

ALAA Newsletter
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FIRST CLASS MAIL



**AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

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

October November December 2012



American Lands Access Association, Inc.

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

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TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS IN JANUARY QUARTZSITE, ARIZONA

For those of you traveling to Quartzsite for the annual Rockhound Roundup Please put these two dates on your calendar:

FRIDAY, January 25, 6:30pm at the Quartzsite Alliance Church, 720 Desert View, take Moon Mountain Rd north to Desert View, turn left, church on right. Plenty of Parking. John MacDonald, Field Manager of the Yuma Office of the BLM will speak to us on the La Posa Travel Plan.

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President's Message

By Dick Pankey, President – ALAA

For the last 4 years or so I have written articles for the ALAA and AFMS Newsletter promoting the American Lands Access Association, articles about the challenges to access and use of public lands from legislation and regulations, and articles to encourage you to be involved and participate in our current and future access and use of our public lands. In January I will be stepping down as President of ALAA and Shirley Leeson will take on the leadership position. But I want to leave you with few last thoughts and ideas, and some encouragement.

At Quartzsite again this year ALAA will hold an open meeting with some planned speakers from the local BLM office with updates on the La Posa TMP that was introduced last January. Shirley is also planning a clean-up of some BLM land around Quartzsite for Sunday, January 27. Clean-ups are a simple, worthwhile service project that benefits the environment, the aesthetics of our public lands, helps out the BLM and gives us a positive image to others to list a few.

There are two ways to conduct a clean-up and a lot of variations in between. The simplest is when you are out on a collecting trip just pick up any trash, cans, bottles that you see and pack them out when you leave. Always try to leave the site cleaner than when you got there. Just practice good stewardship of our land. A second way is an "organized" clean-up: planned, conducted by a group, coordinated with BLM, FS or some other agency, with a specific goal, could be advertised, often at least a several hour event, and usually ends with a great sense of accomplishment. An "organized" clean-up does not have to be complicated; at your next field trip just announce that "we will be cleaning up this site, so collect some trash as you collect the rocks." At the end of your trip, pack out the trash and dispose of it in a good and proper manner.

Clean-ups and other such service projects are a great way to build a relationship with the land managers and private land owner, it makes us look good to the general public (an image builder), and will give all of us a well deserved sense of pride.

If you will be in Quartzsite in late January join us at the ALAA meeting and the clean-up. If you

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For current information and alerts go to the ALAA Web Page at <http://www.amlands.org/>. You can also download a copy of the current newsletter or peruse the archive of previous editions.

President's Message

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can't join us for the Quartzsite clean-up why not conduct and clean-up at a collecting, camping or recreation site in your home area. Get involved. Here is an easy way to participate for the future of access and rockhounding.

Being President of the American Land Access Association has been a great experience and a great challenge. And I am glad I took it on. It was also a great learning experience; learning how our government and its agencies work and **don't work**. Trying to learn how we can participate, contribute and have an affect on what happens with laws and regulations. Everyday I get emails telling about the assaults and threats to access and use of our public lands. These basically fall into two categories: 1.) new/proposed legislation and 2.) new/proposed regulations. I get the BRC Alerts. I get the ALAA Alerts and proposed legislation from **John Martin**. I get forwarded alerts and articles from related watchful organizations/activists, and from concerned rockhounds. I get questions from concerned and interested rockhounds and ALAA members asking "did I know about this" and "what is ALAA doing about that."

Frankly, this was very overwhelming. The challenges are so great and they seem to come so fast. There is so much to do and so much that could be done. But what, how, who?

John Martin is doing a spectacular job of learning about proposed legislation, getting copies of the bills and the legislation, and best of all communicating and sharing these with the rest of us. This information is spread around in e-mails and in articles in Federation and society newsletters. The word is getting out. But is it being listened to; is it being acted upon?

I have had the opportunity to meet people and talk about the issues at shows, field trips, society meetings and wherever I can find people to listen. Most people will listen politely with a "Yea. Uh Uh." But I don't think they are really listening to me. Others seem to hear that there is a problem; that there is a threat, but that is as far as it goes. But thank goodness there is that occa-

sional person that "gets it." They are fired up, asking questions and offering help. But for some reason they don't take the next step – **ACTION**.

