

ALAA Newsletter
Richard Pankey, OT Editor
4310 Kingsly Dr.
Pittsburg, CA 94565



FIRST CLASS MAIL

Dues are Due

***AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS
ASSOCIATION, INC''***

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

DECEMBER 2008

AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC.

DECEMBER 2008

OFFICERS:

BOB CARLSON, President
1585 Los Pueblos
Los Alamos, NM 87544
Phone: 505-662-5834, Email:
drobericarlson@yahoo.com

DICK PANKEY, Vice Pres.
4310 Kingsly Drive
Pittsburg, CA 94565-6267
Phone: 925-439-7509
Email: dickpankey@juno.com

JOYCE HANSCHU SEC.
6607 Strubridge Lane
Canton, MI 48187
Phone: 734-455-8596
Email: nwhanscbu@prodigy.net

NORM HANSCHU, Treas.
6607 Strubridge Lane
Canton, MI 48187
Phone: 734-455-8596
Email: nwhanscbu@prodigy.net

DIRECTORS:

JIM HURLBUT
2240 South Adam
Denver, CO 80210
Phone: 303-757-0283
Email:
jfhu@ear1hlink.net

DEE HOLLAND
PO BOX 23
Tendoy, ID 83468
Phone: 208-756-2394 ID
619-460-6128 CA
Email: shirleyleeson@cox.net,
beauholland@centurytel.net

BOB AND KATHY MILLER
1106 Clayton Drive
South Bend, IN 46614
Phone: 219-291-0332
Email: KanBrock@aol.com

RUTH BAILEY
2857 Addison Place
Santa Clara, CA 95051-1750
Phone: 408-248-6195
Email: Rba51825@aol.com

JOHN ALF
816 Whippoorwill Ct
Bartlesville, OK 74006
Phone: 916-333-3429
Email: Jalf1@Cableone.net

HOWELL WHITING
2300 S. Union Avenue
Roswell, NM 88203
Phone: 505-622-5679
Email: htwdhw@dfn.com

BILL BURNS
1038 Bradshaw Avenue
Monterey Park, CA 91754-4912
Phone: 626-288-2896
Email: isnbll@aol.com

DEAN STONE
402 N. 1st Street
Effingham, IL 62401
Phone: 217-342-7132
Email: stonerocks@hotmail.com

JOHN WRIGHT
3304 Nottingham Rd
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Email: osjbw@cableone.net

Presidents Message

Hello,

My name is Robert Carlson, and I am your current President of the ALAA. I would like to comment on the current state of the ALAA: It is not good. Our treasury is sound, but our membership is way down. Our communication has been largely non-existent, primarily due to the lack of an editor.

Dick Pankey has graciously agreed to be the editor for this one issue, but only this issue.

Now the good news. We have a new editor for the ALAA. His name is Jay Valle, a member of three clubs in California. He is enthusiastic and I will let him introduce himself later in this issue.

Now that solves one problem, but now he needs something to edit. This means that each and every one of us needs to feed him with information. We need to have so much information that he has to pick and choose what he can print.

Since the ALAA publishes a newsletter only four times a year, information will be primarily historical. It will provide the reader with what has happened, and how the ALAA helped to fix it; but it cannot provide the immediate communications that are needed to alert the members of fast breaking legislation.

We need an e-mail communications tree that will receive and disseminate information rapidly to our members. I understand that Shirley Leeson and Dee Holland are working towards that objective. They need our support.

With our declining membership, does the AFMS think that they need the ALAA? I think that the answer is: YES, now more than ever. With the current make-up of Congress and the Executive branches of the government, the conservationists and environmentalists have a forum that they have never had before, and you can bet that they will try to make the most of it. This means that our access to public lands and to our collecting rights will come under fire with a vengeance that we have not seen before. If we are going to stop this assault, we must be organized and be able to communicate quickly and effectively. This is where the ALAA can help, but only with your participation.

How the current state of affairs affects all of us:

When I took Economics in College, I was told that there are three natural resources: Labor, Capital and Land (which includes raw materials). It takes some portion of all three to produce any product or service; and that the proportion of the three is determined by the free market. If one of the resources is scarce, then it takes more of the other two to produce a given product or service, and the total cost of that production is increased.

