they must abide by ranch rules.

National forests have regulations that restrict four wheeler use to established roads. If there is a road closure sign, that also pertains to ATVs or ORV’s. Four wheeler use is generally allowed off road for restricted distances on most BLM land. However, the BLM strongly recommends you restrict use to established roads or two-tracks. If you are on private lands, four-wheeler use is totally up to the landowner. It is a good idea to check with the local forest service or BLM office for specific regulations.

People may report ORV violations to the US Forest Service office in Kemmerer at (307) 877-4415 or the US Forest Service office in Afton at (307) 886-5300, the BLM office in Kemmerer at (307) 828-4500 or the BLM Office in Rock Springs (307) 352-0256.

Anyone can report a wildlife violation by calling the Stop Poaching Hotline at 1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847) instate or 1-307-777-4330 out-of-state. Violations may also be reported to the local game warden or report that violation on-line at <http://gf.state.wy.us>. Those with information may remain anonymous and may be eligible for a reward if the tip leads to a conviction.

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