What are the biggest issues to rockhound as we face these challenges? **Ignorance** – don't know about or understand the challenges and assaults on our access and use of our public lands, they don't pay attention to the messengers nor try to get informed. **Apathy** – may know about the challenges and assaults but just don't care. It's not my responsibility. Someone else will take care of it. **Just Don't try** – don't know what to do or how to do it; don't know how to get involved; or maybe they have given up. ALAA can help with **Ignorance** and **Just Don't try**, but **Apathy** is a major obstacle that is harder to overcome.

There is a fourth group and they are the ones who **do** get involved. They read the alerts and articles, they get informed; and best of all they take action – write letters to their Congressmen and to the Regulators, they attend meetings, they share what they know with others and get them involved. These are the people that give me hope, that keep me going. Did you see yourself here? Which group? What is it going to take to move you from group 1, 2 or 3 into group 4?

What we need is more group 4 people.

How to be an involved member, how to be an involved rockhound:

Become informed about proposed legislation and the legislative process.

Become informed about proposed regulations and the regulatory process for BLM and the Forest Service.

Write letters, send e-mails, make phone calls attend meetings to let your congressmen and the regulators know what you think and what you want.

Share what you know and what you did with others and get them involved

The assault on the use of and access to our public land is great. Now is the time to stand up and be counted. We will help you?

Become an involved rockhound!

BLM, Quartzsite and You

By Dick Pankey

The American Lands Access Association meeting was such a success last January that the third annual meeting is scheduled for Quartzsite, Arizona in January 2013. An open meeting of the American Lands Access Association is planned for Friday evening, January 25th, at 6:30 PM, at the Quartzsite Alliance Church, 720 Desert Vista on the north side of Quartzsite.

Attend this meeting to learn about ALAA and how you can be involved in saving access to our public lands. We will have an open forum on pending legislation and regulations, and what is happening with the BLM and USFS. Bring your questions and ideas.

This meeting should be of interest to all rockhounds and to anyone who recreates on and uses public lands. The purpose of this meeting is for outreach to rockhounds and the public at Quartzsite; to let them know about ALAA and what we do. It is to let rockhounds and the public know the legislative and regulatory challenges and issues facing all of us and how they can and should be involved.

This is a special invitation to all rockhounds and users of our public lands to attend this important meeting. If you can attend, please do so, and show how many rockhounds care.

Be sure to check the December issue of the ALAA Newsletter and the ALAA web site for details about the meeting and speakers.

Changing of the Guard

By Shirley Leeson

Dick Pankey stepped in as ALAA President in 2009. It was a time of little action on the part of ALAA. It was time to get ALAA up and running and Dick was there to revitalize ALAA and get people involved again. It's been a good ride, Dick. We thank you for your enthusiasm and concern. We know you will continue to be involved, and that's a good thing. Dick steps down this month. If you see him around, thank him for

his service to ALAA. It was appreciated.

Others who are "moving on" are Kathy Miller, Midwest. Kathy stepped in when Anne Cook, our Secretary wasn't able to continue because of health problems in 2011. Kathy had been involved, along with husband Bob Miller, with ALAA for many years sharing a Directorship with ALAA and representing the Midwest area of the country. They will continue to be involved, just not at the administrative level. Thanks for your dedication.

Norvie Enns, of California, has been involved first with the CFMS PLAC committee, that's Public Lands Advisory Committee, for many years. I believe PLAC in several regional federations were the front runner of ALAA. Norvie held a Directorship for a number of years and also was on the BLM's Advisory Council for Northeast California and Nevada, an area Norvie was very familiar with. Norvie is stepping back a little, but not giving up his dedication to public lands.

Marshall Havner from California has stepped away from ALAA and is pursuing other aspects of public lands. Marshall was an awesome force.

