

**tread lightly!**<sup>®</sup>

LEAVING A GOOD IMPRESSION



## **Responsible Four Wheeling**

### Tread Lightly! TREAD Principles and Tips

#### **T**RAVEL AND RECREATE WITH MINIMUM IMPACT

- Stay on designated routes.
- Travel only in areas open to four wheeling.
- Know your vehicle's limitations. When in doubt, re-track.
- For your safety, travel straight up or down hills. Don't traverse the face of a hill; you may slip sideways or roll your vehicle.
- Cross large rocks and other obstacles slowly, at an angle, one wheel at a time.
- When possible avoid mud. In soft terrain, go easy on the gas to avoid wheel spin, which can cause rutting.
- Cross ravines slowly at a 45-degree angle.
- Straddle ruts, gullies and washouts even if they are wider than your vehicle.
- Cross streams only at designated fording points, or where the road crosses the stream.
- Don't turn around on narrow roads, steep terrain, or unstable ground. Backup until you find a safe place to turn around.
- Stop frequently and reconnoiter ahead on foot.
- Avoid riding in meadows and marshy areas.
- Go easy on the throttle and avoid riding the brake or clutch.
- To help with traction, balance your load and lower tire pressure to where you see a bulge (typically not less than 20 pounds).
- Know where the differential or lowest point on the vehicle is.
- Choose the appropriate winch for your vehicle size.
- Attach towing cable, tree strap or chain as low as possible to the object being winched. Let the winch do the work; never drive the winch.
- Protect the soundscape by avoiding unnecessary noise created by your vehicle.
- Practice minimum impact camping by using established sites, camping 200 feet from water resources and trails and minimizing use of fire.
- Observe proper sanitary waste disposal by burying waste 6-8 inches deep and at least 200 feet from trails, campsites, and water resources or pack out your waste.

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## **RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS**

- Be considerate of others on the road or trail.
- Drive only where permitted.
- Leave gates as you find them. Respect private land.
- Yield the right-of-way to those passing you or traveling uphill. Yield to mountain bikers, hikers, and horses.
- Keep the noise and dust down.
- Pack out what you pack in.

## **EDUCATE YOURSELF, PLAN AND PREPARE BEFORE YOU GO**

- Obtain a map of your destination and determine which areas are open to off-highway vehicles.
- Contact the land manager for area restrictions, closures, and permit requirements. If you cross private property, be sure to ask permission from the landowner(s).
- Make a realistic plan and stick to it. Always tell someone where you are going and your expected return time.
- Check the weather forecast.
- Make sure your vehicle is mechanically up to task. Be prepared with tools, supplies and spares for trailside repairs.
- Prepare for the unexpected by packing necessary emergency items.
- Travel with a group of two or more vehicles, as riding solo can leave you vulnerable if you have an accident or breakdown. Designate meeting areas in case of separation.
- Buckle up! Seat belts are mandatory.
- Know your limitations. Watch your time, your fuel, and your energy.
- Maintain a reasonable distance between vehicles.
- Don't mix driving with alcohol and/or drugs.
- Understand your vehicle's controls and how to operate them.

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## **ALLOW FOR FUTURE USE OF THE OUTDOORS, LEAVE IT BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT**

- Carry a trash bag in your vehicle and pick up litter left by others
- Ride in the middle of trails to minimize widening of the trails. Avoid sideslipping and wheel spin, which can lead to erosion.
- Avoid “spooking” livestock and wildlife.
- Always avoid sensitive habitats: wetlands, meadows, and tundra.
- Following a ride, wash your vehicle to reduce the spread of noxious weeds.
- Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not allowed in designated wilderness areas.

## **DISCOVER THE REWARDS OF RESPONSIBLE RECREATION**

- Four wheeling provides the opportunity to get away from the rush of everyday life and builds family traditions.
- Careless operation of your off-highway vehicle can cause damage and may result in the closing of an area.
- Respect the environment and other trail users. By using common sense and common courtesy, what is available today will be here to enjoy tomorrow.