

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL



## **AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**Protecting the Public Lands for the Public**

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

**October November December 2013**

**ALAA DUES ARE DUE JANUARY 1, 2014**

DELINQUENT February 15, 2014

Please go to [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org) on the left side click on Join-Application, fill it out  
and send to Membership P.O. Box 54298, San Jose, CA 95154

Make sure there is a contact person with an email listed in your application



# AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION

## NEW MEMBERSHIP and ANNUAL RENEWAL FORM

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

(Must be postmarked or received by December 31 each year)

**Member/Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

**Organization Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(If different than above)

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Residence Primary Business (if any)

**Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Address

**Member Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Send Completed form with renewal Dues to: Dues are: \$25.00 for individual/couple**  
**\$50.00 for a club or society**

**New Member** \_\_\_\_\_ **(X) Renewal** \_\_\_\_\_ **(X) Amount Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_

American Lands Access Association  
C/O Membership Chairman  
P O BOX 54398  
San Jose, CA 95154  
Email to: [membership@amlands.org](mailto:membership@amlands.org)  
Make Checks payable to: American Lands Access Association (ALAA)

**A grassroots 501-C-4 Educational, non-profit organization dedicated to keeping public lands open for the public**



# American Lands Access Association, Inc.

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

October November December 2013

## PRESIDENT'S END OF YEAR REPORT

**Shirley Leeson**

**A**s your new president, I'm still learning all the important items that must be taken care of at the presidential level. It's not easy, but there's been lots of help along the way. So please help me. We're all in this together.

- In January we had an ALAA meeting, in Quartzsite. See minutes of both the board meeting and the public meeting.
- One of the most successful events to date by ALAA was the Quartzsite Clean-up. We received rave reviews by both the BLM offices in Yuma, (who coordinated the event and hauled off the trash we collected) but also noted by the California BLM Newsletter. We plan to make this an annual event.
- In April there was an ALAA meeting at the Northwest Mid-year meeting in Kennewick, Washington. Our featured speaker was John George, who spoke softly and eloquently about his skirmishes with the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Service.
- In May there was an ALAA booth at the Rocky Mt Federation show in Sandy, Utah. I was allowed to speak briefly to the directors about our growing concerns with governmental closing of public lands by both Forest Service and BLM.
- Also in May there was an ALAA booth at the California Federation show in Ventura. And a meeting on Sunday with Kim Campbell Erb speaking on the California Desert Advisory Council and her part in decisions regarding access to our public lands in Southern California.
- In August ALAA had a booth at the Northwest Federation Show in Butte, Montana. And also had a meeting where we learned from Ken Zahn, what the Citizens for Balanced Use, out of Montana was doing. (Ken later joined ALAA)
- We now have a brochure, thanks to John Martin our webmaster extraordinaire, and we have some here with us.
- The AFMS/Southeast Federations show in Jacksonville gave us a booth at the show and provided us with a time and location for the ALAA annual business meeting.
- Our Vice President, Lauren Williams put up an ALAA booth at the Hells Canyon Gem Show in Lewiston, Idaho – at their request. See Lauren's article on the event elsewhere.
- A successful meeting of ALAA at the Fall Business meeting of CFMS in Ventura brought out close to 50 participants in learning about Clear Creek from Bill Spence and Amy Granat, experts in their fields of minerals/rocks and off road respectfully. The good news – is we had a large number of non-ALAA members who attended and we hope to gain them as members.

*(Continued on page 4)*

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## PRESIDENT'S END OF YEAR REPORT

*(Continued from page 3)*

### Goals And Events for the coming year

- A membership drive, beginning at the Jacksonville meeting. We distributed **90** 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter ALAA Newsletters accompanied with ALAA brochures to all who attended the AFMS and Southeast Director's meetings.
- Help clubs with clean-up program
- Spokane Rock Roller club show, March 28-29, 2014 – ALAA booth
- Inter-Regional Field Trip, July 31 – Aug 1-3, 2014 Terry, Montana ALAA CLEAN-UP during the event – Doug True
- **Get rockhounds acquainted with our website.** [WWW.amlands.org](http://WWW.amlands.org)
- Bring more ALAA state representatives on board so we can cover the U.S. more effectively.
- Continuance of our "ROCK GALLERY" PICTURES of rocks from locations that are now closed to rockhounds.
- Asking for help in collecting cabs from locations now closed to rockhounds and putting them in a traveling display at Regional Federation Shows and/or local club shows in the coming years. Donations will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged.

### REGIONAL SCHEDULE for 2014

Eastern	March 29-30	Plymouth Mtg. PA	
California	May30-31-June 1	Pomona, CA	ALAA booth & program
AFMS/Rocky MT	July 9 – 13	Tulsa, OK	ALAA booth & Annual Business Meeting
Inter-Regional Field Trip	July 31 – Aug 4	Terry, MT	ALAA clean-up
South Central	Aug 9-10	Baton Rouge, LA	
Northwest	Aug 15- 17	Hermiston, OR	ALAA booth & program
Midwest	Oct 18- 19	Des Moines, IA	
Southeast – to be announced			

As you can see, we have many of the regional shows covered except for EASTERN, MIDWEST and SOUTH CENTRAL. Will someone step up and offer to set up an ALAA booth at these three shows, please. Contact: [president@amlands.org](mailto:president@amlands.org) and we'll help you.

