

6. Go Prepared – Trip Planning

Planning accounts for 90% of an enjoyable OHV experience.

Here are a few tips to ensure safe and enjoyable OHV rides:

- Contact the land manager of your destination before you go; ensure that the OHV area is open and to check on trail and weather conditions.
- Dress in layers to prepare for changing weather.
- Wear appropriate protective gear.
- Reserve a campsite in advance if you are going on an extended trip.
- Ride with someone; never go alone.
- Always let someone know where you are going, and when you plan on returning. Consider leaving a map of the riding area with that person. If you need help, they will know where to look.
- Know the rules of the OHV area before you go.
- Make sure your machine is not too loud for the area and that you have the proper equipment installed.
- Keep your machine in good shape. Always inspect your machine before each trip to ensure it is in good mechanical shape.
- Take care of yourself. Ensure that you are in good physical shape to withstand the rigors of OHV recreation.
- Carry the basics with you on the trail, including:
 - o Water and snacks
 - o Basic tools to make on-the-trail repair
 - o Basic first aid kit
 - o Extra spark plugs
 - o A tow strap
 - o Waterproof matches or lighter
 - o Tire repair kit
 - o A cell phone, CB or two-way radio
 - o Duct tape
 - o Knife
 - o Emergency blanket
 - o Map of riding area, compass or GPS unit

6.1 Riding ATVs in the Dunes

Sand Hazards

Be aware of:

- Razorbacks—quick drop offs created by wind—are everywhere in the dunes and hard to see.
- Susceptibility to poor depth perception. When the sand is the same color, it's difficult to judge distance and contours.
- Steep drop offs, or other riders, before driving over the crest of a dune.
- Downed trees, lakes, streams, soft and saturated (quick sand) sand.

Dunes are very popular riding areas. Ride defensively and be aware of other riders.

Flags

Red or blaze orange flags are required on all vehicles within the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (ODNRA) and Sand Lake Recreation Area. They must measure 8" by 12" and be displayed 9 feet above the ground on all ATVs.

Sound

Residential areas surround the ODNRA and Sand Lake Recreation Area. Sound buffers help reduce the amount of sound occurring in the dunes areas. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) personnel are equipped to provide sound checks. Call ahead or request a test before riding. Some OHV dealers also have sound testing equipment.

Jumping

Always have a spotter at the top of the dune to make sure the area is clear of other riders and vehicles before jumping.

Alcohol Ban

Alcohol and ATVs don't mix. Accidents and injuries, unsafe environments, and resource damage has led to an alcohol ban in the ODRNA and Sand Lake Recreation Area outside developed sites (CFR 261.50) For more information, contact the USFS at (541) 271-3611.



ATV Funds help develop new resources for OHV users in the dunes. ATV Funds helped pay for the Horsfal and Bull Run Staging Area, pictured.

6.2 Riding ATVs on Forest Trails/ Roads

Fire Seasons

Many ATV areas have seasonal trail closures due to high fire danger, typically between July and September. During the summer, check with the local land manager for trail status. Most ATV areas require USFS approved spark arresters on ATVs to reduce the chance of starting a wildfire.

Protecting Resources

Riding off designated trails can cause damage to sensitive areas, often forcing agencies to spend more time closing illegally created trails and less time maintaining or creating new designated trails.

Logging Activity

Ask the local land managers about any logging operations, trail work and road construction occurring in your riding destination.

Trail Signs

Learn how to read trail signs to determine the difficulty of a trail and the types of ATVs allowed.

Forest Roads

Forest roads are typically open to ATV traffic. Check road conditions, and remember that many forest roads are open to two-way traffic. Keep low speeds and watch for other vehicles. It could be a log truck or another ATV—you never know.

Keep Your Lights On

The forest canopy provides plenty of shady areas that can make it hard for others to see you coming. Keep lights on for safety!

Bright Clothing

Wear bright clothing, especially during hunting season, so you're seen from a distance and not mistaken for a game animal.

Hunting Season

Find out if hunting is allowed along the trail system. Be aware if it is hunting season and of any seasonal closures where you ride.



Looking back down a Class II designated trail at Morrow County OHV Park.

6.3 Riding ATVs in the High Desert

Fragile Ecosystem

The high desert is a fragile ecosystem. Please ride ATVs on designated trails and road systems only.

Sound Carries

In the high desert natural sound buffers, such as hills and valleys, are few and far between. Keep muffler and exhaust systems in good working order and at, or below, the state's recommended decibel levels.

Fences and Cattle

Do not cut fences. Respect the rights of private property owners. Most central and eastern Oregon public lands are open rangeland used for cattle grazing. Look out for cattle and slow down when nearing them. It is against the law to chase or harass livestock, game animals or any other wildlife.

Fire

Many ATV areas have seasonal trail closures, typically between July and September, due to high fire danger. Check with the local land manager for trail status. Most ATV areas require USFS approved spark arresters on ATVs to reduce the chance of starting a wildfire. Report any wildfires to the land manager.

Weeds

Weeds are non-native plants that displace natural vegetation, which is detrimental to the animals that live in and forage on the native vegetation. Weeds can also increase soil erosion and degrade water quality.

Eradication efforts are difficult and costly. The best way to get rid of weeds is to prevent them from spreading! This is what you can do to help:

- Stay on the established roads and trails.
- Check and wash your ATVs, pick-ups and trailers before and after a drive. Seeds can stick to tires, radiators and the undersides of vehicles and fall off to start new infestations.
- Clean your clothes of any weed seeds.
- Do not pick flowers or noxious weeds and take them home.
- Do not pick and transport wild flowers that you cannot identify.
- Do not camp in weed infested areas.
- Report weed infested sites to the appropriate land manager or the Oregon Department of Agriculture Weed Hotline: (866)-INVADER (468-2337).