



AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC.

NEWSLETTER

Protecting the Public Lands for the Public
<http://www.amlands.org/>

October-November-December 2014

TOM BURCHARD - EDITOR
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WARNING!

SHIRLEY LEESON, ALAA PRESIDENT

If you or your club had thoughts of a field trip, or if this was on your personal 'bucket list', here is a warning about LOLO NATIONAL FOREST, close to Lolo Hot Springs, on the border of western Montana.

THE COLLECTING SITE IS CLOSED AND WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL RESCINDED.

I bring this important information to you because the area is being patrolled by the Forest Service Patrol Unit and the local Sheriff's Department. **There are penalties and fines.**

This area has been a favorite collecting site for quartz crystals going back many years before the Forest Service had jurisdiction. This is one of those 'land transfer' deals.

Unfortunately, rockhounds have not lived up to the AFMS Code of Ethics and the place looks like a WWII war zone. Let me be frank here, many of those were commercial entrepreneurs who were 'out for a buck', but we're all painted with the same dirty brush.

In speaking recently with the Forest Service Office that oversees the area we were informed that the closing was because of concern for the public safety, not animals, but humans. It seems the soil is granitic in nature with only a little topsoil, with the removal of the overburden the topsoil is either washed away or blown away, leaving the granitic material. This is susceptible to cave-ins or undercutting.

We have begun preliminary work with the Forest Service office out of Missoula and will keep you informed as to any progress in the re-opening of this area. In the mean time, stay out or face the consequences.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

! WARNING ! - LOLO NATIONAL FOREST	1	LOSS OF COLLECTING OPPORTUNITIES - <i>Continued</i>	9
TABLE OF CONTENTS	2	RECREATIONAL LAND USE - EXTREMISM	9
HONORARY MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENT	2	RECREATIONAL LAND USE - EXTREMISM - <i>Continued</i> ..	10
WELCOME MEMBERS	2	BLACK HILLS - FEES	10
PRESIDENTS MESSAGE	3	BLACK HILLS - FEES - <i>Continued</i>	11
ALAA MEMBERSHIP	4	WHAT IS WILDERNESS?	11
CURRENT ALAA SCHEDULE FOR 2014	4	NEW WILDERNESS IN MONTANA	12
HERMINSTON REPORT	5	NEW WILDERNESS IN MONTANA - <i>Continued</i>	13
EVERYTHING YOU NEED - EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE	6	ROCKHOUND SOAPBOX - <i>Continued</i>	13
TIP & EXAMPLES FOR WRITING LETTERS	7	ROCKHOUND SOAPBOX - <i>Continued</i>	14
ROCKHOUND SOAPBOX	7	LOLO PASS CRYSTAL DIGGIN AREA	14
LOSS OF COLLECTING OPPORTUNITIES	8	OFFICERS & DIRECTORS ROSTER	15
		APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM	16

HONORARY MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Officers & Directors are pleased to announce two new Honorary Members:

RUSS & THELMA WENTWORTH OF EPHRATA, WASHINGTON.

Their defunct club funds of \$1,500 were donated to ALAA for our Action Fund.

A real special couple.

Shirley

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

GROUP

Coconino Lapidary Club, Flagstaff, Arizona
 Kern County Mineral Society, Bakersfield, California
 Western Dakota Gem & Mineral Society, Rapid City, South Dakota

INDIVIDUAL - NEW

Jim Bean & Carol Plummer, Simi Valley, California
 Kyle Beucke, San Bruno, California
 James & Linda Bosley, Idaho Falls, Idaho
 Fred Hall & Kelly Manley, Boulder, Colorado
 Ruth Hidalgo & Paul Hobbs, Palmdale, California
 Jon & Julie North, Roseville, California
 Scott Peters, Havertown, Pennsylvania
 Michael Scott, Flagstaff, Arizona
 Spencer Seymour, Lacey, Washington
 Ophelia & Don Warthen, Hacienda Heights, California

INDIVIDUAL - REJOINED

Jim Brace-Thompson, Ventura, California
 Glen Miller, Redding, California

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SHIRLEY LEESON

president@amlands.org

As we bring to a close 2014, I look back on all the things that have happened this year, and it's overwhelming. But the most pressing right now is the DRECP (Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan) five years in the making by those hell bent on closing what little is left of the Southern California Desert. This amounts to less than 10 %. All the special interests have carved out various areas that have taken away millions of acres of land once thought of as "multiple use". Land we all could share and enjoy. Now, many places have fences and locked gates and worse still giant areas are covered with solar panels and there are more to come, along with wind turbines. Jerry Brown, governor of California has made it his priority to get all his renewable energy plants in the desert and use public land to do it.

All the state and federal governments are working in lock step to achieve this. Rockhounds are in the middle of this and at the bottom of the priority list. We were not asked to sit at the table during the last five years and give our input. Their goal is "planning for renewable energy development while protecting habitat in the California Desert." Nowhere does it say, any of this is in favor of recreation or multiple use by people.