<b>GO IMMEDIATELY TO OUR WEBSITE: <a href="http://www.amlands.org">www.amlands.org</a> and click on any item on the left hand side. NOW!</b>
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**QUARTZSITE**  
**Friday, January 24, 2014**  
**7pm, Quartzsite Alliance Church**  
**720 Desert View**

**I**f you enjoy spending time in Quartzsite during the winter months and you ride your ATV or off road vehicle during that time, then you must attend the ALAA meeting.

The NEPA plan for La Posa is already in progress. It has been commented on and now the results of those decisions are coming. If you didn't have a chance to see the maps and comment, you will learn about them here.

We will have John MacDonald, Field Manager, BLM, Yuma, AZ with us to speak to this issue.

In addition, we will have a staff member, Penny Pew, from Congressman Gosar (R. 4<sup>th</sup> District, AZ) as an observer.

We urge you to attend and bring a friend.  
 Rockhounds & Off road enthusiasts must step up and attend  
 Or all is lost.  
 Shirley Leeson, ALAA President

## WELCOME

**W**e will begin, with this issue, to welcome new clubs and individuals who have recently joined ALAA

Minnesota Mineral Club, New Brighton, Minnesota  
 Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club, Holland, Michigan  
 Cedar Valley Rocks & Mineral, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Reno Gem & Mineral Society, Reno, Nevada

Lea Rudd, Florence, Oregon

Arthur Wagner, Rowley, Massachusetts

Teri Heuer, Fullerton, California

Harry & Helen Baker, Encino, California

Marty Hart, Antioch, Tennessee

Colleen McGann,  
 ALAA Membership  
[membership@amlands.org](mailto:membership@amlands.org)

## 2nd Annual Quartzsite Clean-up Sunday, January 26th, 2014

**W**e did such a good job last year, the BLM has invited us back. BLM Ranger Bill Alexander will be with us to haul all the trash away.

We'll meet east of Quartzsite on I-10 at the Gold Nugget Road Exit. 8am to 11am.

### **Bring:**

\* heavy gloves, sensible shoes, hat and long sleeved shirt.

### **Tools:**

\* lawn rakes, broom stick with nail , 'grabbers" like the ones you use to reach for things on high shelves.....be creative.

Shirley Leeson

**WE HAVE FORGED SOME ALLIANCES**

Shirley Leeson, ALAA President

**A** recap of ALAA..... we've been around for a number of years. During that time we've joined several organizations who have had a like interest in keeping our public lands available to everyone, not just special interest groups.

You are probably familiar with Blue Ribbon Coalition, a national organization of off-road vehicle users primarily but they are also concerned with other areas of recreation on public lands.

We joined CORVA, California Off Road Vehicle Assn. Their Focus is keeping roads and trails open on public lands. Their primary concern is California and the BLM and Forest Service management of public lands.

And this last year we joined the New Mexico Off Hiway Vehicle Alliance who are single-handedly keeping roads and trails open in New Mexico.

All these organizations have contributed to our knowledge in how the government works, especially in the areas of setting up the Travel Management Plans, mandated by Congress. ALAA is playing 'catch-up' in all these areas, while these organizations have been dealing with the problems and drawing up strategy for many years.

Many individuals in these organizations have taken their time and expertise and given freely to help us understand the subtleties of 'commenting' on various public lands now under the Travel Management Plans, and are in various stages of implementation administered by BLM and the Forest Service.

There are other organizations who also offer their expertise and one of these is 'Western Slope No-Fee Coalition. An article by Kitty Benzar is in this issue of our Newsletter, I urge you to read it carefully and act upon it. We will have a 'sample letter' at [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org) for you to use, but please make the first paragraph personal. An experience at a fee campground in a national park, or Forest Service campground along with

our sample letter and send it to your Congressman/Senator will go along way.

We are a grass root organization like those above. We don't have the environmental foundations with deep pockets like those we oppose. All we have is the knowledge that our cause is just.....and we need your help to be heard.

**WESTERN SLOPE NO-FEE COALITION**

**THE FEE-FREE PRESS**

***DEAR PUBLIC LANDS SUPPORTER,***

***Recreation fees on federal public lands are governed by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, or FLREA. FLREA was due to sunset on December 8, 2014. But, as part of the legislation that re-opened the federal government after the October shutdown, that date was extended by one year, to December 2015.***

***Very soon legislation to replace, revise, or repeal FLREA is going to move forward in Congress. Now is the time for the public to weigh in.***

***PLEASE ACT NOW! DETAILS BELOW.***

\*\*\*\*\*

**CONGRESS BEGINS WORK ON RECREATION FEE LEGISLATION**

***D***on't let commercial interests, agency bureaucrats, and special interest groups drown out the public's voice. Speak up now!

The extension of FLREA to 2015 is the most important opportunity in years to get recreation fees under control and restore public access.

Or it could become the most flagrant opening in

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## CONGRESS BEGINS WORK ON RECREATION FEE LEGISLATION

(Continued from page 6)

years for the conversion of our public lands into private for-profit enterprises.

You decide.

You can sit back, do nothing, and let the American Recreation Coalition (ARC) and their cronies in the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service set the agenda.

Or you can take action and make sure the members of Congress who will decide the issue take the public's concerns into account.

The ARC proudly takes credit for Fee Demo as their ["initiative"](#) and recently hosted a conference on "enhancing park experiences through fees." That conference resulted in an outline of what they want to see in the future: *more fees on more people in more places*. Here is what the ARC has [announced](#) it wants to see in legislation:

They want "dynamic" pricing to shift use to non-peak periods and less-used places. In other words the most popular places at the best times of year would be available only to those willing to pay extra.

