



"Creating a Positive Future for Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation"

Guidelines

for

Off-Highway Vehicle Clubs

A Resource Guide to Assist in the Formation, Development and Management of OHV Recreation Enthusiast Clubs

National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council, Inc.
2005

First Edition

NOHVCC

Guidelines for Off-Highway Vehicle Clubs

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NOHVCC

Guidelines for Off-Highway Vehicle Clubs

Why Start an Off-Highway Vehicle Club?

Do you want to share your interest in off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation with others in your community? Have you recently lost an OHV recreation area, or had a favorite trail closed to motorized vehicles? Would you like new friends to ride or drive with? If so, you may want to consider forming an OHV club.

A club can accomplish things that are difficult for one or just a few individuals to accomplish.

A club can speak with one voice for a larger group, increasing their effectiveness when working with elected officials and land managers. Local presence and knowledge of specific areas and situations allow for credible and constructive comments on land management issues and legislation.

Elected officials and local units of government listen to their constituents. The more constituents an organization represents the closer elected officials listen.

Clubs also serve as a contact point for land managers, elected officials, the media, other organizations and OHV-oriented businesses needing local information or having important information to share.

A clubs standing in the community is vitally important and depends largely upon the conduct of its members and club activities.

A club can promote responsible outdoor ethics and safety to improve both opportunity and the image of OHV activity. The better educated the OHV public

is about rules, regulation, natural and cultural resources, land ethics, and safe operation of their vehicles the better we will be perceived.

Peer pressure within and outside of the club can be a powerful influence on the conduct of other OHV enthusiasts.

The image of OHV recreation is further enhanced by community service and charity efforts. A club can sponsor volunteer activities that benefit good causes and provide desirable services to the community. Respect within the community and personal satisfaction are natural returns from coordinating or participating in:

- Trail maintenance,
- Clean-up days,
- Safety training,
- Search and Rescue programs,
- Volunteer trail patrol and trail host programs,
- Youth and at-risk youth diversion programs, and
- Charity fund raising activities.

Group discounts at local dealerships, accessory shops, other businesses and attractions are often available to club members. The same business interests may also be willing to support the club or club activities by purchasing ads in newsletters, paying for their name to be included on activity flyers and event t-shirts, providing discount coupons for event participants, providing in-kind donations such as printing, equipment or food items, and offering prizes.

And, best of all, a club provides camaraderie and fun through excursions, family events, and other activities.

NOHVCC “TOOLS” TO ASSIST YOU

The National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council is an educational nonprofit organization with a unique countrywide network of volunteers assisted by a professional staff. NOHVCC is not a membership-based organization (in other words, you can't “join” NOHVCC.)

The purpose of NOHVCC is to create a positive future for off-highway vehicle recreation by providing to those seeking assistance a wide range of resources to enhance communication forums, responsible riding and driving opportunities, the positive image of OHV recreation, environmental stewardship, and safety education.

NOHVCC encourages enthusiasts to organize into clubs and work with their state organizations. Where no state OHV organization exists clubs are further encouraged to form state associations promoting the NOHVCC mission of *“creating a positive future for off-highway vehicle recreation.”* In return NOHVCC provides information and materials, or “tools”, to assist club and association development.

NOHVCC recognizes that most OHV activists are volunteers with many demands on their time. NOHVCC group development materials provide information and samples to help you build your organizational and collaborative skills, make the most efficient and effective use of your time, and still have time left over for fun.

NOHVCC “Tools” in addition to ***Guidelines for Off-Highway Vehicle Clubs*** include:

- Advice from the NOHVCC professional staff,
- Advice from NOHVCC advisors including land managers and business professionals;
- Advice from your NOHVCC State Representative and Alternate;
- NOHVCC web information including an extensive resource library;
- Referrals to other clubs and associations in your state and across the country.

Now, if you're ready and willing to form an OHV club, turn the page.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDELINES FOR CLUB DEVELOPMENT

Advance preparation and good meeting management is critical. What attendees walk away from a meeting with will determine whether or not they return for another! The following five steps will guide you through any meeting from your initial club formation meeting, to special planning meetings, and to monthly membership meetings ten years from now.