I spoke to the BLM's Desert Advisory Council on Saturday, December 6th. I called rockhounds, "The Ghosts of the Desert." The 'New' Endangered Species. Rockhounds are the forgotten people of the desert. There are thousands of us. We leave little behind to let you know we've been there. We carry out others trash, as well as our own. Many have been calling the desert our second home since the 1960^s, but you don't even know we've been there. Unlike the protected desert tortoise and other endangered species, which have had thousands of acres set aside, the rockhound may be entirely shut out of our beloved desert.

I asked for help in setting aside some of our sacred places. Help in including rockhound areas in the DRECP plan. I reminded some there that there was an economic impact that no one was anticipating. Rockhounds spend money in the small towns spread throughout the Southern California Desert. If we are locked out, we won't be coming through their towns any longer. One of the gentlemen, representing the "At large public" representative on the DAC, and is from Barstow, a stopping off area for rockhounds and he's well aware of the economics of the situation received a copy of the Rockhound Survey, as did Katrina of the BLM Office, Barstow and Kim Campbell Erb. The survey measured about an inch and a half thick and was seen by all the DAC members and those present.

I got on the record a number of specific areas of concern to rockhounds. First our "Memo of Understanding" regarding the Wiley Wells, Hauser Bed area. And they are checking on its status. But we believe it's been put into the plan. Second, I mentioned the following areas: Lavic Siding, Broadwell Dry Lake and Ludlow area, all in the vicinity of Hector and Ludlow along Route 40, Cady Mountains, Gem Hill, Lonely Butte (Brown Butte off Hiway 58), North Edwards/Aerial Acres and roadside collecting along Clay Mine Road off Route 58, Mule Canyon near Calico Ghost Town off I-15, Marble Mountains near Cadiz, off the National Trails Hiway (Old Route 66) and Kramer Junction. I know there are more areas, I should have proposed like Afton Canyon and others but this is a start. Were there rockhounds there at the meeting supporting me at this critical time? NO THERE WEREN'T. Dee Holland, Jay Erb (Kim Campbell Erb currently sits on the DAC), and I carried the burden alone.

Watch for developments in other states that are coming. A push by Congress this month, December 2014 is going to see bills attached to many of the important funding items on the agenda. We have already seen the closing of a number of areas in Montana and Colorado. Please watch closely and let us know at info@amlands.org anything you read or see about public lands in your state.

And please rejoin ALAA. Dues are Due. NOW.

ALAA MEMBERSHIP

By Cheri George

I am happy to have been able to serve as your Membership Chairman this year! ALAA is important to me and to my husband as we have enjoyed our forays out into the wilds to look for interesting rocks and to join friends who are doing the same.

Many of our “Public Lands” are no longer “Public” there are lots of signs saying “Enjoy your Public Lands” but they don’t really mean for us to do that. They mean drive through, go ‘ooh and aaah’ but keep our bloody hands off. I am personally affronted by their audacity, and feel that the BLM as well as the Federal Government have no idea what they are dealing with. The Feds make a rule but then they sign the paper and file it away somewhere, all the while the Department of the Interior tells the BLM “just make it up as you go along”, a least that is how it feels to me. There are people out there who have filed claims on land to do their mining and metal detecting and looking for just that special something, even they are being pushed around. If a claimant can’t search on their own claim, what can they do?

We have to keep fighting the powers that be and keep writing to our Congressmen and stating our case. We have to keep on going and never give up. After all, these are “OUR PUBLIC LANDS”.

As a member of ALAA you can help by spreading the word and urging your friends and acquaintances to join ALAA. The membership fee is small, and every little bit helps us keep our program going. You will find a membership form on our website at www.amlands.org. Print out several and pass them out. Contact me at lizardwoman3@yahoo.com if you have questions regarding your ALAA Membership.



**ALAA DUES ARE DUE
JANUARY 1, 2015**

This is a reminder to get your dues in by January 1, 2015. We need you now more than ever.

Dues are delinquent February 15, 2015.

ALAA is run on the Calendar Year

CURRENT ALAA SCHEDULE for 2015

- **January 23:** Quartzsite, Arizona; ALAA Meeting; 7 PM; Quartzsite Alliance Church, 720 W Desert Vista
- **January 25:** Quartzsite, Arizona; CLEAN-UP; 8am-10am; I-10 West of Quartzsite, Tom Wells Off Ramp, South side of Highway
- **April 10-12:** NFMS SHOW; Ogden, Utah; ALAA Meeting (**Date & Time to be determined**)
- **June 12-15:** CFMS SHOW, Lodi, California; - ALAA Meeting Sat June 14, 2-4PM; Same room as Directors Meeting - Amy Granat, Mini-Seminar on “Making Comments on Forest Service and BLM area closings relevant”
- **Oct 23-25:** SCFMS, Austin, Texas; Annual ALAA Business Meeting; (**Date & Time to be determined**)
- **Nov 14:** CFMS Fall Business Meeting, ALAA Meeting; (**Date & Time to be determined**)

ALAA - HERMISTON - REPORT

LAUREN WILLIAMS VICE PRESIDENT - AUGUST 16TH, 2014

President Shirley Leeson opened the meeting and stressed that it is really up to the club, individual, to do something about 'it'; the closures and all the permits that we are forced to buy to use Our Public Lands.