They want to address the "problem" of Senior lifetime passes by raising the price from \$10 to \$80, eliminating the lifetime term, and/or raising the eligibility age from 62 to 70. They see the many Boomers becoming eligible as a threat to revenue, so they want to move the goal line.

They want to eliminate the free lifetime pass for those with a permanent disability and begin charging \$80 for it. Instead of making it as easy and affordable as possible for disabled citizens to enjoy public lands, ARC wants them to pay up or stay away.

They want to raise the price of an annual pass from \$80 to \$100. Ouch! In this economy a 25%

price increase?

At fee areas that charge a per-person fee, they want to lower the age of free entry from 16 to 12. Shouldn't we be encouraging more families to get outdoors, instead of erecting financial barriers that try to balance the budget on the backs of 14-year olds?

They want to charge higher fees to foreign visitors. If you enter a National Park, you could be asked to produce proof of citizenship, or else be required to pay extra.

They want to change National Park entrance fees from per-carload per-week to per-person per-day. What's next, charging by the hour?

They want the agencies to sell a "debit card" type pass, in hopes that the full value will never be used and the government can keep the change.

ARC also wants a "prestige pass" at a premium price, for those who want to be able to go to the front of the line, use reserved close-in parking, and generally not have to mix with their fellow citizens of lesser means.

What all of these recommendations have in common is that they jettison the founding ideal of public lands as egalitarian spaces where everyone has access and is welcome. Instead they envision a stratified society of those who can afford to enjoy outdoor recreation and those who can't. For the ARC, it's all about generating revenue for the federal agencies and their commercial "partners," not about finding ways to encourage more people to enjoy healthy, active, outdoor activities.

If you agree with these proposals, then by all means do nothing. If ordinary people do nothing, these policies are likely to be adopted.

But if these ideas horrify you, then now is the time to speak up.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Contact Congress.** Legislation is being drafted

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### CONGRESS BEGINS WORK ON RECREATION FEE LEGISLATION

*(Continued from page 7)*

in the oversight committees, so that's a good place to direct your comments. Be sure and send a copy to both of your Senators and your US Representative. Here is the contact information:

**Committee on Natural Resources  
United States House of Representatives**  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-2761  
Fax: (202) 225-5929  
Or use their [WEBFORM](#)

**Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
United States Senate**  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-4971  
Fax: (202) 224-6163  
*Sorry, they don't offer a webform*

**To find the webforms for your Senators and your US Representative, go to the [Senate website](#) and the [House website](#).**

#### **DO IT TODAY!**

\*\*\*\*\*

The Western Slope No-Fee Coalition is a broad-based organization consisting of diverse interests including hiking, biking, boating, equestrian and motorized enthusiasts, community groups, local and state elected officials, conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats, and just plain citizens.

Our goals are:

- To eliminate recreation fees for general access to public lands managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management
- To eliminate backcountry fees and interpretive program fees in National Parks

- To require more accountability within the land management agencies
- To encourage Congress to adequately fund our public lands

Thank you for your support!

**Sincerely,**

Kitty Benzar  
Western Slope No Fee Coalition

#### **Paleontological Preservation Act**

Terrell William "Terry" Proctor  
Texas Representative of the ALAA

There is a time for **contemplation** and a time for **action**. The ill-named '*Paleontological Preservation Act*', passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in his first term, as we know, is unbelievably contrary to the name it carries. This law is also totally contrary to the purpose it espouses. It assures the loss of vertebrate fossils which otherwise would be collected, many shown in museums and at fossil shows worldwide, and others used to educate the public on fossils.

Why? Because this law mandates by in essence saying "leave that vertebrate fossil on the beach for the sand and tide to destroy....Don't you dare pick it up and give it to a museum or take it to a Gem, Mineral and Fossil show so other people can see and learn from it". This was a stupid law and most people who have a 3rd grade education know that this doesn't make sense.

That was the time for contemplation...which I just shared with you. Now what about the time for action?

The time for action is when we have a Congress with over a third grade understanding (yes we do have many who fit this definition, but unfortunately, it is not the majority) and a President who would sign a Bill for a more realistic

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## Paleontological Preservation Act

*(Continued from page 8)*

approach to this matter. Right now a Bill to change this status isn't possible it appears.

So we have the time for contemplation of what we need to do, but we apparently do not have a Congress and President who understand our contemplation of what needs to be done and how to do it.

Let's face it folks, This is small potatoes in the present atmosphere in this Country. Even our supporters in Congress are busy working on the question of securing our borders and what to do with the millions of illegal immigrants in our Country; what to do with healthcare and why after billions of your tax dollars, Obamacare today doesn't meet the promises made of what it would do, and what can be done about the mess, if anything; what can we do in the Middle East after our President has tried so hard to make the World and especially the Middle East love us, and now they don't.

You understand what I am saying. This is why I have counseled and still do "Just keep your powder dry for now". We need to keep explaining to every person who has an interest in geology, paleontology, archeology, lapidary, faceting, and just plain old rock hounds and our heirs, the pebble puppies (young folks) that this is a matter which needs to be fixed, and we need a Congress of people who understand that there are millions of folks who like to go into the fields and canyons and beaches, to find things to tender to science and/or to show off to friends, bring to Rock & Fossil Shows and join others in these groups, so that our numbers and message is ready when the time comes that we can get something done, we will have the people power to demand that the ill-named "Paleontology Preservation Act" be struck down with some reasonable Bill passed to protect public places from commercial diggers who don't share our desires to put things found into public display, instead of just making a profit from selling valuable public property to collectors who only want it for their own aggrandizement or for speculation on future price.

