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ATV RIDERS: OUTDOOR EXPLORERS WHO RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Irvine, Calif. – Exploring the great outdoors on an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) means trekking out to a “private” fishing hole, camping away from suburban-like sites or just finding a picturesque spot that offers a rare chance to relax and picnic away from the crowds.

An ATV excursion can be exhilarating and memorable. ATVs allow riders to explore less accessible trails and discover the beauty of four-wheeling through sagebrush country and climbing passes through awe-inspiring cliff and rock formations. Or, an ATV rider might traverse over a quiet, remote stretch of coastline far from the metropolitan centers of everyday life. ATVs provide the advantage of covering a substantial amount of distance to remote campsites and other locations in a relatively short time.

“I’ve met many people who ride maybe 20 miles of trail into the backcountry, then start looking for a place to camp,” said Elisabeth Piper of the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA). “Before nightfall, they’ll be camped streamside, fishing for dinner. The 4x4 units that many riders like will carry them, and their gear, just about anywhere. You can transport up to 200-plus pounds of camping gear on the front and rear racks.”

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Protecting the Environment

ATVs manufactured since 1988 have four low-pressure balloon tires (2 psi to 5 psi) that are by definition low-impact tires. They are designed to mitigate adverse effects on the terrain by displacing pressure over a wider area. When riders travel down designated winding trails, they also can feel good about how they're protecting the environment.

The ATV footprint is extremely soft and light – a few pounds per square inch – and produces the least amount of impact of any vehicle that may travel backcountry. As a comparison, other off-road vehicle tires (such as an SUV) are several hundred pounds per square inch.

SVIA strongly encourages ATV owners to ride safely and to be conscious of nature and the environment, and added that there are training courses that focus on riding responsibly. ATV industry organizations, such as the ATV Safety Institute (ASI), provide training and educational materials that focus on respecting nature. Some of the guidelines taught to new and experienced riders include:

- Travel only on designated routes; don't trespass
- Respect the rights of hikers, skiers, campers and others to enjoy their activities undisturbed
- Comply with signs and barriers
- Avoid wildlife and fragile environments such as streambeds, lakeshores, meadows, muddy roads and trails, and steep hillsides
- Ride responsibly to protect the environment and to preserve the opportunity to use public lands
- Leave no trace. If you carry it in, carry it out
- Always ride as if a hiker is in the middle of the road around the next bend.

“The industry constantly reinforces that proper training and responsible use of ATVs is critical in order to truly enjoy what nature has to offer, and to preserve designated trails for other riders to enjoy,” Piper said.

The *ATV RiderCourse*SM is a hands-on, half-day class conducted by licensed ASI instructors. The course offers students an opportunity to increase their safety knowledge and to practice basic riding skills in a controlled environment under the direct supervision of a licensed instructor.

The course covers protective gear, environmental concerns and local laws. Participants receive the *ATV RiderCourse Handbook*, which reinforces the safety and environmental lessons. The *ATV RiderCourse* is offered at more than 1,000 locations throughout the United States. More information can be obtained by calling 1-800-887-2887.

The Specialty Vehicle Institute of America[®] (SVIA) is an information source about the all-terrain vehicle industry. SVIA provides information on ATV standards as well as promoting model state legislation on ATV riding. It also serves as a liaison with state and federal agencies on ATV training and their influence upon the environment. Membership is open to all corporations regularly engaged in the business of manufacturing, importing or wholesale distribution of ATVs in the United States. SVIA was formed in 1983 as a national not-for-profit trade association and is based in Irvine, California. Its members include AlphaSports, Arctic Cat, Bombardier, Honda, John Deere, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha.

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