ALAA does not have the manpower or budget to keep track of, or comment on **all** that is going on in the United States. Though we are a national organization, we pretty much operate locally. Communicate with ALAA about what is going on in **your area** and what you did about it, if you attended meetings and or wrote letters about your situation. Shirley encouraged us to 'turn in' those individuals who violate the AFMS Code of Ethics, especially those who use industrial equipment to do their digging, and those who dig underneath trees and roads. They do the damage and leave the scars on the land but we, the rockhounds, get the blame. Do not dig in or next to streams, dig away from the streams so that there is no sediment going into the stream. Stay away from active logging operations. Get permission when it is needed, such as private land.

Next Doug True talked about the closure of Lolo National Forest and Weyerhaeuser forests to Rockhounds because of the scars left by individuals and showed pictures to emphasize the point. Rockhounding in any form is now prohibited in the Lolo National Forest. Weyerhaeuser and Georgia Pacific own a whole lot of Forests in the Northwest and Southeast part of the United States.

President Leeson said the Forest and BLM are losing about 20 to 25% of their personal due to retirement and other causes. This is the older generation who are being replaced by the next generation of college graduates who only know what they read in books. We need to make ourselves invaluable to the Forest/BLM people by volunteering to help them by giving them information and our time to help them do whatever it is that they want or need to accomplish.

The meeting right after the ALAA meeting was presented by John George from the Baker City area of Oregon. John said that we need to quote the publications that the government is using to do what we are objecting to, tell them exactly what the problem is that we have with it, and then tell them exactly what we want them to do to solve the problem. No generalizations, no I feel like, no I have been doing this for years. Quote their material, give them detail information on how you want them to fix the situation on your, the public, lands.

A group comment is not an individual comment. Make them give you the information that they are using, there should be no charge for an "educational organization"; all of your clubs should have this noted in their by-laws. Do not be bashful about mentioning the "Freedom of Information Act".

Finally, APATHY is what is really killing us. There were 30 people in attendance at the ALAA meeting and only 14 people in attendance at John George's meeting, where he gave out the nuts and bolts of 'how to' talk to your government officials.



Rox Obiscum

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles for the NEWSLETTER are **DUE** to the Editor by the **1st of The Month - PRIOR - to the Month of Publication!**

Editor - Tom Burchard - editor@amlands.org

801-791-2828 - or - Roxhund@aol.com

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE IN 6 EASY LESSONS . . . OR LESS:

BY AMY GRANAT, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CORVA AND ALAA DIRECTOR

1. Work together: find a like-minded group of people with whom you can share the responsibilities and the efforts. Talk to CORVA, and we will share our knowledge to help get you started in the right direction. As your umbrella advocacy group, we know the right land use agency people you will need to contact. Working together helps share the burden and inspires every member of your group to make a difference, and more people working together helps avoid the dreaded burnout syndrome.
 2. Meet your elected representatives at their local offices: many folks forget that politicians live in our local communities and must be accessible to their constituents. Be polite, but knowledgeable about your subject. If you want your local representative to do something or get back to you, let them know you will be contacting them in the future, and be persistent. Leave information for them to read after your visit, and don't forget that their aides and assistants might be the keys to your success!
 3. Letter writing campaigns: thousands of generated form letters will not be effective, and many will end up in the round file. Better to write a simple, heartfelt but factual comment on an issue that is important to you. If it is a major problem facing the OHV or ROCKHOUND community, something more serious may be needed, and that's where the CORVA Comments Project will come to your community and teach a class about effective letter writing. There are definitely tricks to the trade, and that's why the CORVA Comments Project was created - to help OHV enthusiasts write substantive and effective comment letters.
 4. Making comments at a public meeting, or speaking anywhere in public: there is a simple secret to effective public speaking. Gather your thoughts and ideas in advance and write them down on index cards for reference. Trying to speak off the cuff is a talent most people do not have so be prepared and it will be much easier. Like many other things, the more you do it, the easier it becomes. Don't let fear limit your effectiveness.
 5. Trail and maintenance issues or rockhound collecting sites: know who is in charge of the trail system or rockhound collecting sites or your favorite OHV area. If it is a state-owned area, talk to the superintendent and tell them you want to volunteer. Most areas already have groups of people dedicated to trail maintenance through 'Friends' groups or adopt-a-trail programs, but they all have one thing in common; whether you work with the agencies themselves, or through other volunteer efforts, everyone can use your help. Don't forget to contact your local Forest Service District Ranger Office or BLM Field Office and meet their recreation officer. Each agency has someone tasked with working on OHV or rockhounding issues, who will be an important contact. Don't assume you know better than the agencies, but work alongside the agencies and they will be extremely grateful.
 6. The five tips above can help steer you in the right direction, but for the modern off-road advocate or rockhound advocate, social media is very important. What you put on social media will reflect on the entire OHV/Rockhound community, so you have the ability to change public perception by placing positive examples of OHV/Rockhound recreation online. Everything is public these days, and often negative images of OHV recreation are used against us in meetings regarding land use policy. Use social media as an opportunity to point out how OHV recreation and motorized access is a positive force for good, and it will help all of us change the course of events in the future.
- One of the most important traits for an off-road or ROCKHOUND advocate is not mentioned above, and it is passion!** Passion for the out doors, and a love of traveling on public land pushes us to keep fighting so opportunities will exist for future generations. Perhaps the most important encouragement I can provide is the knowledge that these simple steps really make huge differences with public land use agencies and do help prevent closures. And perhaps the most reassuring statement I can give you is that CORVA will be with you every step of the way, helping guide you and standing beside you when needed. That's our passion as an organization, and we've never stopped for 45 years.