There is a big difference in protecting public lands from commercial speculators and mom and pop access to a government owned beach to pick up a shark's tooth that just otherwise would be more sand on the beach in the future. "Some individual sharks can produce as many as 40,000 teeth during their lifetimes" per **Robert W. Sinibaldi, PhD** (*What Your Fossils Can Tell You* ISBN 978-0-8130-3425-6 University Press of Florida).

Therefore, I think the position of ALAA should be to not lay down our muskets, but keep our powder dry and seek reinforcements so when the time is ripe, we can be prepared to hopefully get the ill-named Paleontology Preservation Act repealed or strongly amended in the way we all understand it needs to be.

*Terrell William Terry" Proctor, J.D. Attorney/ Mediator & former Judge + President Houston Gem & Mineral Society 2008-2010 and Texas Representative of the ALAA.*  
[auraman@swbell.net]

### ALAA ACTION FUND

**I**n order to raise money for the ALAA "Action Fund" one idea was to hold a raffle at Gem & Mineral Shows and other events that are attended by a large number of people. The first event that offered an opportunity to test the feasibility of having a raffle was the Magnolia State Gem and Mineral Show held in Pascagoula, MS on November 8th, 9th, and 10th. This is a really nice but small show sponsored by the MS Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society. John Wright a member and past President of the society and the MS ALAA Director was asked by ALAA President Shirley Leeson to hold the event . Even though this was a small show and the club's permission was only obtained the night before opening with no advanced notice about the raffle, \$173.00 was made. The prize was a nice clear Topaz ring that was won by Joyce Whitaker from De Hona, FL. Shirley was very pleased with the results and plans to suggest other raffles as a part of the ef-

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**ALAA ACTION FUND***(Continued from page 9)*

fort to raise money for the ALAA "Action Fund". A lot of credit should go to members of society, which is also a member of ALAA, as they pitched in at the last minute so to speak to help make this event a success.

**John Wright, ALAA MS Director**

### **Safety Claims for Need of Travel Management on Region 6 National Forest**

A letter from our Oregon ALAA Rep  
John George

Dear Mr. Connaughton,

I have been actively involved in the progression of the development of our Travel Management Plan for the Wallowa Whitman and Malheur National Forests. I just finished watching a piece on Oregon Public Broadcasting on hiking Mt. Hood, with an emphasis on the accident that occurred on the mountain in 2002.

It has been reported that the mountain has claimed over 100 lives in the past century <http://youtu.be/IEbMJuyRnHc>.

My simple question is this, why are you, as the regional forester so set to create a "closed forest system" the Wallowa Whitman and Malheur National Forest under a variety of reasons, one of those being safety, when such an unsafe environment is found just 60 or so miles from your office in Portland.

I believe the agencies mission in moving forward with Travel Management has nothing to do with Safety, Wildlife, Sediment Reduction, or Reducing Conflicts of User Groups, but is wholeheartedly driven by an agenda to make defacto wilderness and simply remove "motorized access" to public lands as much as possible.

This email is not written to you to pit hikers against motorized users, it's meant to point out the hypocrisy of the agencies policies.

Public lands are meant to be multiple use, and also open to the public. Public lands are just that, public, and the people of Eastern Oregon deserve to have the freedom to access their traditional use areas in their chosen means. Why can the forest not simply designate motorized use for all existing roads, and not build any new roads, and I already have heard the excuse of "we don't have the budget", and the reason the agency doesn't have the budget is because of allocation of priorities, not because of a lack of funds.

I would hope you take this into consideration when you receive the Sub-Part A report from the Wallowa Whitman National Forest. The public has been told repeatedly that we will only be allowed to comment to the correctness of maps (which has been an issue since the conception of this failed planning effort) and that the WWNF is not required to take public input on the findings of what roads are needed or not needed for management of the national forest. This simply means, to us at least, we are not welcome to have a voice in the management of our forest, or what roads are "needed."

I appreciate the agencies concern about my/our "safety" but honestly, part of engaging with "wild areas" as your agency likes to promote them as, is the experience of the unknown and uncontrollable.

Please ask yourself the question, how does closing all of these roads affect others ability to engage with wild areas. The answer is, negatively, and more to the point grossly negatively.

Safety is the least of our concerns sir, we are not people known to live in a bubble, just like the folks that hike to the top of Mt. Hood, I would ask that you simply afford us the same courtesy of freedom of movement and risk taking that you afford them.

Motorized access in not simply a "recreational activity," it is as much, if not more so a sustainment tool as it is a recreational activity.

John D. George  
34226 Austin Rd.  
Bates, Oregon

*Shirley asked me to send you this article, sorry it took so long. She also asked me to say a few words about myself, something I am notoriously bad at doing. I always look at the long list of credits after a person's name, and wonder what he or she really stood for, and how did that manifest in their lives.*

*Suffice it to say that I care deeply about people enjoying the outdoors, and have made it my life's work to make sure everyone can do just that. Motorized access to public land is more than just a saying, it's a passion for people and helping them live their best lives.*

*Amy Granat, Managing Director, CORVA*

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## **The Sad Saga of the Rim Fire**

**A**t time of publication the Rim Fire has scorched almost 250,000 acres and has been named the third largest fire in California history, and full containment is only expected by the end of September. This fire burned with intensity once uncommon, but recently has been seen more and more often. Which has led to the question; what has changed in regards to forest management to cause this devastating difference in fire intensity?

