

A Performance Audit of
**Off-Highway
Vehicle
Funds**

Improving Reporting and
Accountability

Office of the Legislative
Auditor General

Report to the UTAH LEGISLATURE







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June, 16, 2026

TO: THE UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

Transmitted herewith is our report:

“A Performance Audit of Off-Highway Vehicle Funds: Improving Reporting and Accountability” [Report #2026-14].

An audit summary is found at the front of the report. The scope and objectives of the audit are included in the audit summary. In addition, each chapter has a corresponding chapter summary found at its beginning.

[Utah Code 36-12-15.3\(2\)](#) requires the Office of the Legislative Auditor General to designate an audited entity’s chief officer. Therefore, the designated chief officer for the Department of Natural Resources is Joel Ferry. Joel Ferry has been notified that they must comply with the audit response and reporting requirements as outlined in this section of *Utah Code*.

We will be happy to meet with appropriate legislative committees, individual legislators, and other state officials to discuss any item contained in the report in order to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations.

Sincerely,

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE

Auditor General

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PERFORMANCE AUDIT

AUDIT REQUEST

Council members and OHV advocates have become concerned about the increasing amount of OHV funds going to OHV law enforcement costs. The council is concerned that the increased law enforcement costs are reducing the amount of money available for trail maintenance.

BACKGROUND

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) funds come mostly from registration fees for OHVs, with significant amounts coming from fuel taxes and fees for non-resident OHV users. The Legislature appropriates money from this account every year to the Division of Outdoor Recreation to operate the OHV program and to manage the OHV grant program.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE FUNDS



KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ 1.1 DOR Needs to Continue to Communicate and Report Off-Highway Vehicle Activities and Enforcement Costs.
- ✓ 1.2 Review of Snowmobile Registration Fees Is a Policy Decision for the Legislature.
- ✓ 2.1 Outcome Measures for OHV Grants Could Help Ensure Efficient Use of Funds.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ 1.1 The Division of Outdoor Recreation should regularly and clearly report the budget and cost details of off-highway appropriations to the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council. These reports should include details about both trail maintenance and law enforcement costs. Clearer communication can help the council and the Division of Outdoor Recreation make more informed decisions and conclusions.
- ✓ 1.2 The Division of Outdoor Recreation should continue to work with the Legislature to help policymakers consider options for snowmobile registration fees. Options include the following:
 - Increase snowmobile registration fees to cover more of the cost of Utah's snowmobile program
 - Require the Division of Outdoor Recreation to either reduce snowmobile trail grooming services or decrease costs by identifying operational efficiencies
 - Continue to cover snowmobile related costs with other Off-Highway Vehicle funds.
- ✓ 2.1 As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should require outcome measures for off-highway vehicle grant contracts. This will allow the division to better monitor the performance of the grant and make more informed decisions when it is deciding whether to renew those grants.

REPORT SUMMARY

DOR Needs to Better Communicate and Report Off-Highway Vehicle Activities and Enforcement

The Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council doesn't feel communication concerning law enforcement costs has been adequate. Because DOR's communication has been incomplete, the council has been concerned that increased law enforcement for OHVs has come at the expense of funding maintenance of OHV trails and other uses. In fact, trail maintenance funding has remained steady since 2022. This shows that better communication with the council is needed. We found that these costs have not been tracked or communicated well. Improved reporting and communications of OHV activities and enforcement costs would improve operations and relationships.

DOR's Oversight of OHV Grants and Funding Could Do More to Follow Best Practices

Grant oversight for off-highway vehicles (OHV) programs would be more accountable for performance if the Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) used some grant-management best practices. First, the marketing and education grants don't require outcome measures, so there's no way for DOR to assess their effectiveness. Second, DOR should consider increasing their number of physical inspections of grants given for trail maintenance or triage the most important projects to visit in person. DOR was created in 2021 and is still in the process of establishing and refining its grant management practices. As it continues to refine those processes, DOR should consider using outcome measures and physical inspections. These two best practices could increase the accountability of these programs, leading to more efficient use of limited dollars.

Off-Highway Vehicle Law Enforcement Funding Has Increased by 185% in Recent Years. Better tracking of costs due to structural changes and hiring more rangers has led to increased law enforcement costs.

