

ALAA Newsletter
Jay Valle, Editor
1421 Latchford Avenue
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

FIRST CLASS MAIL



**AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

<http://www.amlands.org/>

January February March 2012

A.L.A.A Membership Application

AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

Please enroll me as a member of the ALAA! Annual membership fee is \$25.00

Annual membership fee for clubs is \$50.00

___ New ___ Renewal Date ___/___/___

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Club Affiliations _____

Hobby Interest _____

Remit fees to: ALAA
RUTH BAILEY
2857 Addison Pl
Santa Clara, CA 95051-1705
rba51825@att.net

The A.L.A.A. is a 501(c4) organization. Its purpose is promoting and ensuring the right of the amateur hobby collecting, recreational prospecting and mining, and the use of public and private lands for educational and recreational purposes; and to carry the voice of all amateur collectors and hobbyists to our elected officials, government regulators and public land managers. Contributions to the A.L.A.A. are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Tax Purposes.



American Lands Access Association, Inc.

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

January February March 2012

ALAA President's Message

By Richard Pankey, President - ALAA

Last December the American Lands Access Association joined the California Off Road Vehicle Association (CORVA). CORVA is a varied group of outdoor recreationalists who are extremely active in promoting the positive aspects of vehicular access on public lands and protecting that right. ALAA has the same purpose and goals of CORVA, just stated with different words. The main reason we joined CORVA was to support the lawsuit being filled against the Plumas National Forest to stand up for the rights of all those that use public land; more specifically for the access rights of the elderly and disabled. See Amy Granat's article in the last issue of the ALAA Newsletter.

Since we are now a CORVA member I started receiving the CORVA Newsletter. I also checked out their web site and some past issues of their Newsletter which is published monthly. There were some excellent articles about current legislation and BLM and FS regulations and activities affecting the access and use of our public land. I encourage you to check out their web site, www.corva.org. And while you are at it check out what is new on the ALAA web site – www.amlands.org.

I have been asked why we should join with “those off roader, those ATV'ers.” Well the simple answer is whether we are in a pick-up truck, car or a motor home, when we turn off the paved highway onto a dirt/gravel road we ARE an off highway vehicle recreationist just like them. The off highway vehicle organizations have the same goals, objectives and purpose as ALAA – promote access and responsible use of our public lands. There are many other organizations that use the public lands and are interested in how they are managed: Gem and Mineral Clubs, Off Road Vehicle Groups, Gun Clubs and Hunting Organizations, Camping Organizations and Chambers of Commerce for communities near closed federal lands to name a few. In addition to our other purposes we are all access advocates.

The theme the access advocates need to popularize is that the vehicular access restrictions are NOT always necessary to maintain the values of Wilderness or other Special Management Areas. Vehicular access should be described as a way to increase appreciation and experience of these values for people who would not otherwise be able to enjoy them. It should also be a theme that increased access means more economic activity and a boon to local economies. We need to be an advocate for the principles of “multiple use” and responsible management of our public lands. Support the principle that Use Is Not Abuse!

Dues are Due

ALAA continues to have good growth of individual and societies. We are starting a new year and dues for 2012 are now due!! Please send your dues to our treasurer Ruth Bailey. And remind your society to join or send in their renewal and dues.

Be an involved member!

CAN WE TALK?

Shirley Leeson

Propped up in your favorite Chair. Feet up? Here's a couple of questions for you:

Is your club successful? Is it getting and keeping new members? Do you know why? Chances are your club has two very important things going for it. A shop and field trips. The shop and it's dedicated group of instructors is not what I want to talk about. That's a given. The second problem is the one that really concerns me and it should concern you.

Recently a group of folks went on a field trip. When they got *there* the area was closed. A gate across the dirt road, and a sign told them the place was off limits. Who put the sign up? Who put the gate across the road? How did it happen? Why didn't we know about it and what could we do about it to get the area reopened?

This is happening more and more. Areas we once enjoyed visiting now are closed forever "for the good of our children". Who is responsible for this and do you even care? Americans have always shared a feeling of freedom -- of independence -- of self-reliance. And we were proud of that. When did that change to a nanny state, where the government knows best and they are going to take care of us. And they are especially going to take care of the critters and the land, because we can't do it.