During his testimony given in August at a Congressional Field Hearing, Steve Brink, who is the Public Resources Vice President for the California Forestry Association but has 37 years of service to the Forest Service; described a situation existent in our forests that borders on certain catastrophe. Because this testimony was given before the Rim Fire started, Mr. Brink seemed able to look into his crystal ball. He predicted a fire exactly like the Rim Fire by explaining that forest tree density levels in California far exceed normal; "...the individual National Forests in California show an average of 266 trees per acre on a landscape that generally can only sustain 40-100 trees per acre and thereby be resistant to insects, disease and wildfire."

Mr. Brink proceeded to explain how our

California forests ended up with such an unsustainable landscape; "... every time there is a species-specific habitat designation put in-place, the tendency is to stop forest health and fuels reduction projects. In the case of the Spotted Owl, the reduction in activity is to promote increased canopy cover and other characteristics for species, which then leads to an ever increasing tree density on California's National Forests." But that insistence on the cessation of fuel reduction projects has now led to the destruction of 250,000 acres of prime spotted owl habitat. By not recognizing the more important need for overall forest health, habitat for all species that lived in this moonscape of burned forest area has been lost.

Now the true culprit behind catastrophic fire has been unmasked. Every time a lawsuit is filed on behalf of the Spotted Owl, American Marten or Pacific Fisher, just to give a few examples, fuel reduction projects that would contribute to forest health are halted by a judge, and anti-access groups put another notch in their belts signifying a legal victory. But what has been a success for these groups has been an abject failure for the rest of our state. Both residents and landscapes have suffered because of these legal decisions, and these groups should hang their heads for their direct contribution to 250,000 acres burned beyond recognition.

We ask ourselves how each and every one of us can make a difference, but one point is very clear. As the off-road enthusiast community, have to take back the moral high ground, and start realizing that we are the good guys. We work harder with the Forest Service and BLM than any other group, and contribute more money to sustain landscapes that all other users of public land. As CORVA has pledged to be the "Powerful Access Advocates, the Voice of California's OHV Community" we're here to support you, support local communities, and support public land access for everyone. It's time for all Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts to stand up and be counted. Think carefully before voting, and determine which can-

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## The Sad Saga of the Rim Fire

*(Continued from page 11)*

didate for State or Federal Office supports the rights of Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts. Support "Access for Everyone" by supporting CORVA, your California Off-Road Vehicle Association.

*Mike McMillan/U.S. Forest Service*

## UPDATE - Washington Public Lands

What's happening in Washington State is occurring in the other states as well. What I am referring to is the onslaught of policy changes underway within our Public Land Management agencies as well as federal and state legislation which is bombarding our state and our citizens. These changes if initiated will alter the recreational quality of life and impact the way we use and enjoy our public lands.

Take for example the Bureau of Land Management who are presently engaged in reshaping the way they will manage public lands they control over the next 20 years through a less than transparent and open process known as the (RMP) or Resource Management Plan. Public access to public lands are at risk of being lost.

Then there is the USFS who are revising and changing plans and policies on the way they manage our National Forrest here in the state and throughout the nation under a less than stellar process which is known as the (TMP) Travel Management Plan. Once again the publics right to access & use is in danger.

Not to be outdone and overlooked is the USFWS who are constantly trying to restrict land use practices by exploiting the intent of the Endangered Species Act. They continue initiating listings for flora and fauna which have no legitimate and substantiated reason for being considered for the register. Case in point is the Bladder pod flowering plant which is purported to be endangered but is commonly found in other parts in

America.

State land management agencies who quite often align and collaborate with the federal land management agencies are not immune from fiscal irresponsibility and are suffering substantially. Of particular interest to the citizens of Washington is the Washington State Park System who are quietly celebrating 100 years of existence this year, yet not since the Great Depression has it been so broke and in financial despair. All the while the state is facing a massive deficit resulting in dramatic budget cuts seriously impacting our public lands.

Another important land access issue the public is watching centers around Rattlesnake Mountain located on the Hanford Reach National Monument in Benton County of Eastern Washington. This 3,600 foot ridge on the Hanford nuclear reservation is the highest point in the Mid-Columbia offering amazing views of Central Washington, the Columbia River and the HR National Monument.

This piece of real estate has been controlled by the federal government since 1943 when it was taken over by Eminent Domain actions to serve as a buffer for the Manhattan project. It was unused from 1960 to 2000 when it was designated as part of the Hanford Reach Nat. monument by then President Bill Clinton on June 9th.

This year, Rep-Doc Hastings (Wa-04) and chairman of the congressional House committee on Natural Resources who authored and introduced public access legislation stated "This is about making sure that the land the American people own is accessible to them"

As of this writing this piece of legislation has unanimously passed in the US House of Representatives but has yet to gather a sponsor in the Senate. Presently, access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mtn. is prohibited by the USFWS who manages the National Monument. However they have begun offering limited wildflower tours on a first come first served basis.

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## UPDATE - Washington Public Lands

(Continued from page 12)

These are but a few of the issues facing the citizens of Washington, yet I am reasonable sure every state in the nation is dealing with integrity and credibility issues with our federal and state land management agencies. As with the citizens of Washington State it is incumbent for all American citizens to hold their elected officials accountable and responsible for matters affecting our public lands and rights.