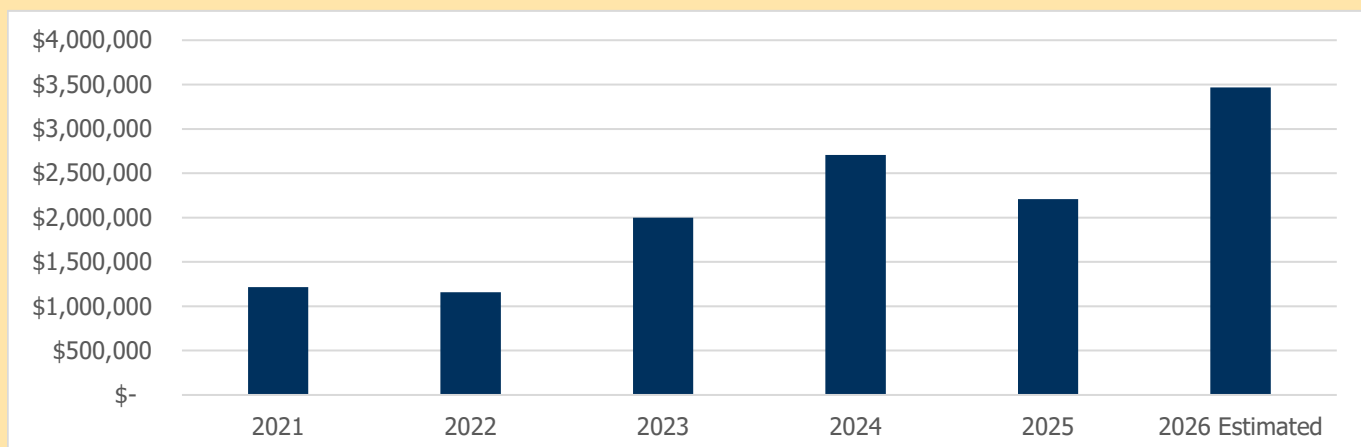


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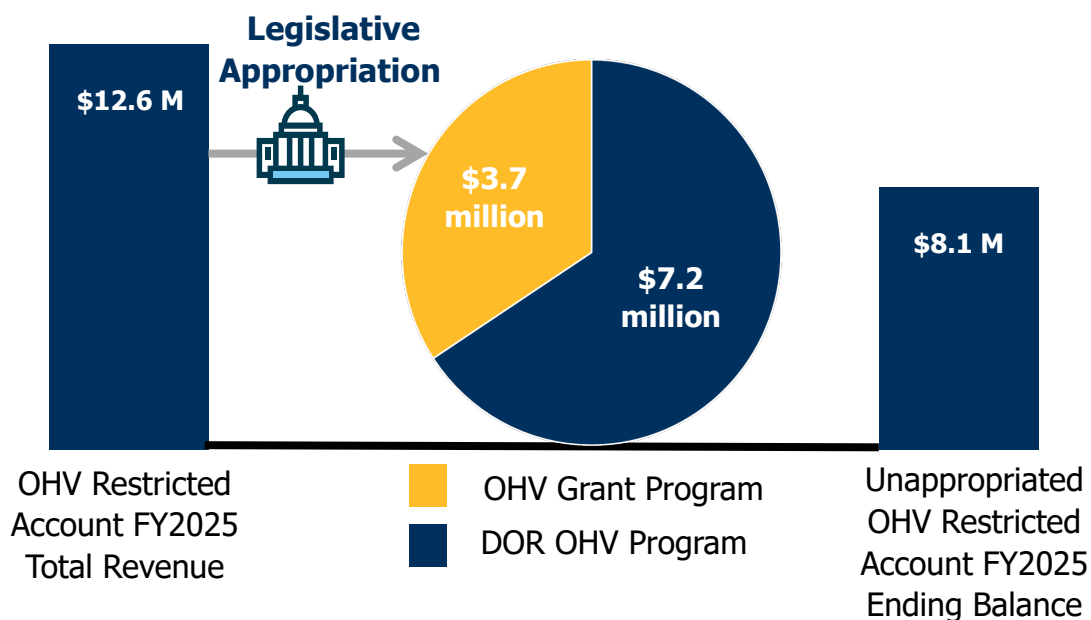
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Introduction

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) funds come mostly from registration fees for OHVs, with significant amounts coming from fuel taxes and fees for nonresident OHV users. These revenues are placed in a nonlapsing restricted account that can have a beginning and ending balance from year to year. The Legislature appropriates money from this account every year for specific purposes. At the end of each year, a balance can remain in the account.



Source: Auditor generated

In fiscal year 2025 the Legislature appropriated \$7.2 million to the Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR or division) for OHV program management. These funds can support the following functions:

- OHV law enforcement
- OHV equipment
- OHV Trail Crew¹
- Snow grooming of winter trails
- OHV education
- Shop facility

Any money not used that year for OHV program management goes back into the OHV restricted account.

¹ The Legislature appropriated an additional \$460,000 in 2026 for the OHV Trail Crew.



The division also manages the OHV Grant Program. The Legislature has set an ongoing appropriation for this program of \$3.7 million.² Any money that hasn't been granted each year remains in the OHV grant account. The OHV Advisory Council (council) advises the division on OHV policy and determines grant recipients. OHV grants go to local governments, state agencies and political subdivisions, federal agencies, tribal governments, and nonprofits to cover the following expenses:³

- Trail work
- Access protection
- Education
- Snowmobile
- Search and rescue
- OHV tourism

Although grant money is generally not used for OHV law enforcement, council members and OHV advocates have become concerned about the increasing amount of other OHV funds going to OHV law enforcement costs. *Utah Code* allows OHV funds to be used for both the enforcement of OHV laws and general law enforcement.⁴ However, council minutes from 2022-2025 don't have detailed discussions of OHV law enforcement costs until 2025. Concern over OHV law enforcement costs and the lack of a full explanation of these costs initiated this audit.

² In 2026, the Legislature appropriated an additional \$2.5 million of ongoing funds for the OHV Grant Program.

³ *Utah Code* 41-22-19(b)

⁴ According to *Utah Code* 41-22-1, "It is the policy of this state to promote safety and protection for persons, property, and the environment connected with the use, operation, and equipment of off-highway vehicles, to promote uniformity of laws, to adopt and pursue a safety education program, and to develop trails and other facilities for the use of these vehicles." *Utah Code* 53-13-103 states: "Law enforcement officers may serve criminal process and arrest violators of any law of this state...." The Office of Legislative Research and General Council concludes that "the law enforcement authority, and tangentially the use of funds, is quite broad."



BACKGROUND

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has improved its tracking of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) law enforcement costs, but these changes have only recently been communicated to the OHV Advisory Council (council) in 2025. DNR structural changes have also allowed for increased law enforcement on OHV trails.

FINDING 1.1 DOR Needs to Better Communicate and Report Off-Highway Vehicle Activities and Enforcement Costs

RECOMMENDATION 1.1 The Division of Outdoor Recreation should regularly and clearly report the budget and cost details of off-highway appropriations to the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council. These reports should include details about both trail maintenance and law enforcement costs. Clearer communication can help the council and the Division of Outdoor Recreation make more informed decisions and conclusions.

FINDING 1.2 Review of Snowmobile Registration Fees Is a Policy Decision for the Legislature

RECOMMENDATION 1.2 The Division of Outdoor Recreation should continue to work with the Legislature to help policymakers consider options for snowmobile registration fees. Options include the following:

- Increase snowmobile registration fees to cover more of the cost of Utah's snowmobile program
- Require the Division of Outdoor Recreation to either reduce snowmobile trail grooming services or decrease costs by identifying operational efficiencies
- Continue to cover snowmobile related costs with other Off-Highway Vehicle funds.

FINDING 1.3 Some Law Enforcement Costs Paid by OHV Funds Are Still Not Identified as Law Enforcement Costs

RECOMMENDATION 1.3 The Division of Outdoor Recreation should follow budgetary procedures regarding law enforcement costs and properly categorize maintenance costs. Accurate accounting of law enforcement costs will inform the Legislature's funding decisions.