TIPS & EXAMPLES ON WRITING LETTERS TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

How to Write Letters to Elected Officials

http://usgovinfo.about.com/c/ht/00/07/How_Write_Letters_Elected0962932964.htm

How to Address an Elected Official (along with sample letters):

<http://www.wikihow.com/Address-a-Letter-to-a-Government-Official>

Simple Tips on How to Write to Your Government Representatives:

http://www.ehow.com/how_4494417_write-letter-government-official.html

Sample Letters, whether advocating or opposing legislation, complaining about a policy, or simply writing a persuasive letter to a government official:

<http://www.writeexpress.com/government.htm>

Why, When, & How to Write to Your Elected Officials:

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/letters-to-elected-officials/main>

A Sample Government Complaint Letter, with Tips:

<http://www.resumecoverletterexamples.com/letters/complaint/government-complaint-letter.html>

Quick & Simple Tips on Writing a Letter to Elected Officials:

http://www.ehow.com/how_2072807_write-letters-public-officials.html

ROCKHOUND SOAPBOX
New House Committee Chairs
By John Martin

With the mid term elections over and the ending of the 113th Congress, the leadership in the House of Representatives is changing. This change is because of the election, Term Limits and retirement of some of the Representatives. What does this have to do with Rockhounds and Rockhounding? There are at least three new committee chairs on committees that have direct impact on your public lands where most Rockhounds pursue the hobby of collecting Rocks, Minerals and Fossils. What happens in these committees has a direct bearing on how collecting on you public lands will be affected. Three House committees are of particular interest to us: The House Natural Resources Committee; the House Agriculture Committee; and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) will become the new Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee. The House Committee on Natural Resources, chaired by Rob Bishop of Utah, considers legislation about American energy production, mineral lands and mining, fisheries and wildlife, **public lands**, oceans, Native Americans, irrigation and reclamation. The Committee is comprised of 47 Representatives, 26 Republicans and 21 Democrats. Click here <http://naturalresources.house.gov/about/about/jurisdiction.htm> to read more about the Committee's specific jurisdiction.

Rep. Mike Conaway (R-Texas), will become the next chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. The Agriculture Committee is important to us because it has jurisdiction over the U.S. Forest Service. Your US Forests are a major factor in the Hobby of Rockhounding in many parts of the country. The decisions of this committee will have a major effect on how Rockhounding in your National Forests is conducted. Click here <http://agriculture.house.gov/about/jurisdiction-committee> to read to read more about the Committee's specific jurisdiction.

Finally, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee will have a new Chairman, Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah). Of particular interest to us is the fact that Rep. Chaffetz will be establishing an Interior Oversight working group, possibly a subcommittee, to focus on the **Bureau of Land Management** and the **National Park Service**, as well as the **U.S. Forest Service**. Chairman Chaffetz will be coordinating closely with Chairmen Bishop and Conaway similar efforts. Click here <http://oversight.house.gov/> to read more about the Committee.

Continued on Page 13

LOSS OF COLLECTING OPPORTUNITIES**BY RICHARD JAEGER - AFMS PRESIDENT 2014**

One of the concerns of many in our hobby is the loss of collecting areas. Sometimes, government regulations which may be unwise, confusing, or unevenly enforced are a real problem. This has certainly been pointed out by Mike Nelson in his articles in the AFMS Newsletters as well as in articles by Shirley Leeson and others in both the AFMS and ALAA Newsletter. However, sometimes, we ourselves are our own worst enemies in regards to the loss of collecting opportunities. I want to give some examples of situations of which I am aware.

Over the years I have heard a number of rockhounds from area clubs, including my own, brag about bringing back a thousand pounds of material when, in fact, they might only use five or ten pounds the rest of their life. After awhile those collecting sites become exhausted and there is little or nothing left for future generations of rockhounds to collect and enjoy. Please, take what you need, but leave something for the next person to have the experience of finding. Now, in the Tulsa area, we frequently have fossil collecting sites uncovered in preparation for the building of a housing addition, shopping area, new highway, etc. In such a case, you and members of your club might as well collect all you can since the site will soon be covered up and lost. Extra material can always be used for grab bags, games for kids at your rock shows, presentations to school or scout groups, etc.

