



Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association's

# Badger Tracks

"Your off-highway vehicle recreation future begins here"

## High-Centered

Winter 2012

High-Centered is a quarterly feature which assists you (the motorized recreation enthusiast) in your quest to become a more involved access advocate. If you've ever been high-centered on the trail you'll relate to this phrase. High-centered on the trail implies that you find yourself looking like a turtle perched on a rock. Try as he might, he just can't extend his legs down to the ground. If you're high-centered on the trail, you're in the same predicament. Your wheels just can't quite reach solid ground. If only you could get just one tire to bite you could free yourself and continue on your quest. All you need is a little nudge, just a small tug. Just that little bit of assistance will get you moving!

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is required to conduct an Environmental Assessment to determine if an Environmental Impact Statement is needed for site specific projects that could have a potential environmental impact on Forest Service properties. This is the first of a two part series of High-Centered which focuses on getting you involved and participating in the project planning process in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

To assist our members in understanding this often confusing process, this and the next issue of High-Centered will focus on the project planning process at the USFS. In order to comprehend the project planning process it's important to become familiar with some of the terms commonly used by the Forest Service. Follows is a short list of the most commonly used terms.

Appeal - is the written document filed with an Appeal deciding Officer by one who objects to a decision.

Appeal Period - The 45 calendar-day period following the publication of a decision document during which an appeal may be filed.

Decision Memo (DM) - A written record of the responsible official's decision to implement an action that has been categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association exists for the sole purpose of proactively assuring that public and private off-highway vehicular recreational opportunities are expanded in Wisconsin for safe use by this and future generations.



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Decision Notice (DN) – A written record of the responsible official's decision based on an Environmental Assessment and a finding of no significant impact.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – A document that presents issues and concerns important to a project, alternate means of accomplishing a project, and analysis of potential environmental effects of each of those alternatives. This information is used to help determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement of a finding of no significant impact.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A document that presents issues and concerns important to a project; alternate means of accomplishing a project; and analysis of potential significant environmental effects of each of those alternatives.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – A document prepared by a federal agency presenting the reasons why an action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and for which an

Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Management Area (MA) – described in the Forest Plan as an area delineated on a map showing the location where a management prescription applies.

Notice of Intent (NOI) – A notice that an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared and considered.

Proposed Action – A site-specific proposal made by the Forest Service to authorize, recommend, or implement an action on National Forest System lands.

Record of Decision (ROD) – A written record of the responsible official's decision based on an Environmental Impact Statement.

Scoping – A process to help determine any potential significant issues that may be related to the proposed action and subsequently addressed in the environmental documents.

In the next issue of High-Centered you'll find information pertaining to the project planning process and how you can be involved.





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## A Primer on Winching, Part 1

If you spend any significant amount of time in difficult terrain, you're bound to encounter a recovery situation at some point. It could be either your vehicle or someone else's. And a winch may be the proper tool at that time. This is a good time to review recovery, and winching in particular.

The steps that follow are taken from my nifty and exclusive [Winch Recovery Bandana](#). Keep in mind that these tips and the information provided on the bandana are not a substitute for proper training, sound judgment and quality equipment.

Every winching operation should start with a plan in your mind as to how you'll rig it up. Winching is a risky procedure; proceed very slowly and methodically. You're dealing with material and parts that are subject to a tremendous amount of force. A mistake can be fatal, as I pointed out in ["Don't Lose Your Head While Recovering a Vehicle."](#) Take your time.

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Winching begins with a walkthrough. You want to inspect all parts and lines while the system is under light tension. If everything looks good, you can power up and proceed with the recovery.

The vehicle doing the recovery is kept in neutral with the emergency brake on. Having the transmission in neutral protects the parking pawl. Chock the front wheels if you can. (Some people even anchor this vehicle to a tree or other vehicle.) You do not want that vehicle to move. Start the winch slowly so you take up some of the slack.

Lines that are slack while on ground take on a new dimension when under tension. You need to check them before proceeding with the recovery. The lines may be binding or twisting. They could be rubbing against an edge on the bumper or other body part. In some cases the lines end up right over a taillight. Under load those lines will smash the cover and bulb.





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Check all connections. Start at one end of the line and work your way through. Are any connections about to be pulled through the pulley? Adjust as needed.

Keep the engine running, or its battery will be drained dry. Even though the emergency brake is on, someone should be in the recovery vehicle applying pressure to the brakes. Now review the winch cable as it is leaving the winch. Does it leave at greater than a 15 degree angle? If so, it will start to pile up on one side of the drum, causing the cable to snag and possibly break that side of the winch. If you see the cable starting to pile up, stop winching. Disconnect the cable, pull it out manually, and wind it up neatly. Always start with your cable properly wound on the drum. Then, consider moving the recovery vehicle or pulley to decrease the angle of pull.

When you winch at greater than a 15 degree angle, there's a greater chance of the cable rubbing or getting caught on the bumper of the recovery vehicle. There may be times when you have no choice but to winch at a severe angle. Just watch the cable closely.

As you're paying out the cable, remember the Rule of 5: Keep at least five turns of cable on the drum at all times (eight turns for synthetic cable, because it's slippery). If you don't keep a minimum amount, the tremendous force of recovery will pull the rest of the cable right off the drum.

If you have a large blanket, toss it over the pulley. (See image.) Called a parachute by 4-wheelers, this blanket will absorb some of the energy should the cable snap.



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## Giving Ammunition To The Opposition



During a recent camping/fishing/hiking/riding trip in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, I came across two OHV riders mud bogging in a beautiful little meadow. What a mess!! Naturally, I accosted the fellows - both old enough to know better - and gave them my little talking-to pointing out that what they were doing was strictly illegal, could result in a substantial fine, and was damaging a valuable resource. They professed ignorance that their activities were illegal, promised to stay on the legal trail, and we amicably parted ways.