Stepping in for Marshall is a small but no less awesome person, Kim Campbell Erb from Anaheim, CA. Kim has convinced the powers she is capable and competent to be on the California BLM Desert Advisory Committee. Kim has to hold her own against overpowering odds of one lone rockhound on that committee and does so with grace and charm.

Coming on as the new ALAA Secretary is Susy Martin. Susy is a busy lady but finds time with husband John to work diligently for open lands and the rights of people to use them. Thanks, Susy, for taking on this important job.

Also new to ALAA is Tom Burchard. Tom lives with his wife Brenda, in the same area and belongs to the same clubs as Evan Day, Ogden, Utah. Tom is currently CFMS 2nd Vice President, Circulation Manager for the NFMS Newsletter, and Utah representative to the Rocky

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Changing of the Guard

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Mountain Federation. Tom will be working closely with Rocky Mt leaders, including Dr. Bob Carlson, to convince their clubs to join ALAA, no small feat.

And last but hardly least, coming off the AFMS Presidency to take on the ALAA Vice President's job, is Lauren Williams. We thank Lauren for his service to the AFMS and welcome his new ideas and interest in ALAA. Lauren lives in Idaho Falls, Idaho, with his wife Shirleen.

TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS IN JANUARY

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We have asked Harry Baker of CORVA (ALAA is a group member) to speak on shared off road concerns, and I have contacted the local off road club, Arizona SunRiders ATV Club to ask someone from their group to speak .

SUNDAY, January 27, 8am to 1pm 1st Annual BLM CLEAN-UP.

This is a way to "give back" and create a good public image of rockhounds doing good things. Bring work gloves, hat, bottled water and sensible shoes, not flip flops. We will have more information at the meeting Friday evening as to the location. For now our BLM Team Leader, Bill Alexander will have a short orientation before we begin at the Scadden Wash 14 Day Camp Ground, east of town. BLM will furnish: trash bags, and have staff vehicles to haul away what we pick up. Look for more information on our website:

www.amlands.org

The Ye Old Timers Mineral Club will co-host this event.

Shirley Leeson, 2013 ALAA President
shirleyleeson@cox.net

A CHANGE IN THE ALAA BYLAWS & OPERATING PROCEDURES REGARDING DUES

The Officers and Directors have determined that a notice will go out each year in December instructing all individuals and clubs that DUES ARE DUE JANUARY 1st.

You are delinquent on February 15th and will be removed from the roster, with all privileges stopped on that date.

A NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR, COLLEEN MCGANN will take over her new duties immediately. New Application/Renewal forms have been adjusted for this and the website has been changed.

The Freedom to be OHV

By Amy Granat

This article is written with off-roaders in mind but the issues raised here apply equally to rockhounds. Reprinted with permission. ED

Freedom: Riding through the desert, the wind making designs in the sand like waves in the ocean. Freedom: Stopping for a moment after driving the trails to see the sunset blending with the colors of the Slate Range in Panamint Valley. Freedom: After a long day out on the trails, sitting with friends and family around a campfire.

Freedom: The ability to go wherever you want, whenever you want.

Freedom to travel. It doesn't take much to realize that in politics, life for OHV enthusiasts has become inherently unfair, and our freedom to travel wherever, whenever and however we choose an important activity that must be protected. The last election taught us some valuable lessons for the future of this pursuit, lessons we would be well advised to take to heart as we walk through the halls of the Capital, and pursue rela-

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The Freedom to be OHV

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tionships with local politicians.

Off-road enthusiasts are a varied bunch of individualists who have one critical thing in common; the need to travel off the paved road. Our mandate to protect that pursuit brings us together as a community, but we threaten our cohesiveness every time we let the differences beyond tear us apart. As motorized recreation enthusiasts, embracing those who enjoy different forms of off-road recreation is just the beginning; whether 4X4, UTV, ATV, Buggy or Sand Rail, we are targeted together, therefore we have to stand together. It makes little sense to divide ourselves into smaller and smaller groups, because as a result, our political influence becomes smaller and smaller as well. Times past we embraced a "single sport" mentality or a single political party, expecting this to save our freedom to travel, but it hasn't worked. Politically, we have worn blinders while the world outside has grown more varied, embracing the melting pot philosophy that has made America the greatest country.