We as rockhounds have tried to live up to our ethics on collecting. Are there rockhogs? Of course, but we shun them and let people know that it is not tolerated in our community of rockhounds. We are not like that.

ALAA was formed some years ago to stand up for rockhound interests. To keep public lands open for the public. But we've never really gotten the response from the clubs, federations and others needed to accomplish this. A dedicated few is better than none, but those few can't get the work done by themselves. I have heard lip service from many over the years but only a few have actually come forward and offered to work for the cause. Why is that? Got a clue? I have

some thoughts and you are not going to like them.....

Rockhounds talk but when it comes to actually going out there, attending boring meetings, learning what and how government works, they don't have it in themselves to do the job. I love some of the excuses; I don't have time. I can't drive that far. I don't have anything appropriate to wear. My cat can't do without me. There aren't any restaurants near the meeting area. I'm not going to pay for parking. I'd rather sit with my feet up and watch TV, there's such wonderful programs on -- there might even be a National Geographic on about the sites we used to enjoy that are now closed. And we can reminisce and buy books from the Sierra Club on those sites we used to visit.

There aren't enough hours in the day to get all the things done that comes across my computer from all over the country. WE NEED HELP. Can we count on YOU?

ALAA Meeting With BLM at Quartzsite a Rousing Success

Shirley Leeson, ALAA Vice President

Planning for this event was no small matter. If you have even been to Quartzsite you know SPACE is at a premium and needs to be booked at least a year in advance. With that said, I proceeded with a program of importance for the event. I contacted the Yuma, AZ. BLM Field Office. Rockhounds? Who, What? But once we got that sorted out it was clear sailing, they said they would be there and I told them I'd fill the room....

The Arizona BLM is releasing their La Posa Travel Management Plan. What's that? Glad you asked...the long and the short of it is this. The BLM personnel have been in the desert around Quartzsite for the last two years mapping all desert roads, trails and washes that some off road people (that's us) use to get from Point A to Point B. Now that it's finished the BLM will be

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ALAA Meeting With BLM

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asking the public (that's you and me) to COMMENT. Here comes the tricky part. Most rockhounds will turn off at this point, hoping for "someone else" to do the dirty work.

It's not as daunting as it looks. What the BLM for the Quartzsite area is asking of you is this. They want to reduce the conflict between motorized (that's rockhounds and all off-road people) with non-motorized people, passive recreation, livestock management, and commercial purposes (that in some cases are solar and wind plants on public lands – but that's another issue)

Routes are managed to reduce impacts to cultural, historical, and natural resources. (this is government speak for endangered critters, plants, and Indian relics, etc. which have first priority) As mandated by Presidential Order, Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands, designated routes:

- “shall be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resources of the public lands.
- shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats.
- shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and to ensure the capability of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors. shall not be located in officially designated Wilderness areas.” (executive order 11644 and 11989)

What is now being asked is: **EVALUATION**

The Evaluation process creates 4 management alternatives

- No Action
- Resource Protection

C. Proposed

D. Access

(To see the maps for each option:

http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/travel_mgmt/la_posa/maps.html)

After PUBLIC COMMENT, and input, BLM develops an Environmental Assessment through the National Environmental Policy Act. (watch for NEPA mentions in your local papers or on public land – BLM or Forestry Websites.) A second public comment period allows for public review of the NEPA results. Finally after all the comments are taken into consideration the BLM provides a Decision Record, officially designating all routes as open, limited or closed. (we thank the BLM Yuma office for this official description of this plan)

Now, the meeting held in Quartzsite, Friday evening January 20, 2012 had 185 registered people in attendance and blew away the BLM representatives. This was a clear message that we are interested, involved and a group, both rockhounds and off-road people to be reckoned with.

YOU can get involved if you are a winter visitor to Quartzsite and know the desert roads, trails and washes. YOU must go to amlands.org then Pending Legislation on the left hand side and then click on Arizona. YOU must submit a compelling and detailed request for those roads, etc you want left open. This must be strong enough to counter special interests who want the road closed for any number of various and sundry reasons. (see above under cultural, historic and natural resources) ALL COMMENTS MUST BE IN WRITING and sent either via post office or email. they will accept nothing less.

REMEMBER THIS:

“IF WE DO NOTHING, WE WILL GET NOTHING”

If you need more information,
I'll be happy to help in any way I can.

