

# **Unprecedented Leadership Training Sponsored by Businesses And Recreation Organizations**

**By Del Albright**

On June 13, 2004, sixteen recreational leaders from throughout the country graduated from the first and only-of-its kind Trail Leader & Land Stewardship (TLLS) Workshop at Ice House Resort, CA. One of our graduates, Doug Barr from Nevada, said: “The four days in this class will change the way I interact with people for the rest of my life.”

Geared towards making better leaders out of volunteers, the workshop taught a lot of the “big picture” of land stewardship so the students could pass along this knowledge to their clubs and associations. Mike Overmeyer, past President and current Environmental Affairs Officer for the Pirates of the Rubicon summed up his feelings this way: “I am now ready to make a real difference in the fight to keep our trails open.”

Most significant about this workshop was the fact the entire session was sponsored by businesses and recreation organizations who fully understand the need for more volunteer leaders in all sports. This unique blending of recreation oriented businesses and organized recreation groups is precedent-setting in the world of recreational sports, especially motorized recreation. The following made it possible for every student to attend this workshop cost free:

BlueRibbon Coalition (BRC)  
California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs (CA4WDC)  
United Four Wheel Drive Associations (UFWDA)  
California Off Road Vehicle Association (CORVA)  
Off Road Business Association (ORBA)  
Rubicon4x4.Com

Bob Reed, President of CA4WDC, and John Stewart of United FWDA and CA4WDC, were immediately supportive of getting more leaders trained in their organizations. “We are placed in positions of leadership, such as the Board of Directors for an Association, with little or no background or training – just a desire to do a good job. This training is just the start of getting more volunteers willing to step up and lead our efforts,” Bob noted.

Students were taught subjects that included basic supervision, human communications and interactions, meeting management, planning and visualization techniques, public speaking, dealing with bureaucracy, NEPA, environmental stewardship and planning, erosion control, and meeting facilitation among other topics. The primary goals of the course were to produce a graduate with new skills in these areas:

- Facilitate individual and club issues as well as meetings.
- Know how to prepare and give a speech.
- Understand the big picture of land management and be able to share that knowledge with others.
- Act as a supervisor of volunteers in any given situation.
- Be able to plan any event, meeting, trail ride, or conference.
- Be more facilitative in confrontational settings.
- Have the skills to act as a train-the-trainer for land stewardship and leadership.
- Be able to set the example for other trail users and recreationists.
- Be qualified to step up to the plate and lead other volunteers to victory!

Jeff Stevens, Red Rock 4Wheelers, from Utah made this statement: “(I learned) some great techniques and tips that I had never before considered. I plan to use some of these in upcoming club meetings and committees.” Dan Peterson, CORVA, of California said, “I do believe the sponsors got their money’s worth. This program is vital to motorized recreation on public lands.”

There was a mix of students in the class; two from Utah, one from Nevada, one from Connecticut, and the remainder from California. Dan Stra, JonFund, came from back east to add a new dimension to the workshop full of mostly westerners. “I came here seeking knowledge and help for our issues in the northeastern states. I found not only that, but also camaraderie and friendships that will last me a life time”, he said.

Jack Lancaster of Rcon4x4, [www.rubicon4x4.com](http://www.rubicon4x4.com), was quick to become a sponsor of the training. “We need more people trained to assume leadership roles or we’re going to lose our opportunity to enjoy our chosen sports,” Jack commented. Roy Denner of the Off Road Business Association made the point very clear: “Without leaders teaching others how to keep our trails and riding areas open, businesses won’t have anyone to sell products to, because our opportunities are shrinking instead of growing.”

Other groups and organizations are doing various types of training and workshops; but until now, there has been no place for a volunteer to learn how to supervise, interact with government, and facilitate conflict. The founding principle of this workshop is that the job of a leader is to inspire, motivate and facilitate. Called the Leadership Triangle, these three words drive the essence of what leaders do. The graduates of this workshop are out there doing just that, right now!

The BlueRibbon Coalition has already started making plans to continue this type of leadership training for volunteers. Once the details are worked out, the information on how to sign up for future workshops will be posted on the BRC web site at [www.sharetrails.org](http://www.sharetrails.org).

You can view a photo essay on this first session at [http://www.delalbright.com/RLTC/vlls\\_jun04\\_01.html](http://www.delalbright.com/RLTC/vlls_jun04_01.html)

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