

Hinsdale County/Town of Lake City

2021 OHV Pilot Project Report

Hinsdale County, Town of Lake City and CDOT partnered in 2019 and 2020 to allow Off-Highway Vehicles to travel on a portion of SH 149 that would allow them to travel along the entire Alpine Loop Scenic Byway. The Byway travels along CR 20 and CR 30 in Hinsdale County. Completion of the Byway requires travel along 2.26 miles of SH 149 and through the Town of Lake City.

In 2019 and 2020, the pilot project was implemented in Hinsdale County and Lake City through a Transportation Commission resolution and subsequent issuance of a Special Use Permit by CDOT. The permit allowed the pilot project to operate from May through September for both 2019 and 2020. The permit contains several special terms and conditions. Among them are requirements for highway signage and other safety improvements.

In the fall of 2020, Hinsdale County Commissioners and Town of Lake City Trustees agreed to request a new special use permit from CDOT that would allow for a three-year pilot project (2021, 2022 and 2023). This new permit would include the same requirements as the previous permit, along with several new requirements, including:

- Revised and additional signage
- Lowering the speed limit on a portion of the Pilot Project route
- Hinsdale County sheriff Office to hire two additional seasonal law enforcement offices
- Amending of Hinsdale County ordinance relating to use of OHVs to increase penalties and fines
- Increased education efforts to inform OHV riders
- A count of OHVs on the highway eight times during the Pilot Program seasonal period
- The ability for the public to provide feedback on the program via the Hinsdale County website

Yearly Pilot Project Review:

Following the seasonal end of the Pilot Program in 2021, a meeting was held with program partners to receive comments on the outcome of the summer. Attending the meeting were Hinsdale County Administrator, Town of Lake City Mayor, Hinsdale County Sheriff, CSP Officer, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife Officer. Comments from this meeting follow, along with additional comments that were provided by the local CDOT representative. In addition, OHV counts and comments were provided by the local volunteer Alpine Outdoor Association, along with public comments received via the Hinsdale County website.

Town of Lake City – Mayor Bruce Vierheller

- The program went well, it was a good season.
- Last year there were 10 violations, and there were more this year

- There were more OHVs this year and the Town Council appreciated the increased law enforcement.
- There are some issues with drivers of all kinds not stopping at the stop sign on the corner of CR20 and 1st Street and there are plans to put up a flashing stop sign and a “stop ahead” sign.
- There is about a mile of Town on Hwy 149 and there were some parking issues but no complaints.
- Concerned about 2022 because Silverton is banning OHVs in City Limits and people are saying that they won’t go to Silverton next year and will come to Lake City instead.

Hinsdale County – Administrator Sandy Hines

- Public comments on the program were solicited through the County website; not many comments were received. These comments are included in this report.
- The County put up the new speed limit signs and made sure they were up during the designated program period.
- Hinsdale County also made sure that all the directional signs for OHVs were up and turned the correct way.
- The County worked with a design consultant to produce education materials that included a poster, a flyer and take-away pamphlets. All business were offered the material in poster or flyer form. Businesses were also provided counter holders for the take-away pamphlets. The education program seemed to be very successful.
- The volunteer organization Alpine Outdoor Association (AOA) manned a booth throughout the summer that provided one-on-one information as well as copies of the educational material. This organization also completed the summer count of OHVs on Highway 149.
- Currently Hinsdale County has no suggestions for changes and received very few comments and complaints.

Colorado State Patrol – Officer James Saunders

- Congratulated the Hinsdale County Sheriff Department on a great job of enforcement.
- No CSP Officer issued a citation to any OHVs in Lake City or Hinsdale County during the 2021 Pilot Program.
- Saunders contacted the dispatch center and had them pull any information concerning ATV, OHV or Razor contacts and only two came up in 2021 through mid-October. One contact was in June and the complaint was that kids were driving an OHV with no helmets on Highway 149. The second was a complaint in August that a Honda OHV was driving on Highway 149 with no tags.
- OHVs, ATVs or Razors did not appear to be an issue in 2021.

- No recommendations for the program this year.