Shirley Leeson, ALAA VP
shirleyleeson@cox.net

CORVA vs. the US Forest Service

By Amy Granat

For many years **CORVA, the California Off-Road Vehicle Association**, worked side by side with the US Forest Service as partners, without a thought that this relationship would be tried and subsequently lost because of Forest Service policy. The Travel Management Rule did away with all this good will borne of years of hard work, discarded along with thousands of miles of road and trails that the public traditionally used for access throughout the national forests in California.

The Forest Service was created and mandated by Congress to manage the national forests for multiple use...including logging, mining, all types of recreation including rockhounding, driving for pleasure and OHV use. Rural residents depended on forests for everything including firewood to heat their homes in winter and hunting to provide organic sources of protein to feed their families. Before the Travel Management Rule was enacted all the above activities were possible, but afterward, everything was changed. By concerted effort through the Travel Management Rule, an extensive analysis was conducted that drastically limited access by motorized means, and no end of commenting, protesting and arguing by CORVA changed the inevitable outcome.

The most drastically impacted by the new limitations to motorized access in our forests are the elderly and disabled community. Those that are most vulnerable, were the most overlooked. The need for motorized means of travel by the elderly and disabled, whether vehicle, ATV, or side by side, to hunt, fish, rockhound or collect firewood was not considered, and was dismissed out of hand when brought to the attention of the Forest Service. It was this disregard, together

with all the other limitations and closures, that convinced CORVA to file suit against the Forest Service.

Although not an easy decision, CORVA is proud to represent the needs of the greater OHV community, and together with our partners Sierra Access Coalition, and Butte and Plumas Counties, are filing suit against the Forest Service to force them to right all the wrongs committed during the Travel Management analysis. Rural residents, the elderly and disabled, and all those who use motorized means to access public land have been treated with complete disregard, and CORVA is committed to standing up for the people we represent. Our members know we can't do this without their support, but also realize the positive results of this lawsuit will reverberate throughout the country, and positively influence all future decisions regarding travel on public lands, whether Forest Service or BLM. What happens in California can change subsequent decision in the entire country, and though we can't predict judicial outcomes, we are confident in our allegations and the skills of our attorneys.

At CORVA we sincerely thank the American Land Access Association for their support and understanding of these issues. ALAA has consistently proven a willingness to learn and work together towards the common goal, reaching across boundaries to see the commonalities between all those that enjoy motorized access. ALAA deserves recognition for the willingness to stand together and fight for the right of public access to public land, and we are proud to have them as partners.

Amy Granat
Managing Director, CORVA
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Minutes of the ALAA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

**Ramada Inn Hotel, Syracuse, NY
Wednesday, July 6, 2011, 7:00 p.m.**

Meeting called to order- Pres. Dick Pankey

Recognition of ALAA Past Presidents –

Bob Carlson, Jon Spunaugle

Salute to flag led by Dick Pankey

Introduction of Board – Shirley Leeson – Vice President, Secretary – Kathy Miller, Ruth Bailey – Treasurer

Introduction of Directors – Bob Miller, Kathy Miller, Dee Holland, John Martin, Robert Carlson, and Jon Spunaugle.

In attendance – Bob Miller – AFMS President, Lauren Williams – AFMS Pres. Elect, Emerson Tucker, Ron Carmen – Past AFMS Presidents, Ann Cook – AFMS Secretary, Betsy Oberheim – EFMSL President, Bob Livingston – EFMSL Past President, Barbara Green – SFMS President, Don Monroe – SFMS Past President, AFMS 1st Vice Pres., Ann Monroe – SFMS Past President, Cathy Patterson – GMSS Show Chairman, Barbara Sky – EFMSL Rules Chairman, Judy Beck – 2nd Regional VP and RMFMS Past President, Susy Martin – Palmdale Gem & Mineral Club

Election of Directors (have 12 Directors)

- Shirley Leeson made a motion to remove Dean Stone as a Director; seconded by Dee Holland. Motion passed by voice vote.
- Kathy Miller moved to elect Tom Noe to fill the remainder of Dean Stone's term; seconded by Bob Miller. Motion passed by voice vote.
- Shirley Leeson made a motion to elect Bob Carlson, John Wright and Doug True for a three year term as directors; seconded by Bob Carlson. Motion passed by voice vote.