Weyerhaeuser has large tracts of forest land in McCurtain County in Southeastern Oklahoma which contains an abundance of quartz crystals. They permitted groups of rockhounds to use their network of logging roads and collect those crystals. However, when they were logging or replanting, they would close off access to those particular areas. Unfortunately there was one rockhound who considered the area his personal collecting area and would ignore such closings, bypassing gates or perhaps, I am told, even cutting locks. His actions caused Weyerhaeuser to completely close their property to collecting. Fortunately, as time has passed, they are again allowing collecting.

Another case was the Dolese quarry at Richards Spur in Southwestern Oklahoma which has abundant Permian Age amphibian and reptile fossils. Rockhound groups could schedule collecting trips on Sundays when the quarry was not in operation and successful collecting was always assured. Their one rule was that specimens were not to be taken out for commercial purposes. Unfortunately, a couple of weeks after one group of rockhounds collected there, the specimens began appearing for sale on E-bay. This action has caused the site to be closed to rockhound groups although university and museum groups can still arrange to collect. Our Public Lands Access Chairman for Oklahoma, Bill Lyon, is working to try to get rockhound groups allowed back in and hopefully he will be successful.

After the Rocky Mountain Federation Show & Convention in Bismarck, North Dakota in 1989 one of the field trip collecting sites was on private property for fossil ginkgo leaves and other plant fossils. An exceptional site, but, just a short time after that, someone or group got on the property at night and took out a large amount of material and left a couple of huge holes in the ground. This action caused the farmer to close the site, put a large fence around it and post it. I checked with Russ Olinger, our RMFMS North Dakota State Director, to find out the current status. He tells me that the site is still closed and it was never found out who was responsible.

Those are just few examples of how we are sometimes our own worst enemies when it comes to loss of collecting opportunities and, unfortunately, it sometimes takes only one person to ruin things for the rest of us. The AFMS has a 'Code of Ethics', also adhered to by the ALAA, which tells us how to respect both private and public property on which we are permitted to collect; you will always find this 'Code' printed in the AFMS Newsletters.

Continued on Page 9

“Loss of Collecting Opportunities” - Continued from Page 8

Please read it, share it with other members of your club, and follow it. Let’s not do anything to cause the loss of collecting opportunities.

I would like to see the AFMS Code of Ethics reprinted in every club bulletin, and discussed at a club meeting, as least once a year.

RECREATIONAL LAND USE VERSUS GOVERNMENT/ACADEMIC EXTREMISM

BY JIM URBANIAK - SEPTEMBER 19, 2014

One concern as an earth science enthusiast, who enjoys leading and going on field trips, is the dramatic increase of state and federal public lands management oversight that has been taking place in recent years. Because of my work in the federal services and my networking with professional and academic earth science people in an effort to secure monthly lecturers for the Oregon Agate and Mineral Society, I have gotten to know many academics, fish and wildlife professionals, BLM and Forestry Service representatives in the federal services really well. The old school folks get the whole thing between balancing environmental stewardship and recreational land use. What is a disturbing trend though is the number of new college graduates entering these services who are being taught (in a bubble, it seems) that ALL recreational use is bad and ALL public lands should be closed off for any use whatsoever.

My way of thinking is this is akin to having a living room in your home in which everything is covered in clear plastic and no one is allowed to enter the room, lest they get anything dirty. UNITED STATES NATIONAL AND STATE FORESTS ARE NOT HERMETICALLY SEALED MUSEUMS! I often feel as though we are fighting a pitched battle against certain individuals who have cut themselves off from the real world, as they send their believers-soldiers into the field to do battle on their behalves.

Don't get me wrong, I am a conservationist. I do believe there are people who are out there doing considerable damage to popular recreational areas. I also believe though that these individuals are in a very small minority, will continue to destroy public and private lands regardless of whether they are violating laws or common sense for the sake of their own greed and short-sighted self-centeredness. I do also believe though that a balance can and must be struck in most everything. This new mentality on the part of over-exuberant environmentalists and public servants does not reflect balance at all. One of the ways our local earth sciences club has approached this though has been to bring the geology professors (and their students) and public servants into our meetings to give presentations on their particular expertise. The benefit has been that they have discovered we are not a bunch of dumb hillbillies but knowledgeable and conscientious earth science enthusiasts with a real concern for lands stewardship. I think it is making a difference locally but we need to broaden that impact out beyond our immediate scope of influence. I want to know what other earth science clubs and other recreational organizations for that matter are doing to encourage the professors, students and public servants to participate in their meetings. We are really beginning to develop some high-level academic and government support through dialog and a growing mutual respect and I believe that this extremism mentality can be overcome through the amateur and academic communities engaging in building shared interest in each others activities. We, the amateurs, learn from the academics, and they in turn realize that we are also stewards of the land and students who can be taught in the field instead of a lecture room. We all have a responsibility to watch out for and attempt to address issues with those very few individuals who choose to disregard any sense of ethical obligation to the recreational community at large, not to mention their overt willingness to break laws and behave stupidly.

