

# Off-Highway Vehicle Use

## Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma



Welcome to the Ouachita National Forest in Oklahoma! Listed below are rules and regulations for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. OHVs include ATVs, 4-wheelers, 3-wheelers, utility vehicles such as mules, and motorcycles. For a more pleasant visit, please take a moment to review the following:

- ü OHVs may be used on open unpaved National Forest roads constructed and intended for normal or regular motor vehicle use. A road is considered closed if there is a sign, gate, or other barricade, including a dirt mound, blocking the road. Prior illegal OHV use does not imply permission to ride off the open road. So, just because someone else went around or over that dirt mound that is closing the road doesn't mean you should do the same. You could receive a fine. You can drive on unpaved county roads but only in the National Forest – not elsewhere.
- ü There are places where trails have been illegally used across the forest floor – be aware these are not open roads and are not legal to use for riding. Make sure it is obviously a road before using it - if you aren't sure then call our office.
- ü In McCurtain County north of Broken Bow, OHV use is not permitted on the forest floor (off-road). Throughout LeFlore County, and in McCurtain County south of Hwy 70, dispersed OHV use is currently permitted on the forest floor. The regulations will be changing in April of 2009 so be sure you have the latest information before you ride. Our website is [www.aokforests.com](http://www.aokforests.com).
- ü A new state law is now in effect on public lands that requires anyone under the age of 18 to wear a helmet and, that no passengers are allowed on OHV's that were not made to carry passengers (after market modifications do not count).
- ü OHVs are not allowed on trails designated solely for other uses, including hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use. Currently there are no designated OHV trails on the forest in Oklahoma except for the Indian Nations Trail in LeFlore County, where motorcycles only are allowed.
- ü Driving on powerlines, pipelines, seismic lines, fire lines, or railroad right-of-ways is prohibited.
- ü Driving on, or crossing, a paved road is prohibited.
- ü Driving in streambeds, creek beds, lakebeds, or shorelines is prohibited.
- ü Make sure your vehicle is in good condition with an approved spark arrester.
- ü Use the appropriate safety gear – helmet (required if under 18), eye protection, boots, and gloves.
- ü Obey speed limits and be considerate of other visitors. When encountering horse riders stop and yield the right-of-way since horses may be spooked by motorized vehicles.

### The Reason for the Rules:

Heavy or irresponsible OHV use can wreak havoc on the environment. Miles of unplanned trails from heavy OHV use on the forest floor can damage watersheds, destroy habitats, kill native plant and animal species, and pollute streams and rivers.

To help preserve these resources and the continued opportunities for you to enjoy using your vehicle on public lands, we ask that you observe the guidelines listed above and report violations.

Individuals riding in closed areas can currently be fined up to \$300. There are also special rules and regulations for the Three Rivers Management Area under the management of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. You do not need a Three Rivers WMA permit to ride on National Forest land but, if you leave it and go on the rest of the WMA, then you need a permit.

*For more information, please call the Forest Service at (580) 286-6564 or (918) 567-2326.*