

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

January - February - March 2010

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

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 2010

President's Message Bits and Pieces

By Dick Pankey, President

Over the past year the American Land Access Association has experienced a substantial increase on a percentage basis in our membership of individuals and societies. But compared to our potential we have a long way to go. ALAA does not send out dues invoices but there was a reminder to send in your dues for 2010 in the December Newsletter. That worked for some people and societies. Unfortunately we didn't get the point across to a lot of our members. As of mid-February 73 out of 107 individual members and 32 out of 57 society member had not sent in their 2010 dues. We hope we aren't losing you and it is just a case of "forgetfuls". We are assaulted daily with proposed legislation, changes in BLM and FS management plans and regulations, and the new assault, National Monuments by Presidential Decree. The need for ALAA is greater today than it was even a year ago. And we need informed and involved members more than ever. We need all of you and a lot more new members. If you have not done so already please send your 2010 dues to our Treasurer, **Ruth Bailey**, today!

Individual and society membership – equal but different. Individual membership in ALAA is not for everyone. While your monetary support is appreciated and useful, what we want and need from individual members is involvement, participation and action. Involved by keeping informed and sharing what you know. Participation, by attending meetings of BLM and FS, reading and analyzing legislation and regulations, and sharing your talent, skills and interests serving with ALAA projects. And taking action by writing letters and e-mails to your legislators and to the regulators, writing articles for newsletters and other publications.

Society members have the same voting rights and participation rights as individual member through their designated representative. While individual membership in ALAA may not be for everyone I believe that every AFMS/rockhound society should be a member. With society membership you will be kept informed of the proposed legislation, changes in BLM and FS management plans and regulations, and the new assault, National Monuments by Presidential Decree and other challenges. And your members are a potential vast source of action for writing letters and e-mails to your legislators and to the regulators to respond to the challenges. But for a society membership to be effective you need an interested, willing, and committed representative that will interface effectively between ALAA and your society. While most societies have designated a representative we are missing a few. Also we really need an e-mail contact for each society (and for each individual member) for fast, efficient contact as the situation requires. If you haven't done so already, make sure we have your e-mail address. Send it to Ruth Bailey.

The American Land Access Association will hold its annual meeting at the AFMS/CFMS Show and Meeting at La Habra, CA in June. This is an important meeting where we will elect the 4 officers, and this year, 2 directors; approve our budget; officer reports and we will have a speaker from the Blue Ribbon Coalition again this year. At this time the exact time, date and location has not been firmed up, I am trying to schedule it for Saturday June, 18th between 2 and 4 PM. This meeting is open to all members and to the general public. I hope that most of our officers and directors will be able to attend this important meeting.

Be an involved member!

**UPDATES ON OUR
"SMALL STEPS FORWARD"
Shirley Leeson, ALAA Vice President
Membership**

We here in California have been overwhelmed by all the events going on here in California. I know many of you are from other areas of the country, but what starts here usually ends up in your areas, so please read this carefully.

We've had a big blowout at Clear Creek, a number of our ALAA members and CFMS club members have attended the various town hall type meetings regarding the Clear Creek situation. A number of our people have spoken and written papers on the Clear Creek situation. The EPA is trying to close the area, but using some interesting statistics as to the asbestos hazards in the area. The Blue Ribbon have sent numerous people to defend their rights to use the area and this overlaps our interests.

The California Desert has been in the news, with Senator Diane Feinstein and her staff getting all the areas they have lined up to close into a neat little package for Congress.

In our last ALAA Newsletter I asked about a number of clubs who used to belong to ALAA and we had lost touch with them. We have gained a few back, thanks to our members contacting members of those clubs.

We had lots of people at Quartzsite this year, and if we had arranged ahead of time for a site to hold a meeting, we could have filled a hall with people we saw at the various events. SO, I propose to the Officers and Board Members of ALAA, the following:

We change our Bylaws/Op to reflect an annual ALAA meeting in Quartzsite, the date, time and place to be arranged for ahead of time. With so many of our members already attending some portion of Quartzsite, let's take advantage of it and have a HUGE MEETING. We need time to talk and connect. Let's take advantage of this time of year when so many of us are at Quartzsite. What say YOU???

Shirley Leeson,
ALAA Vice President
shirleyleeson@cox.net and beauhol-
land@centurytel.net



via Bell Notes 2/88
via Behive Buzzer 1/99

NEWS FLASH - NEWS FLASH**ALAA Annual Meeting
Announcement**

The ALAA Annual Meeting will be held at the LaHabra Community Center, (same as CFMS Directors' meeting) on Saturday afternoon June 19th from 2 to 4 PM. Stop at the ALAA information table at the show for directions. This meeting open to all members and to the general public.

Dick

ALAA Website Being Rebuilt

The ALAA Website is being rebuilt so please be patient. We are hoping to have it renewed and on line by the CFMS/AFMS Show in June.

Any Ideas or suggestions please submit to webmaster@amlands.org or alaa@antelecom.net

Thank you for your ideas and patience.

ALAA Internet Committee

ALAA Membership Dues

DUES ARE DUE!

Now is the time for all of us to get a check in for our 2010 dues. We have heard from a lot of you and have had good reports of the efforts being made to keep our lands accessible to all of us. Please send in your dues as soon as possible.

Dues for 2010 are \$25.00 for a single member or a couple and \$50.00 for a Society.

Send your check payable to ALAA to:

Treasurer Ruth Bailey
2857 Addison Place
Santa Clara, CA 95051.