CONCLUSION

The Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) can continue communicating law enforcement cost details to the council, which can then be better informed in their advisory capacity.





Chapter 1

DOR Can Continue to Improve Communication With the OHV Advisory Council

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has improved its tracking of off-highway vehicle (OHV) law enforcement costs but did not communicate these changes to the OHV Advisory Council (council) until 2025. DNR structural changes have also allowed for increased law enforcement on OHV trails. Because of better tracking and structural changes, it appears that OHV law enforcement costs have increased by 185% in the last five years. Some law enforcement costs paid by OHV funds are still not identified as law enforcement costs. Although the council is concerned that the increased law enforcement costs are reducing the amount of money available for trail maintenance, money spent on trail maintenance has remained steady since 2022. Some OHV advocates are also concerned that snowmobile registration revenues don't cover snowmobile trail maintenance, leaving fewer funds for other trail maintenance. The Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) can continue communicating these details to the council, which can then be better informed in its advisory capacity.

1.1 DOR Needs to Continue to Communicate and Report OHV Activities and Enforcement Costs

The council doesn't feel communication concerning law enforcement costs has been adequate. Because DOR's communication has been incomplete, the council has been concerned that increased law enforcement for OHVs has come at the expense of funding maintenance of OHV trails and other OHV uses. However, trail maintenance funding has remained steady since 2022. This shows that better communication with the council is needed. We found that these costs have not been tracked or communicated well. Improved reporting and communication of OHV activities and enforcement costs would improve operations and relationships. Although the Legislature has not specified this reporting in statute, clearer communication can help the council and DOR make more informed decisions and conclusions.



Because DOR's communication has been incomplete, the council has been concerned that increased law enforcement for OHVs has come at the expense of funding maintenance of OHV trails and other OHV uses.



DOR Has Improved Its Cost Tracking, Leading to Reporting More Accurate Law Enforcement Costs



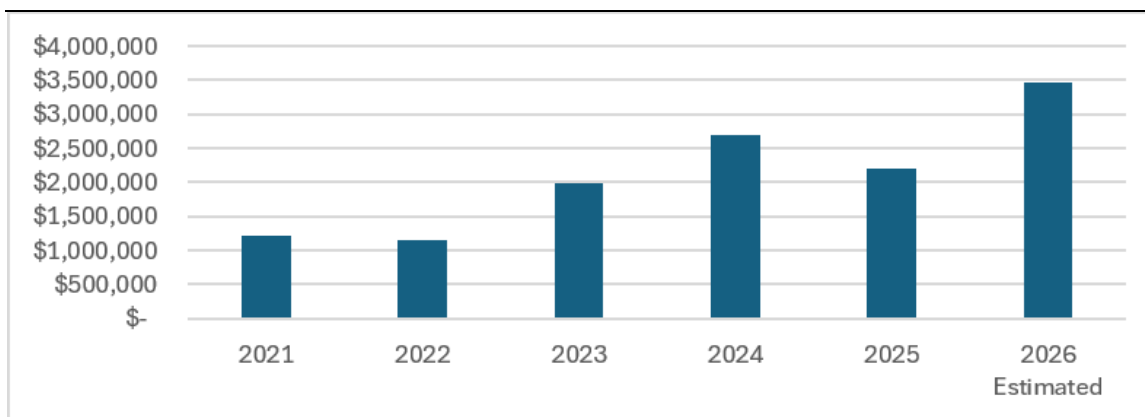
Rangers are no longer splitting their time between park management and law enforcement, which clouded some law enforcement costs.

DOR’s statutory responsibility for OHVs is to 1) “promote safety and protection” and 2) “develop trails and other facilities for the use of these vehicles.”⁵ To accomplish both objectives, DOR provides funding for both law enforcement and trail maintenance. In recent years, DOR has refined its cost tracking to show more accurate numbers. Rangers are no longer splitting their time between park management and law enforcement, which clouded

some law enforcement costs. Furthermore, the creation of DOR allowed it to place more emphasis on OHV law enforcement, leading to increased law enforcement costs.

Because they are now more closely tracked, OHV law enforcement costs are more accurate. Figure 1.1 shows that law enforcement expenses from 2021 to 2026 have increased significantly. Some of this increase is due to better tracking.⁶

Figure 1.1 OHV Law Enforcement Funding Has Increased by 185% in Recent Years. Some of this increase is because better accounting has led to more accurate reporting.



Source: Auditor analysis of Division of Outdoor Recreation data.

⁵ *Utah Code* 41-22-1: “It is the policy of this state to promote safety and protection for persons, property, and the environment connected with the use, operation, and equipment of off-highway vehicles, to promote uniformity of laws, to adopt and pursue a safety education program, and to develop trails and other facilities for the use of these vehicles.”

⁶ DNR can continue to improve law enforcement cost accounting. For example, DOR’s maintenance shop reports all costs as general maintenance instead of splitting the costs out to better identify law enforcement costs, as discussed in Section 1.3.



DOR has reported recent expenditures to the council but did not adequately explain the reasons for the 2026 authorized increases in law enforcement appropriations. Annually reporting the reasons for law enforcement increases could answer some of the council's concerns about rising law enforcement costs.

DNR's Creation of a Law Enforcement Division Allows for Better Cost Tracking

In 2021, the Legislature split the Division of Parks and Recreation into two separate divisions: State Parks and DOR. In January 2025, DNR consolidated all law enforcement into one division. These organizational changes altered how law enforcement activities and related costs are structured and reported. The cost changes helped identify actual OHV law enforcement costs, but the council was not adequately informed of the details of the changes until 2025.



Organizational changes altered how law enforcement activities and related costs are structured and reported.

Prior to 2025, park managers/rangers tracked their time between law enforcement and park management. Their fixed costs, such as motor pool expenses, leave, benefits, and human resources were split into thirds, one third going to each of the three funding sources: OHV funds, boating funds, and parks' restricted fund. When DNR consolidated law enforcement, it allowed them better clarity for the actual costs of OHV law enforcement.

Three factors contributed to costs increasing with the consolidation.

