



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COALITION REPRESENTING OFF ROADERS FORMED TO ADDRESS POSSIBLE
MILITARY BASE EXPANSION**

A Coalition recently met with California Marine Base representatives to discuss possible base expansion into existing Off-Highway Vehicle recreation areas.

Barstow, CA. – Last week, a coalition representing off-road enthusiasts met with representatives of Twentynine Palms Marine Base to review the Military’s possible plans to expand the 1950’s-era base. The proposed expansion would increase the marine base into adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) desert land, which may include Johnson Valley. The goal of the coalition is to gather information as a united group and meet on a regular basis with the military in an effort to work toward a mutually agreeable solution.

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreational access areas in California have continued to shrink over the past three decades causing many OHV enthusiasts to question what will happen to the popular recreational sport. In light of rumors of a possible base expansion into the 189,000-acre Johnson Valley OHV recreational area, there is increased concern of yet more closures of public land access. Johnson Valley, located 55 miles southeast of Barstow is a popular OHV destination for many OHV enthusiasts throughout Southern California.

The OHV coalition, upon hearing of the Military’s possible expansion into public lands met with Marine Base representatives to understand their long range goals for expansion. The Military has been evaluating options for base expansions in an effort to provide increased training areas for our Nation’s military, and has previously indicated their intent to be “good neighbors.” The proposed expansion is in an evaluation stage only. Twentynine Palms has been host to military training dating back to the early 40’s. The Marines now use Twentynine Palms as their Combat Training Center occupying 932 square miles, or 596,000 acres of the southern Mojave Desert. The Combat Center is three-quarters the size of Rhode Island.

The California desert is a finite resource that has been allocated over the past seven decades to a multitude of public purposes and uses. One of those uses is national defense training, and the United States Marine Corps is evaluating the feasibility of a major reallocation of that finite resource. Ultimately, the coalition is asking for continued access to our public lands. Further progress will be reported following subsequent meetings.