Thanks, Ruth

ALAA Election in June

Officers and Directors,

At our annual meeting in June we will be electing 2 Directors and the 4 officers. The one year term directors were Jon Spunaugle and Evan Day. As president I hope to continue on for another term and I hope the other 3 officers and Jon Spunaugle and Evan Day continue on for another term. We have had a great 2009. 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. If for some reason you can not or do not wish to continue in your office, please advise me by April 1st.

I hope that all of you or as many as possible will be able to attend the AFMS/CFMS show and meetings in LaHabra, CA on June 16 to 20. I look forward to seeing you there.

Dick Pankey

**Joyce Hanschu - Life Member
By Dick Pankey**

The American Land Access Association is pleased to award Life Membership to Joyce Hanschu in appreciation and recognition of extraordinary service as Secretary and Treasurer.

Joyce and her late husband, Norm, served ALAA for many years, Norm as Treasurer and Joyce as Secretary. After Norm's passing in January, 2009 Joyce carried on the important tasks of Treasurers and membership.

A plaque in recognition of the special status of Life Membership was prepared and will be presented to Joyce during the Midwest Geological and Lapidary Show in May by Marv and Kitty Starbuck.

Thank you Joyce for your special service to the American Land Access Association.

A Discussion about the California Desert Protection Act of 2010

Wednesday, March 10th was the day for my meeting with Chris, the Field Representative from U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein's office. Our first meeting in person to discuss the California Desert Protection Act of 2010 otherwise known as Senate Bill S.2921 and Rockhounding in the Mojave Desert. I of course came with the concerns of all California Rockhounds, worried about their future collecting access in the proposed National Monuments. We met in the National Parks Conservation Association's office in Joshua Tree, CA. As I opened the front door to the storefront office, Mike the California Desert Program Manager held out his hand and said, "Hi, I'm Mike and I recognize you, you've been to my old house" to which I replied "Yes, in Twenty-nine Palms". Another reaffirmation of this small world getting smaller. We no sooner sat down when Chris came through the door to join us. Handshakes, introductions and a large map of Southern California showing the proposed Monuments spread out on a desktop and here we go.

As I've said before, The California Desert Protection Act of 2010 is more about stopping large scale energy development on the undisturbed natural Mojave Desert landscapes than trying to ruin a rockhounds recreation. Tessera Solar and other would be renewable energy developers would have most likely closed their private properties off to rockhounds if not for the actions of U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and the Wildlands Conservancy. The proposed Mojave Trails National Monument will protect all the recreational uses for rockhounds and the general public on lands previously owned by the Catellus Development Corporation. The former Catellus lands were purchased with close to \$45 million dollars of private funds by the Wildlands Conservancy and then donated for conservation as well as recreational uses.

Now for the really good news, rockhounding is an authorized recreational use of the proposed Mojave Trails National Monument

and the Monuments will be administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Did you get that, BLM not NPS so nothing will change from the rules and guidelines we already know.

Read <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/needles/rock.html> and let out a sigh of relief. While I have you reading, pull up your copy of the California Desert Protection Act of 2010 and read from the bottom half of page 9 to the top of page 10 of S.2921. The Bill says "The management plan shall include provisions that... Authorize the continued recreational uses of the Monument (including hiking, camping, hunting, mountain biking, sightseeing, off-highway vehicle recreation on designated routes, rockhounding, and horseback riding)..." Yes, off-highway vehicles on designated routes, means on existing dirt roads and trails. We rockhounds are not going to lose our OHV access to mineral & rock collecting sites. Did you know that the Off-Road Business Association (ORBA) and the American Motorcyclist Association, district 37 (AMA D37) now support S.2921 the California Desert Protection Act of 2010?

I also asked for detailed maps of the proposed Mojave Trails National Monument so I can see the exact boundaries, dirt roads, railroad tracks, mines and/or any other important details. Chris, the Field Representative from U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein's office said they would be emailed pdf soon, in a few days.

After over an hour of conversation, explanation and the sharing of Rockhounder's concerns, I came away very relieved with an optimistic view of Senate Bill S.2921 otherwise known as California Desert Protection Act of 2010. Rockhounds don't lose access, the BLM will continue to administer the area and the government is not out to take anything away from us. The Bill is all about stopping renewable energy development of lands donated for the purpose of recreation and conservation. I feel we should support Senate Bill S.2921 in its current form.

Roger Thompson
Hi-Desert Rockhounds
Yucca Valley, CA

**Report on Emery County
Public Lands Use Council
Meeting March 2, 2010
Tom Burchard and Joe Kent**

Emery County has had a committee holding meetings and field trips to gather information to put forth a Lands Use Bill for the County for about nine months. Their Lands Use Bill will attempt to inform and hold back any sweeping federal legislation with out at least considering the wants and needs and wishes of the general public in the area where such legislation or legal action might take place. This process is and has been open to the public. Many factions of 'Lands Use' have attended the meetings and field trips. The Council Meeting was scheduled to begin at 10 AM. Joe Kent and I arrived ahead of schedule and found that there was an 'information' session already in progress.

As we sat down, Mr. John Andrews, Chief Legal Council for 'Sitla' (Utah State Institutional Lands Trust Administration) was already speaking. He had just finished showing some of the acreage that Sitla is likely to trade for, or from. We knew that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) had proposed this idea of trading federal lands for state lands, but I was not aware that this process was already ongoing.