1. THE MEETING SITE

- For all meetings select a location that is as central as possible for the participants who you want and who need to attend.
- Be sure that there is adequate space for the number of participants you have invited or that you expect to attend. For your first meeting this may be difficult to determine, but it is better to have an area that is too large rather than too small. At the initial club formation meeting for the New York Trail Riders Organization (NYTRO) 200 riders showed up and 172 signed up as members.
- The meeting area should have enough tables adequate for the work you will be doing. A general membership meeting may only require table space for officers and handouts. While a planning meeting where you will be looking at maps or reviewing documents will require lots of table space.
- Make sure that chairs are comfortable for the length of the meeting. Folding chairs or benches are fine for a short meeting but are torture after any more than two hours.
- Select a site where you are allowed to post material on the wall. (Bring lots of good masking tape – NO scotch tape, duct tapes or electrical tape!) Being able to stick things on the wall such as officer nominations, ideas,

maps, etc., is very helpful at initial development and planning meetings.

- Select a site where you may provide beverages and snacks or where food can be ordered. Food is important! Food creates a relaxed atmosphere and helps keep energy levels up.

- Potential Meeting Sites:
 - Community centers and service halls (VFW, Rotary, etc.)
 - Local libraries, schools, and colleges
 - Local businesses and land management offices
 - Quiet restaurants with separate meeting rooms
 - Members homes – if sufficient quiet space is available

- **Caution:** Pizza parlors and bars are popular meeting places but generally are too noisy to conduct efficient business meetings. If you must consider a restaurant as a meeting site make sure that where you will meet is:
 - Available for the entire duration of the meeting,
 - That the meeting will not disturb other customers, and
 - That other customers will not disturb you, and
 - Establish a ground rule that if meeting participants would like to drink, all business must be completed before alcoholic beverages are served.

2. COMMUNICATION

From when you first think to yourself, I'd like to form a club to regular club operations forever after, good communication is essential to keep a club active and growing.

- **The First Meeting:** After the date, time and location of the first meeting is set you will need to create an announcement to distribute as widely as possible at least one month in advance of the meeting date. Potential venues for distribution may include local newspapers and radio stations, OHV businesses and land management offices.

Distribute the announcement by mail, fax and email to as many friends, business associates and organizations that you believe may be interested in joining or supporting the new club. Redistribute the announcement with a draft agenda two weeks in advance of the meeting.

- **General and Special Meeting Notices:** People are busy. Advance meeting notices and reminders are helpful for even the most active and conscientious club members. Repeated notice is critical for special meetings and for members who may not have been able to attend the previous meeting.
 - The dates for next meetings should be decided upon at each meeting.
 - Notice of all meetings should be distributed one month prior to the meeting date. Notices should include:
 - Date and time
 - Location
 - Primary purpose of the meeting
 - The Action Table

- Reminders should be sent seven to ten days prior to the meeting.
Reminders should include:

- Date and time
- Location
- Draft agenda
- The Action Table
- List of invited guests or special speakers
- List of items, if necessary, that members need to bring to the meeting

- **On-going Communication:** Regular communication reassures members that the club is alive and well. Technology also provides a variety of options in place of face-to-face meetings to conduct business and keep in touch.

- During the initial formation meeting establish a communication process, by phone, mail, fax, email, or website, and stick to it.
- Officers and committees should establish their own communication process.
- Email communication is increasing popular but like meetings need ground rules. For efficiency and to keep discussion focused consider the following:

- For the Subject Box: Use the initials of the club followed by a dash and then identify the specific issue of the email note.

Subject: GTG – January Meeting Agenda

- During specific issue discussions highlight the complete content of each subject message and click “Reply All.”

A complete record of issue discussions facilitates on-going discussion without having to save multiple messages or having to refer back to previously saved messages. And, "Reply All" insures that all members of a discussion have the exact same information to work with.

- Limit each email note to one issue.
 - Change the stated issue whenever a new issue is offered for consideration or discussion.
- Telecommunication is time and cost effective for small groups such as Boards and committees. To insure productive conference calls:
- Provide call-in instructions one week in advance followed by a reminder two days in advance of the call.
 - Provide agendas by mail, fax or email at the same time that call-in instructions are provided.
 - The Board or committee chair or appointed facilitator must keep the call participants focused on the agenda.
 - Notes with clearly identified action items must be taken and provided to call participants as soon after the call as possible.
 - Limit calls to one hour.

