

Little Wins and Rays of Hope

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I've discovered there are "phases" in this off-road life we all love so much, especially if you are in the game of fighting for trails and riding areas. Like a lot of other things in life, it appears there are steps we go through – kind of like losing someone – withdrawal, denial, anger, and resentment. I've been through it all one time or another. But the little wins and the rays of hope are what keep me going. Allow me to share with you how that hope and light can help you as well.

I've been assisting a lot of folks lately with [club elders](#), [conflict in clubs](#), as well as [personalities and infighting](#). But hey, the fact that I'm being asked to help tells me SOMEONE is doing something or trying to do something about it. The fact that folks are asking for help means these things are being brought out into the open so they can be FIXED. Yup! Fixed! 😊

Even better, I've been asked more often than ever about the advanced steps for getting in the game and saving trails. Folks are ready to do more; save more trails; and fight harder. Now more than ever is a great time for this to happen.

But on the down side, over the last couple of decades I've noticed some trends and phases with folks trying to do land use and access work. I think by sharing this, perhaps you'll see where you are and what you might want to do to avoid burn out or dropping out.

Here are the "phases" I've noticed (and that we can prevent).

First, the **awakening** happens and folks see a bleak future. Then **enthusiasm** kicks in full throttle to make some sort of changes. Over a period of struggles, the fuel supply does not match the throttle and **disappointment** starts to pull things down. Of course, when you lead, there are always folks who do not like your leading, so infighting and backstabbing might happen that causes **frustration** to ride shotgun with you.

Finally, the white flag goes up, you're glad there's someone else in the game still fighting, and you phase out or **disappear**.

We must stop this disappearing act!

A lot of folks wake up one day, see a new gate, and start jumping in with both feet. Unfortunately, we lose of these warriors because they are not prepared totally for battle. Armies win wars based on intelligence, supplies, and dedicated, well-trained soldiers equipped with the right gear. In the OHV world, we have to do the same thing in order to prevent the “phases” from dragging us down.

We can prevent this ugly formula from happening. Here are my suggestions based on my talking to and helping folks all over the country (for longer than I care to remember).

Battle Plan #1 - Get Healthy: Spend the time and effort to get yourself “healthy” in the land use game so you can help others. [Learn the ropes](#); [get some training](#); read the land use forums; and get a grasp on the big picture and what it means locally to you. Of course, this implies you are a member of every organization you think can help (like your state association and the [BlueRibbon Coalition](#)).

Battle Plan #2 - Avoid Booby Traps: Avoid the booby traps and pitfalls. Make note of the ugly formula above, and do everything in your power to not let this happen to you as you find yourself walking through land use minefields now and then. Land use and access issues have their share of controversy, but we can't let this eat us up.

We can use this controversy to our advantage. Heck nothing wakes up an online forum like a new gate, an unexpected trail closure, or some yo-yo from our esteemed government acting like they own our public lands and professing that locking us out is a good thing. That's when you kick into “full steam ahead” gear -- when controversy rears up -- and use it as a platform for motivating others to [join up](#), get in the game, learn more about access, and become better soldiers. It's never too late.

Battle Plan #3 - Market the Rays of Hope: Publicize and market every little ray of hope or win that comes along. Post on forums; share with your club; tell people of the little wins so they don't lose hope. Find a way to be the light in the dark closet, even if you're only a small flashlight in a big dark room. Even that much light can make the difference.

The bottom line is that we spin-positive the little wins and rays of hope so our folks don't get too discouraged give up and get gone. We need an Army to win this war, and WE are the Army. Let's not lose any more soldiers.

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