Hinsdale County Sheriff Chris Kambish

- By his observation believes there were an increase of OHVs this year.
- This summer there were four full-time deputies on duty and an Alpine Ranger, as well as two part-time deputies. This made a difference as far as enforcement. However, in 2022, Hinsdale County Sheriff Office will be back to four full time and one deputy dedicated to patrolling the Alpine Loop.
- Sheriff Office supports the AOA group and helps with education.
- No accidents on the State Highway and no injuries or fatalities.
- Complaints were down and with the amount of OHVs this summer he could employ an officer just for OHV enforcement.
- People use ignorance as a defense when being cited.
- There is a great amount of education out there and overall compliance has increased.
- Would like to discuss extending the northern boundary of the Hwy 149 route to Lynn Lane where the Toy Wash is located. Received many complaints from residents on Ocean Wave Dr. (at the north end of the route) about OHVs using Ocean Wave Dr. as a short cut to the Toy Wash.
- Contact statistics provided by Sheriff Kambish:
 - The included statistics account for all OHV contacts in the town of Lake City and in Hinsdale County, regardless of location. At this time, we are unable to separate statistics to include only those occurring within the boundaries of the pilot program.
 - A single contact may result in multiple items. For example, an OHV may be stopped for running a stop sign, and when contacted the Deputy discovers a second violation. The Deputy may issue both a citation and a warning, which would result in two items being documented (1 citation, 1 warning) for the one contact. In addition, citations or warnings with multiple violations are documented as 1 citation or warning. Generally, citations are issued when there are multiple violations.
 - There were 0 OHV accidents reported during the 2021 pilot window.
 - Town of Lake City
 - Contacts: 51
 - Citations: 30
 - Warnings: 26
 - Hinsdale County
 - Contacts: 103
 - Citations: 56

- Warnings: 53

Colorado Parks and Wildlife – Lucas Martin

- Wrote about the same amount of tickets as last year.
- Gave several tickets on Hwy 149 north of town, past the end of the Pilot Program route. OHV operators were coming down to the highway from Arrow Head Lodge on the Alpine Plateau Rd (CR 867) and said they were told that they could travel on Highway 149 south to Lake City (approximately ten miles).
- Made contact with several OHVs on Hwy 149 south of the Pilot Program route, around Spring Creek Pass. Lucas said he thinks they are coming from the Hermit Lakes subdivision off CR 520, and trying to find their way north to Lake City.
- Believes OHVs are thinking that they can travel on all of Highway 149.

CDOT – Local Operator RE Hall

- Getting requests for more speed limit signs near Vickers Ranch, at the southern end of Pilot Program route on Hwy 149. Traffic is driving above the speed limit of 30 mph, which is in effect during the seasonal time frame of the Pilot Program (Memorial Day to September 30). Outside of that time period, the speed limit is 35 mph. Speed limit signs are changed depending on what time of year it is.
- Suggested electronic speed limit signs for the southern end of the Pilot Program route on Hwy 149 to combat speeding during the Pilot Program timeframe.

Alpine Outdoor Association (AOA) Volunteer Education Group – Hector Gomez

- AOA volunteers manned an informational booth on Hwy 149 and 2nd Street in Lake City. In addition to counting OHVs on the highway, the group spoke with OHVs drivers, answering questions and providing educational materials.
- Feels the Pilot Program was a great success in 2021. The contacts we had with business owners while giving out educational material was greatly appreciated.
- Good response on the impact of educating and informing our visitors.
- This effort paid off on not having any issues on Hwy 149 during the busy summer.
- The group counted OHVs along the Hwy 149 Pilot Program route twice in June, July, August and September as per the agreement with CDOT. Counts are as follows:
 - June 15 - OHVs 87
 - June 22 - OHVs 108
 - June 29 - OHVs 102
 - July 20 - OHVs 354

- July 27 - OHVs 455
- August 10 - OHVs 753
- August 24 - OHVs 552
- September 7 - OHVs 205
- September 14 - OHVs 113

Public Comments

Hinsdale County solicited comments from the public through a link on the county website throughout the duration of the 2021 Pilot Program. This was publicized throughout the summer on the county's social media and through emails.

Comments that were submitted are included with this report as Attachment A.

Multiple comments regarding the Pilot Program were submitted by former Lake City resident Peter Nesbitt in the early summer. Many of these comments were sent directly to CDOT staff and members of the Transportation Commission, as well as Hinsdale County commissioners, Lake City Town Trustees and members of the Colorado state government. Since these comments were sent directly to CDOT, they are not included with this report.