

# USA-ALL PVO meeting Provo, Utah.

February 2, 2011

There were several interesting pieces of information to Rockhounds that I gleaned from the Land Use Activist Seminar held in Provo, UT on January 29th by the Utah Shared Access Alliance (USA-ALL). About 130 mostly ATV folks attended, plus representatives from regional offices of Utah's Congressional delegation and our County Commissioners. I was there to let them know that ALAA, and the 50,000 rockhounds we represent, share their challenges and concerns.

The first speaker was Bill Howell, described as a "Constitutional Philosopher," who seemed to believe that the Federal agencies (BLM, USFS, etc) are managing the public lands in violation of the "First Principles" of the Constitution. More "tilting at windmills" in my opinion.

The next part of the meeting involving communications to and from the congressional people was much more fruitful. It was no surprise that Wade Garrett, representing Rep. Chaffetz, Pam Juliano (Rep. Mattheson) and Ron Dean (Sen. Hatch) all appeared knowledgeable, sympathetic and willing to help keep access open to motorized recreationists. They suggested:

- Contact regional offices (usually three in each district) rather than the Washington office when soliciting help or information. It will be faster, and they can direct inquiries directly to the staff person responsible to their Representative or Senator. Call and set up a face-to-face meeting with staff or the Congressman if needed.
- Go to the congressman's web site for names, phone numbers, and email addresses in each office. Be as specific as possible and define exactly what you desire happen. Since there are little or no Federal lands in the East, they are tasked with educating the rest of Congress on Western issues and impact of proposed legislation.
- Emails should start with a brief summary of your personal concerns, especially if responding to an alert from USA-ALL, Blue Ribbon Coalition, ALAA etc. No more than 5.0mb in any attachment; seven years ago they would not accept any attachments, fearing malware and viruses. If it is a statewide

issue, copy the entire congressional delegation; otherwise send only to your own Congressman.

- Send snailmail to a regional office, or hand carry to them; as I did once with a 30-page mark-up of the "Fossil Bill." Anything going to Washington is bent, folded, stapled, irradiated, and steamed to mush in the Baltimore Post Office to avoid poisons or bombs.
- These congressional staff people had never heard of ALAA. **ACTION: Contact your congressional district regional offices, and offer to meet with them and explain who we are, what we do and why access is critical to our hobby of "casual mineral collecting". Direct them to our website <http://www.amlands.org/> .**

Uintah County Commissioner Mike McKee spoke on the huge benefits of each County being legally enrolled in "Cooperating Agency Status." If there is a "Memorandum of Understanding" in place, then the County has a say just like the State of Utah, USFS, BLM, Corps of Engineers, etc. They are able to participate, exert significant leverage, and influence crucial land access decision documents like BLM's Resource Management Plans (RMP) and Travel Plans. **ACTION: Contact your County Planning Commission and see if such an agreement is in place. If not, then bend the ear of your County Commissioners to do so ASAP.**

Attorney Mark Ward, Senior Planning Coordinator and Policy Analyst of "The Utah Association of Counties" (UAC), observed that Interior Secretary Salazar's directive #3310 was aimed at creating "De-facto Wilderness" and closing RS2477 roads to satisfy the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (SUWA). UAC is a voluntary, state-wide organization operated since 1924 by the 29 counties of Utah. As I have observed in the past, the Ranchers and County Commissioners in Utah make more sense and have worked harder to keep public access open than anyone else! Mr. Ward asked for some specific help from us (the Public) in keeping roads open. **ACTION: Get your County's detailed map of roads from the Surveyor and identify which ones you have traveled to mineral and gemstone collecting sites, especially before 1976 when they should have been grandfathered as "Public" roads. This gives the Commissioners ammunition to claim roads and keep them open for collecting access..**

Mr. Ward also advised that BLM Wilderness Inventory manuals 6300-1 and 6300-2 (implementing order #3310) will become effective on 23 February 2011. Note that definitions in those manuals exclude as a "Road" a two-track built or maintained solely by vehicle passage; so the final "Cherry

Stem" route to a given collecting site may not be a County Road. **ACTION: Contact your nearest BLM Field Office, and request an opportunity to participate in their re-inventory of "Wild Lands" from their Resource Management Plan.**

I have sent in my membership application to USA-All. As with the Blue Ribbon Coalition, our objectives are the same, they have many more people and financial resources than ALAA, and they carry much more clout. Two of their officers just returned from Washington where they met eyeball-to-eyeball with Congressional Staff for the better part of a day. **ACTION: Locate a nearby ATV club or access Activist group and join with them in fighting for recreation access.**

Evan Day, Utah Director

American Lands Access Association.