An example is in farming. Generally the amount of land that is owned by a private farmer is fixed, although the option to rent more land is available. In this situation, if capital is scarce, farm machinery cannot be purchased or rented, so the farm becomes labor intensive to produce a given amount of product. Conversely, if Labor is scarce, then more specialized and expensive machines are needed to produce the same amount of product. If both labor and capital are scarce, the land

goes into the Federal Land Bank Program - commonly called "bailout" - and the taxpayers foot the bill.

So what? Well, our economy is a lot like that farm. It requires those three natural resources - Labor, Capital and Land - to produce our Gross National Product (GNP). Let us examine our economy and determine what is happening.

With the recent disaster in the Stock Market, Capital is becoming non-existent. Those in the Stock Market that thought that they had monetary resources to spend or loan, have discovered that they no longer have them. Those that had monetary resources in other investments, such as

Real Estate, Bonds, precious metals, etc. are holding their collective breaths. Are they going to provide Capital? Not on your life.

Well, that leaves Labor and Land. Let's examine Land. For the past many years, the Conservationists and the Environmentalists have been converting every possible acre that they can envision into Wilderness Areas, National Parks, National Monuments, or Environmental Concerns. This has been done through their extensive lobby in Congress. They are not done. This year there was an attempt put a lot of Conservation Legislation into a "Massive Omnibus Public Lands Bill". It was postponed until the next Congress so more support could be mustered.

What does this mean to us? It means that the land needed to provide the raw materials for our economy to exist is gradually and silently disappearing. For example, due to Environmental Concerns, the spotted owl and related rare insects, lizards, and other fauna, have driven the price of forest products to unprecedented highs. Making new areas dedicated to a single purpose, such as Wilderness or protection of a soon to become extinct species, further depletes our economy of the raw materials that it so desperately needs to survive.

To round out the economic analysis, we come at last to Labor. With Capital gone, and Land (which includes raw materials) disappearing through Congressional Action, what does this mean for Labor? It means that we need more people in the work force. If capital is not available to buy or

rent a backhoe to dig a hole, you need a lot of people with shovels. Since the number of people is finite, how can this be achieved? Through longer work weeks, and higher retirement ages, with a consequent lower wage. The good side is that more jobs will become available, but some former Stock Brokers may be wielding those shovels. Not a pretty picture.

What can be done? One partial solution is that the Land Grab by the Conservationists and the Environmentalists needs to be stopped so that we no longer further deplete our land resources, not just for the protection of our hobby, but for the recovery of the entire economy.

Who has to do it? YOU. Become a member of ALAA. Receive the alerts, and contact your Congress Persons to express your opinions on pending legislation. That is how the system works.

Bob Carlson



Use the little Rockhound Sticker when mailing to your elected representatives, to governmental agencies and to other rockhounds.

From the Editor's Desk

When I signed on to edit the ALAA Newsletter I volunteered to do one issue. We didn't have a newsletter all this past year because we didn't have an editor. And one time is all that I will have to do because we got a volunteer! In mid-November I sent an email to the officers and directors of ALAA and to another group of involved people that I knew and had their email addresses requesting articles and explaining our need for an Editor. The next day a received an e-mail with a recommendation and before I could contact that person he contacted me. The experience was astounding and very gratifying – an actual volunteer. I informed President Carlson who made the official appointment. The new editor for ALAA is Jay Valle of California. Please read his self introduction.

As Bob states in his President Message, "Since ALAA publishes a newsletter only four

times a year, information will be primarily historical. It will provide the reader with what has happened, and how the ALAA helped to fix it; but it cannot provide the immediate communications that are needed to alert the members of fast breaking legislation.” But the ALAA newsletter needs to be more.

The newsletter needs to have more “proactive content”, also. We need articles on how to write letters, and how and to whom to send them. We need articles about introduced legislation. This content comes from our membership and from our contacts with other like minded organizations.

