

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 2011**

**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 2011

## ALAA President's Message

By Dick Pankey, President - ALAA

The ALAA Newsletter is published once every 3 months. But the issues that affect the use of our public lands are happening every day. So if you wait for the ALAA newsletter for your information on land use and access legislation and regulations you will be reading about what HAS happened instead of what IS GOING to happen. By the time you read about it in our Newsletter it is often too late for you to do anything about it; to make your voice heard.

It is easy to get the information you need to be involved and participate in the future use of our public lands. One easy way is to subscribe to the BlueRibbon Coalition Recreation News. Just go to the BRC web page, <http://www.sharetrails.org/public-lands/>. On the top left side of the page is the Public Lands Dept. box. Click on *Subscribe* under BRC Recreation News. Then fill out the subscription form. You will have 4 information choices:

- **Action Alerts** -- Keep up-to-date on access issues requiring action across the nation or in your area.
- **BRC's Recreation News** -- Daily updates on the latest access issues.
- **General Media Releases** -- Press releases from BRC and its partners intended for the general public.
- **Enthusiast Media Releases** -- Press releases from BRC and its partners intended for recreation enthusiasts.

I currently get only the Action Alerts but I am going to add on the other 3. While you are at it take some time and explore the rest of the BRC web site. It is full of very interesting information.

For information and to be involved with a BLM or USFS office near you sign up with them to get e-mails and information about their Resource Management Planning and other news. Then get involved and participate; attend meetings and submit your comments and ideas. And you don't need a computer and the internet to do this. But if you do have a computer and internet service you can get a lot of information on camping, rock collecting, access, and much more about each BLM and USFS district/office.

Don't forget about the ALAA web site ([www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org)). It is another source for up to the minute information. John Martin adds and updates information on a regular basis, sometimes daily.

Check out the AFMS and your regional federation newsletters for articles. John Martin, Chair of the Conservation and Legislation Com. generally has an article on current legislative and regulatory activity in each issue. I try to have an article each month about something related to ALAA activities.

Get informed about the issues. Involve yourself in the process. And take action: inform others, write letters and e-mails, attend meetings, and volunteer your time and talents to help with ALAA projects. The **work** of ALAA takes place throughout the year by our officers, directors, committees, at regional Federation conventions and most of all by the actions of our members.

### Dues are Due

If you haven't done so already now is the time to renew your membership in the American Lands Access Association. Your membership in ALAA is very important especially your society's membership. When renewing be sure that your e-mail and contact information is current. For society members we need a contact person's name and e-mail address. The renewal form is on the inside cover of this Newsletter. When you renew your membership you will receive another large Rockhound Sticker and a strip of 5 little Rockhound Stickers along with your membership card. Use the large sticker on your truck or car and the little stickers on letters to your elected officials and to other rockhounds.

You the members serve two important functions for ALAA. First you are the eyes and ears, the front line, to monitor and report on legislative and regulatory activity in your area. It is important that when you learn of things that affect access or changes in land use policy that you pass this information on to your State Rep, a Director or an Officer. Secondly, you are the base of our "strength in numbers" to write or e-mail your legislators and regulators when called to action to respond.

Send your membership renewal to our Treasurer, Ruth Bailey, TODAY! Renewal form is on page 2 of this newsletter.

### Annual Meeting at AFMS/EFMLS Convention

The American Lands Access Association will hold its annual meeting at the EFMLS/AFMS convention at Syracuse, NY on Wednesday evening, July 6<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Ramada Inn (host hotel). This is the **business meeting** for ALAA where we will elect our directors and officers, have officer and committee reports, and approve our budget for the coming year. The **work** of ALAA takes place throughout

the year by our officers, directors, committees, at regional Federation conventions and the actions of our members.

At our annual meeting in July we will be electing 3 Directors and the 4 officers. As president I hope to continue on for another term and I hope the other 3 officers will continue on for another term. We have had a great 2010 and 2011 is going well. Our membership is growing, and we have started some good programs with great promise. I believe that ALAA has a strong leadership team and that we should continue and build on our strengths. I hope that all officers and all directors will continue to serve.

All members of ALAA, all members of EFMLS and AFMS are welcome and encouraged to attend this meeting. I hope that all of you or as many as possible will be able to attend the EFMLS/AFMS show and meetings in Syracuse, NY, on July 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to seeing you there.