Mr. Andrews talked about some of the 'trades' that had taken place after the 1996 creation of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Arches to federal hands. Sitla had many parcels of land that had to be traded back to the state in these areas. I am not sure of the time frame in which this took place, but eventually both sides were happy to come to the compromise they did.

Mr. Andrews was sure to explain to us that Sitla's Mandate is not an easy one to administer, and because of it's Mandate and Charter and language in the State Constitution, is not able to take sides on the issue of land use, except to insure that State Lands are used to fund our school system. The State Trust Lands Act states that the "General Public" is not to be considered when deciding Use and Value. But this mandate is used by Sitla to validate 'existing' roads, through and to, State Lands. This is and will be useful to people as 'existing' roads can be a tool for keeping areas open that might otherwise be closed if we cannot prove existing or pre-existing access was/is available. A separate funding of this process was set

up by establishing a 'surcharge' from off road licensing fees. The process of validating existing road is ongoing, but if we want to ask them to look in specific areas instead of just generally there is a 'Request' process that needs to be filed with them. The forms are available in the Sitla web site. Most of the rhetoric about these roads mentioned a term that I was not familiar with, but I am sure that the people more familiar with land use issues would know about. That is "RS2477". I mention this so that the readers of this report will know that that is mostly what they were talking about.

I later received this information from Evan Day: Revised Statute 2477 (commonly known as "RS2477") was enacted by the United States Congress in 1866 to encourage the settlement of the Western United States by the development of a system of highways. Its entire text is one sentence: "the right-of-way for the construction of highways across public lands not otherwise reserved for public purposes is hereby granted." It granted to counties and states a right-of-way across federal land when a highway was built. The mechanism for recording rights-of-way, and the definition of "highway", remains murky to this day. RS2477 was repealed in 1976 under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The repeal was subject to "valid existing rights", but since many RS2477 road claims were never recorded, the "valid existing rights" clause is open to wide interpretation. RS2477 is used in several different ways to claim access to roads that are closed by what most would naturally think of as the governing authority; but can be divided into two categories based on whether the land is currently owned by the government (usually the federal government) or by private individuals. Shared-access groups (mostly ATV groups) argue that lack of formal action by the counties does not diminish the public's right to use these routes, and have engaged in acts of protest including threats, criminal trespassing, vigilante raids, unauthorized road construction, and vandalism to [1] vigorously assert what they view as a public easement/usufruct right to travel on roads that traverse private property, and roads that traverse federal property that the land manager has closed. The Jarbidge Shovel Brigade is the best-known group that was formed for this purpose.

It is at this point that the 'actual' lands use committee meeting started.

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Public Lands Use Meeting (Continued from page 7)

Item # 1 on their agenda was the introduction of Gary Klimka the Administrator of the Price BLM Office. Mr. Klimka advised that he was at the meeting mainly to answer any questions, but that he was very pleased to see so many people in attendance. There were more than 40 people from the general public there. He was asked about the RS2477 process and he advised that the BLM is not responsible for determining RS2477 designations, but it is a legal process that takes place in the courts. BLM records are used in the process. He was asked 'How far back do BLM records go as regards roads, ponds and structures.' He advised that some of the BLM records are available 'on line', but feels that county records are more likely to have more complete, accurate and detailed records. Mr. Andrews stated that a 'General State Survey' was done by Sitla when they were first chartered, in 1976. He did not indicate in what form this information was available in.

Item #2: Ms. Pam Juliano, an Aide from Representative Matheson's Office was introduced. She distributed letters from Rep. Matheson and Senator Robert Bennett, to Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar. Both letters admonished Secretary Salazar and the Department of the Interior for drafting a list of places in Utah that could become National Monuments, without consulting anyone from the State of Utah, prior to creating this list. Both politicians feel that 'land use' decisions should be a 'bottom up' process, not a 'top down' process, involving all the stake holders' opinions. Ms. Juliano urged that members of the general public need to participate more in general, and specifically in the 'Telephone Town Hall Meetings', that usually occur on a monthly basis, except when close to an election. If we wanted to be sure to be included in these meetings, a 'sign up' is available to be put on a list of possible participants. You should go to www.house.gov/ and 'click' on 'Representative Matheson'. Otherwise the Tele-Town Hall Meetings participants are chosen randomly from registered voters in the state. She gave us her e-mail address pamela.juliano@mail.house.gov.

(Item#3?) There were several other people introduced from various state and federal agencies, but their reports were not about land use in particular and so will not be included in this report.

Item # 4: Mr. Ronald Dean, an Aide from Senator

Hatch's Office, was introduced. He reiterated Senator Hatch's consternation with the Dept of Interior's 'list', and reported that Senator Hatch had had several conversations with Rom Emanuel and President Obama about this. In his conversations with them he made them aware that there are 'Processes' ongoing in Utah as regards 'land use'. They stated that they had been unaware of these processes and that 'Nothing Imminent' was planned as regards National Monument' designations. Senator Hatch was not particularly pleased with this language, as it is almost the same language used by President Clinton, just prior to the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument creation. Senator Hatch's office has been talking with many people on both side of the land use issue. People inside the Dept. of Interior are becoming more aware of the ongoing processes in Utah. But, several people warned that if these processes do not seem to be moving 'forward' towards conclusion, their weight of consideration will be lessened quickly. Land Use Policies should be codified sooner, rather than later. He mentioned the affect the Washington County Land Bill had on those in Washington D.C. As I was not familiar with that, or its affects, I cannot be sure if it was positive or negative.