Changing long-held beliefs is not easy, but is necessary to protect motorized access into the future for our children and grandchildren. While we can learn from what we've done and accomplished in the past, we only have to look to the results from the past election to understand this won't work in the future. Our need to race in the wide-open desert, crawl over boulders on a mountain trail, or search for that perfect rock specimen to add to a collection, brings us together as people who value our access to public land, we can't let the differences in political viewpoints define us as enthusiasts.

As Californians and people who value motorized access to public lands in California, our path ahead is clear. We have to walk the halls of the Capital as off-road advocates, not belonging or endorsing just one political party. We have

to stress the family values our sports bring to the public, the enjoyment our children experience in the outdoors, and stress the physicality required as off-roaders. The beauty inherent in a mountain stream or a desert vista is just as important and necessary to those that have no other way to reach it other than by means of motorized vehicles. Discrimination against any person or choice is wrong, and discrimination against those who chose motorized recreation is just as reprehensible. These are values that all can understand, no matter what political allegiance, and issues we must bring forward as off-road advocates representing all forms of motorized access, and all those who travel off-road.

Freedom to defend motorized access is a hard fought battle, but one that can be won only with help from everyone who finds this fight worthwhile, and gives of themselves, either with time or donations or both, to make it happen. While those who use the words environment or wilderness receive donations from every foundation or business wanting a 'feel-good' moment they later use for publicity, we have no such foundation for off-road advocates. CORVA has mapped a path that started 40+ years ago to represent all form of motorized access with miraculous foresight that this would be the correct path to protect off-road access into the future. We now have to embrace this wholeheartedly with our memberships and our dollars. We are working for your access, and your off-road rights, but we can't do it without you. Give generously, give often, and ask others to give. Be proud of who you are as off-roaders, your spirit and your generosity.

Amy Granat
Managing Director, CORVA
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California Off-Road Vehicle Association
Fighting For **YOUR** Right To Access Public Land

**Land Closures
by Management Decisions
John Martin CFMS PLAC-South
November 2012
plac-south@antelecom.net**

With the slow down in legislative action this election year the Public Land Use (Restriction) bills before congress are mostly on the back burners for the remainder of this congressional session. It does not look likely that much will be happening until after the November election. That does not leave very much time for any action on the bills that have been introduced and referred to the appropriate committees for review and recommendations. If no action has been taken the bills introduced during this session will die in committee and need to be reintroduced during the next congressional session. There is one “unless”, and that “unless” is, if the Land Use Bills before congress are consolidated into one large piece of legislation and attached to some other bill, like what happened in 2008 with the “Omnibus Land Bill Act of 2008”, which made it a federal felony to collect vertebrate fossils on Federal Public Lands, then there would be cause for concern.

This does not mean that all is well for Amateur Rock, Mineral and Fossil collecting on BLM and USFS managed Public Lands. These Federal Agencies, through Congressional Mandate several years ago, must provide to congress a Land Management Plan for all managed land under their jurisdiction. The creation of these plans has been in the development cycle for several years. They have been labeled Resource Management Plans (RMP) and Travel Management Plans (TMP) and through congressional mandate are required to have open public hearings and input from all stakeholders. Included in these management plans are the allowable activities and the designated roads and trails within the managed

areas. All roads and trails within the management areas must be identified and publicized. These roads and trails may lead to Rockhound collecting sites. If the road to the collecting site is not on the list of approved open roads the only way to get to the collecting site is by foot. This access battle for open roads has been waged for several years now and some process is being made thanks to a few concerned Rockhounds. There are more dangers to Rockhounds in some of these RMPs and TMPs than roads. One example is in the Bakersfield Field Office Resource Management Plan Revision.