**Dick Pankey, President**

### ASK NOT WHAT ALAA CAN DO FOR YOU, ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR ALAA...

**Shirley Leeson, Vice President – ALAA**

Instead of asking what the American Lands Access Association can do for you, it's time for all to start asking; "What can I do to help ALAA"? The problems facing rockhounds are too big for one or two people to solve alone; the fact is....we need everyone's help to keep rockhounding alive.

We hear the same question all the time; "What's ALAA going to do about...?" The answer is...YOU ARE ALAA. It's very simple. If

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**ASK NOT...**

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you bring a problem to ALAA, we will help you find the answers, and coordinate a response. But then you have to be responsible and take the lead in that battle. You have to take the lead, and be part of the solution, we can accept nothing less. We're still learning how to fight these battles, the organizations that are trying to end access to our forests and deserts have had at least 40 years to organize their attack, and educate their members. We're just getting our feet wet in the arena of public opinion, and we need everyone's expertise and everyone's experiences to help win this battle.

These days rockhounds are getting involved in all areas of the government, in all issues that can involve rockhounding activities. We must be aware that issues like clean water and watersheds, pollution, dust and other topics you might not even equate with rockhounding, gold panning, or metal detecting will greatly affect all our members. Make sure to read your local newspapers for these issues, and where they are being discussed. You may see a report on local TV news that will alert you to meetings that might be of concern to you as a rockhound. Watch for public notices from government agencies as well.

Here's some things you can do to prepare yourself:

- Research the problem! Find those who are responsible, whether it's a government or state agency, and when meetings will be held.
- Use your computer as a research tool. You'd be surprised what you can learn by doing a search on Google.
- Find out why and how this problem developed.
- Look for solutions, or compromises.
- Be articulate.
- Be concise, and spend time refining your message.

Sometimes you'll find help and solutions from organizations and associations outside the rockhound community. There are many organizations who are working on multiple use of public lands. Reach out to them and ask if they are having the same problems, and what they are doing about these issues. Road closures, ambiguous or incorrect interpretations of the regulations at the management level, and many forest and desert issues have organizations that are working hard to combat these problems and can use our help!

Bring your concerns to your City Council or County Board of Supervisors? Be prepared to speak at Forest Service or BLM hearings State Fish and Game Departments, as well as Federal Fish and Game regulations may have an impact on rockhounding, so be armed and prepared to speak on behalf of rockhounds everywhere.

Although it can be intimidating to speak in public...YOU CAN DO IT! Prepare fully, know your subject, and be articulate and concise. Have a handout of your points, and leave it with whomever organized the meeting. Sing up for their mailing list, and get business cards from all important people in the room. Ask to speak to them about the issue at a later date, and the best way to contact their office. Look for people with like concerns, and don't be afraid to ask for help. You don't have to stand alone, instead you can bring friends with you. Let them know there are a large group who care about the issue. But:

- Never go into a meeting with a chip on your shoulder.
- Be friendly and attentive to what others have to say.

YOU'RE the one who's going to make the difference, and ALAA is here to help.

*Shirley Leeson*  
*Rockhound Activist*  
[shirleyleeson@cox.net](mailto:shirleyleeson@cox.net)

**ALAA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**  
**Anaheim Park Hotel, Fullerton, CA**  
**Sunday, June 20, 2010**

**Meeting called to order - President Dick Pankey**

- Recognition of ALAA Past Presidents - Bob Carlson, Jon Spunaugle, Marv Starbuck, Fred Shaffermeyer, Peggy Blickfield
- Introduction of scheduled Guest Speaker, Del Albright, from Blue Ribbon Coalition - could not attend
- Salute to flag provided by Emerson Tucker

**Election of Directors (have 12 Directors)**

- "3 Year Terms - Evan Day (UT), Jon Spunaugle (WA) and Marshall Havner (CA) (nominated from floor by Shirley Leeson)"
- Currently as 2nd year Directors) Bob & Kathly Miller (IN), Dean Stone (IL) and Norvie Enns (NV)
- Currently as 3rd year Directors) Dr. Bob Carlson, Bill Burns and John Wright (MS)
- Permanent Directors - Dee Holland (ID), John Martin (CA) and Jay Valle (CA)
- Motion - Dr. Bob Carlson for nominations be approved by acclamation, 2nd Shirley Leeson, Approved.