The ALAA Newsletter is just one of the communication links with our membership. There are the Blue Ribbon Coalition e-mail alerts. These are alerts for legislative and agency activities. Some of us are already receiving these alerts which we then forward to others. Hopefully in the next newsletter there will be an article telling how more of our members can get onto the Alert List.

ALAA also has a very good web site, www.amlands.org. Marty Hart saw the need and has been serving as our web master. The web site has 6 sections: History, Articles, Letters, Membership, Links and Officers. The web site is a great way to communicate with our membership and with the general public. But it needs content. Marty can't do it alone. Just as an editor doesn't write the newsletter, the web master isn't responsible for the content. With a plan and guidance from the officers and directors and contributions from all of us the web master arranges and presents what we supply. Currently the ALAA web site gives us internet presence, but in could be and needs to be so much. Our web site can give us the **NOW** communication that we need to be responsive to rapidly changing issues and developments.

I got an excellent response to my call for articles. I wish to thank all of you that sent me articles from my first and last issue. A special **BIG THANK YOU** to all of you that contributed articles and reports.

Its turn around time for the ALAA Newsletter. We need to know what is going on, what went on and what we are doing about it. And

all of this comes from the Officers, Directors and the members. Let your voice be heard.

Dick Pankey, Your one shot editor!

Please allow me to introduce myself...

My name is Jay Valle and I asked to be the bulletin editor for the 4-times yearly ALAA Newsletter. My first issue will come out at the end of March 2009. I see this job as a new challenge and a way to become aware of the issues we are facing as rockhounds and outdoors enthusiasts. Currently, I produce a monthly bulletin for the Whittier Gem & Mineral Society, a job I enjoy and have been doing for about 9 years. I have been a rockhound for many years and love and appreciate the "great outdoors." I enjoy off-roading, camping and the thrill of the hunt (for rocks). Right now I see our freedom to visit and enjoy our own lands being frittered away by pseudo-environmental groups, over-reaching judges and self-serving politicians.

One way to combat this encroachment on our chosen lifestyle is through the sharing of information regarding land closures, lawsuits and legislation affecting our public lands. With knowledge comes the ability to respond to these threats through the sharing of information and though contacts with Government Agencies and legislators (for example.) To this end the American Lands Access Association was founded. ALAA can make contacts with legislators and distribute politically charged information in a way that our Gem & Mineral Societies cannot without endangering their non-profit status.

In order for me to be successful at this job I need your help. The information contained in the ALAA Newsletter comes from many sources, but primarily from individuals who come into possession of facts that need to see the light of day. Many times bad legislation or illegal land closures occur in the dark of night, behind locked doors and with little public notice. I need you to pass on that information so it can be published and, hopefully, a timely response can be organized.

The next issue of the ALAA Newsletter will be published and mailed in March 2009. Due date for articles for the next issue is March 8th. I use Microsoft Word and MS Publisher 2003 but can read most other word processing formats. Plain text and html are ok too.

My contact information is as follows:

Jay Valle
1421 Latchford Avenue
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745
Phone: (626) 934-9764
email: res19pnb@verizon.net

Dues Are Due

ALAA works on a calendar year basis and dues renewal time is in December. Your dues are critical to the operation of ALAA. We have no other source of income. Occasionally we will get a donation in excess of the dues. Membership cost is modest -- \$25.00 for an individual and \$50.00 for a society membership.

There is a special offer for all of you that paid your 2008 dues. If you paid your dues for 2008 your membership is automatically extended thru December 2009. You owe nothing for 2009. If you did not pay dues for 2008 please remit your dues for 2009, now. Don't put it off, write that check now. There is no better time.

An application/renewal form is in this newsletter. Please fill it out completely so that we have your most current contact information. Be sure to include your email address. So much of what we do is on short notice and email is the only efficient way to do it. Even if you paid dues in 2008 and do not owe for 2009, complete a form and mail or email it to me so that we are sure we have your most current contact information.

We need your support; we need your dues; we need you to be a member of ALAA. Be an active and involved member.