[http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bakersfield/
Programs/planning/
caliente_rmp_revision.html#Draft](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bakersfield/Programs/planning/caliente_rmp_revision.html#Draft)

This plan is in its final stage of review and is close to approval and implementation. As an example, when this plan goes into effect, it will close the collecting area known as Horse Canyon, near Tehachapi, California. The Horse Canyon Agate is unique. This is the only green tubercular agate in North America. Under this RMP access to this collecting site will be closed and so will collecting of any kind within the area of the canyon under BLM control. This type of language is appearing in many of the Land Management Plans being released for public review and comment before presentation to congress for final approval.

Even though congressional action has slowed, Rockhounding sites are in greater jeopardy of loss through internal Public Land Management review and decisions. With a stroke of the management pen collecting sites and access may be closed in the name of resource protection. It is up to Rockhounds to make their voices heard so collecting sites and amateur collecting on public lands remain a viable hobby now and for future generations to enjoy.

The Federal Land Designation Act needs your help

Environmental lobbyist such as the wilderness society, sierra club, wildlands project are increasing their campaign to have supporters send letters to the President to encourage the use of the stroke of his pen to close more public land to public access and use be the executive order. These lobby groups are asking supporters to write the president and ask him to turn large tracks of public land into National Monuments without the consent of the State or Congress. At the present time there is a bill in congress that, if passed, would limit the power of the executive order when withdrawing public land from multipurpose access and usage.

On April 26, 2012, Sen. Mike Lee introduced the “**Federal Land Designation Requirements Act**” S.2473, It is a bill to prohibit the establishment of new units of the National Forest System, National Park System, National Wildlife Refuge System, National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, National Trails System, National Wilderness Preservation System, or any other system established by Federal law, or any national conservation or national recreation area without approval of the applicable State legislature.

This bill will limit the use of the Executive Order to create National Monuments and other Federal Land Designations without the consent of Congress and of the State where the land is located.

This bill needs the support of Rockhounds everywhere. Information on the bill may be found on the ALAA Website.

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

Rockhounds need to contact their elected officials urging them to support the passage of this bill and to become a co-sponsor. Passage of this bill will protect States Rights and keep the designation of Public Lands in the hands of Congress where voters and users will have an input to the use and management of these vast areas.

I’m Your New Incoming ALAA President Shirley Leeson

I was there in 1992 at Brunswick, Ohio when ALAA was born. The dedicated people who began ALAA were some of the movers and shakers of the AFMS. They believed it was time to organize and fight the closures that were taking place all over the country but especially in the west where there was abundant PUBLIC LANDS. I watched from the sidelines because of other commitments but over the years the public lands in my area of the country continued to shrink. I watched as small, well organized groups, were able to break off chunks of public lands and squirrel them away. I began my current involvement in 2009. I have met the most wonderful dedicated people along this incredible journey. These people have shared their varied interests in saving our public lands. Multiple Use, gives more people the chance to experience our public lands. There should be room for everyone, not just special interests. So I am here, to work with all those who want to see public lands stay open. It isn’t easy, there are politicians who are manipulated by special interests, but there are also legislators who say, “enough, stop taking the public’s land and locking it away.”

I urge you to ‘get involved.’ The worse thing a rockhound can do is nothing.” By the time you wake up, you’ll see all the public lands in the U.S. put in special interest categories and locked away, “for the good of our future children,” what ever that really means... Please join us, it isn’t enough to belong to ALAA, it’s up to you to get involved in ALAA. You can reach me at: president@amlands.org. And if you haven’t checked out our website lately, please do so. We need rockhounds all over the U.S. to step up and get involved in their local, state and federal lands. It might not seem important when you see an item in your local paper about a meeting on clean water or clean air, but these are the first signs of

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Shirley Leeson

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more restrictions to come.

This newsletter comes out four times a year. So get in the habit of checking our website: www.amlands.org frequently for updated information. I urge club editors to keep informed and share with your clubs what's going on in your area. And for those of you who are actually involved, please let us know of events taking place in your areas. You are our eyes and ears.

Thanks for listening....