When these matters of recreational land use reach the point of becoming laws

Continued on Page 10

“Recreational Land Use . . .” - Continued from Page 9

against rockhounds and other recreationalists, it results in a situation of too little, too late and we stand a better chance of keeping the tide from rolling onto a beach than overturning land use laws. Our best bet is not to end up in a position of getting into a legal fight with Uncle Sam but rather identifying those within the with a direct involvement in these actions and attempting to build relationships with them. The biggest challenges I see, which I think are completely understandable, are as follows:

1) Lack of money on the part of the rockhounding/recreational community to effectively hire full-time representation to do the manual labor required to continuously monitor land use actions, not to mention fight land use decisions in court.

2) Recreationalists who have the time and inclination to volunteer to monitor actions, show up for public hearings and write in on developing issues. 3) Taking on ‘public servants’ who are highly focused on a specific area of land and know how to wield legal tools to their private mission – vs. - a bunch of rockhounds who are highly disorganized, dysfunctional (sometimes), spread too thin (always) and are sometimes intentionally kept in the dark by government representatives and academics on a crusade to shut down wildlife areas to the public. I think we are fighting a pitched battle unless someone has the talent, strength of character and time to take on this important cause. I am reminded by one of my good friends and mentors though that “we are all volunteers here.”

With that said, I wonder what best practices we as a recreational community can learn from groups in each state. Again, there is the matter of volunteers being able to make the time commitment to research this matter further.

My opinions are my own and don't necessarily represent the opinions of others on this matter. But I like to think we all share the same sentiments. ;-)

Best Regards,
Jim Urbaniak
President, Oregon Agate and Mineral Society

BLACK HILLS FEES

They are now charging fees, premium passes for day use in the most popular areas of the Black Hills! This is to alert visitors from other state that come to the Black Hills.

JAN BAUMEISTER, RMFMS PLAC AND ALAA SOUTH DAKOTA REPRESENTATIVE

U.S. Forest Service – News Release Date: 11/24/14

Black Hills National Forest

Public Affairs Office

1019 N. Fifth Street Custer, SD 57730

Voice (605) 673-9216

Web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills>

Contact: Scott Jacobson, (605) 673-9216 or cell (605) 440-1409

2015 Forest “Day Use” Passes on Sale - One day only - Friday December 5, 2014

Custer, SD - On December 5, 2014, day use passes for entrance into many Black Hills National Forest recreation locations for the 2015 season will be available for half price at several Black Hills National Forest offices including, the Bearlodge Ranger District office in Sundance, WY, the Northern Hills Ranger District office in Spearfish, SD, the Mystic Ranger District office in Rapid City, SD and the Forest Supervisors office in Custer, SD. This is a one day only sale.

Continued on Page 11

"Black Hills Fees" - Continued from Page 10

The Premium passes, which includes the Sheridan and Pactola lake complexes, will be \$15 (regular \$30), and the Standard passes, which are for all FRM operated day use areas except the Sheridan and Pactola lake complexes, will be \$10 (regular \$20). These passes are for USDA Forest Service facilities located within the Black Hills National Forest fee areas and should not be confused with South Dakota State Park Passes. Requests made by mail with postmarks between Dec. 3-5: to: FRM, PO Box 1168, Hill City, SD, 57745; will also be honored. Please include a check for the appropriate amount. No other discounts will be accepted with this offer and those with senior or access discounts can receive this reduced price any time.

**WHAT IS WILDERNESS?
WHATEVER THEY SAY IT IS**

I read Amy Joi O'Donoghue's Loss of Freedom article "Court rejects monument complaints" in the Utah Deseret News dated April 14th 2009. I read this with interest because I love to explore the back roads of Utah. I will be 79 next month and don't get around like in the old days. Hiking 100 miles in the Sierra's was a good two weeks outing. My interest comes from noticing two things that are happening in our country. One is the meaning of Wilderness and the other is the way courts are making laws and not interpreting them.

Well I am 84 now and according to this article in the Deseret News that was published this year <http://www.ksl.com/index.php?sid=31109039&nid=148&title=moab-land-planning-process-explained-in-video> the Moab BLM is proposing another new change that strengthens a regional BLM office's ability to make changes without Congressional authority on a line item basis.

This means that what I wrote in 2009, has not changed and in fact this type of change has been going on since 1976 when the original Travel Management Plan (TMP) was written into law by congress. Now we have another new change that strengthens a regional BLM office's ability to make changes without Congressional authority or Presidential designation.