Norm Hanschu, Treasurer

From an ALAA Director:

Kathy and I have been trying to come up with something to help or to write about but we here in Indiana are more or less "landlocked" as far as any kind of public lands. Sadly, there isn't any in Indiana. Fossils are all that we have (invertebrate) and we are allowed to collect in the state parks but not the forests. Any other fossil collecting we do we have to get permission from the land owner which is not always possible. I believe Ohio and Illinois has the same situation. Marv Starbuck covers Michigan which has a few state owned, user friendly areas left. We have been encouraging clubs and members to write to our senators about the Paleo Bill and have been passing on what information we receive from the various Blue Ribbon alerts because when our members travel, the West seems the only place left available with public lands to collect on. Even though we do not have access here we need to keep up the letters to try to keep western ones open for the benefit of all.

Bob & Kathy Miller

NORTHEAST CALIFORNIA RAC

After three times applying for a position on the BLM Resource Advisory Committee, I recently received the notice of acceptance to the Northeast CA RAC. Hopefully, input into this committee will have a positive effect on our rockhound collecting and enjoyment of public lands.

Concurrently I am also a member of the Blackrock/Highrock Wilderness and Conservation Area for the BLM RAC Subgroup. For four years the Subgroup worked with the BLM on a management plan that was agreeable to everyone. There are still issues to be addressed, one of which is to have the Blackrock Desert geodes area named as a rockhound recreation area. This would require the stewardship of the local gem and mineral club and the CFMS. I do not know whether this will happen or not, but I will keep working on it.

Membership on the CFMS PLAC Committee has declined from 18-20 people in the 1980s and 1990s to five members now. All rockhounds need to notify and inform PLAC committee members of

upcoming meetings and hearings involving our collecting rights. Also please keep in touch with PLAC members about new issues and concerns that need CFMS input regarding public lands.

Norvie Enns, Reno G&MS

IS ROCKHOUNDING, AS WE KNOW IT, DOOMED TO EXTINCTION?

My name is Dee Holland. I am the registered agent for ALAA, Inc. It is registered in the state of Idaho. I am also a Charter Member of ALAA and have been a Director since the organization started back in 1992 in Brunswick, Ohio..

We can thank Ed Romack for the Incorporation of ALAA. Ed took the time to have his attorney set up the Bylaws and the proper Incorporation papers and had them registered. In the beginning Ed was the registered agent but he turned it over to Peggy Blickfeldt as the incoming ALAA President in 2004 in Syracuse, NY. I found out the papers had lapsed and contacted the State of Idaho and got them reinstated.

ALAA is a 501-C4. That makes a huge difference between the AFMS and ALAA. The AFMS is an educational organization, 501-C3. It is not allowed to lobby. That means to lobby for or against legislation or politicians. ALAA is allowed to lobby. Dues or donations to ALAA can not be deducted from your income tax.

Recently we have experienced a number of U.S. Senate and House of Representative bills that will have a lasting impact on our rockhounding. Many of us enjoy nature, and go into the hills to collect rocks, minerals & fossils for our personal enjoyment and to give to schools, scouts and other organizations as educational tools. This will be a thing of the past as far as fossils are concerned. With the pending passage of the Omnibus Bill due for passage as soon into 2009 as Senator Harry Reid can bring it to a vote, collecting fossils will end. There will also be restrictions on areas throughout the U.S. where we can continue to collect rocks and minerals. New Wilderness areas will be in the

Omnibus Bill. Roads under BLM and Forestry Departments will be restricted and many closed.

We will be living in a new time and with each bill issued by the new Congress we will see our areas of collecting shrink. Will our rockhound activities continue? Or will we allow the wilderness environmentalists to dictate our extinction?

This organization has laid dormant too long. Are you willing to help us become a viable organization again? Or shall ALAA become extinct?

Dee Holland, Director

**Use the ROCKHOUND STICKER
on your truck, car and RV to show
that you are a Rockhound**



OMNIBUS PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2008

The senate has before it a bi-partisan package known as the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2008. This Act is a sweeping package that contains numerous "bills" that will add millions of acres of new wilderness and other public lands to the areas now under government protection. The public lands that are designated as Wilderness Areas and National Parks are already "off limits" for all practical purposes for most types of recreational activities.

