



## Press Release

**For Immediate Release:**

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### **Artists and Photographers Call upon Park Service to Rein in Off-Road Vehicles**

#### **Impacts from Unregulated ORV Threatens Business**

**San Francisco:** Three dozen wildlife artists, nature photographers, and gallery owners called upon the National Park Service to restrict off-road vehicles (ORV) in the nation's parks and monuments. In a letter to Park Service Director Fran Mainella, business owners asked the Park Service to grant a 1999 rulemaking petition by Bluewater Network that would restrict ORV to the system's high standard gravel or paved surfaces. In addition, the petition calls for an end to cross-country ORV travel. Off-road motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATV) are often used as little more than thrillcraft and are known to cause significant damage to park resources. Research shows that ORV threatens wildlife and destroys critical habitat.

"Off-road vehicle use in the national parks is not a pretty picture," said Sean Smith Bluewater Network's public lands director and artist/owner of Wild Art Studio. "Unregulated ORV inflict extensive damage on the environment and the countless businesses that are dependent upon the preservation of wildlife and their habitat. It's time for the Park Service to recognize this destruction and put the brakes on out of control ORV."

Wildlife art and landscape photography businesses like those that surround many national parks are part of a billion-dollar industry, contributing significantly to local economies. ORV use frequently inflicts significant and hidden costs upon businesses such as artists. For example, ORV activity requires many artists and photographers to travel deeper into the backcountry to find their subjects. Unfortunately, with the development of more powerful and reliable machines fewer places are protected from the thrillcraft.

Currently, ORV use occurs in nearly 60 national parks. The Park Service reports that ORV have caused significant damage to more than 70 percent of these parks. At Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida, ORV use has produced more than 28,000 miles of user-created routes, threatening the long-term survival of the endangered Florida Panther. Recently at Yellowstone, ORV users caused extensive damage to some of the parks thermal features. Rehabilitation costs could run into the thousands of dollars. In Alaska, park rangers report that ORV users have destroyed or stolen irreplaceable cultural resources.

Other federal agencies such as the Forest Service are recognizing the impact unregulated ORV are having on wildlife. Unlike the Park Service, the Forest Service has committed to a rulemaking process that among other things would ban cross-country travel.

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