- **Law enforcement salaries increased**—When DNR created its law enforcement division, it increased employee salaries to be closer to employees of the Department of Public Safety. For rangers whose positions received some OHV funding, this meant an estimated \$500,000 in salary increases in fiscal year 2026.
- **DOR hired more rangers**—After its creation in 2021, DOR hired five rangers while having a financial agreement with State Parks for more law enforcement. By 2025, DOR had increased its ranger workforce from 5 to 15. This obviously increased costs.
- **The number of law enforcement contact increased**—Because there were more rangers, DOR had more law enforcement “contacts.” These contacts included both public interactions and OHV machine inspections. From 2021 through 2024, contacts with individuals went up 54%.

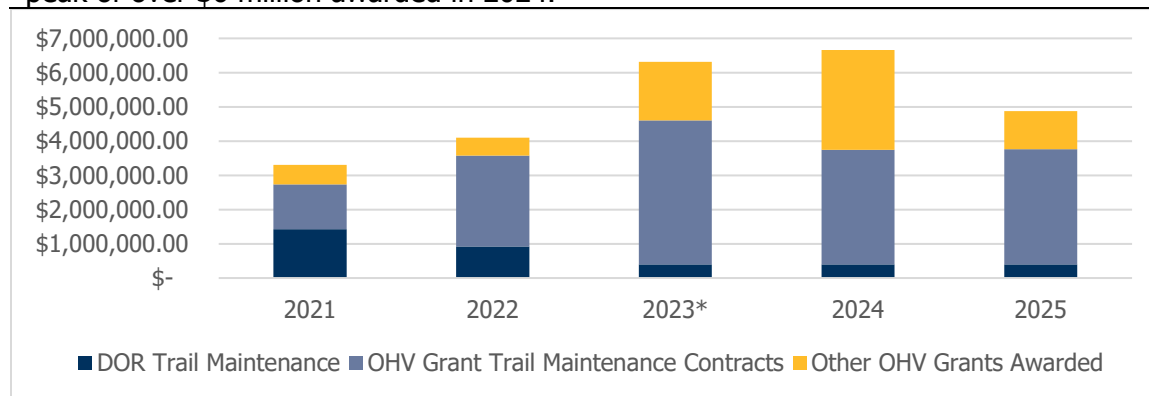


These factors meant that costs increased, and that the actual costs as mentioned were better reported. In 2025, DNR communicated these reasons for increases to the council, while the council still believes these costs increased at the expense of trail maintenance.

Funds Spent on Trail Maintenance Have Not Decreased

The council and advocates are concerned that DNR is funding OHV law enforcement to the detriment of trail maintenance costs. However, average trail maintenance costs have remained steady for the last four years, hovering around \$4 million.

Figure 1.2 DOR spends roughly \$4 million a year on trail maintenance with the bulk of trail maintenance coming from OHV grant contracts (see light and dark blue bars). Overall, OHV grant amounts have increased from 2021 to a peak of over \$6 million awarded in 2024.



Source: Division of Outdoor Recreation.

* In fiscal year 2023, OHV grants received an additional one-time appropriation of \$1 million.



While it is commendable that DOR has tried to be more accurate in cost accounting, infrequent communication with the council prior to 2025 has caused concern and confusion.

DOR needs to regularly provide clear and more detailed explanations of both law enforcement and trail maintenance costs. While it is commendable that DOR has tried to be more accurate in cost accounting, infrequent communication with the council prior to 2025 has caused concern and confusion.



RECOMMENDATION 1.1

The Division of Outdoor Recreation should regularly and clearly report the budget and cost details of off-highway appropriations to the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council. These reports should include details about both trail maintenance and law enforcement costs. Clearer communication can help the council and the Division of Outdoor Recreation make more informed decisions and conclusions.

1.2 Review of Snowmobile Registration Fees Is a Policy Decision for the Legislature

The Legislature decides the highest amount charged for snowmobile registration fees. Current snowmobile fees don't cover snowmobile trail grooming and related law enforcement costs. OHV advocates are concerned that some of the licensing fees for summer OHVs are being used to supplement snowmobile costs. The division should continue to work with the Legislature to consider policy options regarding this issue. Options can include the following:

- Continue allowing non-snowmobile registration fees to supplement snowmobile trail grooming and winter OHV law enforcement expenses.
- Increase snowmobile registration fees in Utah to cover a higher portion of the costs of snowmobile trail grooming and winter OHV law enforcement expenses.
- Require DOR to either reduce snowmobile trail grooming services or decrease costs by identifying operational efficiencies.

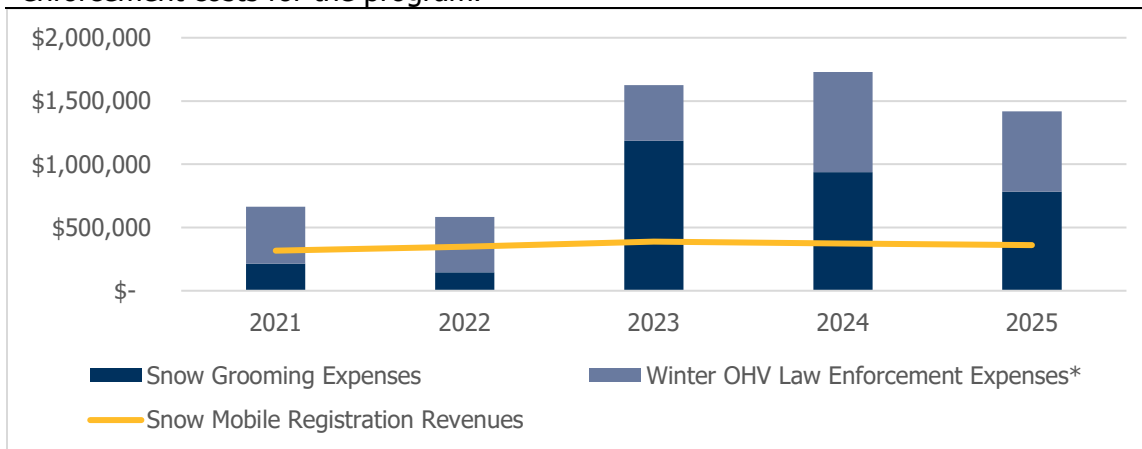
The Legislature funds OHV programs primarily through registration fee revenue from OHVs. In the last five years, snowmobile registration revenues have not covered the costs for snowmobile trail grooming and winter OHV law enforcement. Figure 1.2 shows that registration fees only covered about 30% of funding for the snowmobile program when totaled over the last five years.