Besides the millions of acres that will be added by this package of bills to the Wilderness Areas and National Parks, a new entity will be established known as the "National Landscape Conservation System" which will essentially place an additional 26 million acres of public lands under control of BLM. It is to be regulated and control in a manner very similar to the "National Parks" and will eliminate or severely limit any type of recreational mining (rock-hounding) plus a host of other pursuits.

The Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, HR554, which was resurrected earlier this year

and approved by committee, has also been added to the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2008. It can be found in the package as an attachment under Subtitle E--Paleontological Resources Preservation, Sections 641 to 652. This is a dangerous part of the package that is going to hurt a lot of innocent people.

Senate Majority Leader, Senator Harry Reid had planned to bring this bill before the Senate for a vote during the "lame duck session" following the national elections, but with the threat of a filibuster and economic issues deemed more urgent, he decided to pull the bill for the time being. There is still a slim chance that the Omnibus Land Bill could be acted on, but since this is a bi-partisan bill, it may be allowed to die and a more liberal version conceivably written next year. In the mean time we may still have a small window of opportunity to let our congress men and women know that we are opposed to this legislation.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 originally consisted of 9.1 million acres of national forest wilderness areas. As of 2004, the Wilderness System comprises over 107 million acres involving federal lands administered by four agencies: the National Park Service (43,616,250 acres), U.S. Forest Service (34,867,591 acres), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (20,699,108 acres), and Bureau of Land Management (6,512,227 acres) **for a total of : 107,436,608 acres.** Using these figures as a reference, I think we can safely assume that the areas being set aside for The National Landscape Conservation System will grow accordingly and the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, if passed into law, will be substantially expanded over the coming years.

The environmentalists are also working diligently at having states and large private land owners convert their properties into wilderness areas similar to the ones controlled by the U.S. government. They are well organized and financed, which in many cases allow them to exert considerable pressure on state and private land owners. If they are successful, it is going to further limit many areas that can be used for recreational purposes.

John Wright, RPG, Chairman, AFMS

Conservation & Legislation

(Ed. Note: Since John wrote this in late November, the Omnibus Bill was pulled from consideration for this session of congress. Our fight is not over; expect these bills to be re-introduced in the next session -- 'bigger and badder'.)

ALAA: Needed and Needing Change

It seemed to start on mid summer. A flurry of emails. From many sources. *"The Paleo Bill is Coming! The Paleo Bill is Coming!" It will devastate what we do as rockhounds. It must be stopped. It will come to a vote soon. It has been combined into the Omnibus Bill.* It seemed to catch us by surprise and we were in reaction mode. And we were reacting and communicating pretty well.

I went on line and got a copy of the Paleo Bill and read it. Yes, we need to be concerned; we need to take action. Then I noticed the date on the bill: it was introduced in the House in January 2007. Where had I been? Why hadn't I heard about this before? Where was ALAA? What did they know and what had they done? There is a similar scenario with some Wilderness Bill and the Omnibus Bill. We did rally the troops and we did get some letters and email written, but we were fighting the wrong battle at the wrong time. By the time we joined the fight it was probably already lost.

My point, we have to change our approach from *reactive to proactive.* We need to get involved at the start of the legislative process not at the end. We need to lobby for what we want, not just want we don't want. We need to be supportive of the Senators and Representatives that see things our way that are supporters of **Public Lands for the Public!**

I am not trying to put down what has been done but promote another way of doing business. A lot of good people have done a challenging job of finding out what is going on and trying to inform the rest of us about it. I believe a lot that has been done has fallen on deaf ears.

I see two challenges before us:

- Developing a *proactive* approach and process to be involved in the legislative process and agency rule making and maintain and build a *reactive* response process as needed.
- Develop an outreach program to educate and inform the ALAA membership, other rockhounds and users of the public lands, and to the general public at large.

Okay, lets stew on this awhile; I am not expecting immediate consensus and change. But they are some things to think about. I believe that our once a year ALAA meeting is not enough to build interest and membership. I propose that ALAA have an information table and hold some kind of meeting at every Regional Federation Show to promote ALAA and inform people on the threats to users of public lands. At this moment I am not exactly sure what this meeting will entail but I plan to hold one at the CFMS show in April 2009.