(Evan Day, Jon Spunaugle and Marshall

Havner are 2nd year directors; Bob Miller, Tom Noe and Norvie Enns are 3rd year directors)

Election of Officers for 2012

President – Dick Pankey

Vice President – Shirley Leeson

Secretary – Kathy Miller

Treasurer – Ruth Bailey

Motion by Bob Carlson and 2nd by Dee Holland.

Approved by Acclamation.

Approval of 2010 Annual Meeting Minutes

Whittier, CA June 20, 2010 in ALAA Newsletter of January-February-March 2011

Motion by Bob Carlson and 2nd by Dee Holland.

Approved by voice vote, motion carried.

Officer Reports

President Dick Pankey:

ALAA is running smoothly, continues to grow with lots of activity, the Associations money is in good shape, and there are 57 Societies (with over 8000 members) and 89 individual members out of 640 societies and 52,000 members of the AFMS. ALAA show more involvement and we are finding even more ways to get involved. The AFMS and their newsletter are giving ALAA good press coverage.

The 2011 meeting in Quartzite was well attended, with a speaker from the BLM. The next ALAA meeting in Quartzite will be Friday, January 20, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. We have put into our purposed Budget funds for meetings at Regional Federations and Quartzsite. Money is also included for speakers.

All meetings are good exposure with the objective to recruit people for ALAA. Dick is looking for a key person to help with the above.

Vice President Shirley Leeson:

Shirley stated she did not wish to exclude

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Minutes

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people outside of California, but wanted to make them aware of what the congressmen from the west are doing to avoid not being reelected to office. When they feel threatened by our groups they ask congressmen from the east, midwest, etc. to speak for them. We should be aware of what our congressmen in these regions are doing. We need to let them know we don't live out west but our hobby and travels take us there and we wish to be able to use these lands, not be locked out. Shirley then gave us some examples of "land grab".

Shirley approves of Off Road people who help keep the roads open for us to collect. She spoke of outdoor regulation, how we can help being the arm of the AFMS with 10,000 people strong. Shirley mentioned that the Blue Ribbon Coalition is a part of our organization with a 501 C3.

Kathy Miller Secretary:

Will add later in general discussion regarding Wiley Wells, CA

Ruth Bailey Treasurer:

Treasurer's Report and Proposed Budget were available at the meeting, Ruth indicated to send in your membership dues and she will send you you're a receipt ASAP.

Permanent Director Reports

Newsletter Jay Valle:

Jay was not present, puts out the ALAA Newsletter in March, June, September and December.

Webmaster John Martin:

John has had 2,000 hits on the website, but wants more people to visit it. He recommends to check it out, every piece of publication he can find regarding forests, public lands in any state he puts on the web and tries to use current

regulations. If any Director, Officer, etc. has information that should be included on the website send it to him. He would like more information from the states east of the Mississippi River.

Registered Agent Dee Holland:

Dee filed for next year's Fiscal Year in the state of Idaho where there is no charge for filing.

OLD BUSINESS:

Requesting to become Associate members of ALAA by the Association of Paleontologists with full voting rights and be a partner and merge with us. The legal aspects were not good for us. It was removed from the Table, motion made by Dee Holland, so moved. Jon Spunaugle spoke regarding this association which is affiliated with SVP. Shirley Leeson called a question, Bob Carlson moved to reject the proposal, 2nd by Shirley Leeson, motion voted on by all Directors present, motion carried. As a footnote: Possibly they could join our Association at a later time.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed change to By Laws: SECTION 8 Quorum submitted by Dee Holland.

It currently reads 1/3 of Directors shall constitute a quorum, etc. Dee Holland wishes to add "the Officers shall be counted to establish a quorum" Dee would like to make a motion to this change, Shirley Leeson seconded.

As read "One third (1/3) of the Board of Directors and the Officers shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board. Once a quorum is established, it shall remain for the duration of the meeting.

Ruth Bailey called to attention that this must be put out 10 days prior to a meeting by written notice any action regarding Amendment/By Law changes.

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A straw vote was taken and approval was made for the change.

President Dick Pankey will send out this motion by email to all Officers and Directors to vote or act upon.

