



AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC.

NEWSLETTER

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

October-November-December 2015

TOM BURCHARD - EDITOR
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JUST KEEP MOVING

BY DOUG TRUE - INCOMING PRESIDENT OF ALAA

Welcome members and clubs and all of those interested in keeping our public lands open to rock hound use. Lots of times it seems like a fight just looking at our public lands, let alone using it, figure of speech of course.

Jeanette and I have arrived in Quartzsite, Arizona for the winter and begin setting up for the big rock events. For all of you that plan to attend the shows we have a special treat for you. A friend of collectors, retired Geologist from the US Forest Service, Michael Hunerlach. Michael will give a special program at the 'New' Quartzsite Community Center, 295 Chandler Street. Time 7:00 PM, Friday, January 22nd, Come and enjoy.

Also while you are in town come to the Ye Old timers 'Live Auction' January 21st. Senior Center North Moon Mountain Road. Viewing 6:30 PM. Auction starts 7 PM - Sharp. All for a great cause, promote the hobby and help those in need. Bring canned goods for the Senior Center. I hope everyone one has had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP

LAUREN WILLIAMS, ALAA VICE-PRESIDENT

I would like to take time and thank everyone for helping me through the transition as Temporary President of ALAA. And you all know how thanking others goes, you always leave out someone, but never intentionally.

First and foremost is Shirley Leeson for taking the time to answer all my stupid questions that most of you think that I should have known. Next is John Martin and Susy Martin who probably said 'not him again' when they saw my emails come in. And then Tom Burchard who probably shares John Martin's sentiments. Then Dee Holland, Jon Spunaugle, Dr. Bob Carlson, and Marion Roberts and Ronna Watkins with the ALAA Facebook. If your name is not listed here, you can rag on me later.

We all need to give Jon Spunaugle a big Thank you. Jon was one of the driving forces for forming ALAA. Shirley and I and Dr. Bob Carlson and Dee were also at that meeting in Brunswick, Ohio. Jon also wrote a Congressional Bill, the only one that ALAA has sponsored. Congress defeated it but it put the rest of Congress on notice that they were not going to 'just have their way'. Jon has been president of ALAA at least 2 times.

I would like to thank Shirley Leeson and Hidemi Kira for stepping up into one of the Directors positions. I would like to thank Ruth Hidalgo for stepping up as Assistant Treasurer/Membership Officer. And thank you Frank Mullaney for continuing to be ALAA's stalwart Treasurer.

And finally I would especially like to thank Doug True for stepping up and becoming ALAA's next President.

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MEMBERSHIP - REMINDER

BY - RUTH HIDALGO - MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Membership Dues are **DUE** January 1st (1/1/16) and are **DELINQUENT** February 15th, 2016 (2/15/16). To renew your membership, simply complete the Membership Application (attached to this newsletter for your convenience) and send in your payment.

Your continued support is most appreciated. Please see the American Lands Access website, amlands.org for information on how your nominal membership fees are being put to good use.

Membership Applications can also be found at <http://www.amlands.org/media/bf2baf1f8f42e45fffff83abffffe904.pdf>

Thank You!

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE 'MAILING LABELS' ON THE HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER HAVE A DATE CODE IN UPPER LEFT HAND CORNER OF THE LABEL THAT TELLS YOU THE LAST YEAR YOUR DUES ARE PAID UP TO. THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY PAID THEIR DUES WILL HAVE A DATE CODE OF 2016 (OR LATER) AND THOSE WHOS DUES-ARE-DUE WILL HAVE A DATE CODE OF 2015. IF THOSE WHO HAVE "2015" DO NOT PAY THEIR DUES BY 2/15/16, THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER UNTIL YOUR DUES ARE PAID. I DON'T KNOW HOW OUR WEB MASTER PLANS TO LET THE ELECTRONIC RECIPIENTS OF THE NEWSLETTER KNOW ABOUT THEIR DUES SITUATION.

WE SPOKE UP AND THEY LISTENED!

BY - RUTH HIDALGO - MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Living Southern California and having collected at most of the areas still accessible in the old "Gem Trails of Southern California Guide", I was aghast when I took a look at the maps posted for a massive plan (DRECP) to designate where to focus solar and wind in Southern California. They wanted to put a solar or wind farm directly on top of two longtime favorite and beloved collecting areas, Gem Hill and Brown Butte. I immediately went to work telling everyone I could we had to do something. Fortunately ALAA invited me to attend a workshop on the DRECP where I learned how to make a comment on the DRECP. It wasn't nearly as hard as I had anticipated. I showed my friends and

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ROX VOBISCUM

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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

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PROPOSED ALAA SCHEDULE for 2016

ALAA at QUARTZSITE

- Quartzsite, Arizona, Board Meeting, Friday, January 22nd, 10 AM (SMT).
- Quartzsite, Arizona, Public Informational Meeting, Friday, January 22nd, 7 PM (SMT) at the 'New' Quartzsite Community Center, 295 Chandler Street.

Speaker: Michael Hunerlach, U.S. Forest Service-Retired, Mining Geologist and Mineral Specialist, Pacific Southwest and Regional Liaison for USFS

- Quartzsite, Arizona, **FOURTH ANNUAL BLM CLEAN UP**, Sunday, January 24th, 10 AM to 12 Noon, at the DOME ROCK exit west of Quartzsite. All Rockhounds and Concerned Citizens are welcome to participate. See You There!

**SHOW DATES FOR GEM AND MINERAL SHOWS
SPONSORED BY MEMBER CLUBS AND SOCIETIES OF ALAA, INC.**

YOUR ALAA AFFILIATED CLUB COULD HAVE ITS SHOW LISTED HERE.