In the last five years, snowmobile registration fees have not covered the costs for snowmobile trail grooming and winter OHV law enforcement.



Figure 1.3 Snowmobile Trail Grooming and Law Enforcement Costs Regularly Exceed Snowmobile Registration Revenues. In summing the past five years snowmobile registration fees only covered 30% of grooming and law enforcement costs for the program.



Source: Division of Outdoor Recreation.

*Past winter OHV law enforcement expenses cannot be separated from snowmobile and OHV enforcement.

The concern from the OHV community is that these shortfalls are being covered by other types of OHV registration fees. Some in the community felt there was an agreement that OHV fees were not to be used for law enforcement.

OHV fees were changed with House Bill 143, which passed during the 2018 Legislative General Session. Testimony regarding this bill centered around the need for more money to go into the OHV Restricted Account to be used for trail maintenance and trail expansion. This led some to believe that the money would be used exclusively for those two purposes. However, statute regarding the use of the OHV Restricted Account hasn't substantially changed since before 2018 and has also allowed the funds to be used for administration and law enforcement. This further highlights the need for DOR to improve their communications regarding expenditures and performance.

The snowmobile registration fee is fixed in statute at a maximum of \$26, and inflationary pressures have further contributed to the growing gap between revenues and program costs.⁷ This fee is currently being increased from \$22 to \$26 and should increase revenue by about \$94,000. If the Legislature decides that snowmobile fees should cover more of those program costs, Utah may see an additional fee increase. As shown in Figure 1.4, out of seven western states, Utah's fees are lower than all but two.

⁷ *Utah Code* 41-22-8(1)(a)(ii) states that the fee for each snowmobile registration may not exceed \$26.



Figure 1.4 Other Western States Have Higher Snowmobile Registration

Fees. Utah snowmobile registration fees are on the low end compared to states like Colorado and Idaho.

State	Resident Fee	Non-resident Fee
Utah	\$26.00	\$30.00
Colorado	51.25	51.25
Idaho	45.50	59.50
Montana	20.00	35.00
Oregon	10.00	7.00
Washington	50.00	
Wyoming	50.00	75.00

Source: Auditor generated.

If the Legislature were to increase fees to double the registration revenue from 2025, it would only cover half of actual 2025 costs but should cover the costs in low snow years. As previously stated, DOR should continue to work with the Legislature on this issue.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

The Division of Outdoor Recreation should continue to work with the Legislature to help policy makers consider options for snowmobile registration fees. Options include the following:

- Increase snowmobile registration fees to cover more of the cost of Utah's snowmobile program
- Require the Division of Outdoor Recreation to either reduce snowmobile trail grooming services or decrease costs by identifying operational efficiencies
- Continue to cover snowmobile related costs with other off-highway vehicle funds.



1.3 Some Law Enforcement Costs Paid by OHV Funds Are Still Not Identified as Law Enforcement Costs



DOR shop costs related to law enforcement equipment repair are not currently categorized as law enforcement costs but simply as shop costs.

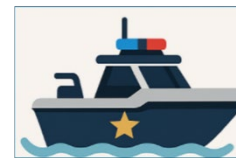
The organizational changes at DNR helped identify actual OHV law enforcement costs, but some law enforcement costs still need to be properly categorized. DOR shop costs related to law enforcement equipment repair are not currently categorized as law enforcement costs but simply as shop costs. Recategorizing these costs would provide the council—which has expressed concern

about rising expenses—with more accurate information on the amount of law enforcement costs funded by OHV funds. Accurate accounting of these costs will also provide the Legislature with better information to make law enforcement funding decisions.

In 2025, OHV funds and boating funds were used to cover the cost of DOR’s maintenance shop, as shown in the graphic on the right. These costs are currently classified as shop costs. According to the shop manager, over 80% of the work they do is repairing OHVs and boating equipment for law enforcement. This means that DOR does not properly account for roughly \$800,000 in additional law enforcement costs, with half of that coming from OHV funds.



\$487,351 from OHV funds for maintenance



\$496,062 from boat funds for maintenance

Now that DNR Law Enforcement and DOR are separate



By miscategorizing law enforcement maintenance costs as shop costs the division is transferring funds to law enforcement that the Legislature did not approve.

divisions, they each have their own legislative funding line item. The Budgetary Procedures Act generally prohibits transfer of funds between line items. By miscategorizing law enforcement maintenance costs as shop costs, the division is transferring funds to law enforcement that the Legislature did not approve.⁸ Management has recognized this inconsistency and says it can be easily fixed.

⁸ According to *Utah Code* 63J-1-105(1)(b): “An agency may expend dedicated credits for any purpose within the program or line item.” *Utah Code* 63J-1-206(2)(c)(1) states: “An appropriation or any surplus of any appropriation may not be diverted from any department, agency, institution, division, or line item to any other department, agency, institution, division, or line item.”



RECOMMENDATION 1.3

The Division of Outdoor Recreation should follow budgetary procedures regarding law enforcement costs and properly categorize maintenance costs. Accurate accounting of law enforcement costs will inform the Legislature's funding decisions.





BACKGROUND

Grant oversight for off-highway vehicles (OHV) programs would be more accountable for performance if the Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) used some grant-management best practices.

FINDING 2.1

**Outcome Measures for OHV Grants
Could Help Ensure Efficient Use of
Funds**

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should require outcome measures for off-highway vehicle grant contracts. This will allow the division to better monitor the performance of the grant and make more informed decisions when it is deciding whether to renew those grants.

FINDING 2.2

**Physical Inspections Can Verify
Whether Grantees Met the Outcome
Measures of the Grant Contract**

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should have a plan for which grants and how many would most benefit from site inspections. This would allow DOR to use staff resources more efficiently and effectively.



