

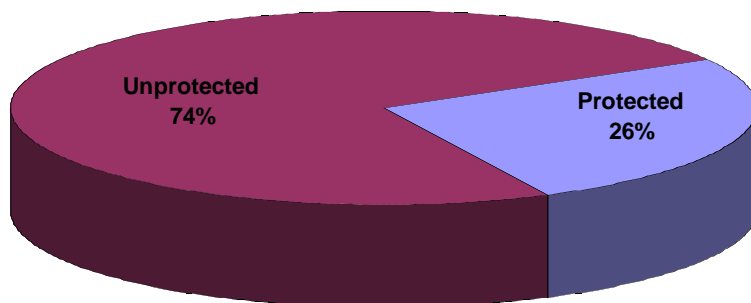
THE FACTS ABOUT OFF-ROAD VEHICLE DAMAGE

Unfettered use of off-road vehicles (ORVs)—such as dirt bikes, rock crawlers, and all-terrain vehicles—throughout America's Red Rock Wilderness is a pervasive threat to this uniquely wild landscape.

- **Most public lands are unprotected from ORVs in Utah.** Roughly seventy-five percent, or 17 million acres out of 23 million acres, of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in Utah still lack any real protection (including designated routes, maps, trail signs, and other tools to ensure that these natural areas are protected) from ORV damage.
- **Over 100,000 miles of ORV routes.** Utah has over 100,000 miles of dirt roads, jeep trails, and old mining tracks. Driving all of these trails would be the equivalent of driving four times the circumference of the Earth. America's Red Rock Wilderness Act would protect public lands that are still roadless, wild, and free from ORV intrusions.



Utah BLM Lands Protected/Unprotected from ORV Damage



- **Documented damages from ORVs.** BLM allows nearly uncontrolled ORV use in areas that have known but unrecorded archeological resources, putting these resources at risk from vandalism and unintentional damage. ORV's can cause damage to fragile desert soils, streams, vegetation, and wildlife. Impacts include churning of soils, distribution of non-native invasive plants, and increased erosion and runoff. Rare plant, wildlife, and fish species are at risk.

- **ORV use is growing nationwide.** In the past 30 years, the number of off-road vehicles in the United States has grown from 5 million to roughly 36 million ORVs. The BLM has fallen woefully behind in the management of these machines on public lands.
- **User conflicts.** Thousands of visitors come to Utah's canyons and desert expanses hoping to experience solitude and quiet. In far too many places, however, these visitors are now treated to the inescapable buzzing of rock crawlers, all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes.

Proposed wilderness in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. © James Kay.



Off-road vehicles tear up Pritchett Canyon near Moab. © SUWA.

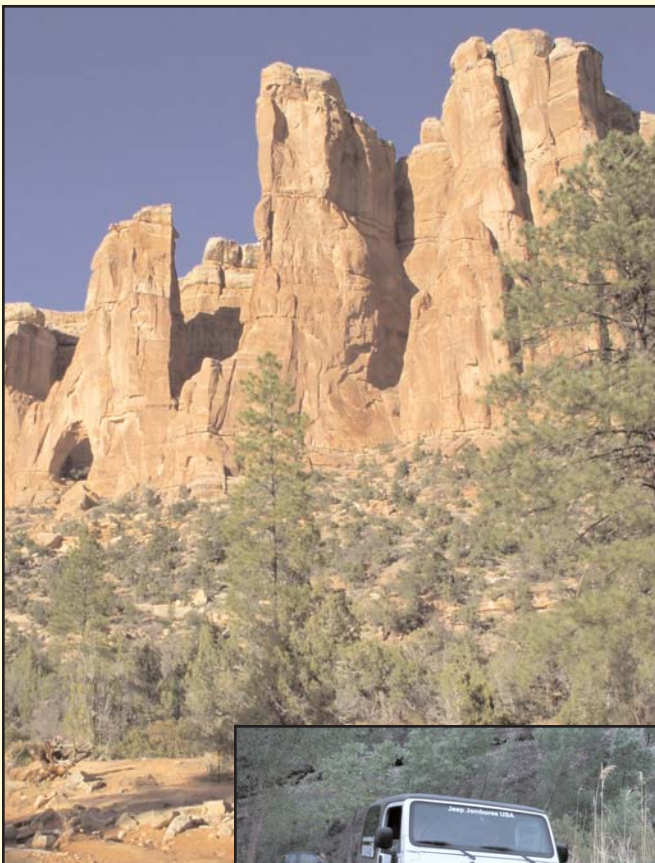
CASE STUDY: Arch Canyon

Arch Canyon, a scenic steep-walled canyon in southeastern Utah, is included in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. This canyon is illustrative of the damage to proposed wilderness caused by irresponsible and unregulated ORV use. Although BLM allows ORV use in Arch Canyon, archeologists and scientists have only begun to survey and catalog the over 100 estimated archeological sites believed to exist throughout the canyon. At the same time, Arch Canyon's winding stream bed provides a rare and a valuable natural resource in the arid desert of southeastern Utah. Three native fish species, including one state sensitive species, reside in Arch Canyon.

Arch Canyon has recently been the target of intense ORV use. ORVs routinely travel up this canyon crossing the stream 60 times in the short eight and one-half mile trip from the mouth of the canyon to the U.S. Forest Service boundary where the canyon is closed to ORV use, totaling 120 stream crossings for each round trip. On BLM lands, new ORV routes are being pioneered along the stream and to archaeological sites, potentially damaging cultural artifacts along the way. Undocumented cultural resources that make Arch Canyon an important area for scientific study of Ancestral Puebloan agricultural practices and sensitive fish species are in harms way.



An archaeological site in Arch Canyon. © Liz Thomas/SUWA.



Above: Arch Canyon. Right: One of 120 round-trip stream crossings in the Jeep Jamboree. © Liz Thomas/SUWA.



"Preservation of these lands is important for our culture and spiritual values. . . . Arch Canyon should not be sacrificed by the damaging effects of [OHV] use."

—Mark Maryboy, former Navajo Councilman, and former San Juan County Commissioner (*Salt Lake Tribune*, December 28, 2006)

"[W]e respectfully request that BLM close [Arch] Canyon to off-road vehicle use until a survey of cultural resources in the canyon is completed and a management plan is developed that provides for their protection."

—National Trust for Historic Preservation, letter to BLM, January 5, 2007

Noting that "[c]ultural resources in Arch Canyon will continue to deteriorate without an aggressive management plan that includes public outreach, limitations on vehicular access, site stabilization and better management of pedestrian traffic on and around significant sites," the Hopi Tribe "requests the immediate interim closure of Arch Canyon."

—Letter from Hopi Tribe to BLM, January 24, 2007

For more information please contact the
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
(202) 546-2215 • www.suwa.org