Jo Kent sent me this additional information after we made the first draft of this report:

"I have been reviewing what we picked up from the BLM and also the Washington Co. Bill and then called Emery Co. and talked to the Committee Chair Ray Peterson. He gave me a brief history covering Emery Co. land use history and its connection to Washington Co. as well.

A brief characterization would be that the BLM current plan includes a wilderness area of 450K acres. Emery Co. is comfortable with the BLM plan but is scared of the proposed Red Rock Wilderness Act which would cover 1.4 million acres. What the Washington Co. Bill did was to beat Congress to the punch and designate the wilderness as Washington Co. perceived it, and getting it approved by Congress.

Rays feeling was that they would have to expand the 450K acres somewhat to make to the bill acceptable to get Congressional support. His suggestion was three fold:

- 1.) Review the present BLM Access Maps on line.
- 2.) If there are additional specific areas that we would

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Public Lands Use Council Meeting

(Continued from page 8)

like access to, that they are communicated to the council.

3.) That the clubs compose a letter of support of the Emery Counties efforts.”

In Addition: I downloaded a copy of the Washington County Lands Bill and find that in addition to being, I think, successfully preemptive, that they were also successful in getting some of the land that had been ‘under study’ to be released, as well as defining some favorable, to Washington Co., management policies.

Item # 5: Facilitator

Other than the general meeting and discussion of different sides of the lands use issue, it seemed that whether or not to hire a ‘Facilitator’ or Administrative Assistant’ to one of the council members, to gather, collate, disseminate and prepare a guideline, or outline, for the persons actually writing a ‘lands use bill’ seemed the most pertinent item on the agenda for the council. There was much discussion as to pro and con, and to whether any ‘outside’ funding should be accepted or not. In general, the members of the public in attendance encouraged the council to move ahead with the bill, with or without a Facilitator.

Of note: 1) There are about 400K acres in Emery County that are designated Wilderness Studies Area’s (WSA). To date, no WSA acreage, anywhere, has ever been released from that designation. Essentially making AS defacto Wilderness. 2) Southern Utah Wilderness Association (SUWA) is not generally happy with the Resource Management Plan (RMP) as regards Emery County and the San Rafael Swell. 3) There is no actual ‘guideline’ as to how to manage a Monument’. Can an Emery County Land Use Bill have any impact on A) the RMP or B) Monument Management? A motion to table the Facilitator issue was made and seconded. The motion passed.

There was a fairly wide range of interests represented by the 40 + members of the general public in attendance. OHV clubs, Rockhounds, SUWA, Recreationists, Ranchers and Farmers.

Submitted by:
Tom Burchard
Joe Kent

BLUERIBBON COALITION PARTNER ACTION ALERT!

DNR has closed Reiter, if and when it re-opens the DNR plans to make it much smaller

Dear BRC members, supporters and action alert subscribers,

Our partners over at the Northwest Motorcycle Association (NMA) sent us word that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources has released its Draft Reiter Foothills Forest Recreation Plan. You can read NMA's alert here: <http://www.nmaoffroad.org/news.shtml#346>

BRC is asking our members and supporters in Washington to contact Washington DNR Commissioner of Public Lands, Peter Goldmark, telling him the DNR should prioritize motorized recreation at Reiter.

We've put together another one of our INSANELY EASY 3-Step action items below. Please take action today, and please forward this to friends and family who could help.

Thanks in advance,
Ric Foster
Public Lands Department Manager
BlueRibbon Coalition
208-237-1008 208-237-1008 ext 107

**BRC WASHINGTON ACTION ALERT
IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUESTED
SITUATION:**

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has released its Draft Reiter Foothills Forest Recreation Plan, and there are serious concerns about the current plan. The new DNR plan proposes limiting ORV use to only 1,100 acres. That is 72.5% less land for ORV use than what has historically been available.

The DNR admits that 1,100 acres is inadequate to accommodate existing ORV use, and their own research has identified additional area suitable for ORV use. Still they refuse to increase the area available to ORVs.

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BRC Action Alert
(Continued from page 9)

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

Please write to Washington DNR Commissioner of Public Lands, Peter Goldmark, telling him what you think of this plan, and asking him for a detailed reply on how he plans to solve the problem.

**BRC'S THREE-STEP ACTION ITEM
STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW
TO EMAIL YOUR COMMENTS:**

NOTE: Please Remember - be polite. If possible, make your comments as personal as you can.

- STEP 1:** Open your email program and start a draft email. Address the email to CPL@wadnr.gov. Put "Draft Reiter Foothills Forest Recreation Plan" in the Subject Line.
- STEP 2:** Use the comments below as a guideline for comments in your email. Cut and paste is okay, but try to make your comment letter as personal as possible.
- STEP 3:** Take just a minute to add a bit about where you live, where you like to ride and how much trail-based recreation means to you. Be certain to include your name and address. A return email address is NOT sufficient! ("anonymous" emails are often discarded).

EXTRA CREDIT:

If you can add any personal testimony about your experiences enjoying this spectacular area, please take a minute to add that to your email.

Then click "Send" and you're done!

SAMPLE COMMENTS:

The area the proposed Reiter Foothill plan allocates for motorized recreation is significantly inadequate to facilitate the current recreational usage. This shortcoming is addressable as noted below.

In addition to the proposed ORV area, additional suitable area should be allocated for lightweight, single-track motorized recreation.

