



WHAT DOES THIS PLATE MEAN TO YOU?

The Mile-Hi Jeep Club plate, a piece a metal, painted red with some white lettering. A plate that few people have and a badge of membership for the club and what we stand for. What does it really mean? The first line of our Constitution reads:

The purpose of the Mile-Hi Jeep Club of Colorado is to unite adventure loving people in worthwhile 4-wheel drive activities; to educate its members in the proper manner of all road driving; to protect and preserve the natural beauty and terrain; to participate, on a voluntary basis, in search and rescue and other humanitarian missions as the community needs; to share good fellowship while operating our vehicles in a manner so as to preserve and protect our land for all generations; and to extend the courtesy of the open road to all.

Does this reflect the way you carry yourself on the trail, at parent club meetings or other events? How do you drive your rig on the street, highway or on the trail?

In this uniquely connected world we live in with smart phones, cameras, Facebook and the web, there is an extra effort required of you when you wear this badge. In the MHJC we ascribe to the “Tread Lightly” and “Stay the Trail” methodology of trail etiquette. Etiquette is a code of behavior that delineates expectations for social behavior according to contemporary conventional norms within a society, social class, or group. The way we react or respond to a situation will or will not set us apart from other groups on the trail AND highway. When you are wearing the badge, there is an immediate connection between your behavior and the character of the club. It’s like wearing a large sign; I’m a member of the MHJC and since I drive like a jerk or DON’T ascribe by the “Tread Lightly” or “Stay the Trail” or Common Courtesy rules of the road, this badge on my rig reflects how all members of the Mile-Hi Jeep Club are.

One of the obligations that the Commander has to deal with is fielding all the instances where that badge is associated with a situation, reaction, response or attitude on the trail, street or highway. I can say that I’ve handled more emails and messages than I care to admit. Know that

in this world, there is very little privacy. Your actions can be photographed or recorded and the world can be notified in a very short amount of time.

TREAD PRINCIPLES

Travel Responsibly on land by staying on designated roads, trails and area. Go over, not around, obstacles to avoid widening the trails. Cross streams only at designated fords. When possible, avoid wet, muddy trails. On water, stay on designated waterways and launch your watercraft in designated areas.

Respect the Rights of Others including private property owners, all recreational trail users, campers and others so they can enjoy their recreational activities undisturbed. Leave gates as you found them. Yield right of way to those passing your or going uphill. On water, respect anglers, swimmers, skiers, boaters, divers and those on or near shore.

Educate yourself prior to your trip by obtaining travel maps and regulations from public agencies. Plan for your trip, take recreation skills classes and know how to operate your equipment safely.

Avoid Sensitive Areas on land such as meadows, lake shores, wetlands and streams. Stay on designated routes. This protects wildlife habitats and sensitive soils from damage. Don't disturb historical, archeological or paleontological sites. On water, avoid operating your watercraft in shallow waters or near shorelines at high speeds.

Do Your Part by modeling appropriate behavior, leaving the area better than you found it, properly disposing of waste, minimizing the use of fire, avoiding the spread of invasive species and repairing degraded areas.

Let me cover our principles so every opportunity is given to you to understand what and who we are, how to react and respond to situations on the trails and why we need to take that extra step, especially when you have a very distinctive rig. Your Jeep may have a one of a kind paint job, decals, or look that no other rig on the planet has, think about that when you are driving down the trail or even when you are in traffic on the highway. So here we go, First we are members of Tread Lightly and adhere to the Tread Principles:

We are also HUGE supporters of the "Stay the Trail" State Program in Colorado and believe everyone, especially our club members inspire to live by the following points!

Play Nice!

Your trails are always in danger of being closed. As an OHV enthusiast you can help prevent closures through responsible use and influence other OHV users by example. On any day of riding you become the face of OHV recreation to other users, leave them with a good impression of your sport.

Your behavior reflects on other trail users; motorcyclists, ATV riders and 4WD enthusiasts. Don't create situations that can be used as issues against motorized use. It's not a difficult task; all it requires is common sense and some common courtesy.



Always Yield the Trail to Non-Motorized Users

The mountain bikers have a yield [triangle](#). The motorized version is a rhombus. Slow down and be prepared to stop when passing or meeting non-motorized users on the trail. Yield the right of way to them and be especially careful around horses.

Be Friendly

Interact with other users at the trailhead, especially non-motorized users. Say hello, compare direction of travel or destination and ETA. By creating a friendly mood early, possible unpleasant confrontations on the trail can be avoided.

Be Respectful

Multi-Use trails are necessary to minimize overall impact on the land and all those recreational users have the same right to enjoy the trails as you do. Respect that right.

Be Aware

On the trail, slow down in the presence of other users and in areas where forward visibility is limited, especially on crowded days. Non-Motorized users will hear you coming but give them a wide berth anyway. No one likes surprises on the trail.

Be Helpful

As a motorized user, you have a greater cargo carrying capacity and speed than non-motorized users. Chances are you have a good map or guide book, extra water, or can get an emergency responder faster than a non-motorized user. You could really leave a good impression by helping a lost group of hikers or sharing some extra water with a mountain biker if the situation arises.



Respect Wildlife and Livestock

Slow down, give them space and don't chase or harass. Also leave gates as you found them whether opened or closed.

Keep Your Wheels Where They Belong!

And finally, remember:

- Drive on designated motorized routes where such designations have been made.
- Where no designations have been made, drive only on existing routes until designations are made.
- On public lands managed by the Forest Service, use [motor vehicle use maps](#) (MVUMs) to determine which trails and roads are open to your vehicle.
- On public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), follow on-the-ground [signs](#) to determine which trails and roads are open to your vehicle.

And again from our Constitution

The purpose of the Mile-Hi Jeep Club of Colorado is to unite adventure loving people in worthwhile 4-wheel drive activities; to educate its members in the proper manner of all road driving; to protect and preserve the natural beauty and terrain; to participate, on a voluntary basis, in search and rescue and other humanitarian missions as the community needs; to share good fellowship while operating our vehicles in a manner so as to preserve and protect our land for all generations; and to extend the courtesy of the open road to all.

So think about that badge on your vehicle, it directly connects your actions to the club, good or bad; someone's perception of OUR club rests on your actions. If you feel that you cannot control your actions on the trail or won't take that extra step on the trail, cannot control the middle finger, your language or don't feel that this is a big issue, I would ask you to remove that badge from your vehicle.

We are the oldest and largest Jeep club in Colorado; we are not just a website, not just a Facebook page. We represent a legacy, and that legacy should be one of education, preservations, respect, courtesy and fellowship.

Thanks

Frank Eichenlaub
Commander

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