**Election of Officers for 2011**

- President - Dick Pankey
- Vice President - Shirley Leeson
- Secretary - Kathy Miller (Kathy will also will complete 2010 Secretary)
- Treasurer - Ruth Bailey
- Motion by Dee Holland and 2nd by Bob Carlson, Approved AYES x 6.

**Approval of 2009 Annual Meeting Minutes**

- From Billings, MT August 1, 2009 in ALAA Newsletter of Sep. 2009.
- Motion by Bob Carlson and 2nd by Bill Burns. Approved AYES x 6.

**Officer Reports**

**President Dick Pankey:** Continue to publish articles in AFMS and ALAA newsletters. Has ALAA table at show and signing up new members and renewals. Need to get more folks involved, checking legislation, going to BLM offices, asking for their written policy, where can camp, allowed activities.

**Vice President Shirley Leeson:** Her job is to promote members and recruit State Directors. Focused this year on California's Clear Creek and Trinity Mtns. Focus in Oregon on closing beach shell & rock collecting. Went to City officials to remind them of city economy and tourism. The bill was not passed. Remind members to talk to Congressmen & Representatives on proposed bills. Again voters are all affected.

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## BUSINESS MEETING

(Continued from page 6)

**Secretary Anne Cook:** (Colleen McGann substitute)

**Treasurer Ruth Bailey:** Handles membership moneys. Has report for first half year at meeting. Needs for Societies to provide a contact name and email address to send information to. Club = one vote. Directory has # club members.

### Permanent Director Reports

**Newsletter: Jay Valle** - doing well, postal requirements grow

**Webmaster: John Martin** - has compiled start email list. Site is dynamic, changes weekly, changes topics, notify issues, has links. Sends legislation about immediate issues. Any area can send him information to be distributed. Contact webmaster@amlands.org. Have clubs websites link to Amlands.org.

**Reg Agent: Dee Holland** in Idaho is registered Lobbyist with Clerk of House of Representatives and Senate. His reports are now electronic & up to date. He had talked twice this year as a Lobbyist. Contact local BLM offices to access maps, roads, topos, information denoting land status as land may have a mix of public (Federal), private and State (railroads).

### New Business

Appoint Marshall Havner as State Representative for Central California, Dan Brown is State Rep for Northern Calif. Appoint John & Judith Washburn as State Representatives for Illinois.

By email vote of the Officers and Directors, the addition of the following was approved.

Article VII, Miscellaneous Section 10, Dues

New member and Society dues paid after July 15th shall be considered as paid in full for the following calendar year. Approved 9-8-2009

This was ratified for 2010 and 2011.

Proposal for "Official Meeting each year during Quartzite, Arizona" in January during the Annual QIA Pow Wow. This will be added to the end of Article III, Section 1.

Article III - Meetings Section 1

**An ALAA meeting will be held each year during the Quartzite Pow Wow. President will arrange time, day and place. Notification will be in the ALAA newsletter as well as on the ALAA website.**

Motion by Dee Holland and 2nd by Shirley Leeson. Approved AYES x 6

Proposal: to add the following at the end of Section 3.

Article I Section 3 Classes of Members

The Board of Directors may provide for multiple classes of membership based upon the level of contributions or other criteria, including Life, Honorary Members **and Associate Member Organizations,**

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

(Continued from page 7)

**provided, however, that for purposes of voting for Directors, all members shall have equal voting rights.**

Motion to Table Proposal by Shirley Leeson. Approved to Table.

Proposal: Procure Liability Insurance Policy for ALAA as a Non-Profit Organization & Management Liability

Dick had a proposed quotation which had much discussion.

Motion for \$1 Million Liability with \$3,000 deductible and include internet, yearly cost \$1,185.

Motion by Dr. Bob Carlson and 2nd by Dee Holland. Approved AYES x6

Recommend an "ALAA POSITION STATEMENT"

**ALAA supports sound land management that offers adequate protection for the environment while protecting public access to public lands.**

ALAA believes that environmental protection and recreation can co-exist with proper land management and reasoned accountability.

Motion was approved and 2nd. Approved AYES x 5. Bill Burns had left the room.

Approve Budget for 2011

Motion and 2nd. Approved AYES x 6.

Motion to approve to buy Officers and Directors Insurance for 2010 from CFMS Insurance company.

Motion by Dr. Bob Carlson and 2nd by Norvie Enns. Approved AYES x 5.

