



# U.S. Forest Service Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Briefing Paper



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**Date:** April 15, 2014

**Prepared for:** OHMVR Commissioner Meeting, Victorville, CA May 2, 2014

**Topic:** Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) in Kern County, CA – OHV Trespass Issues

**Executive Summary:** The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) provides an outstanding recreation opportunity for hikers and equestrians to travel from Mexico to Canada along the spine of the Sierra and Cascade Mountain ranges. Where the trail crosses the Tehachapi Mountains, the federal ownership is fragmented – in between the Angeles and Sequoia National Forests and interspersed with checkerboard Bureau of Land Management land - the trail corridor is connected through private land easements and authorizations. This remote section of the PCT continues to have management challenges and resource damage due to illegal motorized trespass. An interagency management team and law enforcement task force between the U.S. Forest Service, BLM, CA State Parks, and Kern County Sheriff's Office has worked together since 2008 to 1) Increase law enforcement patrols in the area; 2) Improve trail maintenance and signing; and 3) Engage stakeholders in identifying and resolving issues.

**Background:** The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail travels from Mexico to Canada through California, Oregon and Washington for 2,650 miles. It was designated by Congress in 1968 and is open to hikers and equestrians and closed to motorized and mechanized (bicycle) use. The trail is primarily on public lands crossing 25 national forest units, 6 national parks, 7 BLM field offices, and 3 national monuments. The route on private land is secured with easements held by the U.S. Government that are between 10 and 50 feet wide. The section of trail between the Angeles and Sequoia National Forests, crossing Los Angeles and Kern County is the largest continuous private land stretch and has the highest level of law enforcement issues the full length of the trail.

Reports surfaced in 2008 regarding illegal motorized use on the Pacific Crest Trail. Since that time, the PCT Manager has facilitated public meetings in Tehachapi between federal, state, county, and citizen stakeholders to clarify issues, identify solutions, and to leverage law enforcement resources. The Kern County's Sheriff's Office has been well represented by deputies in the Rosamond and Tehachapi substations, as well as the OHV Division (Sgts. Paul Leonard and Steve Williams and many others). Also from Kern County, there has been assistance from the Second District Supervisor's Office from Zach Scrivner (Michelle Vance) and Don Maben (Mary Beth Garrison). Additional issues in this area include a significant threat to federal officials that was resolved with law enforcement action and the planting of hazardous materials with the intent to harm in the trail tread (May 2010). Unfortunately, despite an increased law enforcement presence, improvement of signing on the trail itself, and collaboration meetings, tensions between citizens and users (both legal and illegal) continue to escalate and illegal motorized trespass continues.

## ***Key Contacts and Stakeholders:***

### **Kern County Stakeholders (this is a representative list – not complete)**

#### Non-motorized Stakeholders

Kern County ORV Watch: Mesonika Piecuch

California Portland Cement (Oak Creek Canyon) Property Caretakers: Diana and Steve Palmer

JB Cattle Co.: Brandie and Jeremy Dunn

Pacific Crest Trail Association: Anitra Kass, Southern Regional Representative

#### Motorized Stakeholders

Kern County Recreation Land Owners: Doug Varner and Rick Still

Friends of Jawbone: Ed Waldheim

### **Federal, State, and County Contacts (\*law enforcement leads for the agency)**

#### US Forest Service

Beth Boyst: Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Program Manager

Cpt. Diane Welton: Sequoia National Forest Patrol Captain\*

Officer Richard Telles: Sequoia National Forest Law Enforcement Officer

#### Bureau of Land Management

Craig Beck: Ridgecrest Field Office Recreation Program Manager

Mark Conley: BLM CA State Office, NLCS Program Manager

Wayne Dengal: Ridgecrest Field Office Chief Law Enforcement Ranger\*

#### CA State Parks

Brian Robertson: CA State Parks Superintendent, OHMVR – Public Safety

Joshua Bernadas: CA State Parks, OHMVR – Park and Recreation Specialist

#### Kern County Sheriff's Office

Sgt. Paul Leonard, OHV Division\*

Sgt. Steven Williams

## ***Actions to Address Issues/Concerns:***

Over the past five years there has been an interagency team assembled to leverage law enforcement resources and management resources by the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Kern County Sheriff's Office, Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division and Friends of Jawbone to resolve OHV trespass on the PCT and adjacent private land in Tehachapi area. This team has been active in the following areas:

- Citizen Stakeholder Group – The Forest Service convened an ad hoc Stakeholder Group to provide a forum and collaborate between, federal, state and county law enforcement agencies and citizens to identify and resolve OHV issues on the PCT in Kern County. As a result of the stakeholder group, a law enforcement task force comprised of law enforcement deputies and rangers from the Kern County Sheriff's Office, the Sequoia National Forest, the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division and the Bureau of

Land Management coordinate and conduct patrols the on the PCT.