What is wilderness, whatever they say it is? What is public land, whatever they say it is? I remember back in 1976 the first discussions were about the definition of a road which was made to try and get more areas into wilderness. Then there were things like the Spayed Toed Frog that threatened to close Glamys Dunes until it was brought to their attention that it lies dormant in the dunes until there is a heavy rain once every 10 years or so. This was done to restrict public land to a select few and the elite. They use the excuse "it is saved for my grandchildren" well I say what about me and my children, grandchildren and great-grand children now.

Here is some of the history of the changes that have been made to the original 1976 TMP;

Travel Management Plans (TMP)	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)
Visual Resource Management (VRM)	Special Management Areas (SMA)
Wilderness Area (WA)	Wilderness Study Area (WSA)
Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR)	Wilderness Characteristics (WC)

All of these restrict travelers like Rockhounds, Four wheelers, and the Public to travel. But the BLM, FS, the elite and a select few can travel these areas. At one time only Congress and the President could do this.

I urge everyone to look up each of these acronyms on Wikipedia to understand the duplication and effort that is made to close out the PUBLIC. Also note that I have not included the Endangered Species and other environmental concerns that have been contrived to close out the PUBLIC from Public Land.

John A. (Jack) Johnston

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Utah 4 Wheel Drive Association (U4WDA)

Treasurer, Land Use Assistant

ALAA

NEW WILDERNESS IN MONTANA AND WHY CITIZENS FOR BALANCED USE - NEWS

After seeing the actions in Washington D.C. this last week it would seem that our Montana representatives have abandoned our state. CBU has always been opposed to new wilderness and land of no use and we will continue to fight for multiple use recreation, active forest management, and responsible resource development on our current federally managed public lands. We say current because maybe it is time to start an orderly transfer of these public lands back to the states for us to effectively manage them in a way that benefits our state and our communities.

CBU is well connected to many groups in the D.C. arena. These organizations help us keep informed on what is coming and help all of us in having our voices heard. When the Defense Spending Bill was starting to move through Congress we were watching it very closely. During this process we were able to follow its activity with help from legislators and other organizations.

So what really happened and why did Montana get more wilderness and why does it look like our legislators abandoned the people of Montana? The answer is somewhat complicated but in an effort to keep our members and supporters educated and informed we provide the following information.

After the election the Democrats knew they were leaving the majority in both houses. The Defense Spending Bill was a must pass piece of legislation and they knew it was going to be their last opportunity to attach their pork in order to get some things they wanted. Interesting enough was the fact that Senator McCane was the first to attach his pet project to the Defense Spending Bill as a member of the Armed Services Committee. His bill opened a large copper mine in his state producing 6,000 new jobs.

Then the environmental groups became enraged and wanted something in return. Up jumped Senator Tester and added his Forest Jobs and Recreation Act to the bill and another 650,000 acres of new wilderness in Montana. CBU worked hard with our lone Representative Daines to have this legislation removed and no one worked harder than Congressman Daines and in the end his efforts got the FJRA removed. In return for removing the FJRA, the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act was inserted and the tribute to Max Baucus was put in place.

As the bill continued to move forward during the last few months, it changed in shape and form almost on a daily and hourly basis. Negotiations on bill language, what was in and what was out, remained a question and CBU continually tracked the movement of this bill. We did not know exactly what was in this bill until the press release on the day it was introduced into the House.

Senator Walsh was not a real player in this legislation as you can guess but Senator Tester was and so was Representative Daines. Now the final bill seems to show our legislators standing arm in arm on the stage supporting this bill but in truth Senator Tester tried for 650,000 acres of new wilderness and was not happy on the stage because his FJRA was removed and Representative Daines was forced to be on stage because 4 of the bills inserted in the Defense Spending Bill helping Montana were authored by him and Senator Walsh was just there for a picture, he had no clue.

Are we happy? No. But it could have been worse because with or without opposition from our legislators, this bill was going to pass with PORK and a vote against funding our military would have been devastating to all our veterans and service personnel so no matter what was in or out of this bill it was going to pass.

Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act: Adds approximately 67,000 acres to the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas and designates roughly 208,000 acres of adjacent federal land as a

Continued on Page 13

“New Wilderness in Montana . . .” - Continued from Page 12

Conservation Management Area. The bill protects existing agricultural uses, prohibits management of a buffer zone to the Conservation Management Area, and protects valid and existing mineral rights. Additionally, the bill will release the Buffalo Creek and Zook Creek Wilderness Study Areas, approximately 14,000 acres. Finally, the bill would require a new assessment of oil and gas potential in the Bridge Coulee and Musselshell Breaks Wilderness Study Areas.

Additionally there were several National Parks that were designated but the majority of these are very small. Here is a list:

- Sec. 3031. Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park.
- Sec. 3032. Coltsville National Historical Park.
- Sec. 3033. First State National Historical Park.
- Sec. 3034. Gettysburg National Military Park.
- Sec. 3035. Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, Maryland.
- Sec. 3036. Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, Auburn, New York.
- Sec. 3037. Hinchliffe Stadium addition to Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park.
- Sec. 3038. Lower East Side Tenement National Historic Site.
- Sec. 3039. Manhattan Project National Historical Park.
- Sec. 3040. North Cascades National Park and Stephen Mather Wilderness.
- Sec. 3041. Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve.
- Sec. 3042. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.
- Sec. 3043. Valles Caldera National Preserve, New Mexico.