Shirley Leeson:

Shirley spoke to an Attorney regarding the 501 C4, because people don't wish to make donations since there is not return on their income tax. She asked the Attorney if he could set up within our organization a 501 C3 "Defense" type Fund (i.e. Friends of the Forest) with a new Articles of Incorporation and By Laws to go with it. He then would make sure it was legal and get papers to go with it and a IRS with a number.

She and Dee need approval from the ALAA Board and Officers to go forward with this. Jon Spunaugle moved for them to investigate for further action, 2nd by Bob Carlson. All in favor, motion carried. Dee and Shirley will report by email.

Approval of 2012 Budget

Bob Carlson moved to accept the Budget as presented, seconded by Jon Spunaugle.

Motion to adopt this Budget carried by vote of Directors and Officers

General Comments

At the beginning of the meeting Shirley Leeson and Dee Holland distributed copies of *Range* magazines to all those in attendance. It was recommended a good buy of \$15 yearly to follow the articles regarding public lands, use, misuse and availability.

Kathy Miller had copies of pictures and newsletters from Kitty Starbuck, regarding Wiley Wells, CA. Dick Pankey and Shirley Leeson gave further information about the past and current situation. Shirley will contact Kitty on this.

Discussion took place regarding the ALAA newsletter on email and snail mail, pros

and cons were talked about. The electronic format may have some upcoming changes.

The next annual meeting will be held at the AFMS show/convention in Minnetonka, MN the last weekend of July 2012. Dick is working on new brochures to be given out at this show.

Dick Pankey adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Forest Service Agency Unveils Sweeping New Planning Rule

The Obama administration released a crucial new proposal that aims to protect wildlife while promoting recreation, logging, grazing and other uses on nearly 200 million acres of national forests. The new planning rule will make land management on 175 national forests and grasslands cheaper, more efficient and less vulnerable to lawsuits, the administration said. At the same time, the new guidelines will enhance collaboration between the Forest Service and the public and will require the use of the best available science to inform decisions, the agency said.

The most collaborative rulemaking effort in agency history has resulted in a strong framework to restore and manage our forests and watersheds and help deliver countless benefits to the American people," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Our preferred alternative will safeguard our natural resources and provide a roadmap for getting work done on the ground that will restore our forests while providing job opportunities for local communities."

The new planning rule -- which seeks to update 1982 guidelines and replace proposals since then that were thrown out in court -- is designed to make forests more resilient to threats

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New Planning Rule

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like wildfire, pests, drought and other stressors. The rule will determine how forests and grasslands develop individual management plans, which govern activities from logging to recreation and the protection of endangered plants and animals.

"We think this focus on water makes this planning rule somewhat unique from prior efforts," Vilsack said. The new guidelines will also promote job-creating activities like timber thinning, invasive species removal and watershed restoration, which in turn will reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires, insect attacks and other threats, the agency said.

The new rule also places a stronger emphasis on recreation, Vilsack said. Opportunities to hike, camp, fish and hunt draws some 170 million visits to the forests each year, a crucial economic driver in some communities. The final rule will be closely watched by environmentalists, hikers, motorized users, loggers, miners and ranchers, all of whom share access to the nation's forests. Several sources today said they will need time to digest the rule before commenting. The agency's draft rule a year ago drew more than 300,000 comments and was the subject of multiple congressional hearings.

Some critics warned the draft rule was too wordy and included new environmental protections that could open the door to special-interest lawsuits. But conservationists said the draft rule lacked regulatory teeth, gave too much discretion to local forest managers and rolled back protections for streams and riparian areas.

"We hope that ecological, social and economic objectives are given equal weight in planning so that all of the needs of our citizens will be met by our federal forests," said Tom Partin,

president of the American Forest Resource Council, in a statement this morning. "We hope to see direction in the rule that forest plans provide direction to harvest timber for the many benefits it provides, including wood products, forest health and habitat diversity, and that timber management is not neglected in the planning process."

The agency said its final planning rule provides "strong support for vibrant rural communities" and requirements to consider a range of uses including timber, mining, grazing, energy and outdoor recreation.

While forest planners are required to use best available science in decision making, such information must only be "taken into account and documented," rather than given a lead role in planning, the draft rule stated. Still, many observers said the requirement to seek best available science could introduce legal challenges and increase the workload for responsible officials. The agency said its new planning rule also requires officials to consider habitat to support hunting and fishing.