It is important that the DNR recognize that different types of ORV use have different impacts on the landscape. Just because the largest ORV may be inappropriate in a specific area, that should not preclude allowing lightweight two wheeled ORV access.

Prioritizing motorized recreation at Reiter is consistent with the DNR's Statewide Recreation Program Vision and Management Goals. "DNR envisions a future in which the lands it manages offer distinct and diverse outdoor recreation opportunities within the overall fabric of recreation in Washington."

The overall fabric of recreation in Washington includes prohibitions on motorized trail recreation in all National Parks, all Wilderness Areas, all Natural Resource Conservation Areas, all State Parks (except the 600 acre Riverside facility near Spokane), the Mt Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest, and the vast majority of county and city parks. At a statewide level, motorized trail use is prohibited on over 80 percent of the trail mileage. In the areas adjacent to the Reiter Foothills, that prohibition is 100 percent.

When considering the overall recreation fabric, it is reasonable for all areas within the Reiter study area that are found to be suitable for motorized recreation to be incorporated in the plan as areas where some form of motorized trail recreation is allowed.

The Reiter Foothills Forest Recreation Plan shows that the offroad motorcyclists are the largest user group, their recreational needs should be a priority.

The BlueRibbon Coalition is a national (non-profit) trail-saving group that represents over 600,000 recreationists nationwide The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) season is beginning. Federal employees, please mark BlueRibbon Coalition and Check #11402 on your CFC pledge form to support our efforts to protect your access. Join us at 1-800-258-3742 1-800-258-3742 <http://www.sharetrails.org>

As a non-profit, grassroots organization funded primarily by membership dues and donations, we greatly appreciate your support.

Visit <http://www.sharetrails.org/make-a-difference-now> to help fund our efforts to protect your trails!

BRC Action Alert

Here is another attempt to take away our rights to access our National Forests by the forest service and the corrupt leaders in Washington DC. It is our forests and our public lands keep it open for our access and use. If you do not use the forests for recreation please pass this on to your friends who do!!!

BLUERIBBON COALITION ACTION ALERT!

FS plans to close over 80% of the routes and eliminate 90% of dispersed camping in mountainair ranger district

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUESTED

Dear BRC Action Alert Subscriber,

Mark Werkmeister, President of the New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance (NMOHVA), just sent us a their latest Access Alert on the Cibola National Forest's Mountainair Ranger District.

It's bad. Mark reports that the FS wants to close 80% of the existing roads and trails, which will eliminate about 90% of the dispersed camping.

The situation is so crappy; we decided to send this alert to all surrounding states.

Please send a message to the Forest Service - even if you don't visit this area

Thanks in advance for your support,
Ric Foster
Public Lands Department Manager
BlueRibbon Coalition
208-237-1008 208-237-1008 ext 107

PS. Forgot to mention, NMOHVA's website is an excellent source for anything recreation related in New Mexico. BOOKMARK THIS SITE!!

www.nmohva.org/

Clear Creek News

Our new Public Lands Advisory Chairman, Bill Spence, thought this would be of great interest to our club members and members on our contact lists. Please look below for more information about the Clear Creek Area in San Benito County and the proposed changes to access.

*Thanks
June Harris, SCVGMS Editor*

From: William Spence
Subject: Public Lands Access - Clear Creek, San Benito County

June, please forward to all SCVGMS members or those that you know to be interested in collecting of minerals and/or lapidary materials from Clear Creek area in San Benito county.

The Hollister BLM office has issued its draft Resource Management Plan for the Clear Creek Management Area in San Benito County, and it is available online now at the BLM website. The report is approximately 700 pages long and lays out 7 options for the future management of CCMA. The "preferred" option would put Clear Creek itself (i.e. plasma agate and jade) permanently off limits and restrict vehicle traffic to the Ridge Road (Spanish Lake Road) with access only through New Idria. This would make most other collecting localities in CCMA virtually inaccessible to collecting as the only approved access would be on foot from the Ridge Road and limited to day trips. In effect, this plan makes CCMA accessible only to hardcore hikers.

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Clear Creek News
(Continued from page 11)

Bay Area Mineralogists intends to organize a consolidated response to the plan, including SCVGMS, Sequoia, Peninsula and any other club that wants to participate. Our preliminary plan is to meet after having read and critiqued the plan to draft a consolidated response, probably in early to mid-January. Tentatively meetings will be hosted by Stan Bogosian (member of BAM and Peninsula) in Saratoga. Any SCVGMS member who would like to participate in this effort should contact me asap.

Thanks, Bill Spence
bill.spence777@sbcglobal.net

FYI

There is still time to make a statement.

"BLM extends comment period on
Clear Creek draft plan"
(BLM-California news release, 3/5/10)

The Clear Creek Management Area in southern San Benito and western Fresno counties has a long history of public recreational use. But because of increased awareness of potential health risks caused by asbestos, the area has been temporarily closed since May 2008. The temporary closure remains in effect until the new management plan is approved. Comments must be postmarked or received by April 19, 2010. http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/newsroom/2010/march/cc1048_clearcreek_comments_extended.html

The public comment period for the Clear

Creek Management Area draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement has been extended by 45 days by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

"Because the plan addresses potential long term restrictions on public lands," said BLM Acting California State Director Jim Abbott, "we are extending the comment period to allow further public input"

The Clear Creek Management Area in southern San Benito and western Fresno counties has a long history of public recreational use. But because of increased awareness of potential health risks caused by asbestos, the area has been temporarily closed since May 2008. The closure was in response to results of an Environmental Protection Agency's human health risk assessment. The temporary closure remains in effect until the new management plan is approved.