Dick Pankey, Vice President

SO YOU THINK YOU AND YOUR RIGHT TO COLLECT FOSSILS & MINERALS IS SAFE?

Think again. Congress in its wisdom, or lack thereof, is rumored to be poised to act on or about November 17, 2008, during a 'Lame-Duck' Session for Land Bills, which had been previously block by Sen. Coburn. H.R. 554 would be one of the bills anticipated to be included. H.R. 554 is called the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (*H.R. 554 or Act herein*).

I have H.R. 554, the so-called Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, in my hand. I have also read some of the blogs about this Act. Some say the Act only spells out what is already law. Other blogs state it protects Americans from having things taken from Public Lands which ought not to be taken. On the other hand, there are those who blog that this is but another action being taken by the U.S. Government to prevent citizens from enjoying Public Lands and the Act contains dangerous provisions which could entrap folks out

collecting fossils as a family, friends, or groups, leading to seizure of their vehicles, contents and felony prosecution.

So let us look at some of the provisions and then, if you feel this Bill could end or greatly curtail we rockhounds from enjoying our avocation or possibly bring a halt or severe diminishment of our hobby, you need to act promptly in contacting your own Representative and Senator, and ask them to vote against H.R. 554.

The thing I notice in the very first part of H.R. 554 is that so much of the content is 'subjective', i.e. it uses words which the person or agency enforcing the Bill would be able to use their determination of what did or did not meet the criteria of the terms used. That is bad law.

Casual collecting is purportedly O.K. But looking at Sec. 2 of the Definitions, item (2) Casual Collecting, has about half dozen things, which would be entirely subjective and subject to someone determining what each meant. Here is what I am talking about. Verbatim, here is what Sec. 1 (2) states 'CASUAL COLLECTING.--The term "casual collecting" means the collecting of a reasonable amount of common invertebrate and plant palontological (never mind that they can't spell paleontological) resources for non-commercial personal use, either by surface collection or the use of non-powered hand tools resulting in only negligible disturbance to the Earth's surface and other resources. As used in this paragraph, the terms "reasonable amount", "common invertebrate and plant paleontological resources" and "negligible disturbance" shall be determined by the Secretary.

Later the term Paleontological resource is defined to mean "any fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms, preserved in or on the earth's cruse, that are of paleontological interest and that provide information about the history of life on earth, except that term does not include-- (setting out archaeological resources and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act items). It doesn't say who is going to determine what 'paleontological resource' means.

This is a rather long Act and I won't even try to go too far into it, but let us just look at the at that first definition of 'Casual Collecting'. What is a

'reasonable amount and what are common invertebrate and plant paleontological resources'? Is reasonable amount boxes full in your SUV or only what you can put in your jeans pocket? Is the Secretary of the Interior going to let you know, before they seize your vehicle for forfeiture because you have 13 (a Baker's dozen and the law only allows a normal dozen, i.e. 12). Are we looking at annual limits like shooting ducks and will there be a season?

What is non-commercial. If you ever traded one fossil on eBay would that subject you to a felony conviction? What if you didn't trade, but instead you were paid \$1.00 for the fossil? Aha, that's different. Well what does non-commercial mean? I am concerned that as different Administrations come and leave the White House, every 4 to 8 years, and a new Secretary of the Interior comes and leaves at least that often, how would rockhounds know when they are just having fun or when they need to learn what gang to join in prison.

Any tool, including hand tools, are powered. They are powered by muscles. So saying 'surface collecting or the use of non-powered hand tools isn't possible. Tools don't operate by themselves without some power, including your hands, arms etc. What is 'negligible disturbance'? I'm sure some firms which have taken out entire forests would argue that when they reforested, they had done only negligible disturbance. In the Scouts I learned to 'take only photos' and 'leave only footprints'. So if I take a 1# rock, and leave a depression which is 1" deep, have I done more than negligible disturbance?