3. The Agenda

- Limit meeting time to NO MORE than three hours! After three hours attention span and energy level drop.
- Note the time for each agenda topic and when the meeting will adjourn so that your agenda will also serve as a time guideline.
- Include the speakers name for each topic, verify that the speaker will attend and notify them of the time that is allotted for their topic.
- ALWAYS establish meeting rules. Meeting rules are essential to keep a meeting on track and civil. Consider the following:
 - One conversation at a time
 - Conduct side conversations outside of the meeting room
 - Cell phones off
 - Respect others points of view
 - Limit comments to pertinent information. No war stories.
 - No finger pointing or “blaming”
- If there is potential for contentious discussion consider adding the following:
 - Raise your hand to speak
 - No personal attacks
 - When recognized to speak, speaking time is limited to 2 minutes
- On the agenda include an action table for:
 - What action items have been assigned
 - To whom they have been assigned, and
 - When they need to be completed.
- Have adequate copies of the agenda to hand out to all participants.

4. Meeting Management

Management of the first meeting is critical; the impression attendees get from the first meeting and what they take away from it will determine whether or not they return for a second!

- Wear a watch. A room clock is also helpful.
- Use *Roberts Rules of Order* when necessary to keep a meeting orderly. Use *Roberts Rules of Order* whenever a vote is necessary.
- Stick to the agenda topics and time!
- During any type of planning meeting, including the initial club development meeting, assign a participant other than the facilitator to record the meeting on flip charts or butcher paper. Post the sheets on the walls as the meeting progresses. These notes will help to insure that when agreement is required all know exactly what is being agreed on. And, when copied the flip chart information may serve as or back-up the minutes for the meeting. Meeting minutes are required for all incorporated organizations.
 - Necessary equipment:
 - Flip charts or butcher paper
 - LOTS of water-soluble marker pens (various colors are fun), and
 - Masking tape.
- Use the Meeting Ground Rules to insure that all participants have an opportunity to speak and that no one individual dominates any particular discussion.

- Watch and listen to the participants! Attention, facial expressions and tone indicate where there is disagreement, frustration, lack of knowledge, or disinterest that needs to be addressed.

- Provide materials necessary for the meeting. At the initial meeting this would include at least the following:
 - Sample by-laws
 - List of proposed officer positions
 - Proposed officer responsibilities
 - List of proposed committees

- Provide (or assign someone dependable to provide) refreshments at the beginning and throughout the meeting. Eating relaxes people and helps to create a more conducive atmosphere for working together.

- Include a fun activity such as a door prize, “club member of the month” award, two-for-one pot, etc.

5. Follow-up

- Provide meeting minutes to all participants. These may be a copy of the flip charts or the agenda with the following as bullet points under the appropriate topic:
 - A list of the comments, questions, or concerns
 - What, if any agreements were made
 - The action table (see Appendix a)
 - Date and location of next meeting
 - List of participants with contact information.

- Thank or send a letter of thanks to those who provided the meeting space, beverages and snacks, and any other donated meeting materials.

MEETING CHECKLIST

- Meeting Site Selected (1 month in advance)
- Date and Time Set (1 month in advance)
- Meeting Announcement Out (1 month in advance)
- Agenda Completed (2 weeks in advance)
- Action Table updated (2 weeks in advance)
- Meeting Materials & Information complete (1 week in advance)
(Try to avoid leaving anything to the last minute)
 - Agendas with Action Table
 - Copies of documents
 - Flip chart(s), easel(s), masking tape and pens (Remember, water soluble!)

- Meeting Reminder Sent
- Beverage/Food provision - arranged/confirmed
- Thank you given or note sent

YOUR FIRST MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Remember from Meeting Management, the management of your first club meeting is critical. The impression attendees get from the first meeting will determine whether or not they return for a second meeting! When time and the meeting location allow set aside time for socializing, preferably with provided refreshments.

Suggested Agenda Items:

- Introductions (state name and reason for attending meeting)
- Distribution and gathering of membership information forms
- Discussion: mission and purpose of the club (see Appendix l)
- Discussion of club name (see Appendix d)
- Nominations/volunteers for initial Board positions (see Appendises h)
- Discussion of future positions and committees (see Appendises e and i)
- Discussion of club activities
- Discussion of dues
- Set date, time for Board meeting
- Thank you to those who helped with the meeting

Suggested Agenda Items for regular future meetings:

- Activity reports and Committee reports
- Education presentations (a *brief* video on OHV safety, guest presentation by the local land management agency regarding future planning efforts or sound testing, review and discussion of educational OHV outreach programs, etc.)