CONCLUSION

As it continues to refine its processes, DOR should consider using outcome measures and physical inspections. These two best practices could increase the accountability of these programs, leading to more efficient use of limited dollars.





Chapter 2

DOR's Oversight of OHV Grants and Funding Could Do More to Follow Best Practices

Grant oversight for off-highway vehicle (OHV) programs would be more accountable for performance if the Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) used some grant-management best practices. First, the marketing and education grants don't require outcome measures, so there's no way for DOR to assess their effectiveness. Second, DOR should consider increasing the number of physical inspections of grants given for trail maintenance. DOR was created in 2021 and is still in the process of establishing and refining its grant management practices. As it continues to refine those processes, DOR should consider using outcome measures and physical inspections. These two best practices could increase the accountability of these programs, leading to more efficient use of limited dollars.

2.1 Outcome Measures for OHV Grants Could Help Ensure Efficient Use of Funds

We reviewed seven DOR marketing and educational grants totaling approximately \$560,000. None of these grants had defined long or short-term outcome measures. Because the grants don't have measures, there's no way to know if there was improvement or if the money was used effectively.



Our review found that the division does not require outcome measures for marketing and educational grants.

The Governor's Office of Planning Budget's guide to strategic planning provides useful information on meeting goals through objectives, strategies, and performance measures.⁹ Though created to guide agencies with their strategic planning, these same processes can be used to manage contract and grant performance. The guide emphasizes the need for short-term strategies and tactics, leading toward meeting mid-range objectives to meet long-term goals. Because the OHV grants don't require any outcome measures, DNR can't determine whether they've been successful, and the division risks continuing to fund grants that are ineffective.

⁹ GOPB Guide to Strategic Planning; Performance measures assess and track progress

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should require outcome measures for off-highway vehicle grant contracts. This will allow the division to better monitor the performance of the grant and make more informed decisions when it is deciding whether to renew those grants.

2.2 Physical Inspections Can Verify Whether Grantees Met the Outcome Measures of the Grant Contract

DOR reviewed the 35 OHV grants awarded during the first two quarters of fiscal year 2025. Of the \$3,672,651 in total OHV grant funding during that time, DOR reports they inspected approximately 40% of grants with a site visit and physical inspection. There are some grant types (trail work, events, and equipment purchases) that could benefit from physical inspections.



Approximately 40% of grants received a site visit or physical inspection.

While its resources may not allow DOR to physically inspect all grant projects, DOR should continue to triage so it can inspect projects that would benefit the most from a site visit. Physical inspections of trail work can provide better evidence of the status and quality of the work than photographs alone. The federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommends that physical inspection provides more reliable evidence of compliance.¹⁰

GAO Government Auditing Standards:

“Evidence obtained through the auditors’ direct physical examination, observation, computation, and inspection is generally more reliable than evidence obtained indirectly.”

Source: GAO Government Auditing Standards 2024

DOR management believes they need more physical site inspections for OHV grants. In the summer of 2025 DOR devoted more staff resources to conducting inspections. Management is also planning a full-time position dedicated to conducting on-site inspections for all grant programs. Increasing the use of physical site inspections, or triaging them more effectively could improve DOR’s ability to assess the status and quality of work funded by grants, particularly for

¹⁰ GAO, Government Auditing Standards 2024 Revision



trail maintenance contracts. Outcome measures in grant contracts would make these inspections more useful. Staff would be able to determine what success looks like.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should have a plan for which grants and how many would most benefit from site inspections. This would allow DOR to use staff resources more efficiently and effectively.

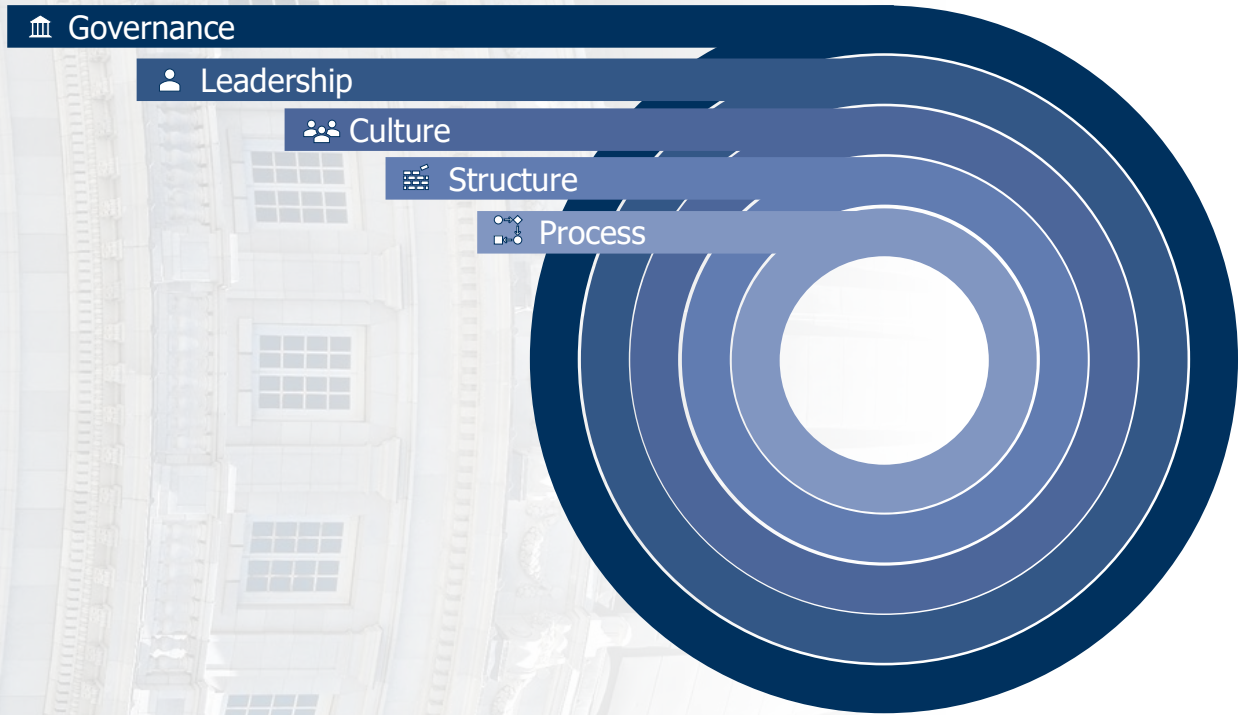




Complete List of Audit Recommendations

THE FIVE LAYERS OF CAUSE

We developed the Five Layers of Cause Framework to assist leaders in identifying the causes of organizational success and failure. To truly improve as an organization, leaders must understand the causes of major risks. Only when leaders understand these causes and their roots can they make meaningful improvements. Root causes are deeper and more fundamental.