The guest speaker was Amy Granite from CAL 4 WHEEL in Sacramento, CA.

Her job is to protect access to public lands and holds workshops to help others understand Federal language, such as "reasonable" to BLM means ""restricted"". She will be speaking at CFMS Visalia meeting too.

She wants to assist creating informal coalition of groups with common goals. Please add her website to ALAA website.

Other groups are OutdoorHeritage.org and California Wilderness Coalition

Dick Pankey closed the meeting. The next annual meeting is at AFMS show in Syracuse, NY on July 7-10, 2011, the meeting will be held on July 7th.

Meetings:     Visalia - Nov. 2010  
                  Quartzite - Feb. 2011  
                  Syracuse - July 2011

Submitted by Colleen McGann

**ARE YOU A ROCKHOUND ACTIVIST?****Shirley Leeson, VP, ALAA**

**H**ow do you *KNOW* you're a rockhound activist?

Take the quiz:

- You're a rockhound activist if you know what's going on in your local, regional, state and national governments regarding rock-hounding activities.
- You're a rockhound activist if you've called your local, , state or federal governmental body.
- You're a rockhound activist if you've sent a letter or email to the above governmental bodies.
- You're a rockhound activist if you've attended a meeting of any of the above governmental bodies.
- You're a rockhound activist if you know all of the above governmental bodies by name, and have their phone number on speed dial.

Rockhound activists belong to ALAA and are involved.

If you're not a rockhound activist, WHY NOT?

**GET INVOLVED. WE NEED YOU!**

Get in the habit, go to: [amlands.org](http://amlands.org) each day, or at least once a week, we need you to keep up to date, but we also need you to tell us what's going on in your area so we can keep the site updated.

**Box Elder County (Utah) Plan  
Evan Day, Utah Director**

Friends,

**S**ometimes it pays to take one's own advice! As I have urged others to do, last Wednesday I read down the list of meetings scheduled in our local Box Elder County (Utah) "News Journal."

**Notice for Feb. 22nd: "County Commission special meeting to adopt Amendments to County General Plan regarding Non-Wilderness Quality Lands proposed by Environmentalist Groups for Wilderness Management and Designation"**

Oops! Did the Greenies get to our Planning Commission and the County Commissioners? So next morning I headed to the Courthouse, ready to do battle with SUWA and their \$20 million budget. What a relief – quite the opposite was underway. Our rural county is preemptively staking out its' opposition to the "Red Rock Wilderness" and Secretary Salazar's order #3310 "Wild Lands" grab. In a well-written document they have spelled out their legal responsibilities to plan for and protect our ranches, mines, wells, search and rescue, recreation (specifically mentioning Rockhounds), from unwarranted and unrealistic "Wilderness" in the west end of the county. If it isn't multiple-use, forget it!

The County Commissioners I spoke to were very knowledgeable on the issues and people involved. And delighted that a knowledgeable local citizen cared enough to find out what was going on. They were glad that I took the time to carefully review their proposal; even spotting a couple typo's and glitches. I was urged to come to the meeting today (Feb 22nd) and speak during the time for Public Comment. I did; and started by briefly explaining who I was (a Rockhound Activist representing 50,000 club members over the USA), and had lived in the county for 42 years of collecting, hunting, and fishing. That it was my opinion that they were on exactly the right track, for which they certainly earned an Atta-Boy! That the planning document was very well done, and covered all the important factors. There were about a half-dozen other people in attendance, but nobody spoke in opposition. Apparently I had said enough, and the ranchers let me carry the ball.

A representative from Sen. Orrin Hatch's office did speak to the subject, but not specifically the County Plan. All of Utah's Congress-

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**BE County Plan**  
(Continued from page 9)

sional delegation is hard-over in opposition to the Obama administration's wilderness proposals. They are trying to educate their colleagues on how much impact will be felt here in the Inter-mountain West. The best bet to stop SUWA and their allies appears to be through amendments to the Federal Budget to deny funding.

The County Commission then proceeded to pass the proposed amendments and the resulting updated General Plan. So - - friends, by reading a local paper and watching the boring list of public meeting for anything involving our hobby; I was able to move fast and get our position known right at the start. "Go and do likewise."