Suggested 1st Meeting Materials

- Copies of the agenda
- Copies of Board Positions and Responsibilities (Appendix i)
- Copies of Membership Information Forms. (Appendix g)

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR FIRST MEMBERSHIP MEETING

ITEM	COMPLETE BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Site Selected	(1 month in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Date and Time Set	(1 month in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Announcement Out	(1 month in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda & Action Table Completed	(2 weeks in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Reminder Sent	(1 week in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Materials & Information complete (Try to avoid leaving anything to the last minute)	(1 week in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of agenda	
<input type="checkbox"/> Two copies of the Action Table (for the secretary & meeting leader)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of Membership Information Forms	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of Mission and Purpose Statements	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of Position Responsibilities	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flip chart(s) and easel(s)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Masking tape	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pens (Remember, water soluble!)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Beverage/Food provision - arranged/confirmed (2 weeks in advance)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thank you given or note sent	(Within 1 week after the meeting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting minutes distributed to participants	(Within 1 week after the meeting)

SAMPLE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE (of announcement)

CONTACT: _____

Phone: _____ - _____ - _____

Email: _____

NEW OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE CLUB TO FORM

On Monday, May 3, from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. a meeting will be held at _____ (location), _____ (address), _____ (city) to form a new _____ (off-highway motorcycle, dual sport, ATV, 4WD or whatever combination is desired) club.

The proposed purpose of the club is _____.

(The purpose may be kept general so that those who come can help to develop the purpose of the new club.)

_____ (Include a brief statement as to why a new club is needed or would be fun.)

(Example: The San Bernardino is our local forest and has great trails to ride and drive on almost year-round. Due to budget cuts trails are not receiving regular maintenance. The forest staff is asking local OHV enthusiasts to help maintain the trails through an adopt-a-trail program. This is the perfect opportunity for trail riders and drivers to help the forest, improve our opportunity, and have good time.)

All (off-highway motorcycle, dual-sport motorcycle, ATV, 4WD) enthusiasts are welcome. Bring the kids too. For further information call _____ at (____) _____ - _____ between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. any evening or anytime by email at _____ @ _____.

Refreshments will be provided. If you'd like to bring extra refreshments they're sure to be enjoyed.

Come help to create a positive future for OHV recreation and have fun!

SAMPLE AGENDA

Proposed New OHV Club Meeting

Location & Address

Day & Date

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

AGENDA

- 6:30 p.m. Gathering – Refreshments provided
Distribution of membership information forms
- 7:00 Welcome, Review of Agenda, Ground Rules, and Introductions (with each person asked to state their reason for attending the meeting)
- 7:30 Discuss and develop Mission and Purpose ideas (See Appendix – Mission and Purpose Statements)
- 8:00 Discuss and develop club name ideas (see Appendix – Club Name)
- 8:15 Discussion of position responsibilities and selection of initial Board officers
Set date for the first Board meeting (see Appendix – Officers)
(Initial Board officers should hold their positions until the By-laws are approved. Serving as an initial officer should in no way affect an individual's ability to serve as a regularly elected officer.)
- President
 - Vice President
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
- 8:45 Initial discussion of future club positions, committees, dues and activities
- 9:15 Date for next meeting, agenda items including first club outing, challenge to bring new members, and collection of member information forms.
- 9:30 Thank you's for use of meeting site, provision of snacks and adjourn meeting

YOUR FIRST BOARD MEETING

As with your first club meeting, your first Board of Directors meeting should also be well planned and organized. (Review Appendix - Meeting Management)

Suggested Agenda Items:

- Introductions
- Review of job descriptions (make sure that each Board member understands their responsibilities.)
- Review and discussion of sample bylaws. Preparation of draft club bylaws to present to club membership for approval. (Appendix b)
- Discussion concerning incorporation of the club (Appendix b)
- Discussion regarding club insurance (assign someone to research and report back to the Board). All clubs should secure adequate liability insurance. This is especially important if your club plans to hold events to which the public is invited.
- Discussion regarding membership dues
- Discussion regarding money management (Appendix c)