The draft resource management plan and environmental impact statement was released in December 2009 with a 90 day comment period. Three public meetings were also held in Coalinga, Hollister and Santa Clara in January 2010 to gather comments. The initial 90-day comment period ends today.

Comments must be postmarked or received by April 19, 2010. Written public comments may be submitted by mail to BLM, Attn. CCMA RMP/EIS, 20 Hamilton Court, Hollister, CA 95023. Comment may also be provided via email: cahormp@ca.blm.gov, or fax: 831-630-5055.

For more information contact the Hollister Field Office at 831-630-5000 831-630-5000 .

Via John Martin
CFMS PLAC South 2005-2008, 2010
plac-south@antelecom.net

U.S. Forest Service Will Leave Existing Discounts in Place 3/19/2010

In December, we reported on the U.S. Forest Service's plans to reduce or eliminate some discounts in the senior and disabled park pass programs. The full story can be accessed at www.escapees.com/hot_article.asp?ID=279. We asked all RVers to take the time to send the Forest Service their comments, and it appears that our voices were heard. The Forest Service issued a press release on March 17 to announce that they would not be going forward with their plan to cut those discount programs. The complete press release is included below.

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service
Washington, D.C.

Release No. 1004 Contact: Press Office
(202) 205-1134

USDA Forest Service Continues Discounts at Campgrounds

WASHINGTON, March 17, 2010--USDA Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell announced today his decision not to implement proposed changes to fees charged to holders of passes at Forest Service campgrounds operated by private businesses. The Chief's decision means Seniors and people with disabilities will continue to receive a discount at Forest Service campgrounds run by private concessions.

The Forest Service had proposed changes to discounts provided to holders of Golden Age and Golden Access Passports and Senior and Access Passes. Under the proposal, discounts at concession-operated campgrounds would have changed from the current 50 percent to 10 percent. After considering many public comments, the Chief determined the proposed

changes are not the best way to address growing challenges regarding services provided by private businesses at Forest Service recreation facilities.

"Each year more than 175 million people enjoy recreational opportunities on national forests and grasslands, and that includes more than 15 million visits to our campgrounds," said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "Particularly in these difficult economic times, it is very important to maintain affordable access to our national forests and grasslands, giving people easy ways to recreate and find respite in the great outdoors."

The Chief's decision leaves in place a 50 percent discount at campgrounds run by private concessions for holders of Golden Age and Golden Access Passports and Interagency Senior and Access Passes. Concessioners are not required to accept passes at day-use sites. Seniors age 62 and older pay a one-time \$10 fee for the Senior Pass. Lifetime Access Passes for people with disabilities are free.

The Forest Service conducted a 60-day public notice and comment period on the proposed changes. More than 4,000 comments were received.

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of National Forest System land, provides stewardship assistance to non-federal forest landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. For more information, visit: www.fs.fed.us.

We are glad that the Forest Service has decided to do the right thing. A big Thank You to all the RVers who sent in comments and helped spread the word!

Escapees E-news: www.escapees.com/enews.asp

To ALAA O&D,

Check out these meetings in your area and try to attend. Evan Day said he was planning to attend the Salt Lake City meeting. I am planning to attend the Sacramento meeting. While I have your attention, the deadline for ALAA Newsletter is March 15. What is happening in your area? What have you seen or heard that we all should know about? Any ideas for what ALAA should be doing? You don't have to wait until the last minute to send in your articles.

Do you write letters to your congressmen or to BLM, FS or other regulators? Are you a good letter writer or know how to write a good letter? How about writing an article about how to write a letter. I often hear "I would like to write, but don't know what to say or how to say it." We need more example letters, outlines, form letters. Who can help?

Dick

NEWS RELEASE: USDA FOREST SERVICE
 Press Office, 201 14th Street, SW, Washington, D.C., 20050
 Voice (202) 205-1134 (202) 205-1134
 Web: <http://www.fs.fed.us>
 Release No. 1003
 Contact: PRESS OFFICE, 202-205-1134 202-205-1134

**USDA FOREST SERVICE
 WILL HOST PUBLIC EVENTS ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW PLANNING RULE**

WASHINGTON, Feb.24, 2010--USDA Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell today announced a series of events to provide opportunities for public discussion on the development of a new Forest Service Land and Resource Management Planning Rule (planning rule). The Forest Service will host a national science forum, three national roundtables and nine regional roundtables.

Providing multiple opportunities for public participation ties directly to President Obama's call for open government that is transparent, participatory and collaborative, and illustrates Forest Service commitment to engage the public in the development of a new planning rule.

"We encourage broad participation in the creation of our new planning rule," said Tidwell. "Through collaboration we will be able to better address the current and future needs of the National Forest System such as restoration, protecting watersheds, addressing climate change, sustaining local economies, improving collaboration, and working across landscapes."

Following the meetings, notes will be posted on the planning rule Web site, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>, to allow for further feedback. Summaries of the presentations and discussions in the science forum and roundtables, along with the individual comments received during the 60-day formal comment period on the Notice of Intent, will be used to develop the proposed rule and a draft environmental impact statement.

The meetings announced today include:

National Science Forum March 29 and 30, 2010, in Washington, DC.

National roundtables April 1 and 2, April 20 and 21, and May 11 and 12, 2010, in Washington, DC.