**Comment and Opinion**

**The House Committee on Natural Resources  
Hearing**

**Ken Salazar's Secretarial Order Number 3310  
Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on  
Lands Managed by the BLM**

**By John Martin**  
**ALAA Internet Committee**

**P**urpose. This Secretarial Order (Order) affirms that the protection of the wilderness characteristics of public lands is a high priority for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and is an integral component of its multiple use mission. The Order provides direction to the BLM regarding its obligation to maintain wilderness resource inventories on a regular and continuing basis for public lands under its jurisdiction. It further directs the BLM to protect wilderness characteristics through land use planning and project-level decisions unless the BLM determines, in accordance with this Order, that impairment of wilderness characteristics is appropriate and consistent with other applicable requirements of law and other resource management considerations. The full text of the order may be read on the

ALAA Website

<http://www.amlands.org/27112/56812.html> .

On March 1, 2011 The Governors of Idaho, C.L. "Butch" Otter, and Utah, Gary R. Herbert, frustrated and worried by the Department of the Interior's new policy on designating "wild lands" in Bureau of Land Management areas, took their case to Washington DC and asked lawmakers to insist that only Congress be allowed to establish wilderness areas. The testimony lasted over 6 hours and had a live feed over the internet. Witnesses of some notoriety to Utah were Governor Herbert and Commissioner Mike McKee. Governor Herbert came across, cool, articulate, reasoned, and yet aggressive. Commissioner McKee really illustrated the significant harm Wild Lands would likely have on local economies and rural communities. Both Governors did an outstanding job defending their position that order 3310 was un-necessary, went around existing federal procedures, and would do more harm to western states than good. Both Governors stated the compliance to the order would hurt the public schools in both of their states and would burden the already stressed taxpayers with additional liabilities to cover the cost to re-inventory BLM Land that had been inventoried under current law. Both states have spent over 7 years each to accomplish the required inventory of BLM lands for the "Wilderness Characteristics" within their states as required by current legislation. All of their points were well taken by the panel of House Representatives. Both governors said the secretarial order issued Dec. 23 by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar demonstrated a disregard for a collaborative approach to managing public lands in the public interest. Herbert said he learned about the wild lands plan only a few hours before Salazar announced it, while Otter did not learn of it until after the fact (247 DER A-9, 12/28/10).

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chairman of the committee's public lands subpanel, was in top form as he made statements and questioned witnesses. All of Utah's, Public Lands Recreational-

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## Comment and Opinion

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ists and Rockhounds are lucky to have Congressman Bishop and his exceptional staff on our side. Mr. Bishop submitted written testimony to the committee from Recreational user groups (AMA, BRC, USA-ALL and others) opposing the Secretarial Order. There were also many other county commissioners and other experts. All did well. It really was great to see so many members of Congress who seem to be on our side and who really grilled BLM Director Abbey and Wilderness activist Peter Metcalf, owner and CEO of Black Diamond Equipment in Salt Lake City, UT.

After more than four hours of testimony from Western governors, county commissioners, legal experts and the CEO of an outfitting company, BLM Director Abbey defended the policy before a skeptical GOP majority in the House Natural Resources Committee. Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chairman of the committee's public lands subpanel, grilled Abbey on how the order would affect BLM resource management plans developed over the past decade in Utah and recently completed under the George W. Bush administration. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar "arbitrarily" threw out those management plans in Utah with the attitude "I don't like the answer, I'm going to start over again," Bishop said.

Abbey replied that field managers were under no obligation to amend completed land-use plans but rather must review them to make sure they comply with the secretary's order. "We don't necessarily have to amend anything," he said.

Director Abbey was pressured even harder by Alaska Rep. Don Young (R), who suggested BLM's implementation of the policy in his state was illegal and would be met by lawsuits. "This committee should file a lawsuit, too," he said. "You're thumbing your nose at Congress; you're going against the law. Your administration stinks right now."

During testimony by Governor Otter and Herbert it was stated that over 65% of the land in their states was owned by the federal government

and managed by either the BLM or the USFS. Out of this land only 2% was designated "Wilderness". Over the last 2 years no additional public land had been designated as "Wilderness" was a comment made by the Rep Markey (D-MA). Is there some mandate that requires a percentage of public land be designated as "Wilderness" each year? Written testimony from both governors may be found on the ALAA Website under their respective state page. <http://www.amlands.org/6652/index.html>

By the end of the 6 hour session both sides had had their chance to state their case before the House Committee on Natural Resources and BLM Director Abby had stated Secretary Salazar's position and reasons for issuing Secretarial Order Number 3310 - Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Committee Chairman Hastings stated more hearings are being scheduled to bring to a conclusion this important issue on Public Land Management. More information on the hearings may be found on the House Website <http://naturalresources.house.gov/Calendar/EventSingle.aspx?EventID=226023> A webcast of the hearing is available on the ALAA Website and on the House Website above.