*A. Johnson*

*E. Washington rep*

### Clear Creek Management Area (San Benito County, California)

At this time BLM's revised Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Clear Creek is still being held up in BLM offices in Sacramento and Washington DC. Final protests relating to the proposed Plan of March 2013 were submitted by the April deadline by ALAA and others. To date, BLM has not responded to the protests, and Clear Creek continues to be officially closed under the Emergency Closure Order of May 1, 2008. Pursuant to NEPA, the final steps in the planning process should be to respond to protests; publish a Record of Decision in the Federal Register; and commence permitting of access to Clear Creek. Although BLM Sacramento has provided assurances that they "have been working diligently on Clear Creek over the past two months" and are "coming down the home stretch", BLM declines to "put an actual date" on the re-opening of Clear Creek. We are advised that one final "briefing" is required and then the RMP "should be good to go." Definitive enough for you? Best guess now is that BLM will drag this process past New Year.

*Bill Spence*

## North Carolina National Forest Service's Forest Management Plan Revision

By Carl Talbott,

ALAA State Director for North Carolina

The National Forest Service for North Carolina (NFSNC) began a process last spring to revise its 1987 Nantahala and Pisgah National Forest Management Plan. This process involves a continuing dialog with interested National Forest customers, including ALAA, to form a coherent set of management objectives in light of the diverse set of user groups.

After a number of data-gathering, public meetings, NFSNC prepared a draft Assessment Report available online at [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/nfsnc/nprevision](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/nfsnc/nprevision) and then sought formal comments at regional meetings in western North Carolina and via e-mail at [ncplanrevision@fs.fed.us](mailto:ncplanrevision@fs.fed.us).

Regarding recreational rockhounding, the Sept 2013 draft Assessment Report says "while collecting minerals that are loose and free on the surface is a permitted activity [language from the 1987 plan], some popular collection areas are experiencing more significant damage to natural resources as a result of digging and subsequent erosion." This assertion, the only such negative comment in the draft Assessment Report, has been challenged as to its veracity and evidence when compared to other recreational activities such as horse or motorbike riding.

It's a rare day that one can find minerals that are "loose and free on the surface". Such ambiguous language might even exclude mineral collecting (such as placer gold) in creeks and rivers. The Assessment Report goes on to say rockhounding 'guidelines' can be found at [www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/recreation/?cid=stelprdb5420144](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/recreation/?cid=stelprdb5420144). Other than guidelines for use of firearms in North Carolina's National Forests, these guidelines on Rockhounding and Goldpanning are the only written policy for any recreational activity. Needless to say, much needs to be done to yield coherent rules and policy.

**Subject: NFSNC Forest Plan Revision  
Comment**

To: "[ncplanrevision@fs.fed.us](mailto:ncplanrevision@fs.fed.us)"

At the Plan Revision meeting in Murphy, North Carolina yesterday, I submitted a written comment regarding the use of metal detectors in the NC National Forests. I see there is a NFSNC Order # 04-16-2010 that prohibits carrying or using metal detectors or other devices intended to locate metal except in designated areas listed in the Order.

Since many gold panners use metal detectors in streams to locate gold, perhaps this specific prohibition ought to be included in the guidelines on Rockhounding and Gold Panning referenced in the Plan Revision.

This Order cites 36 CFR 261.53(f) as it's authority. Yet, this authority citation says "When provided in an order, it is prohibited to go into or be upon any area which is closed for the protection of: (f) Property."

It appears to me that the above citation should not be used as the authority for this Order. The prohibition Order is in regards to possession or use of a device(s) in any area and not the simple entry or presence in any area per the citation. Of course, the NFS could take the position that all metals are "property". Perhaps this issue ought to be addressed by your legal staff.

Thank you ...

*Carl Talbott, D.Sc.*

### Finding Your Role

Throughout my tenure in the many roles I have served in the fight for access for responsible recreational on our public lands, one thing I have always wondered at is how so many of the folks who enjoy the outdoors on public (and even private) lands don't consider themselves motorized off-road enthusiasts. The truth is everyone—I repeat everyone—is motorized at some point when

they visit our public lands. The only thing that separates us is simply a question of whether or not you decide to park your vehicle.

Some do it for the simple pleasure of an afternoon ride in the countryside. Others use their atv, jeep, or whatever vehicle as a tool to get there so they can hunt the big buck, fish the good stream, or unload their mountain bike or horse for a bit of fun and exercise. Hiker, biker, atver, jeeper or hunter, rare is the enthusiast who enjoys only one of those activities. Rarer still is the enthusiast who walks from his/her house to enjoy that activity in the backcountry.

Thanks to organizations like the American Lands Access Association and their members, Rockhounds have always understood this. Few know this, but for me, a healthy portion of my early mentoring as an advocate for public lands access "wannabe" came from a guy by the name of Don Rathert. As some of you likely know, Don was known by thousands of kids (and others) around the Black Hills of South Dakota as the Rock Man. A long time active member of the Western Dakota Gem and Mineral Society, Don also served for as many years on their behalf as a director with the Black Hills Regional Multiple Use Coalition where I first met him.

A rockhound extraordinaire, I count Don as one of those who helped broaden my vision in those early years to help me understand that it takes all of us to win this fight. Sage, recently snake bit, and leaning heavy on his cane, Don depended on his old red truck to access public lands for the hobby he loved so much... as much as I depended on those same backcountry roads and trails to take me where I wanted to go to enjoy my chosen recreation. And he was right. In the end, it doesn't matter how you decide to enjoy our public lands. We aren't so very much different and it does take all of us working together to fight the good fight to make sure our public lands remain

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## Finding Your Role

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accessible to the public.

Perhaps the most important thing I learned from Don is that we all—hiker, biker, atver, jeeper and rockhound alike—have a responsibility toward ensuring our public lands are managed properly and toward making sure others know the importance of that as well. After all, the “public” in public lands means us, and the communities we live in depend on access to those lands for even more than just our personal recreation.