Finally, in my very short coverage of **H.R. 554**, let's look at what happens when you violate the law. **Sec. 7 Prohibited Act; Criminal Penalties.** What are some of the things you cannot? (a)(1) sets out: excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface or attempt to do these things, to any paleontological resources located on Federal lands, unless done so in accordance with the Act. (a)(2) You also cannot exchange, transport, export, receive, or offer to do these things, if in the exercise of due care, the person knew or should have known such resource to have been excavated or removed from Federal lands in violation of any thing in the Act (not exact language to shorten it down). (a)(3) adds sell or purchase or offer to do so and

paleontological resource. (b) provides you better not falsely make a record or an account or a label for or any false identification of any paleontological resource. Can even our best Paleontologists in this nation always be 100% sure that what they identify as a given fossil, will not be challenged by another well-education Paleontologist who disagrees. Come on, you members of congress--surely you know that no one could expect rockhounds to be correct in identification of fossils 100% of the time.

(c) O.K. now for the penalties. A person who knowingly violates or counsels, procures, solicits, or employs another person to violate subsections (a) or (b) shall, upon conviction, be fined in accordance with 18 United States Code or imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both. But take heart, if the value of the item or the cost of restoration or repair does not exceed \$500.00, then you can only be fined under the same 18 USC or imprisoned for not more than one year or both. See there is a break.

There is also a section for civil action and penalties. Sec. 9 provides for Rewards to those who are 'whistle blowers' and more onerous is the forfeiture provisions including your "vehicles and equipment of any person which was used in connection with the violation.

There are provisions to obtain a license. From my experience, even though personnel in charge of National Forests, Monuments etc. are provided, it is usually up to the manager of that U.S facility to determine if any will be issued, and being over-cautious, the chances of getting a permit is virtually non-existent.

Another thought. Suppose you are only collecting minerals but doing so in an area that the U.S. Government has determined there are vertebrate fossils and that makes digging off limits. Could you be prosecuted for digging, even if you weren't collecting vertebrate fossils? I don't know, but is it a possibility? Probably could be.

If you wish to read the entire **H.R. 554**, go to <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-554> and read the Act yourself.

If you like what this Act will do to the rockhounding hobby, let your member of Congress know.

If you think this Act is not well written and would have the effect of putting honest rockhounds at great risk of their property and their chances of being branded a criminal without intending any crime, then IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS (BOTH REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATOR) AND TELL THEM TO VOTE AGAIN H.R. 554. There is no time to be lost in letting your members of Congress know of your concern.

Remember one last thing. Houston Gem & Mineral Society isn't just a bunch of folks having fun. Yes, we do that--however. We have classes to education folks on many things, including responsibility in collecting. This year we adopted a CODE OF CONDUCT for your Club which provides also for responsibility. Annually we have given scholarships to students in Science and jewelry design. Annually we hand out many fossil, mineral and commercial mineral identification boxes to schools all over the area, to further interest and education in science. Annually we have a Show where HGMS and exhibitors, at great time and expense, set up educational displays for the public to learn about paleontology, geology, jewelry making, minerals and other scientific enlightenment.

Should Congress damage or destroy this meritorious avocation, with H.R. 554? It is up to you to tell your Members of Congress what you think.

Terry Proctor, Houston G&MS

(Ed. Note: Terry sent me this article in mid-October. Our fight is not over; expect this bill to be re-introduced in the next session -- 'bigger and badder'.)

When Writing to Elected Officials

Rockhounds have a great tool to use when writing to our elected officials: the *little Rockhound Sticker*TM. The use of this sticker on our correspondences attracts attention and immediately identifies it as being from an interested rockhound. The more that it is used, the more it will be recognized and remembered, and the more

impact it will have. Wide spread use of the little Rockhound Sticker will add continuity to our message and show that we are a coordinated force not just random individuals. Use of this sticker should start with ALAA. We all should use it and promote its use to others who write to their elected officials. We then should promote its use to our local Federation PLAC Committees and all of our Federation members.

The *little* Rockhound Sticker is a fun, inexpensive way to promote rockhounding and to identify your correspondences as being from a rockhound. I use them in addition to my return address labels on mail to other rockhounds, clubs, governmental agencies and any time I want my letter to say "**this is from a rockhound.**" I give them out to kids at rock swaps, talks to youth groups, at shows, and anywhere else to attract attention and promote our hobby. They are great conversation starters. That is the purpose of the Rockhound Sticker, to identify and promote.

