

**From:** [George Sorenson](#)  
**To:** [FS-travel-comments-rocky-mountain-shoshone](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal (WR- 26) to change the last section of Bear Creek Road (FS-501)  
**Date:** Monday, July 18, 2016 11:04:18 AM

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Dear Sirs:

Having grown up in Utah, and having seen how ATV's operate on trails there, I do not think it is a good idea to revise the current standing on FS 501 to make it only accessible for vehicles fitting ATV dimensions, especially in light of the fact that currently there are a number of outfitters such as Great Basin Adventures that use the trail to set up, access and outfit their camps. The outfitters are well aware of the damage vehicles can cause and it has been my experience that they take care to minimize their footprint on the land, especially since maintaining the land in as pristine a condition as possible is essential to their business. Disallowing the outfitters the ability to use vehicles with axle widths greater than 65" with the view that it will reduce 'impact on riparian and wetland areas by lighter vehicles' does not make sense. The reality is that the ATV's travel much faster and often pay much less attention to the road boundaries than the outfitters do. For many ATV users speed is the prime objective. They love the thrill of going fast over the terrain and overcoming challenges that the landscape may present (that has certainly been the case when I have used ATV's). When you factor in the speed of the vehicle, along with the outdoor challenge mentality that many ATV users have, you have a recipe for much more destruction than an outfitter or rancher with a pickup truck would have. In fact perhaps you should have the outfitters police the ATV users as opposed to prohibiting them from driving on the road in a truck.

As an example, in St. George, Utah, a popular destination for ATV users, the hills are littered with trails, and it seems the steeper the trail is the better. Usually the trails run straight up the mountain, exposing the land to erosion as the knobby tires of the ATV rip up the plant life in their path. The damage to these delicate ecosystems is especially severe when the soil is saturated from rain or snow. The knobby tires are able to dig in much deeper into wet soil and at speed spray the soil all over. Perhaps a better solution to a ban on bigger vehicles in the hope that smaller vehicles will do less damage is to restrict use during sensitive periods when the riparian habitat is at its most vulnerable.

Finally, I think it is easier to police the ranchers and outfitters since they reside in your community and share an interest in preserving the habitat for others. Simply ask them to adhere to certain standards during sensitive times of the year. In the case of the ATV users (and not all of them are irresponsible) it will be impossible to police. They are there one day and gone the next and it only takes one or two irresponsible ones to do tremendous damage to the environment.

Regards,

George Sorenson  
Wind River Range Camper and User