There are plenty of parts to play in that fight for the future and each one is just as important as the other. You are never too young, and you are never too old. Have you found your role?

*Greg Mumm*

## WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC LAND NEWS

Ellen Tilley, President of Western Dakota Gem and Mineral Society and Club Representative to Black Hills Multiple Use Coalition, and I attended the Forest Service meeting that started at noon at the Ramkota Hotel on July 24<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was in regards to some improvements to be made at the Railroad Buttes area of the Buffalo Gap Grassland. They are planning to put large parking areas, an area for young motorcycle riders to use, toilets and picnic tables which will be wonderful for families with “little bikes”.

**There is good news for all rockhounds in the US, who enjoy hunting the Fairburn agates and other rocks in Western South Dakota!** They are going to **re-valuate the trail usage** on the Buffalo Gap Grasslands, both from the Wall district, controlling the public land east of the Cheyenne River, and Hot Springs District, controlling lands west of this river. It was pointed out on the Railroad Butte map concerning the first trail #500 westward, which starts at *north en-*

*trance* into the Railroad butte area. *They have plans to improve and open a trail that cuts across this area-going southwest to meet the same trail #500 that makes a loop and come around the south side.* We discussed trails like the one at the Agate Allotment being closed. We need to let them know this is a well used area, especially for elderly rockhounds to easily access and hunt in flat areas.

**They are asking for comments-suggestions about trails that are presently closed in which we rockhounds use the most and want reopened!** So, make a copy of these areas on your 2013 Buffalo Gap Grasslands trail management map, or from other Buffalo Gap Grasslands maps, **mark these trails in RED INK that you wish opened for future rock hunting and add your comments!** This makes it easier for them to understand the exact trails we would like to have open to drive on to certain agate beds. This year’s edition of the Buffalo Gap Grasslands Map is available free at the US Forest Service office on South Highway 16 or write for a copy at the FS- Buffalo Gap Grasslands Manager at Chadron, NE office, address is in their line website. **The short jeep trails in the grasslands that need to be re-opened are in the Agate Allotment; the short trail into the rattlerock geode area at turn-off to Kurdna ranch -all east of Scenic, SD. Also a trail northeast of Scenic in Bear Canyon drainage. West of Scenic there are two short trails around the Hart Table buttes-this the only flat area with drainages having black agates that is easy accessible.** We asked about possibility of re-opening three longer trails around the original Fairburn agate beds east of Fairburn, SD and both rangers said that is impossible for these trails to ever open again. The Forest Service did make a new road with parking area in the Fairburn beds north of the picnic area.

Send to management: **Buffalo Gap Grasslands, Wall Ranger District, PO Box 425, Wall, SD 57790 (ph: 605-279-2125, 605-279-2125) or**

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**WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA  
PUBLIC LAND NEWS**

*(Continued from page 15)*

**Buffalo Gap Grasslands, Fall River Ranger Station, 1801 Highway 18 Truck Bypass, Hot Springs, SD 57747** (phone: 605-745-4107, 605-745-4107) I've included phone numbers if you wish to call and ask about numbering concerns of existing trails. **Please contact them now this Fall - this may be our only chance to get our well-used trails open before the new trail map is printed!**

*By Jan Baumeister, SD Rep for ALAA and RMFMS*

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC LANDS: BLM**

**T**he South Dakota Field Office (SDFO) manages over 274,000 surface acres and around 1.7 million acres of subsurface mineral estate in South Dakota. The majority of the surface acres are located west of the Missouri River in 13 counties; mineral estate is found in 32 of the 66 counties. Butte County in western South Dakota has the majority of the surface acres with around 145,000 acres. (\*Editors note: The map shows there is BLM land in upper Shannon County and upper part of Jackson County, SD and scatter around north and east of the Black Hills. It might pay for rockhounds to get a BLM map for future hunting- it states: recreation (especially hunting) if public access exists.

A majority of the vegetation on the BLM-administered lands is prairie grassland or juniper woodlands. However, lands at Fort Meade Recreation Area and around Lead and Deadwood have ponderosa pine. Fort Meade Recreation Area has opportunities for camping, picnicking, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and a Back Country Byway with interpretive signs. (from: SD BLM website)

*By Jan Baumeister, SD Rep for ALAA and RMFMS*

**Introduction of New Editor**

**Tom Burchard**

**T**o borrow from Jay's 2008 introduction, "Please allow me to introduce myself". My name is Tom Burchard and I've been asked to become the Editor of the ALAA Newsletter. I see this as a 'continuing challenge'. The first challenge is to pick up where Jay has left off and continue to provide timely and essential information for ALAA members on the issues that concern us all. The next challenge will be to see how we may adapt a quarterly newsletter to provide more timely or relevant information to our membership. I will need your help with this as although I can see that we need to do this, I am not at all sure how we should go about it. I know that there may be a natural limitation to effecting this improvement, but would like to explore the possibilities.

I am very familiar with publishing monthly bulletins and newsletters. I have been the 'publisher' of the Peninsula Gem & Geology Society's (Los Altos, California) "Petrograph" since 1996. The 'Editor' does all the information gathering and sends me text files with which I do the 'desk top publishing' and 'print, label, stamp and mail' the bulletin from here in Ogden, Utah, where I live now. I have just finished my turn as "Editor" of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies Newsletter while I was serving as 2nd Vice President of CFMS.