*This article is taken from the March 2012 issue of CORVA Newsletter. It was written by Bruce Witcher. When this New Planning Rule process started about one year ago "recreation" was not even a factor listed for the Forest Service to consider in making land management decisions for our FS lands. Fortunately the access organizations were alert and were participating in the process and recreation is now at least getting lip service. However, more rockhounds and ALAA need to be more involved in this process. These New Planning Rules will affect the development all future Land Use Plans for **EVERY** National Forest. These new rules affect all of us who use and recreate in our National Forests.*

Dick Pankey

Annual Meeting at MWF/AFMS Convention

The American Lands Access Association will hold its annual meeting at the MWF/AFMS convention at Minnetonka, MN on Saturday afternoon, July 28th at 2:30 PM at the Lindbergh Center. This is the **business meeting** for ALAA where we will elect our directors and officers, have officer and committee reports, and approve our budget for the coming year. The **work** of ALAA takes place throughout the year by our officers, directors, committees, at regional Federation conventions and the actions of our members. At our annual meeting in July we will be electing 4 Directors and the 4 officers. As president I hope to continue on for another term and I hope the other 3 officers will continue on for another term. We have had a great 2011 and 2012 is going well. Our membership is growing, and we have started some good programs with great promise. I believe that ALAA has a strong leadership team and that we should continue and build on our strengths. I hope that all officers and all directors will continue to serve.

All members of ALAA, all members of MWF and AFMS are welcome and encouraged to attend this meeting. I hope that all of you or as many as possible will be able to attend the MWF/AFMS show and meetings in Minnetonka, MN on July 26th to 29th. I hope to see many of you there.

Dick Pankey, President

Are Access Issues Moving East?

By Tom Noe

Access to public lands hasn't been much of an burning issue in the eastern portions of the US, but that may be changing. In the past several months I've forwarded to the MWF president some information about plans and decisions being considered by the US Forest Service regarding Huron-Manistee National Forest in Michigan. Discussions have taken place about banning gun

hunting and snowmobiling in some areas of Huron-Manistee.

No, nothing has been said yet about banning rockhounding, but the basic issue is the same: public access. That makes it an issue rockhounds should take note of.

The Huron-Manistee National Forests comprise almost a million acres of public lands in the lower peninsula of Michigan. These forests provide recreation for visitors, habitat for fish and wildlife, and resources for local industry. Public use of these forest lands is wide-ranging, and includes everything from hunting and hiking to the sale of \$5 Christmas tree tags so families can locate and cut their own tree in December.

The government agencies managing these public lands have to make decisions about access, usage and fees, and they will be asking for input on their new proposals. Local input. What do the people of Michigan have to say about access? What do others in the Midwest say about access? Will their input be a factor in the decision? Not unless they get involved in the process right away and make their voices heard.

If the managers of Huron-Manistee should propose that large areas be closed to vehicular traffic, and no member of the public offers any reason why these areas should remain open to vehicles . . . I think you know what will happen.

"Access" affects hunters, fishers, hikers, bikers, offroad drivers, snowmobilers, rockhounds, Christmas tree cutters, etc. Managing access means making decisions, and we, the public, should be part of the decision-making process.

I'm hoping that ALAA can send more information about access issues to our MWF clubs, especially clubs in areas close to public lands like the Huron-Manistee National Forest. Getting our members involved locally in places like Michigan starts with the flow of information.

The Blue Ribbon Coalition's email update of February 2, 2012, included this information about access decisions for the Huron-Manistee National Forest:

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Are Access Issues Moving East?

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“The Record of Decision and associated documents are posted on the Huron-Manistee National Forests' website: www.fs.usda.gov/hmnf. [Click on “Forest Plan SEIS,” then on the new page click on “Record of Decision.”] The published documents will be available in March, and mailed to all people who previously requested a copy. If you have not previously requested a copy, you may request a copy by calling the Forest Supervisor's Office at (231) 775-2421 and (231) 775-2421.

Once the documents have been released to the public, a Notice of Availability will be published in the Federal Register and the newspaper of record, which will begin a 45-day appeal period. The Forest Service will notify the public by news release and website posting when the Notice of Availability has been published.”