Nine regional roundtables in the following locations:

- * Pacific Northwest Region (Region 6), Portland, OR on April 6, 2010;
- * Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5), Sacramento, CA on April 6, 2010;
- * Intermountain Region (Region 4), Salt Lake City, UT on April 8, 2010;
- * Rocky Mountain Region, (Region 2), Lakewood, CO on April 12, 2010;
- * Northern Region (Region 1), Missoula, MT on April 13, 2010;
- * Alaska Region (Region 10), Juneau, AK on April 13, 2010;
- * Southern Region (Region 8), Atlanta, GA during the week of April 12, 2010 (exact date to be determined);
- * Eastern Region (Region 9), Chicago, IL during the week of April 28 (exact date to be determined); and
- * Southwestern Region (Region 3), Albuquerque, NM on April 28, 2010.
- * Region 2 will host additional meetings on April 14 in Cheyenne, WY and on April 21 meeting in Rapid City, SD.

Webcasting may also be available for selected meetings; please check the planning rule website, at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>, for the most up-to-date information.

To encourage widespread participation the Forest Service is using new media tools in conjunction with the public meetings. Please visit:

<http://blogs.usda.gov/usdablogs/planningrule> to participate in the Forest Service web-based planning rule blog.

**News from Western Slope No Fee Coalition
WE'VE FOUND THE SMOKING GUNS!
The Paper Kind!**

Two important letters have recently been made public, both of which concern US Forest Service fee increases for seniors and disabled persons. These will put to rest any doubts you might have had that private companies are determined to achieve the total privatization of recreation on public lands and that the U.S. Forest Service is aiding and abetting them.

- 1) Derrick Crandall, President of the American Recreation Coalition (ARC), recently wrote a letter detailing ARC's anti-public lands, pro-corporate control lobbying, and posted it on their website for the whole world to see. Read Crandall's letter [HERE](#).
- 2) Warren Meyer, head of the National Forest Recreation Association, used a NFRA press release to try and frame the plan (which NFRA initiated) to cheat seniors and the disabled out of the benefits they were promised with their lifetime passes as somehow being a boon to young families. Read the NFRA statement [HERE](#).

What's most important in these letters:

- 1) 1) For the first time ever, Crandall openly refers to the corporate takeover of Public Lands, giving ARC credit for its central role in establishing Fee Demo and the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, or R.A.T. (Recreation Access Tax), and states the support of ARC for privatization of public lands along with charging prices for recreation at the same rates as private corporations do.
Even some members of ARC are against increasing fees, especially members of RV groups like the Family Motorcoach

Association and the Good Sam Club, many of whom are seniors. They have seen the value of their retirement savings plummet and they rely on their discount to make camping affordable. All citizens need a fair level of access in return for funds supplied by our taxes.

- 1) The NFRA statement makes clear that the policy changes being proposed by the Forest Service are originating with them for the benefit of the firms they represent, and that the Forest Service is merely acting as their front man. There is no *public* benefit to the policy changes, only benefits to *private* interests.

Some pro-fee supporters say that the US Forest Service is short of funds and therefore continually increased fees are essential for its basic operations, which include the expense of fire-fighting. However, their recreation budget is separate from fire and the overall funding for the USFS is not only substantially ahead of inflation but has increased by over 60% since 2000.

So, what can we do?

Here are three suggestions which would be a great help at this important time, when a bill to REPEAL the R.A.T. (S.868) is pending in Congress:

- 1) Write letters to the editor or Guest Editorials about ending these ever-increasing fees, and **keeping Public Land accessible to everyone, especially seniors and the disabled.**
- 2) Pass this on to anyone you know who could help in this important effort.
- 3) If you are an RV owner, tell your organization to let ARC know of your opposition to the fee increases.

Via John Martin

FYI - If you can, try to make this meeting or send in comments. Please pass along to other people and clubs

John Martin
CFMS PLAC South 2005-2008, 2010
plac-south@antelecom.net

BLM Central California Advisory Council Plans Meeting in Bakersfield

Land management issues for the Bakersfield Field Office will be on the agenda when the Bureau of Land Management's Central California Resource Advisory Council meets in Bakersfield on April 9.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. at the BLM Bakersfield Field Office, 3801 Pegasus Drive. Council members will take public comments from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Agenda items include resource management plans for the Carrizo Plain National Monument and BLM's Bakersfield Field Office, an update of statewide BLM issues and reports from BLM Central California managers. The RAC Off-Highway Vehicle Subgroup will meet briefly before the RAC meeting to vote on whether to present screening criteria for land acquisitions for OHV use to the full RAC.

"The advisory council provides a valuable forum for BLM and the public to exchange views on management of public lands," said Kathy Hardy, BLM Central California District manager.

On April 10, the advisory council will participate in the National Landscape Conservation System 10th Anniversary event at Carrizo Plain National Monument. The meeting and Carrizo event are open to the public, but reservations are required for the Carrizo event.

For more information, contact David Christy, BLM Central California District public affairs officer, at (916) 941-3146 and (916) 941-3146.

The 12-member council, one of 24 such advisory councils in the western states, is

comprised of members who represent broad natural resource interests including livestock grazing, environmental groups, recreation, wild horse and burro management, history and archaeology, the academic sector, local government and the public at large.

BLM, Central California District
5152 Hillside Circle
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

BLM Offers Public Informational Meeting on Bodie Hills Report

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will host a public informational meeting to present the final report for the Bodie Hills conservation action planning effort. The meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 15, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Bridgeport Memorial Hall, 73 N. School St., Bridgeport.