The Rockhound Sticker was developed to promote rockhounding and help rockhounds identify one another. Since its' introduction in the summer of 2002 it has created great interest and can be seen throughout the United States and Canada. However, many rockhounds still are not aware of it and its benefits and still do not have one of their own. It is our objective that all rockhounds have and display the Rockhound Sticker.

The three and a half-inch, bright yellow Rockhound Sticker is an easily recognizable way for rockhounds to identify themselves to other rockhounds and to the general public, especially on field trips or on backcountry roads. It would also be very useful in campgrounds and other gatherings where rockhounds might be present. It functions much like the scuba diver's red and white sticker. It would say to the world "**there's a rockhound in that vehicle.**" No other words or mottoes are necessary. In short, everyone, rockhound or not, will recognize it, thus widening their circle of friends and helping them to learn of new locations and ideas. Because of its simple design and bright yellow color it can be recognized easily and from a distance.

The *new, little* Rockhound Sticker has many uses for all rockhounds. The new sticker is the same bright, attention getting yellow with the black rock hammer as the 3 and a half-inch version, but is only one inch in diameter. This new sticker is inexpensive and can be used in many ways by rockhounds and by rock clubs.

Dick Pankey, Vice President

Rockhound Sticker and related items are available from **Frank Mullaney/ROCKY FIVE:**

Frank Mullaney
5705 Begonia Dr.
San Jose, CA 95124-6535
Ph.: 408-266-1791
E-mail: rockyfiv@aol.com

Promote rockhounding. Proudly display your Rockhound Sticker

Omnibus Lands Bill and Contacting Your Representatives

For everyone concerned about provisions in the so-called Omnibus Lands Bill, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has WITHDRAWN it, due to a threatened filibuster by Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn and a perceived lack of 60 votes to invoke cloture. So this is VERY big news for all of us who had concerns over yet more listing of BLM lands as wilderness, which would have prohibited rock

This ALAA Newsletter was sent to all current 2008 members and all members who were on the mailing list as of December 2007 when the last Newsletter was sent out. It is our hope that you still see the need for and will continue to support the objectives of ALAA. ALAA needs your support and participation. If you paid dues for 2008 your membership will continue until December 2009. If you did not pay your dues for 2008 please take this opportunity to pay your dues for 2009. *Protecting the Public Lands for the Public*

Dick Pankey, Your one shot editor!

collecting and automotive access into many popular collecting areas. We don't get good news on this front very often, so enjoy it . . . **for now.**

But as I'm sure you all know the incoming Congress is much more liberal. The bill will undoubtedly be reintroduced, so it is important to keep contacting your Congressional Representatives and Senators to ensure common-sense modifications are made.

*******contact information listed below*******

http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW_by_State.shtml Go here to get all of the links for the House of Representatives. Some Congress members don't accept electronic messages and some do not accept out of district emails. Many of the websites said Congressional courtesy prevents them from responding to people not in their districts...but it doesn't prevent them from reading your messages.

You can send them your messages regarding the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2008 (including H.R. 554: Paleontological Resources Preservation Act and **any other bills that take away public access from taxpaying citizens**)

To look up websites for Senators:

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm and to send your message to Senator Reid himself:

<http://reid.senate.gov/contact/index.cfm>

ALAA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC"

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public Please enroll me as a member of ALAA!

Annual Membership Fee: Individual - \$25.00 / Club membership - \$50.00

Please Print ___ *New* ___ *Renew* *Date* ___ / ___ / ___

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP CODE** _____

PHONE _____ **EMAIL** _____

CLUB AFFILIATION _____ **INTEREST** _____

Remit Fees to the ALAA Treasurer,
NORMAN W. HANSCHU, 6607 STURBRIDGE LANE. CANTON, MI 48187-2638

ALAA is a 501(c)4 organization. Its purpose is promoting and ensuring the right of 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 ALAA are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Tax purposes.