Rockhounding on Washington State's Public Land

By John Martin

AFMS Conservation and Legislation Committee
afms-conservation@antelecom.net

Within the Northwest Federation there shines a star in the Pacific Northwest, that is the star of a number of Rockhounds of Washington State. During the 1990s rules and regulations for collecting Rocks, Minerals, Fossils and petrified wood on state owned public lands by amateur collectors met with different interpretations depending on the agency and agent in the field. Then in late 2009 the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) proposed rule changes that would make it a gross misdemeanor or a felony to collect rocks of WDFW land. While it has been the case since 1990 that rock collecting on State public land has been illegal, the penalty has been a citation with a fine of around \$100. It was discovered that decisions regarding amateur rock

collecting by the WDFW were arbitrary not based on research or study despite the fact they initially claimed otherwise.

It was decided by the members of several of the Washington State's Gem and Mineral Clubs not only to protest the proposed rule changes, but to seek a modification of the prohibition against recreational rock collecting through state legislative action. Several members of various clubs contacted their local state legislators and proposed making changes to Washington State laws regarding the non-commercial amateur rock collecting on state owned property. The proposed legislation will define Rockhounding as a legitimate recreational activity and define state wide rules for amateur rock collecting.

What is proposed is to align the State law with Federal law (BLM's Rock Collection Guide – Washington and Oregon), a guide that was worked out between the BLM and Washington State Mineral Council (WSMC) and Oregon Council of Rock and Mineral Clubs (OCRMC). After several months of conversations with various elected officials in the state, one was found that had an open ear and agreed to sponsor the state legislation.

SB 6057 was introduced in January 2012 and shortly there after HB 2600 was introduced and both are now going through the legislative process. Following the progress of both bills through the legislative process can be tracked through the ALAA Website:

<http://www.amlands.org/6652/92612.html>

or www.amlands.org then to the *Active Legislation* page and *Washington State* page.

In closing, the introducing of these two bills is but the first volley in the battle to win the right to ‘recreationally’ collect rock of Washington public land. Flintknappers and Rockhounds of Washington are highly motivated and determined to effect a positive change.

For more information from the Washington State Rockhounds contact:

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Rockhounding

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[James C. Keffer jkeffer@comcast.net](mailto:jkeffer@comcast.net),

[Ed Thomas feather@hughes.net](mailto:feather@hughes.net) or

[Brian Waters bwaterss2011@gmail.com](mailto:bwaterss2011@gmail.com).

These folks are to be commended for their positive action taken to ensure that Rockhounding on Washington State's Public Lands is available now and for generations to come. Kudos for this extraordinary effort goes to the Washington State Mineral Council and the Puget Sound Knappers, a flint-knapping group reaching throughout the continent. Their website is [Puget Sound Knappers http://pugetsoundknappers.com/index.html](http://pugetsoundknappers.com/index.html). This is a shining example on what needs to be accomplished in all states where amateur rock collecting is in danger of becoming extinct or access to public lands is being limited to special interest groups. Become Pro-Active in the decisions that regulate Rockhounding in your state.

Even though this addresses OHV use and from the American Motorcycle Assn (AMA), it may have an impact on access to collecting sites. Please read and take appropriate action as needed. Thank you for your support to help keep access to our collecting sites open to all Rockhounds. ALAA

U.S. Interior Department Resurrects Wild Lands Policy

Contact your senators and representative today! [Take Action!](#) The inappropriate federal "Wild Lands" policy was thought to be dead and buried -- until now.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) opposes the "Wild Lands" policy because it can restrict responsible off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding with little or no public input whatsoever.

A [notice](#) in the Federal Register, dated Feb. 24, 2012, concerning federal Bureau of Land

Management (BLM) Resource Management Plan (RMP) revisions indicates that the goal of the federal "Wild Lands" policy remains. The recent notice for the Carson City, Nev., District RMP emphasizes that the BLM is seeking "nominations for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and information on lands that may possess wilderness characteristics."

The AMA now has two specific examples where the federal BLM is using the RMP process to advance de facto Wilderness through administrative fiat.

