

What Military Jeepers Need to do to Save Our Sport

**By Del Albright, BlueRibbon Coalition Ambassador, “Jeepndel”
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The freedoms that we are defending today (and that Del fought for in his day), are in jeopardy right here in the good old USA. We’re talking specifically about the freedom to take your Jeep for a ride, on base/post or out in our public lands when you’re on home ground. There are plenty of powerful folks who would like you to park your Jeep in the garage and never take it off pavement! We can’t let that happen. Military Jeepers can’t let that happen. Allow us to explain.

Todd Ockert has 25 years of service in the Navy, and will retire next year with 26 years. He is currently a Senior Chief Petty Officer (E8) in the Navy and has been for 5 years. Todd has worked on Land Use issues for about 5 years now. He is also a graduate of Del’s Volunteer Leader and Land Stewardship (VLLS) workshop which really spearheaded his land use involvement.

At the local level, Todd is a member of two clubs in California, the Trail Busters of Kings County, and Lock and Low of Visalia. Both of these clubs are members of California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs. In addition to everything else, he serves on the board of directors for United Four Wheel Drive Associations as the Director of Environmental Affairs; is the Vice President of the Cal4Wheel Conservation and Education Foundation; leads club runs and events; and assists Cal4Wheel as needed with local events.

Our freedom to recreate is in grave danger every day. Currently, there are proposals to designate close to another 11 million acres of wilderness across the United States. Those that are asking for the wilderness will tell you that these lands are good for nothing but wilderness. We would disagree, as most of these areas have current 4x4 roads and trails that we use on a weekly and monthly basis.

Public lands belong to us as Americans and more so as those that defend Freedom! The different wilderness groups want to have us all closed into small population areas so they can control what we do, and where we recreate. Some of the wilderness groups have gone as far as proposing population control on us to limit our outward growth that is happening around our cities and towns. Along with wilderness, we have areas of wilderness study areas that are closed to OHV access, and then other monuments that they are creating.

These are all closing down our recreational areas, and concentrate us into smaller and smaller areas. This then has the potential to create user conflicts between the different user groups. This has the effect where one user group wants to ban the other user group so they have exclusive access to an area. If the land manager gets enough of these requests, they look at segregating all the groups to eliminate the user conflicts. Again, we all lose as we are now concentrated into a smaller area to recreate again.

United Four Wheel Drive Associations (UFWDA) is an association of associations and clubs. They are dedicated to protecting 4x4 access across the globe. Why the globe, because most other countries are also facing some of the same issues that we face here in the United States when it comes to 4x4 or OHV access. Learn more about United FWDA here: www.ufwda.org.

The BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC) is a national recreation group that champions responsible recreation, and encourages individual environmental stewardship. It represents over 10,000 individual members and 1,200 organization and business members, for a combined total of over 600,000 recreationists nationwide. Learn more about BRC here: 1-800-258-3742. www.sharetrails.org

What does that mean to us in the military that recreate? If we are not paying attention to what is going on around us, we will lose our ability to recreate on public lands near our base's, and in towns where we live. We in the military fight for our freedom, and this include our ability to use our public lands in a responsible manner. We do not have a right to go out and tear up the land, as this is so far from the truth of why most of us recreate on our public lands. We do it to enjoy the sights and sounds of the forests and lands that we have available here in the United State that our previous members of the military fought for.

How can you help? **Join** all the groups that you can afford to join. This includes everything from your local club, state association, to the national groups like Blue Ribbon Coalition and United Four Wheel Drive Associations. **Advocate** for your sport and your love of jeeping. Talk it up to others on base and help Military Jeepers grow in size and credibility. And **Donate** to those groups that are helping us have a place to enjoy our Jeeps.

See below for a list of states and the local state association. Within this group, there are many local clubs that are great, and need all the support that they can get. This includes everything from just being a member to being active in the club as a member of their board of directors. Our sport needs new leaders every day at all levels, like from leading club runs, to organizing club functions and state association functions.

(Note: Email Del at del@delalbright.com or Todd at todd.n.larisa@comcast.net for any questions or further help).

State	Association	Association-Link
Alabama	Southern Four Wheel Drive Association	www.sfwda.org
Arkansas	SOUTHWEST FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION	www.swfwda.org
Arizona	Arizona Association of 4 wheel drive clubs	www.asa4wdc.org
California	Cal4Wheel	www.cal4wheel.com
Colorado	Colorado Association of Four Wheel drive clubs	www.hightrails.org
Connecticut	North East Association of 4WD Clubs	www.nea4wd.org
Florida	Florida Association	www.fl4wda.com
Georgia	Southern Four Wheel Drive Association	www.sfwda.org
Idaho	Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association	www.pnw4wda.org
Kansas	SOUTHWEST FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION	www.swfwda.org

Kentucky	Southern Four Wheel Drive Association	www.sfwda.org
Louisiana	SOUTHWEST FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION	www.swfwda.org
Massachusetts	North East Association of 4WD Clubs	www.nea4wd.org
Maine	North East Association of 4WD Clubs	www.nea4wd.org
Michigan	Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association	www.glfwda.org
Michigan	East Coast 4 Wheel Drive Association	http://www.ec4wda.org/default.asp
Minnesota	Minnesota four wheel drive association	www.mn4wda.org
Missouri	SOUTHWEST FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION	www.swfwda.org
Montana	Montana 4X4 Association	http://www.m4x4a.org/
North Carolina	Southern Four Wheel Drive Association	www.sfwda.org
New Hampshire	North East Association of 4WD Clubs	www.nea4wd.org
New Mexico	SOUTHWEST FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION	www.swfwda.org
New York	North East Association of 4WD Clubs	www.nea4wd.org
Ohio	Southern Four Wheel Drive Association	www.sfwda.org
Oregon	Pacific Northwest Four Wheel Drive Association	www.pnw4wda.org
South Carolina	Southern Four Wheel Drive Association	www.sfwda.org
Tennessee	Southern Four Wheel Drive Association	www.sfwda.org
Texas	SOUTHWEST FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ASSOCIATION	www.swfwda.org
Texas	Texas four wheel drive association	www.tx4wd.org
Utah	Utah Four Wheel drive association	www.u4wda.org
Virginia	Virginia Four Wheel Drive Association	www.va4wda.org
Vermont	North East Association of 4WD Clubs	www.nea4wd.org
Washington	Pacific Northwest four wheel drive association	www.pnw4wda.org
Wisconsin	Wisconsin four wheel drive association	www.w4wda.org