The five layers of cause are defined below. They are ranked from most impactful in organizational change to least.



GOVERNANCE –
The laws and rules that establish the organization's mission, accountability, and funding. Governance empowers the organization with the leadership and resources needed to achieve meaningful results.



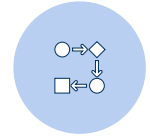
LEADERSHIP –
The competency and character of the leaders of the organization. Leadership is the decisive force that transforms vision into action and effort into results.



CULTURE –
The collective beliefs, values, and behaviors of the organization. An organization's culture can determine employee engagement and morale, willingness to innovate, and quality of product.



STRUCTURE –
The policies and standards that guide an organization's work. Structures direct the flow of work and establish what is and is not acceptable.



PROCESS –
The steps taken to accomplish a task. Processes are the logistics—the capital, workflows, timing, and practices—that move work along.



Complete List of Audit Recommendations

This report made the following five recommendations. The numbering convention assigned to each recommendation consists of its chapter followed by a period and recommendation number within that chapter.

Recommendation 1.1 (Leadership)

The Division of Outdoor Recreation should regularly and clearly report the budget and cost details of off-highway appropriations to the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council. These reports should include details about both trail maintenance and law enforcement costs. Clearer communication can help the council and the Division of Outdoor Recreation make more informed decisions and conclusions.

Recommendation 1.2 (Governance)

The Division of Outdoor Recreation should continue to work with the Legislature to help policymakers consider options for snowmobile registration fees. Options include the following:

- Increase snowmobile registration fees to cover more of the cost of Utah's snowmobile program
- Require the Division of Outdoor Recreation to either reduce snowmobile trail grooming services or decrease costs by identifying operational efficiencies
- Continue to cover snowmobile related costs with other Off-Highway Vehicle funds.

Recommendation 1.3 (Process)

The Division of Outdoor Recreation should follow budgetary procedures regarding law enforcement costs and properly categorize maintenance costs. Accurate accounting of law enforcement costs will inform the Legislature's funding decisions.

Recommendation 2.1 (Process)

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should require outcome measures for off-highway vehicle grant contracts. This will allow the division to better monitor the performance of the grant and make more informed decisions when it is deciding whether to renew those grants.

Recommendation 2.2 (Process)

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should have a plan for which grants and how many would most benefit from site inspections. This would allow DOR to use staff resources more efficiently and effectively.





Agency Response Plan





State of Utah

SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

Department of Natural Resources

JOEL FERRY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Division of Outdoor Recreation
JASON CURRY
DIVISION DIRECTOR

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE, Auditor General
Office of the Legislative Auditor General
Utah State Capitol Complex
Rebecca Lockhart House Building, Suite W315
PO Box 145315
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-5315

Dear Mr. Minchey,

Herein you will find the response by the Division of Outdoor Recreation (DOR) to the audit performed on its use of OHV funds.

Our staff has reviewed the draft report, including the recommendations by the auditor team and found that it was a sound assessment. All of the recommendations made in the report have merit, and the DOR has already taken steps to begin adopting each of them, and we intend on implementing all of them.

We appreciate the professional and thorough job done by the OLAG team, the process has been very helpful in reducing the state's risk for any abuse, misuse, or waste.

Respectfully,

Jason Curry
Director, Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation

Chapter 1

Recommendation 1.1: The Division of Outdoor Recreation should regularly and clearly report the budget and cost details of off-highway appropriations to the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Council. These reports should include details about both trail maintenance and law enforcement costs. Clearer communication can help the council and the Division of Outdoor Recreation make more informed decisions and conclusions.

Department Response:

The DOR has managed the OHV restricted account since 2022, and during that time made some internal changes that brought greater alignment between expenditures and the statutes that govern what the account may be spent on. However, the OHV Advisory Council also became an asset to the DOR in 2022, but had not typically been asked to advise on expenditures of the funds beyond the biannual grant scoring portion. It became clear in 2024 that the council's advice could have been useful in key decisions made regarding expenditures of OHV funds.

The Division of Outdoor Recreation agrees with the recommendation. While the division has been working to elevate communication to the advisory council and other stakeholders, we recognize there are always opportunities to increase communication.

1. **Who:** Wade Allinson, OHV Program Manager, 435-609-3126, wadeallinson@utah.gov
2. **What:** We will continue to provide the detailed financial reporting we began in April 2025. We will also identify and report useful KPI's, including about trail maintenance and law enforcement costs and results. We will seek the council's advice on expenditures paid by the OHV Fund that exceed \$100,000 .
3. **How:** We will gather input from the OHV Advisory Council KPIs of interest to council members. We will also identify other KPIs that provide transparent and accountable reporting of the use of OHV funds. We will report these KPIs using easy to understand infographics and present them in our budget meeting in November.
4. **Documentation:** The council and the public will be notified of the annual financial disclosure meeting, and all presentations delivered during this session will be documented and retained.

5. **Timetable:** The division will hold the next annual financial disclosure meeting in November 2026.
6. **When:** The annual financial disclosure meeting will be held in November 2026 and each fall thereafter.

Chapter 1

Recommendation 1.2: The Division of Outdoor Recreation should work with the Legislature to help policy makers consider options for snowmobile registration fees. Options include:

- Increase snowmobile registration fees to cover more of the cost of Utah’s snowmobile program
- Require the Division of Outdoor Recreation to either reduce snowmobile trail grooming services or decrease costs by identifying operational efficiencies
- Continue to cover snowmobile related costs with other Off-Highway Vehicle funds.

