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## **Record-setting \$1,500 Fines Levied against OHV Joyriders**

In a recent ruling, a judge in Rocky Mountain House assessed two \$1,500 fines against off-highway vehicle (OHV) users joyriding in the Clearwater River. This is the highest fine ever levied for this charge in Alberta's history. As reported in Rocky Mountain House's *The Mountaineer* newspaper, the judge in the case expressed disappointment at "the lack of respect the OHV users in [Rocky Mountain House] have for the local environment and wildlife." AWA applauds both the decision, which represents official recognition of the value of Alberta's headwaters regions and the damage that is caused by OHV use, as well as the diligence of the local RCMP officers in recording and bringing charges against the joyriders.

"This precedent-setting decision sends a clear signal that the public will not tolerate this kind of wanton destruction of our headwaters," says Sean Nichols, Conservation Specialist with AWA, "we applaud judicial actions that help secure vital watersheds for future generations."

Enforcement of environmental regulations in public lands is an ongoing issue along Alberta's eastern slopes. Long-tasked with the enforcement role, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) has transferred responsibility to Alberta Justice and Solicitor General in 2013. Penalties for destructive recreational practices need this infusion of support from the judiciary.

AWA is encouraged by the initiative shown by Rocky Mountain House RCMP officers in this case, and strongly supports the proposed creation of an RCMP division tasked with enforcement of environmental violations in Alberta's public lands.

**For more information:**

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