Upon return to the real world a few days later, I reported the damage to the appropriate B-D District Office, emphasized that RCORUA would like to volunteer our services to help them remediate the problem, and offered several suggestions about how to block the lower end of the meadow to prevent further damage. The Recreation Specialist I spoke with thanked me for the report, seemed delighted that RCORUA was interested in being part of the solution, and promised to be in touch soon. We'll keep you informed about how this develops.

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As part of my little talk I give to OHV enthusiasts when I encounter violators, I point out that not only are they breaking the law, but also they are providing excuses to radical environmentalists and Federal Agencies to pursue their exclusionary agendas. If a greenie were in possession of the accompanying photograph, it would be splashed all over their websites, provided to the press, and shown in Congressional hearings as evidence to support the stereotype of OHV riders as crazed, beer guzzling, irresponsible red necks intent on trashing public lands. It's like giving bullets to your enemy and then being surprised when you get shot at.

RCORUA has always advocated for responsible uses of public lands. Riding our OHVs on public lands is a privilege granted to us by the public. Along with that privilege comes responsibilities, and those responsibilities include staying on designated roads and trails: Off route travel of wheeled vehicles is strictly forbidden on all public lands (with a few exceptions such as dune areas), and it is our responsibility to comply with that law. It is also in our best interests to raise the awareness of non-members of what constitutes responsible and lawful behavior on public land. We do so with our educational program (we reached 700 school kids this year!!), setting a good role model by being responsible ourselves, being active in our volunteer program, and with peer pressure. I'm quite certain that the two guys I spoke to in the above example will think twice before they trash another meadow.

On the other hand, it is also true that Federal Agencies have failed miserably to provide adequate responsible opportunities for OHV recreation. And that problem is getting worse with every Forest Plan and every Travel Plan. Somehow, Federal Agencies have failed to get the message that one of the keys to managing OHV recreation is to provide responsible, sustainable opportunities to OHV enthusiasts that makes it possible for us to ride responsibly. The implementation of the Travel Planning Rule (TMR) is particularly counterproductive: The TMR directs Forests to designate, by vehicle type and season of use, an adequate network of responsible OHV routes on their Forest. Yet every Travel Plan released so far closes about 50% of the currently available routes to motorized travel! I wish someone would explain to me how the Forest Service proposes to encourage responsible OHV behavior by closing half of the existing OHV routes!! Clearly, under the influence of wealthy and litigious environmental groups, the Travel Management Planning process has sadly morphed into an exclusionary agenda. It is an alarming commentary on dysfunctional processes in Washington, DC when environmental extremists through influence, intimidation and endless lawsuits can pervert a well-intentioned process such as Travel Management to serve their radical agendas.

*Dan Thompson is a member of the Ravalli County Off Road User Association (RCORUA). RCORUA is a group of about 400 citizens who advocate for public access to public lands.*



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## EXTREME OFFROADERS

PRESENT

Ice Racing 2013

Extremists will once again be taking to the frozen waters of Lake Winnebago to challenge man and machine with the slippery surface of a man made road course. Dates this year are February 2<sup>nd</sup> in Oshkosh, WI at Menominee Park on Millers Bay and February 9<sup>th</sup> at Payne's Point Hook and Spear Fishing Club in Neenah-just off Hwy 45. Registration starts at 10am both days and racing starts at noon.

Each year Extreme has classes for two wheel drive cars and trucks, short, medium and long wheel base 4x4 vehicles and a studded class. Each class must have three or more entries to run; payout will be to third place in all classes. Entries are mild to wild vehicles but mostly street legal, daily driven cars and trucks. All that is required to participate is a signed waiver, entry fee, working brakes at all four wheels, seat belts and the desire to have a great time enjoying winter. The track is plowed and wide, getting stuck is rare and help is close by. This is a family event, the kids love watching mom and dad cruise the track.

These two ice races would not be possible without the Otter Street Fishing Club of Oshkosh's Annual Fisheree. The Club puts on a band Friday night, an ice fishing tournament

Saturday, refreshments and food in their heated tent and other activities all day on the first weekend of February. In recent years there has also been Motor Cycle oval track racing, Go-Kart racing and ATV racing all on the ice.

The second week of February is the opening of Sturgeon Spearing season on Lake Winnebago and the up river lakes. This marks the annual Payne's Point Hook and Spear Fishing Club Fisheree. Bands start Friday night under the big top with food and refreshments served day and night. Spearers can register their catch and/or join in the celebration of winter in the tent or out on the ice. The tent is usually open and bustling by mid morning and the bands go late in to the night.

The people of Otter Street Fishing Club and Payne's Point spend months preparing and putting on these great events that Extreme Offroaders have had the privilege of sharing for over 10 years. Many Extreme Club Members belong to these great clubs also. The work is done to benefit quality fishing in Lake Winnebago and up river lakes. Please visit both events if you can, better yet, come out and race with us!



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What: ICE RACING!!

Fintleman Off course!

Where: Lake Winnebago

Millers Bay Oshkosh Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>

Payne's Point Hook and Spear Fishing Club Neenah Feb 9<sup>th</sup>

When: Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> Oshkosh

Feb 9<sup>th</sup> Neenah

Cost \$10 per person, per class entry.

Why? WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO FOR \$10 IN THE MIDDLE OF A WISCONSIN WINTER THAT IS THIS MUCH FUN?????

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Extreme-Offroaders-4x4-Club-Ltd/154443224613069?ref=hl>

<http://theosfc.net/index.php/events/winter>

<http://pphsfc.com/Home.php>



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The Awesome track crew