Important New Developments

Shirley Leeson

At our annual ALAA business meeting in Minnetonka, MN this summer I asked our Officers and Directors to support a move by ALAA to join the New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance. The purpose of ALAA joining was to support this organization in their efforts to work within the system of the Santa Fe, New Mexico National Forest Service to keep roads open under the Travel Management Plan. After pages of documents and comments by NMOHV, the Forest Service went ahead and closed 70 percent of the roads. Many of these roads were closed with little or no explanation as to why and that violates the National Environmental Policy Act, (NEPA). The phase that created the problem was the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) offered by Forest Supervisor Maria T. Garcia. The Travel Management Plan has specific phases the Forest Service must follow. Everyone has to play by the rules set up under NEPA and in this case it was not followed and the result was: "the decision closed 70% of the existing roads and trails reduced vehicle camping nearly 95%, and virtually eliminated hunters being able to use a vehicle to retrieve game".

ALAA joined NMOHVA and donated \$1000. to their defense fund in case it was necessary to take the Santa Fe National Forest Service to court. We have just heard from NMOHVA

and they have filed suit in federal district court to begin legal action against the decisions made by the Forest Supervisor and the Region 3 Appeal Deciding Officer who supported her. We believe that it's necessary to take a stand, and this organization has the expertise to take on the Forest Service and the Environment community who will support many of the aspects as to why the Forest Service has made these arbitrary decisions. Visit the NMOHVA website at: www.nmohva.org and follow their action. If you support their action, get involved. They can use all the help and donations we are all willing to offer.

Our Public Lands - Today & ????

According to the (GAO) Government Accounting Office report-Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data, released this February reveals the following: "The federal government owns and manages roughly 635-640 million acres of land. Four agencies manage 609 million acres of this land: in the Department of the Interior (DOI), the National Park Service (NPS) manages 80 million acres, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 248 million acres, and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) manages 89 million acres (plus 217 million acres of marine refuges and monuments); and in the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service (USFS) manages 193 million acres. Most of these lands are in the West, including Alaska. In addition, the Department of Defense administers 19 million acres in military bases, training ranges, and more. The remaining several million acres (estimated) are managed by a variety of government agencies. Ownership and use of federal lands have stirred controversy for decades. Conflicting public values concerning federal lands raise many questions and issues, including the extent to which the federal government should own land; whether to focus resources on maintenance of existing infra-

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Our Public Lands - Today & ????

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structure and lands or acquisition of new areas; how to balance use and protection; and how to ensure the security of international borders along the federal lands of multiple agencies. Congress continues to examine these questions through legislative proposals, program oversight, and annual appropriations for the federal land management agencies " and yet it business as usual in D.C.

Recently while reminiscing about some of my experiences on our nations public lands I could not help thinking about the way it was, how it is now, and what it will be like for those of us who enjoy the great American Outdoors and the opportunity to recreate upon those lands in a variety of ways. As you read this article, America is poised to set sail on a journey into the unknown, a new year where there are more questions than there are answers. Where unfounded and unproven optimism for the future rules over common sense and proven logic. Our current political administration and the hierarchy of it's leadership seems hell bent on giving away our homelands and the resources they possess to foreign interest and alien ideas which undermine the very nature and fabric of America.

There has been no greater time in Americas history than the present, where our public lands as well as our private lands have been, are now, and will be threatened by internal and external force whose mission is to deprive, deny, and destroy the very greatness of Americas foundational truths and inalienable rights. It is difficult to convey in words adequately , the significance of the loss until it's gone. When common sense and truth are muddled and mistaken by the realty of deception and untruths.

Our country is facing a crisis of unknown proportions by refusing to reign in unbridled spending while at the same time ceasing the practice of paying billions of dollars of the publics money on entitlement programs to and for 3rd

world countries hostile to America. We can no longer afford to be the world's policeman when we cannot even insure and guarantee the health safety and welfare of our own citizens let alone protect and maintain and sustain our public lands. Responsibility and accountability are crucial to redirecting the path this country is currently travelling. This government must end the madness of arming our enemies with weapons which will be used against us while at the same time quietly attempting to disarm it's own citizens, both physically and emotionally. Our current administration must immediately close the gaping holes of security in the defined boundaries of our Republic. It must address and make clear and concise for all, as to who is and isn't entitled to be in this country. Yet regulatory and legislative entities of this country seem all too eager and anxious to implement and impose rules and laws which create economic hardships and eliminate and outlaw the very constitutional rights to occupy, inhabit, use and enjoy our lands, your lands, my lands our public lands.