### Let Your Voice Be Heard!

**I**n this time of Political Action Activists, let your voice be heard! Let the Rockhound Community know your concerns and ideas. Get answers to your Rockhounding Questions! How do I get involved, you ask? The easiest way to get started is to use the American Land Access Associations Website's Feature of the Forum/Blog Page. [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org) What can the Forum/Blog page be used for? For instance, you hear of a piece of legislation that may close access to your favorite collecting area and you want to know more. Just post your concern on the blog page and you may find others with the same questions and now you are involved in

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**Let Your Voice Be Heard!****(Continued from page 11)**

constructive dialogue with others. You may have a question about a collecting site that you have not been to or how to get there, post your question to the forum and see what helpful information is posted as your answer. If you attend a Gem and Mineral show that you enjoyed, let the Rockhound Community know. If you attend a local or regional Land Use Management Planning Meeting or other similar activity let others know what was discussed or decided or maybe just your own feelings about the activity. It is quite easy to do. Just go to the ALAA Website and click on the Forum/Blog Page (the last item at the bottom of the menu) and let the world know what you know, it is easy and who knows you may become a "Rockhound Activist" or at least help support your hobby from the comfort of your keyboard. Visit <http://www.amlands.org/52112/index.html> and get involved.

John Martin  
 American Land Access Association  
 Website Committee  
[webmaster@amlands.org](mailto:webmaster@amlands.org)  
[info@amlands.org](mailto:info@amlands.org)

**AFMS****Conservation and Legislative Committee****February 2011 Report****John Martin**

**B**y now the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress has been seated and has been in session for about a month. Even though the 111<sup>th</sup> congress failed to pass the second "Omnibus Land Management Act", S.303 "America's Great Outdoors Act of 2010" and as S.2921 "California Desert Protection Act of 2010" died in committee the battle for public land access is not over. We did not accomplish any

"Wins" this year, rather the legislation restricting the use of public lands was put on the back burner only to be reintroduced under a different title or attached to other legislative actions in this new congressional year. The environmental activist lobby has vowed to start their efforts anew with more vigor and determination than was exerted last year. If the Rockhound Community just sits by as the environmental lobby takes action we will eventually discover that all of our collecting sites have been added to more wilderness and our access roads and trails have been closed to travel except by foot traffic. The restrictive legislation is not only affecting the western states but it is now being proposed in several legislative acts on the eastern seaboard and some mid western states as well. As the new congressional year marches forward the AFMS Conservation and Legislation Committee will be doing their best to keep on top of the issues and trying to keep the Rockhounding Community advised of the changing conditions. As the new legislation becomes public and our collecting areas become at risk once again, it will take the combined effort of the Rockhounding Community as a whole to make a difference and let our voices be heard in Washington and your state capital. This will be the only way to keep our Public Lands and our collecting areas open to all public users now and for future generations of Rockhounds. We can not do it alone, we need your help. So, when it becomes time to contact your elected officials please consider taking a little time and send that email, fax or make that phone call. To find your elected legislator and to see what the latest legislative activities are, the American Lands Access Association (ALAA) Website is a good starting point. [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org) For more information or advice on Conservation and Legislation please contact the Committee Chair. Their contact information may be found on the AFMS Website [www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org).

## California Desert Protection Act 2011 S138

To all Rockhounds in the CFMS

### California Desert Protection Act 2011 S138

has been introduced by Senator Feinstein. This bill covers a large part of the Southern California Desert areas. The full text of the bill has not been released to the Government Printing Office (GPO) as of today so the text of the bill is not available. This bill again will create two more National Monuments and increase the size of several wilderness areas. In addition it will create several more Wilderness Areas which may include several of our collecting areas and close any mechanized access to those collecting areas. According to some published literature Rockhounding has not been preserved in the bill. For more information and up to date information on this and other bills please use the ALAA Website. [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org)

This is a direct link to where the latest information on this bill may be found.

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s112-138>

Please stay informed on this important issue and contact your elected officials with your concerns and comments as needed.

