

## **An ATV Success Story**

**By Steve Chapel**

The Western Slope ATV Association (WSATVA), in Grand Junction, Colorado, is not known to be a highly political organization like many others in the state. They learned sometime ago that too much politics results in not only lower attendance at monthly meetings, but also a drop in annual membership. The WSATVA, with over 300 members and growing, is known as a “**get the work on the ground done**” kind of club. While they do get involved with every Resource Management Plan, Forest Plan and Travel plan for their area, they know not to push the membership too hard. What they excel at is the “boots on the ground” work.

In addition to lots of single day work projects, they have incorporated overnight campouts, combining both work and play activities over as many as 5 days. The old adage of “too much work makes Jack a dull boy” comes into play here and the club tries to strike a balance between work days and ride days. One motivational factor is simply to look back in time ten years as to the condition of ATV trails then, versus now. Dangerous routes have disappeared, illegal user created routes are fading away, impassable mud holes and stream crossings are being replaced by sustainable rock pathways and trail heads have width restrictors and very aesthetically pleasing log fences constructed at them.

In 2010 the club spent \$80,000 on trail dozer operations in the Grand Mesa & Uncompahgre National Forests. They were notified of acceptance of two Colorado State Parks grants amounting to \$120,000 for trail dozer operations for 2011 and have applied for another \$98,000 maintenance & education grant for the 2012 season. Over the years the club has transferred over \$632,000 in grant funds to the U S Forest Service Grand Valley Ranger District & the Grand Junction BLM Field Office.

In 2010, WSATVA members hauled over 250 trailer loads of rock to remote backcountry trails. They cut dozens of downed trees off routes, blocked rogue routes, installed width restrictors and log fencing at trailheads to 50 inch wide trails and picked up trash in all directions of Grand Junction.

In 2010 the WSATVA formed a volunteer Trail Patrol, sanctioned by the Grand Valley Ranger District, which provided the training, vests and information packets to distribute to the recreating public. The trail patrol provides an on the ground presence and peer pressure to help eliminate bad behavior of other users. The trail Patrol will be expanded to more people and larger geographic areas in the coming years.

In 2010 the members of the WSATVA did what few if any other clubs managed to do. They logged 1,868 volunteer hours for the BLM Grand Junction Field Office and 3,149 volunteer hours for the Grand Valley Ranger District for a total of 5,017 hours. A sampling of some of their work follows.

**Below left, WSATVA members work with environmental groups to transform a rough and rocky road and parking area at the historic Calamity Mine site on BLM land near Gateway Colorado, into a route and parking lot suitable for passenger cars so the area can be enjoyed by all.**



**Above right, a member of the WSATVA Trail Patrol gives maps and information to motorcycle and ATV riders in the Grand Mesa National Forest.**



**A WSATVA work crew assembled with three trailer loads of building supplies and width restrictors to transport to a remote 50 inch wide ATV Trail in the Grand Mesa National Forest.**

**Below are trailheads with log fencing and two different types of width restrictors installed. The one on the right has a separate pathway on the left for horses and cattle to access.**



**Forty-five trailer loads of rock transformed this mucky almost impassable water crossing into a rock pathway that will last for years. Larger rocks are placed on the bottom and smaller ones on top to ensure the water continues to flow through the crossing.**