Department Response:

1. **Who:** Wade Allinson, OHV Program Manager, 435-609-3126, wadeallinson@utah.gov
2. **What:** Current statute limits the maximum snowmobile registration fee to \$26.00. While the division successfully increased the fee from \$22.00 to \$26.00 during the 2026 legislative session, it also recognized the need to amend the statute further. Increasing the statutory maximum fee to \$35.00—similar to off-highway vehicle (OHV) dirt registration fees—would significantly help offset rising grooming costs. The Utah Snowmobile Association (USA) supports this adjustment and has requested a gradual implementation. This increase remains critical, as Utah currently has the lowest snowmobile registration fees among its surrounding states. In neighboring states like Idaho and Wyoming, the high expense of winter grooming means snowmobile registration fees actually exceed dirt registration fees.
3. **How:** During the 2027 legislative session, the division will await legislative action to amend the statute to enable a \$35.00 snowmobile registration fee. Concurrently, the program will analyze grooming complexes and service needs to identify any areas where savings could be realized.
4. **Documentation:** The division will evaluate detailed expense reports, meeting minutes, and correspondence to identify operational efficiencies and determine areas where savings could be realized.
5. **Timetable:** The division will await legislative action amending the statute during the 2027 legislative session. Ahead of this, in July 2026, the division will evaluate all grooming complexes to assess operational needs and identify cost-effective

improvements. Grooming complexes will be evaluated on a yearly basis for cost effectiveness.

6. **When:** The division will monitor legislative actions during the 2027 session and implement fee increases that are advised as soon as practical.

Chapter 1

Recommendation 1.3: The Division of Outdoor Recreation should follow budgetary procedures regarding law enforcement costs and properly categorize maintenance costs. Accurate accounting of law enforcement costs will inform the Legislature in their funding decisions.

Department Response:

1. **Who:** Yan Yan (Finance Manager) yanyan@utah.gov 801-232-8728, Darren Simons (Program Manager, Recreation Shop) darrensimons@utah.gov 801-538-7363
2. **What:** The division previously did not have an expedient method of separating the costs of maintaining and repairing OHVs used by law enforcement. A new equipment management software has already been purchased, that will allow future expenditures to be tracked separately and accounted for as part of the law enforcement costs.
3. **How:** Shop management will finalize implementation of the equipment management software, and the division finance team will track and total those costs.
4. **Documentation:** Reports run in the equipment management tool. Spreadsheets kept by the division finance team
5. **Timetable:** Fiscal Year 2027 and beyond.
6. **When:** Fiscal Year 2027.

Chapter 2

DOR's Oversight of OHV Grants and Funding Could Do More to Follow Best Practices

Recommendation 2.1: Outcome Measures for OHV Grants Could Help Ensure Efficient Use of Funds

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation will require outcome measures for off-highway vehicle grant contracts. This will allow the division to better monitor the performance of the grant and make more informed decisions when it is deciding whether to renew those grants.

Department Response:

1. **Who:** Name, title, contact information for the individual responsible for implementation.

Rachel Toker, OHV Recreation Grant Administrator, racheltoker@utah.gov, (385)303-1519.

2. **What:** Describe what the entity will do to address the recommendation.

The Division will strengthen grant accountability by implementing standardized, outcome-based reporting requirements across grant categories. Grant closeout requirements will be updated to emphasize measurable project outcomes that align with grant objectives.

3. **How:** Describe the steps the entity will take to address the recommendation.

The Division will revise grant applications, reporting requirements, reimbursement procedures, and closeout processes to incorporate standardized outcome measures. Outcome reporting will be aligned with grant category objectives and integrated into existing grant management and reporting systems.

4. **Documentation:** Identify documentation that will be used to validate the implementation status of the recommendation.

Implementation will be documented through updated grant applications, agreements, reporting forms, program guidance, grant management records, and project documentation demonstrating compliance with outcome reporting requirements.

5. **Timetable:** Set a timeline with milestones for implementation of the recommendation.

Grant applications will be updated before the July 15, 2026, OHVR grant cycle opening. Reporting, reimbursement, and closeout requirements, including Salesforce forms, will be updated by June 30, 2026, and revisions to the OHV Recreation Program Guide will be finalized by November 2026.

6. **When:** Specify an anticipated deadline by which the entity will fully implement the recommendation.

The Division anticipates full implementation of Recommendation 2.1 by December 31, 2026.

Chapter 2

Recommendation 2.2: Physical Inspections Can Verify Whether Grantees Met the Outcome Measures of the Grant Contract

As it continues to develop and refine its grant management processes, the Division of Outdoor Recreation should have a plan for which grants and how many would most benefit from site inspections. This would allow DOR to use staff resources more efficiently and effectively.

Department Response:

1. **Who:** Name, title, contact information for the individual responsible for implementation.

Rachel Toker, OHV Recreation Grant Administrator, racheltoker@utah.gov, (385)303-1519.

2. **What:** Describe what the entity will do to address the recommendation.

The Division will strengthen grant oversight by implementing a structured compliance framework that includes risk-based monitoring, site visits across grant programs, and a newly-established grant compliance position.

3. **How:** Describe the steps the entity will take to address the recommendation.

In-person site visits and documentation quality checks will be incorporated into a structured compliance framework and prioritized for larger-scale or higher-risk projects, or when submitted documentation does not sufficiently verify the scope of completed work.

The Division will implement a triage-based approach that prioritizes projects based on award amount, grant type, and overall risk factors.

4. **Documentation:** Identify documentation that will be used to validate the implementation status of the recommendation.

Implementation will be documented through compliance program records, oversight procedures, monitoring activities, site visit documentation, and grant management records.

5. **Timetable:** Set a timeline with milestones for implementation of the recommendation.

The compliance role has been filled by reassigning an existing employee to the position. Oversight procedures and compliance protocols will be developed and finalized no later than December 2026.

6. **When:** Specify an anticipated deadline by which the entity will fully implement the recommendation.

The Division anticipates partial implementation of Recommendation 2.2 immediately, and full implementation by March 31, 2027.



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