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR FIRST BOARD MEETING

ITEM	TO COMPLETE BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Site Selected Meeting)	(ASAP after the 1 st Member Meeting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Date and Time Set	(At 1 st Member Meeting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting notice sent Meeting)	(w/minutes from 1 st Member Meeting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda & Action Table Completed	(2 weeks in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Reminder Sent	(1 week in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Materials & Information complete (Try to avoid leaving anything to the last minute)	(1 week in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of agenda	
<input type="checkbox"/> Two copies of the Action Table (for the secretary & meeting leader)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of filled out Membership Information Forms	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of Position Responsibilities	
<input type="checkbox"/> Flip chart(s) and easel(s)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Masking tape	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pens (Remember, water soluble!)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Beverage/Food provision - arranged/confirmed	(2 weeks in advance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Thank you given or note sent	(Within 1 week after the meeting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting minutes distributed to Board members	(Within 1 week after the meeting)

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Artist	
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Event Chair	62
Event Coordinating Committee Member	

Event Publicity Chair	
Land Use Specialist	
Newsletter Editor	64
New Member Advocate	65
Outreach Coordinator	
Public Policy Specialist	
Publicity Specialist	
School Program Coordinator	
Special Activity Coordinator	
Special Project/Event Fundraiser	

BY-LAWS AND INCORPORATION

By-laws are the rules of an organization explaining how it is organized and operates. By-laws are required for incorporation. Incorporation establishes an organization as a legal entity and protects the officers from being personally responsible for the debts or deeds of the organization.

By-laws are dynamic rules that may be revised as a club grows or as a clubs activities change. For incorporation an organization's by-laws must at least include the following:

1. Name of club
2. Home or office address for principal officer or principal business office where corporate records (including by-laws and minutes) will be held.
3. Information regarding Officers and Directors. (Caution: There may be residence, age and number requirements.)

Incorporation requirements for individual states may be obtained by:

1. Calling your states Secretary of State office;
2. Going to your states government website at: http://www.__.gov (*Insert the two-letter abbreviation for your state) and do a search for "Incorporation" or "articles of incorporation"; or
3. Going to the internet and doing a search for "incorporation".

Additional Resources:

- Your State's OHV-oriented associations and other clubs
- "AMA Incorporation Guidelines" (Appendix b-iii)
- "NOHVCC Application For Federal Tax-Exempt Status" (NOHVCC Library)

Use of the Sample By-laws: The following sample by-laws provide the format and information generally needed to meet incorporation and tax requirements. Recipients of these Club Guidelines are free to remove the inserted "NOTES" and "EXAMPLES" from the Sample By-laws and to use all or whatever is appropriate from the sample for their own club by-laws.

SAMPLE BY-LAWS

Organization: _____
Date Adopted: _____

ARTICLE I – NAME

Name: The name of this organization shall be the _____.

ARTICLE II – ADDRESS

The mailing address for the (name of club) shall be the home address of the current President of the club.

(**NOTE:** P.O. Boxes may not be allowed in some states)

ARTICLE III – RECORDS

The corporate records, including the incorporation document, tax status and minutes of membership and Board meetings shall be at the home or business address of the current secretary. (or whatever officer the club would prefer to assign the responsibility to)

ARTICLE IV - PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization is to (Insert the club mission statement here.)

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 — Composition:

The membership shall consist of individuals* having an interest in off-highway vehicle recreation. Membership in this organization shall be determined on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, gender, color or national origin.

(* **Note:** An option is to include families and/or sponsors and/or business interests in the membership.)

Section 2 – Number:

There shall be at least ____ people comprising the total organization membership for it to continue.

(NOTE: Five members are adequate.)

Section 3 — Term:

The term of membership shall be _____.

(NOTE: Annual membership is good for dues collection and for regular updating of member information.)

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

Section 1 – Composition

The officers of the organization shall be the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and _____.

(NOTE:

- Check to see if incorporation in your State requires a certain number of officers.
- Having additional officers helps to divide up responsibilities and gives the board an uneven number to prevent tie votes.
- Add positions that are appropriate for the purpose(s) of the club such as
 - Legislative Liaison
 - Land Management Liaison
 - Committee Chairs

Section 2 – Term of Office

The officers shall be elected at a predetermined annual meeting for a term of one year. Officers may be re-elected but will not be eligible to serve more than three consecutive years in any one position.

(NOTE: Periodic change in leadership strengthens a club with fresh ideas and enthusiasm and broadens the base of active members. By limiting “consecutive” years of service, members with ability and time may re-serve in any elected capacity as long as they have moved to another position or not served as an elected officer for at least one year.)