



# ECOSYSTEMS DESTROYED

## Off-Road Vehicles Play an Increasing Role



**A pristine and complex masterpiece, balanced by nature, but damaged by man, is left struggling for life.**

Despite a remarkable resilience and ability to recover, there are limits beyond which nature may not be restored. At this point our resource is lost, the landscapes which we know and enjoy are erased forever, along with their inhabitants.



**This is abuse — please STOP!**



**It may be fun but...** The environment pays a high price—particularly on fragile sites. The cost of restoration is high, not negotiable and sometimes not an option.

**Be a responsible steward of the land**

# In the aftermath...from beauty



The pictures tell a story: soils and plants shattered by these vehicles tell the rest of the story...

## The rest of the story...

When one link in an ecosystem is damaged, all parts suffer. Do not be a part of the equation that destroys the resource we all enjoy and profit from.

- native plants are uprooted and ground cover is lost
- ground cover is important to capture moisture and regulate soil temperature
- soils are compacted and topsoil is displaced
- water does not infiltrate through the compacted soil, and run-off increases
- the water bodies carry more sediment, which directly affects living things relying on the water bodies, including humans
- tiny organisms that interact with plant roots are adversely affected
- in the absence of root mass to hold soils in place, erosion occurs
- in the absence of plant litter and moisture, soil productivity is reduced
- shallow rooted opportunistic plants, including noxious weeds, establish easily on poor quality dry sites and out-compete attempts by native plants to return
- forage for wildlife and livestock is lost
- habitat for insects and birds is lost
- links in the chain are broken and an ecosystem can cease to function
- in the absence of life, a desolate wasteland is born

It is a beautiful world of forests, grasslands, wetlands—and the host of creatures, including humans, that enjoy and depend on that world.



# to barrenness



## Misuse it— we will lose it

▶ Native fescue plants provide important forage for wildlife and livestock. They are also important habitat for insects and rodents.

◀ Spotted knapweed invasion begins along a disturbed trail. Noxious weeds destroy plant diversity.



Stay on designated roads—protect the view from these black marks.



The road to recovery is long—often longer than a lifetime. Riparian and alpine areas are particularly vulnerable to damage.

For enjoyment of our natural resources “walk softly and leave no tracks.” With motorized toys and mountain bikes, this is seldom possible and it appears some try to leave the biggest possible tracks!



Many forest jurisdictions have either banned off-road vehicles entirely or severely restricted their access to public lands. In British Columbia we still have the opportunity to enjoy our forests relatively unrestricted. However, if the trend to more invasive use of off-road vehicles continues, there will be public demand for control measures.

When you meet wildlife or livestock, be respectful and yield right of way. Please **DO NOT** use your vehicle to chase or harass animals—**IT'S AGAINST THE LAW!**



## What Can You Do?

- treat the forest and grassland with respect
- educate friends and family
- stay on roads and trails
- observe the signs
- if necessary to go off-road to access your destination, avoid areas where plants and soils are fragile
- observe, record and report vandalism to the environment



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**Promoting responsible stewardship of the land**