Thank you for your time and effort.

## **Public Lands Travel Management Plans Hits Snag in Courts**

**John Martin - ALAA Rockhound Activist**

Several lawsuits have been filed by various environmental groups against both the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service over their Travel Management Plans. These Travel Management Plans have been going through their development and approval stages for several years and most of them have been released in their final version by the respective government agencies. In most cases the environmental activist groups felt that the government agencies did not do enough to protect the envi-

ronment to the extent of the agencies own policies and procedures.

One of the long-running dispute centers on a Civil War-era mining law, known as R.S. 2477, which granted rights-of-way across public land until it was repealed by congress in 1976. Existing rights-of-way, however, were grandfathered in and now these environmental activists want most of these roads (Rights-of-way) across our Public Lands closed.

A large number of these roads and trails have been used for years by the Hunters, Fishermen, and Off Road Users and, yes, even Rockhounds use some of these roads to get to our favorite collecting areas or campsites. Congress has enacted legislation requiring agencies responsible for the management of our public lands to establish and implement a Travel Management Plan identifying for the multipurpose usage of roads, trails and access rights-of-ways through the public lands they manage. They must take into consideration the recreational and commercial value of these roads and the environmental impact the roads and users of the roads may or may not have on the public land they manage.

The Environmental Activist Groups have been active for several decades trying to achieve their agenda of having no unpaved roads through our public lands or as they call it A Roadless Wilderness, where the only way to gain access is on foot or horseback. This will kill most all Rockhounding as we know it today.

What these lawsuits have accomplished, whether ruling in favor of the OHV users, the Government Agencies or the Environmental Activist Lobby, is allow time to return to the negotiating table and re-consider and re-plan the usage of these roads across our public lands. Now, we in the Rockhound community have a chance to let our voices be heard and our wishes be known on these matters. If we speak long enough and loud enough and with a unified voice, we may just be able to keep our access roads open to mechanized travel now and for future Rockhounds to enjoy.

(Continued on page 14)

**Public Lands Travel Management Plans  
Hits Snag in Courts**  
(Continued from page 13)

It will take several years to re-draw the Travel Management Plans, so the fates of our collecting sites are ours to lose. Please get informed and become proactive in the process. A good way to start is to contact you Federation, Federation Director and check often the American Land Access Association (ALAA) Website. [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org)

**California State legislators grab  
OHV funds**

The Assembly suddenly came up with this \$27 million dollar plan last week. I was at the budget hearing on Friday, and we literally heard about it just an hour or so before the hearing.

One of the most problematic parts about this "taking" is that it is proposed from the operations part of the division's budget - that is bound to close some of the SVRA's, and really restrict the program. The Senate hadn't proposed to take anything at all from the operation budget, so this came as a surprise. The Conference Committee to resolve the differences between the Assembly proposals and the Senate proposals will take place tomorrow and Thursday. We need them to take this proposal off the table during this committee process. Anyone and everyone who can get the message to that conference committee that this a really bad idea would be valuable.

We have heard that this we are caught in the middle of a Democratic-Republican argument, but that shouldn't matter. This is a program that pays it's own way, doesn't take money from the general fund, is environmentally responsible, and offers kids a safe and organized place to enjoy motorized recreation. It will be disastrous to take this away form the public - you know that as well as I do - we need this program to stay intact,

and it's blatantly unfair to take money away from the operations side of the division. And this would be an ongoing, every year diversion, not a one time borrow, It would permanently dismantle the OHV program in the state.

The Governor is proposing to borrow an additional \$21 million from the reserves. We don't like that either, but it's not as problematic, the division would continue more or less the same.

So we have problems on both ends. People are just angry at this point, and I'm really worried that these moves will have serious ramifications to the community. They will only stand for so much until they get frustrated and start riding everywhere and anywhere. I know that is a politically incorrect viewpoint, but it is also reality. Anything you can do to help would be great.

Amy Granat  
PO Box 298  
Clarksburg, CA 95612  
916-710-1950 [granat.amy@gmail.com](mailto:granat.amy@gmail.com)

*all about access*

**"Bureau of Land Management urges  
Caution on renewable energy plans"**

(Palm Springs Desert Sun, 1/13/11)

The push to fast-track renewable energy projects in America has led to some missteps along the way, Marcilynn Burke, deputy director for Programs and Policies with the Bureau of Land Management, said Wednesday at a tribal summit on renewable energy ... 'We need to work at all levels to improve our consultation' on projects that may affect tribal and aboriginal land, Burke said. 'We need to look at landscapes and realize our boundaries are not the same as your boundaries'."