We have been too busy and caught up with the multitude of distractions which have become all too common in daily life to fully wrap our minds around the fact that America is standing in quicksand and we are sinking. While the Department of the Interior and it vast empire of federal land management agencies continue to mishandle and mismanage our public lands under the banner of public safety and in the best interests of the public, all too often it is at the expense of the public. State land management entities of our federation are not exempt from the above remarks and observations as well, and are, in some instances subservient and share complicity with the Federal government in its role to minimize and eliminate multiple use and access from our public lands. As well as to insure that the public receives a fair and just return on lands they manage

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Our Public Lands - Today & ????

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Here are but a few of the game changers and eye openers the public has witnessed pertaining to it's public lands this year

Rep. Doc Hastings (R-Wash.), chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, has held a series of hearings this year on the Endangered Species Act (ESA) highlighting Congress' need to review and update the act, which has not happened since its enactment 37 years ago. The ESA has had a less than two-percent success rate for species recovery, has imposed severe restrictions on ranchers on both public and private lands, and has been the cause of much litigation by radical environmentalists, costing taxpayers and landowners alike.

Proposed Increased Funding to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The president has proposed a \$105 million increase to LWCF, totaling at \$450 million. \$258 million of that would go toward federal land acquisition. (Question-How in the face of reality can this happen when we are BROKE and are unable to maintain and sustain what already exist without adding more fuel to the fire!)

Scoping Report for Sage Grouse Finalized

Earlier this year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (FS) released their Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Scoping Report ("Scoping Report"), a result of the first stage of public involvement in a planning effort to list the bird under the Endangered Species Act. (NOTE:- should these agencies be successful it will significantly impact recreational access and use on huge tracts of public lands in the west.)

Wild lands Order Revived by "Guidance"

In August, the Congressional Western Caucus brought to light what appears to be the administration's revival of the congressionally blocked Wild lands Order, this time in the form two new BLM manuals (guidance) on managing lands with "wilderness characteristics". The two manuals, dated March 15th 2012, were recently discovered on the BLM website (6310 – Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands and 6320 – Considering Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process). It is unclear when the manuals were posted/made public. (Once again we see the intent of the present administration to disregard policy and attempt an end run around the public.....says a lot about the transparency Obama has promised)

WHO KNOWS??

While the U.S. government reaps billions of dollars in royalties each year from fossil fuels extracted from federal lands and waters, it does not collect any such royalties from gold, uranium or other metals mined from the same places, congressional auditors reported Wednesday. The federal government doesn't even know how much these so-called "hard rock" mines produce from federal public lands in the 12 western states where most of the mining occurs, the Government Accountability Office report found. And there is no federal law requiring the disclosure of production figures from individual mines. The non-competitive nature of the federal leasing program is being reviewed by the Interior Department's inspector general and also will be the subject of an audit by the Government Accountability Office, according to officials at the Bureau of Land Management, which oversees the leasing program. (NOTE: Isn't it time that provisions are established to help fund our public lands and amenities with a reasonable percentage of the

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Our Public Lands - Today & ????

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wealth extracted by the private sector from our public lands?)

On a positive note

In October, four hikers, including two Ojai men, sued the U.S. Forest Service, challenging the agency's right to charge visitor fees at four Southern California national forests. The lawsuit, filed in federal court, follows similar efforts elsewhere in the country. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided in February with petitioners challenging the legality of fees at Mount Lemmon in Arizona.