I hope to be able to use my somewhat unique situation to provide a fairly wide sweep of information gathering to the newsletter. I belong to four rock hound clubs that happen to be in four federations. I see a lot of information coming across the screen of my computer and through the postal system. But mostly I will rely upon the ALAA Membership to give me as much cooperation as you gave to Jay.



## HAPPENINGS IN THE BLM'S CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT

By Kim Campbell Erb

There are several things happening currently in the BLM's California Desert District that rockhounds need to be aware of and get involved in. Typically the BLM sees and hears very, very little from rockhounds. For some reason, most rockhounds just don't seem to want to participate in the process or comment on the proposed actions that could cause us to lose what access to collecting sites that we haven't already lost. No one or two persons is capable of knowing all collecting areas or speaking for all rockhounds, and the reality is that if the BLM doesn't hear from more people it will continue to believe that we are an insignificant group. Currently there are several proposed actions looming that will affect our access, so now is the time to jump in and get involved.

Below are some items that require your involvement:

### **Soda Mountain Solar Project:**

The proposed Soda Mountains Solar project is a very large project that would cover a huge area (4,179 acres, plus another 2122 of additional facilities) on both sides of Highway 15 around the Razor Road offramp, not far from Afton Canyon. The proposed project would be a fenced project consisting of solar photovoltaic panels that extend from the base of the hills on the north side of the freeway to the base of the hills and beyond on the south side of the freeway, a sub-station and other facilities.

It is quite possible that this project would affect access to several collecting locations, not to mention the affects on the micro-climate of the area and the many species that live on and under the ground where the project would be sited.

Two public meetings are scheduled to take place at the Comfort Suites in Barstow, one

on the evening of January 8, the other on the afternoon of January 9. This provides a poor opportunity to attend for most working people, but if there is any way you can make it to one of these meetings, you should.

The notice provides a web address where more information can be found as:

[http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/barstow/renewableenergy/soda\\_mountain.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/barstow/renewableenergy/soda_mountain.html)

Please take the time to review the documents provided on the website and attend one of the meetings, and comment. If you cannot attend one of the meetings, please submit your written comments to the address provided on their website and documents. They seldom hear from rockhounds.

### **Special Recreation Permit Subgroup:**

The Special Recreation Permit ("SRP") Subgroup is a subgroup of the Bureau of Land Management's ("BLM's") Desert Advisory Council ("DAC") that is working with the BLM to better understand under what circumstances a Special Recreation Permit is required for an event on BLM land, and how to better communicate to the public the SRP requirements and the permit process. Previously this subgroup addressed competitive events such as motorcycle races, but the focus now is on non-competitive events. This would include group rock collecting events, but under what circumstances a group rock collecting would require a permit and what requirements such permit would impose is a mystery to most of us.

The next meeting of this subgroup will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on January 15, 2014 at the BLM's Desert District Office located at 22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA .

This subgroup gets little or no participation from rockhounds, yet we may be greatly affected by the Special Recreation Permit require-

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## HAPPENINGS IN THE BLM'S CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT

(Continued from page 17)

ments in the future. The BLM sent a representative from their state office to the last meeting, and they may utilize the work of this subgroup on a state-wide level, so now is the time to learn about this topic and contribute your thoughts, concerns and ideas in a meaningful way.

### **Important Upcoming Items to Watch For:**

Two very important items that we know, with certainty, will affect our future access to BLM lands within the California Desert District are the West Mojave Route Network Plan and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. The final EIS for each of these are expected to be released this spring, most likely in March.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") for the proposed *West Mojave Route Network Plan* will define the routes within the West Mojave sub-region that will be open for travel. If you do not already know this, you should: if a route is not marked as "Open", it is closed and you are not permitted to use it. If you are caught travelling on a route that is not open, you can be cited and fined. Maps showing the routes proposed to be kept open will be released for review, public meetings will be scheduled, and a defined comment period will be defined when the final EIS is released. Many of you participated in the public meetings that were held during the scoping process or by the WEMO Subgroup, but it will be far more important that we as rockhounds participate in the meetings and comment on the final EIS, so please watch for this and make time to get involved. More information can be found at: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd/wemo.html>

The Final EIS for the *Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan* ("DRECP") will propose what areas will be designated as preferred for development of alternative energy projects, which land is preferred not to be developed for

alternative energy projects, and which land will be preferred to be used for conservation land as mitigation for the anticipated negative impacts the alternative energy projects will have. Once final approval for this plan occurs, any proposed alternative projects that are sited in the preferred areas will be fast-tracked for approval and it will be much more difficult for the public to stop or reduce them. This is a monumentally huge, unprecedented multi-agency plan, and will have an impact on our access for a long, long time. Very, very few rockhounds participated in the public meetings or commented during the scoping process. It is essential that we, as rockhounds, get involved in the process so that there is some hope of keeping access to what collecting locations we still have. To get started, go to: <http://drecp.org/>

### **ALAA HAS LOST SOME AWESOME FRIENDS THIS YEAR**

First we lost our 'rock' Ruth Bailey in early 2013. Then we lost Julaine Mullaney, wife of Frank Mullaney. And Billie Wright, wife of John Wright. And late this year we lost Joan Day, wife of Evan Day.

This has not been a good year for our band of ALAA officers and directors. But, we will endure while remembering these outstanding ladies for all they have contributed to the rockhound community. We will rally around those who have been left behind with our support and prayers.

We have just learned of the passing of Vern Cliffe of Sierra Madre, CA. Vern was an early ALAA member and kept us busy with innovative ideas to push ALAA forward. With failing eyesight Vern was forced to curtail his endeavors but never gave up. A spirit we all admired.

Shirley Leeson, President ALAA

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