Again, CBU is very disappointed in how Congress acted in jamming these bills into a must pass Defense Spending Bill. We are saddened for the people close to the Rocky Mountain Front and the further restrictions and closures they received. We are angry that these political stunts are pulled and we are frustrated by all the thousands of miles driven and the hundreds of hours spent by our members and supporters in fighting this bad legislation. The Rocky Mountain Front wilderness bill was opposed by local government, recreation, agriculture and resource groups and in the end we lost. But it could have been worse.

If we had more control over these lands, rather than the D.C. bureaucrats, these actions would not occur. This should wake up everyone to the fact that Washington D.C. does not give a hoot about us. The East and West coast members of congress are all about themselves and know little to nothing about the need for active management of our lands and the need for the resources that come from these lands to fuel and protect our nation. The environmental groups buy off many of our Senators and Representatives with their mega bucks and but we will continue to fight to keep our property and personal freedoms.

“Rockhound Soapbox” - Continued from Page 7

Click here <http://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/OGR-Committee-Rules-113th-Congress.pdf> to read the rules and the Committee’s specific jurisdiction.

Every Rockhound who reads this should become familiar with these 3 Committee Chairs and the committees. All Rockhounds whether an individual, member of a Club or Society or a Federation needs to contact these elected Representatives and let them know you are here and you enjoy Recreational Rockhounding on your Public Lands. Let them know your concerns about Access to your collecting areas and you want to preserve these collecting areas for Recreational Rockhounding for future generations of Rockhounds. Let them know that you are but one of millions of Rockhound in the United States of America who use these Public Lands for Recreational Rockhounding. Let them know that Rockhounds are good Stewarts of Public Lands.

Continued on Page 14

“Rockhound Soapbox” - Continued from Page 13

Tell them about the AFMS Code of Ethics and Land Use Policy. Without the voices of Rockhounds all speaking in unison, letting your government know you are here and that you really do care about the recreational usage of the Public Lands of America, the Rockhound will become extinct within a few decades.

Contacting your elected officials as an individual or a club or society with commits, concerns or questions will not have an adverse effect on your 501(c)(3) or (c)(4) status. Senate Committees and Committee Chairs will be discussed in future articles. For questions, concerns, comments or assistance, please contact the American Lands Access Association (ALAA) at info@amlands.org

**ALAA - LOLO PASS CRYSTAL DIGGING AREA
LOLO NATIONAL FOREST, MONTANA
BY SHIRLEY LEESON, PRESIDENT ALAA**

First, Dee and I were greeted by: Jennifer, Missoula District Ranger, Al Hilshey, title unknown and no business card; Nancy Rusho, Forest Geologist; and Carl Anderson, District Minerals Administrator. In spite of your contacting people, Ben, no one showed up.

I did find out something interesting, the Lolo Pass area was received by them from the Plum Creek Forest Company, and it was in 2012 the Forest Service realized they were to receive the Lolo Crystal Digging area. And they had additional terrible pictures of damage. They said they were CONCERNED WITH SAFETY FOR HUMANS because of the nature of the soil and the undercutting and cave-ins. They also mentioned, and I asked the Public Service person for pictures, of culverts and roads that were damaged.

1. We need: all Lolo National Forest maps, free and ‘for purchase’ that pertain to the Lolo Pass Crystal Digging area.
2. The name of the current Forest Supervisor and what happened to the Acting Forest Supervisor, Rusty Wilder, who signed the ‘emergency closure of Lolo Crystal Digging area’.
3. Copies of all documents and e-mails leading up to the closure of the Lolo Crystal Digging area, including all recent e-mails. Was there a complaint filed, if so, by whom?
4. How to go about a formal request to ‘reopen the crystal digging area’ and what criteria are needed to accomplish this.
5. Copies of documents & posters pertaining to your ‘outreach efforts to inform crystal collectors about the resource impacts that have resulted from digging and excavating for crystals over the last several years in the Lolo Pass area’. If the notice is published in a newspaper, which paper, and where is it placed.
6. We would like to research your ‘volunteer’ program if it is applicable to this problem. Could a group of ‘organized rockhounds’ do a clean-up program several times a year, and the forest service opens the area for limited crystal collecting.
7. We would like to research your ‘partnership’ program if it is applicable to this problem.
8. Could this area be placed in a situation like the Forest Service ‘Emerald Creek’ Fee area in Idaho?
9. Could this area be placed in a situation like Crystal Park area in Montana? Several acres where digging for crystals are allowed, that area when cleared of crystals, the area is reclaimed and another area opened.
10. If the area is left closed, how much of your budget would be used for heavy patrolling of the area to make sure no one collected? Is this feasible?
11. Are there other solutions we could explore?

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