Remember, on Feb. 6, 2012, the federal BLM issued a [notice](#) in the Federal Register affecting 2.4 million acres of public land in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. The BLM decided to take a "fresh look" at land-use plans in the aforementioned states dealing with oil shale and tar sands leases. Even though this announcement deals with energy-related leases, which are not a concern of the AMA, the BLM stated it will consider "wilderness characteristics" in determining any future disposition of public land in the affected areas -- which can include responsible off-highway vehicle recreation.

"Wilderness characteristics" was the defining language used to describe the Department of the Interior's (DOIs) "Wild Lands" policy.

In the administration's fiscal year (FY) 2013 budget, the BLM requested an increase of \$4.4 million for Resource Management Planning. This will certainly help accelerate a goal to create de facto Wilderness through administrative fiat.

U.S. Rep. [Rob Bishop](#) (R-Utah), chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands of the House Natural Resources Committee, will hold a hearing on Feb. 28 regarding the FY 2013 National Park Service and BLM budgets. The issue of "Wild Lands" is expected to be discussed. To view a live webcast of the hearing, [click here](#).

On Feb. 15, 2012, the House Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. [Doc Hastings](#) (R-Wash.), held an oversight hearing on the

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Wild Lands Policy

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DOI FY2013 budget. At the hearing, Rep. Bishop asked Interior [Secretary Ken Salazar](#) about the reemergence of "Wild Lands." [Click here](#) for an archive webcast. To see Rep. Bishop's press release, [click here](#).

For some background, on Dec. 22, 2010, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar signed [Secretarial Order 3310](#) creating a new land-use designation called "Wild Lands" that essentially allowed officials in the federal BLM to manage public land as if it had received a "Wilderness" land-use designation from Congress, but without requiring congressional approval.

Congress then blocked the "Wild Lands" proposal by refusing to fund it.

Now, this latest policy appears to revive "Wild Lands" and its implementation may restrict responsible off-highway riding in the affected areas.

If true, the de facto resurrection of the "Wild Lands" policy would be in violation of the congressional funding moratorium that prohibits the use of appropriated funds to implement, administer, or enforce Secretarial Order 3310.

Furthermore, these notices appear to contradict a June 1, 2011, DOI [memorandum](#) directing Abbey to not designate any lands as "Wild Lands." This memorandum reversed Secretarial Order 3310.

Subsequently, Salazar said the BLM will work in collaboration with members of Congress to identify public land that may be appropriate candidates for congressional protection under the Wilderness Act. Now it appears this may not be the case.

On Feb. 7, 2012, the Utah congressional delegation sent a bipartisan letter addressed to Salazar protesting his decision to reexamine the 2008 Oil Shale Rule. The letter noted, "Even the BLM's early announcement that it would revisit the 2008 Oil Shale Rule to consider wilderness characteristics would have been forbidden by the congressional funding moratorium on the Depart-

ment of the Interior Secretarial Wild Lands Order 3310." To see the letter, [click here](#).

When the "Wild Lands" policy first emerged, federal lawmakers called the policy a "land grab" and a blatant attempt to usurp congressional authority. The AMA sent a letter, dated Jan. 11, 2011, to Salazar asking him to explain whether the "Wild Lands" land-use designation would block traditional routes of travel for off-highway riding. To view the letter, [click here](#). To view the BLM's response, [click here](#).

A Wilderness designation is one of the strictest forms of public land management. Once Congress designates an area as Wilderness, nearly all forms of non-pedestrian recreation are illegal. The AMA supports appropriate Wilderness designations that meet the criteria established by Congress in 1964, but anti-access advocates have been using the administrative and legislative process to ban responsible OHV recreation on public land.

This recent notice by the BLM is another reason that the riding community must remain vigilant in protecting responsible access to our public land. The AMA encourages the OHV community to get involved and to participate with a local BLM Resource Advisory Council.

If the "Wild Lands" policy is reemerging, anti-access advocates and the administration are once again seeking an end-run around Congress. Salazar's order has far-reaching implications because the BLM manages about 245 million acres of public land nationwide, primarily in western states.

The AMA needs all its members and OHV enthusiasts to write their senators and representatives today. You can follow the "Take Action" option to send a pre-written email directly to your senators and representative urging them to oppose any usurpation of congressional authority with regards to public land designations.

Send a pre-written email to your senators and representative now and let them know you oppose any usurpation of congressional authority.

(Note: to follow the included links you need to use the e-mail version of this newsletter. ED)

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