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act allows fees in "high-impact" recreation areas that have specific amenities available, including picnic tables, security services and developed parking. The Arizona lawsuit alleged the Forest Service went too far by charging those parking their cars just to picnic, hike or camp on undeveloped public land. The California suit follows a similar argument. (More to come)

Recommended Reading:

<http://www.amazon.com/Public-Lands-Debates-Century-Controversy/dp/087071659X>
<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42346.pdf>

In closing It is my wish this new year that your experiences outdoors are pleasant and safe and full of wonderful encounters and marvelous discoveries that await those who will reach out and walk the landscape of a new horizon.

Andy Johnson;
 NFMS-PLC
 AND ALAA Washington State Representative

Hi Jay,

Hope you can find space for the following:

From: Geolap News, bulletin of the Auckland Geological & Lapidary Society, Auckland, New Zealand, Nov 2012

"The problem with doing something right the first time is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was....."

Shirley

Public Lands

by Susy Martin

Have you ever picked up a rock
 Cut it open and revealed the beauty
 Fashioned it into a beautiful piece of jewelry?

Have you ever found a mineral specimen
 Examined the structure and marveled at the color
 Observed the entire specimen as a wonder of nature?

Have you ever found a fossil
 Looked at the pattern left long ago
 Wondered about life before us?

Have you ever taken these rocks
 These minerals, these fossils
 to the children at the schools?
 Shared with them the beauty and wonder
 Showed them a record of the history of life?

Don't make them simply look at pictures in a book.

Don't tell me I'm using up your resources
 Destroying something that should be preserved
 I am preserving the most precious resource

Let the children touch and see
 The wonders of my hobby
 Pass on the natural curiosity and zest for life I harbor.

BIO: Tom Burchard

Hello my name is Tom Burchard. I was born and raised in California, third generation.

I did not become a rock hound until my early 40's. Although family members had been rock hounds, I had had no interest until then. I started escorting my mother to club meetings due to her having some temporary night vision problems. I was her chauffeur. But, I liked the people so much I joined the club. I'd never been around such a group of friendly, knowledgeable, caring, sharing folk before.

I went to some rock club shows and decided to take a lapidary class to better appreciate what it took to make those beautiful objects in the display cases. Turned out I REALLY liked grinding & polishing rocks! Who Knew?

Then I was asked by my teachers if I was interested in teaching others how to grind & polish. I'll try anything once. Turned out I REALLY liked teaching, too! Who Knew? Since 1999 I've been teaching lapidary for the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies - Earth Science Studies Seminars.

I met my wife Brenda in 2000 and we married and I moved to where she lived in Ogden, Utah in 2001. We belong to two clubs here in Ogden that are associated with two federations. I still belong to my 'parent club' in Los Altos, California so we are members of three clubs and three federations.

I became involved politically in all three because I believed I had something to contribute. I joined ALAA for the same reason. I have accepted the invitation to participate as an ALAA Director because I believe we need to do more to protect public lands from people who wish to lock them up.

Tom Burchard
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BIO: Colleen McGann

Hello, I'm Colleen McGann, born in Oakland CA, raised in Fairfax VA, returning to California after college.

In college, I chose geology for freshman science class and loved it.

Once back in California, in San Diego, I again became interested in geology. One friend's family was involved in gold mining, a legendary California sport. A work colleague was in a local rock club, which I soon joined. I started taking geology classes at community college and was hooked! My work employer moved me to San Jose and the Peninsula Gem & Geology Society show was the first offered in July of 1986.

I joined PGGGS and have been an active participant in all the club activities, fieldtrips, shows, and eventually I held every position or office at one time or another, or twice.

Following in the footsteps of club members, I went to the CFMS Earth Science program at Zzyzx. Here I learned how important the federation was and became our club's Federation director, volunteering in Federation affairs and eventually went through the chairs, to the presidency in 2006.

As much as I liked lapidary and club activities, I really liked the displays of minerals and lapidary, the competition cases of minerals and the wide range of education displays. I have created both education and mineral displays for competition. This led to becoming a judge for both CFMS and AFMS.

Being involved at the CFMS level has educated me in the need we have to protect our lands even as our collecting areas disappear. Working with ALAA expands my participation in our community and nation. I look forward to meeting fellow members at future shows.

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