- Outreach and Signing of the PCT – The Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division has plans to erect six kiosks at portal locations in the Tehachapi area. The kiosks will provide OHV information and map highlighting the “open” OHV riding areas in Kern County. In addition, volunteers from the Friends of Jawbone, have developed many OHV guides and maps with information about responsible OHV recreation and the PCT “closed” to OHVs in the Tehachapi area. The PCT has been re-signed to clarify that the single track trail sections are closed to motorized use and the road sections of the trail may have motorized use present.
- Youth Corps Teams – For the past five years, Youth Corps Teams from the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and American Conservation Experience (ACE) funded by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have assisted with trail maintenance and restoration projects on the PCT in Kern County. These teams will continue to provide assistance with the maintenance, restoration and signing of the PCT. The Pacific Crest Trail Association has provided technical assistance and logistics support for the teams. In FY14, the BLM will sponsor the Kern Service and Conservation Corps (FIELD) based in Tehachapi to work for three weeks in this area.
- OHV Restoration Planning Grant - In FY 2011, the BLM-California State Office received a PCT planning and restoration grant in the amount of \$54,000 from the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. A detailed trail condition assessment of about 110 miles was completed of the PCT in eastern Kern. The final phase of the project to be completed by December 2014 will include the development of a five year restoration and trail closure plan with prioritized list of OHV routes to be closed and rehabilitated on public lands in the Tehachapi area.
- Law Enforcement Patrols – Attached is a table of the Forest Service Patrol logs and contacts on the PCT from September 2013-March 2014. In addition, law enforcement patrols were conducted by the Kern County Sheriff’s Office, the Bureau of Land Management, and rangers from the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division.
- Reports of Motorized Trespass - Kern County Sheriff’s office has agreed to be the primary contact for reporting law enforcement incidents on the PCT. **Instructions are as follow:** “Citizens are reminded that their first priority is to ensure their personal safety. When situations appear confrontational, do not approach. Please retreat and report the incident. Report all incidents or suspicious activities that occur on the Pacific Crest Trail to the Kern County Sheriff’s Office 800-861-3110 or 661-861-3110. Email copies of this report and any photos the Sgt. Paul Leonard at [leonardp@kernsheiff.com](mailto:leonardp@kernsheiff.com). Sgt. Leonard will distribute to the appropriate law enforcement agency.”

**Note:** Recent inquiries from stakeholders regarding the Sequoia National Forest OHMVR grant application not mentioning the PCT have been responded to. Both the BLM and Kern County Sheriff’s Office have requested OHMVR funding to assist with law enforcement in this area. This area is outside the Sequoia National Forest boundaries.

Submitted by: Beth Boyst, U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Crest Trail Program Manager

Contact Information: [bboyst@fs.fed.us](mailto:bboyst@fs.fed.us) or 707-562-8881

Date	Contacts	U.S. Forest Service PCT Patrol Observations	Notes
September 3, 2013	12	Site visit to Pasco Motorsports. Provided information on designated OHV use areas. Discussed that OHVs on the PCT's are not authorized, informed of the implications of riding OHV's on the PCT.	12 contacts made.
December 1, 2013	20	One Federal Violation Notice issued for OHV use on the PCT.	
January 4, 2014 (2 LEO's)	1	Tracks on PCT. Verified by Stakeholders from pictures taken during the previous days.	Contact with Stakeholder.
January 11, 2014	1	No new activity observed on the PCT.	Contact with PCT Hiker.
January 18, 2014	12	Patrol PCT with BLM Rangers.	
January 22, 2014	0	No new activity observed on the PCT.	
January 30, 2014	0	Weather was bad.	
February 1, 2014	1	No new activity observed on the PCT.	Contact with Stakeholders.
February 5, 2014	1	Tracks on PCT Oak Creek side. No motorcycles observed.	
February 15, 2014	0	Multiagency Patrol-Presidents Day Weekend. Motorcycles observed – attempted contact. Unable to contact riders.	Contact with Stakeholders.
February 16, 2014	2	One motorcycle observed, attempted contact. Rider fled on motorcycle.	
March 9, 2014	2	Observed new motorcycle tracks. Approximately two motorcycles operating in Bean Canyon. Motorcycles did cross the PCT.	Contact with two Stakeholders.
March 23, 2014	0	Patrol PCT	Contact with one stakeholder.
Date		Bureau of Land Management Observations	Notes
Oct 29, 2013		Patrol Check	
Nov 10, 2013		2 Orange KTM dirt bikes in Tyler horse Cyn area, unable to contact; fresh motorcycle tracks on PCT in Manzana Project Area	
Nov 15, 2014		Patrol Check	
Nov 23, 2013		Patrol Check	
Nov 25, 2013		Final day for feature film being shot near PCT at HWY 58	<i>Starring Reese Witherspoon</i>
Nov 28, 2013		Motorcycle tracks on PCT at Oak Crk Cyn, approx 1 week old	
Dec 15, 2014		Patrol Check/Fresh Tracks on PCT	
Dec 17, 2013		Patrol Check	
Dec 20, 2014		Patrol Check/Fresh Tracks on PCT	
Dec 29, 2013		Approx. 6 OHV's with children operating on pvt lands within Manzana Project Area	3 BLM Rangers / saturation patrol
Jan 01, 2014		Dirt bikes heard operating in Gamble Springs Cyn area	
Jan 10, 2014		Patrol Check	
Jan 18, 2014		Patrol Check	Joint patrol with USFS + 2 BLM Rangers
Feb 07, 2014		Patrol Check	
Feb 15, 2014		White SUV exploring near Tyler Horse Cyn, warning issued for off route travel adjacent to BLM parcel; 3 dirt bikes observed near quarry, unable to contact	Joint patrol with USFS + 2 BLM Rangers
Feb 16, 2014		Patrol Check	
Mar 22, 2014		Assist KCSO on contact with 2 dirt bike trespassers near Cameron Rdg trailhead at gate entrance to Oak Crk Cyn	USFS on patrol Oak Crk Cyn
Mar 23, 2014		Developed motocross track observed on pvt lands within Manzana Project Area, near LA Aqueducts	
		<b>CA State Parks OHMVR Support</b>	
Nov., 30, 2013		Jawbone Deployment and southern Tehachapi region tour	Page 4 of 6
Dec. 5, 2013		Weevil Market Temporary Panels Installation	Two Trips

Overview Maps of the Area of Interest





# Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Overview Map - Southern California