In late 2007, the BLM and TNC entered into a cooperative agreement to develop a conservation action plan for the Bodie Hills, which could be used to guide future site-specific vegetation management projects to protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the area. A cornerstone of the conservation action planning effort was a series of three workshops held during 2008 with a diverse group of stakeholders to review and refine ecological models, review findings and identify potential vegetation management scenarios. The March 15 informational meeting is designed to present the final report from this cooperative effort.

A hard copy or compact disk of the final report may be requested online at <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bishop.html>. The executive summary to the final report is also available for review and downloading at this web address. You may also request a hard copy or CD by contacting Dale Johnson, Interagency Vegetation Management program leader, at (760) 872-5055 (760) 872-5055 or by email at dale_f_johnson@ca.blm.gov.

NOTE: Though this will have already happened by the time the newsletter is released, the webpages and links should still provide useful information. ED

ALAA Alert

Here is a Letter/Fax that can be used to contact the Governor at the fax numbers listed. It can also be sent to senators and congressmen with the changing of the fax numbers. It can also be emailed <http://gov.ca.gov/interact#email> Please consider using this information. JRM

202-624-5280
916-558-3160
213-897-0319

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Sacramento, CA
RE: Secret Land Grab!

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

A recently obtained internal document from the Department of the Interior (DOI) shows the Obama Administration is considering using the Antiquities Act to designate National Monuments on 13 million acres of public and private lands in 11 western states.

I am asking you to go on record as opposing any unilateral monument designations by the Administration. Also, I want you to support legislation that requires Congressional review of Antiquities Act proclamations. This process should also allow for State and local government as well as public input before any designation takes place. Given the economic crisis our nation and the great state of California is in today, this is not a good use of my taxes.

Thank you for allowing me to express my concern.

Sincerely,

[Your Name and Address]

US Forest Service admits putting surveillance cameras on public lands

Charleston man surprised when he found one while camping with daughter

BY TONY BARTELME

postandcourier.com

Published Monday, March 15, 2010

Last month, Herman Jacob took his daughter and her friend camping in the Francis Marion National Forest. While poking around for some firewood, Jacob noticed a wire. He pulled on it and followed it to a video camera and antenna.

The camera didn't have any markings identifying its owner, so Jacob took it home and called law enforcement agencies to find out if it was theirs, all the while wondering why someone would station a video camera in an isolated clearing in the woods.

He eventually received a call from Mark Heitzman of the U.S. Forest Service.

In a stiff voice, Heitzman ordered Jacob to turn it back over to his agency, explaining that it had been set up to monitor "illicit activities." Jacob returned the camera but felt uneasy.

Why, he wondered, would the Forest Service have secret cameras in a relatively remote camping area? What do they do with photos of bystanders?

How many hidden cameras are they using, and for what purposes? Is this surveillance in the forest an effective law enforcement tool? And what are our expectations of privacy when we camp on public land?

Officials with the Forest Service were hardly forthcoming with answers to these and other questions about their surveillance cameras. When contacted about the incident, Heitzman said "no comment," and referred other questions to Forest Service's public affairs, who he said, "won't know anything about it."

Heather Frebe, public affairs officer with the Forest Service in Atlanta, said the camera was part of a law enforcement investigation, but she declined to provide details.

Asked how cameras are used in general, how many are routinely deployed throughout the Forest and about the agency's policies, Frebe also declined to discuss specifics. She said that surveillance cameras

have been used for "numerous years" to "provide for public safety and to protect the natural resources of the forest. Without elaborating, she said images of people who are not targets of an investigation are "not kept."

In addition, when asked whether surveillance cameras had led to any arrests, she did not provide an example, saying in an e-mail statement: "Our officers use a variety of techniques to apprehend individuals who break laws on the national forest."

Video surveillance is nothing new, and the courts have addressed the issue numerous times in recent decades. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and seizures, and over time the courts have created a body of law that defines what's reasonable, though this has become more challenging as surveillance cameras became smaller and more advanced.

In general, the courts have held that people typically have no reasonable level of privacy in public places, such as banks, streets, open fields in plain view and on public lands, such as National Parks and National Forests. In various cases, judges ruled that a video camera is effectively an extension of a law enforcement officer's eyes and ears. In other words, if an officer can eyeball a campground in person, it's OK to station a video camera in his or her place.

Jacob said he understands that law enforcement officials have a job to do but questioned whether stationing hidden cameras outweighed his and his children's privacy rights. He said the camp site they went to -- off a section of the Palmetto Trail on U.S. 52 north of Moncks Corner -- was primitive and marked only by a metal rod and a small wooden stand for brochures. He didn't recall seeing any signs saying that the area was under surveillance.

After he found the camera, he plugged the model number, PV-700, into his Blackberry, and his first hit on Google was a Web site offering a "law enforcement grade" motion-activated video camera for about \$500. He called law enforcement agencies in the area, looking for its owner, and later got a call from Heitzman, an agent with the National Forest Service

Read more:

<http://www.islandpacket.com/2010/03/15/1173660/us-forest-service-admits-putting.html#ixzz0iNFQbamr>

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Other Sources of Information**ALAA Webpage**

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

The BlueRibbon Coalition

Webpage: <http://www.sharetrails.org/>

America Lands Rights Association

Webpage: <http://www.landrights.org/>

American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

Webpage: <http://www.amfed.org/>