<http://www.mydesert.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2011101130328>

**AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC  
2009-2010 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

**OFFICERS**

**PRESIDENT**

DICK PANKEY  
4310 Kingsly Drive  
Pittsburg, CA 94565  
925-439-7509  
dickpankey@juno.com

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

SHIRLEY LEESON  
6155 Haas St.  
La Mesa, CA 91942  
(619) 640-6128  
shirleyleeson@cox.net

**SECRETARY**

KATHY MILLER  
1106 Clayton Drive  
South Bend, IN 46614-2134  
KanBrock@aol.com

**TREASURER**

RUTH BAILEY  
2857 Addison Pl  
Santa Clara, CA 95051  
408-248-6195  
rba51825@att.net

**DIRECTORS**

**Permanent Directors:**

Dee Holland, Registered Agent, Idaho  
PO BOX 23  
Tendoy, ID 83468-0023  
208-756-2394 (ID)  
619-460-6128 (CA)  
beauholland@centurytel.net

John Martin, Webmaster  
1309 W. Avenue L-4  
Lancaster, CA 93534  
661-942-8336  
webmaster@amlands.org

Jay Valle, Newsletter Editor  
1421 Latchford Avenue  
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745  
626-934-9764  
res19pnb@verizon.net

**Three Year Terms:**

Jon Spunaugle, Northwest  
4841 Dr Eldridge Drive  
Washangal, WA 98671  
360-835-9313  
jonspe@comcast.net

Evan Day, Northwest  
509 N Highland Blvd  
Brigham City, UT 84302  
435-723-3830  
eday@sisna.com

Marshall Havner  
mdhavner@verison.net  
(559) 562-4133

**Two Year Terms**

Bob & Kathy Miller, Midwest  
1106 Clayton Drive  
South Bend, IN 46614-2134  
Phone: 574-291-0332  
KanBrock@aol.com

Dean Stone, Midwest  
402 N 1st St  
Effingham, IL 62401  
217-342-7132  
stonerocks@hotmail.com

Norvie Enns, California  
1485 W 4th St #10  
Reno, NV 89503  
775-786-9887  
Nve5103@charter.net

**One Year Terms**

Dr. Bob Carlson, Rocky Mt.  
1585 Los Pueblos  
Los Alamos, NM 87544  
Phone: 505-662-5834,  
drobertcarlson@yahoo.com

Bill Burns, California  
1038 Bradshaw Avenue  
Monterey Park, CA 91754-4912  
Phone: 626-288-2896  
burns1928@gmail.com

John Wright, Southeast  
3304 Nottingham Rd  
402 N. 1st Street  
Ocean Springs, MS 39564-4313  
osjwb@datasync.net

### State Representatives

#### ILLINOIS

John and Judith Washburn  
jrwashburn2@msn.com

#### NEVADA

Norvie Enns  
Nve5103@charter.net

#### WASHINGTON, D.C. & VIRGINIA

Mary Bateman  
mbateman1@verison.net

#### E. WASHINGTON/N. IDAHO

Everett Hedrick  
elheadrick@live.com  
Asst: Bev Bockman  
bockbb@aol.com

#### MONTANA

Douglas True  
dtruefossils@yahoo.com

#### INDIANA

Bob & Kathy Miller  
KanBrock@aol.com

#### UTAH

Evan Day  
eday@sisna.com

#### MICHIGAN

Marve Starbuck  
greenstone@iserv.net

#### C. CALIFORNIA

Marshall Havner  
mdhavner@verison.net

#### OKLAHOMA

Richard Jaeger  
rjrsci@aol.com

#### MISSISSIPPI

John Wright  
osjwb@datasync.net

#### SOUTHERN IDAHO

Shirley Metts  
rmetts@cableone.net

#### N. CALIFORNIA

Dan Brown  
rocky299@frontiernet.net

#### TEXAS

Terry Proctor  
auraman@swbell.net

#### S. CALIFORNIA

Kim Campbell  
campbellsrocks@gmail.com

### Other Sources of Information

The ALAA Website has a new Up-Date.

[ALAA Webpage](http://www.amlands.org/)

<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/>

Western Slope No Fee Coalition

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