Send suggestions or problems to [webmaster](#)

Show Dates for Gem and Mineral Shows Sponsored by Member Clubs and Societies of the American Lands Access Association, Inc. For inclusion in the list send your show information to:

showdates@amlands.org

February 12-13

Oregon Agate & Mineral Society

Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, 1945 SE Water Avenue, Portland, OR

Contact: Ginny Deppa ginnvdeppa@gmail.com

February 25-27

Rock Rollers Club of Spokane, Washington

Spokane County Fair & Expo Center Bldg. 1, N 604 Havana at Broadway, Spokane, WA

Contact: Vonnie Dillon showchair@rockrollers.org

March 5 - 6

Monrovia Rockhounds

L.A. Arboretum - Ayers Hall, 301 No. Baldwin Ave Arcadia, CA

Contact: Jo Anna Ritchey joannaritchey@gmail.com

March 12 - 13

Salinas Valley Rock & Gem Club

Spreckels Vets Hall, 5th & Llano St Spreckels, CA

Contact: Karin Salomon kebakes23@yahoo.com

"We Spoke" - Continued from Page 2

fellow Rockhounds it wasn't so hard and they too sent in comments.

I am so very excited to find the focus areas on Brown Butte, aka Lonely Butte and around Gem Hill have been removed, as we requested, in the final draft of the DRECP! Now these were just two of the many collecting areas affected in many different ways under the DRECP. Again ALAA was to the rescue with a complete analysis of the 12,000 page DRECP plan as it pertained to Rockhounding which was done by Randy Banis. Many Rockhounds also made comments based on that analysis. As of the writing of this document, I have not yet to be able to check each of the other points made in those comments, but I am optimistic.

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ACTION ALERT

CORVA OPPOSES USE OF ANTIQUITIES ACT TO CREATE NATIONAL MONUMENTS

October 23, 2015 2:55 PM | CORVA (Administrator)

Ever since the California Desert Protection Act in 1994, which closed thousands of miles of OHV roads and trails, OHV leaders have urged California's senators and representatives to protect our remaining OHV opportunities in the desert.

It took 21 years, but now we have our bills: H.R. 3668 and S. 414. Both bills will protect five BLM OHV Open Areas, as many as 1,750 miles of routes, and OHV, Rockhounding and hunting on 1.6 million acres of the California desert. Also, both bills have a path to expand OHV areas to make up for the lost OHV acreage in Johnson Valley.

CORVA joined other OHV organizations such as the American Motorcyclists Association, the Blue Ribbon Coalition, the Off Road Business Association and several Friends groups in crafting and introducing these bills. Now we are working hard together to move both bills through Congress before President Obama designates much of these lands a National Monument by proclamation.

OHV leaders also worked hard on the draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). Unfortunately, despite early assurances to the contrary, the DRECP proposes to further reduce our OHV acreage and decimate the OHV route system on 6 million acres in the desert.

Now facing a probable National Monument proclamation of up to 2 million acres that is unfriendly to roads, OHV, Rockhounding and hunting, and an inevitable DRECP that is hostile to OHV, the passage of both H.R. 3668 and S. 414 is urgently necessary to ensure a future for OHV in the California desert.

Sadly, the largest national environmental organizations do not support H.R. 3668 and S. 414 because of the strong protections for OHV. They are actively working against passage of our bills and are leading the charge for a presidential proclamation.

Please support our bills, H.R. 3668 and S. 414, and help CORVA to protect OHV-based recreation from the threats of renewable energy development and environmental extremism.

For information on how you can help, visit: <https://www.corva.org/email>

ACTION ALERT

The White House is seriously considering designating three new National Monuments in the California Desert potentially totaling over one million acres. On Tuesday, October 13, 2015, Senator Feinstein will be hosting a public meeting with administration officials in attendance to discuss these potential designations under the Antiquities Act. Such a proclamation is unlikely to protect our OHV roads and trails and could prohibit rock collecting and hunting altogether.

Fortunately, Senator Dianne Feinstein and Representative Paul Cook have each introduced bills that would protect these lands while specifically allowing continued recreational use for OHV'ers, Rockhounds and hunters. Sen. Feinstein's California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act, S.414, and Rep. Cook's California Minerals, Off-Road Recreation, and Conservation Act, H.R.3668, would not only protect OHV-based recreation in these proposed National Monument lands, but would also protect and expand up to 360,000 acres specifically for OHV recreation areas.

We need you to write IMMEDIATELY to:

1) President Obama - respectfully request that he suspend the Antiquity Act process and support a legislative solution to protecting these lands.

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"Opposition of Antiquities Act" - Continued from Page 4

2) Senator Lisa Murkowski (R - AK), Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources Chairman - respectfully request that she support the balanced approach of Sen. Feinstein's S.414 to permanently protect OHV recreation on millions of acres in the California desert.

3) Your U.S. Representative - respectfully request that they support Rep. Cook's H.R.3668 for its important and balanced protections for OHV recreation in the California desert.

PLEASE, DON'T WAIT! The timing is now perfect for you to get involved and help protect OHV recreation, including access to rockhounding and hunting, in the California desert.

<http://www.corva.org/CORVA-Opposes-use-of-Antiquities-Act-to-create-national-Monuments/3597679>

<http://www.corva.org/email>

Thank You

ROCKHOONDING ON RIVERS

BY SHARON MARBURGER

AS PUBLISHED IN THE MWF NEWS, DECEMBER 2015

(I wrote this article in November for my club newsletter. Although the incident occurred in Nebraska, it can happen in any of our United States.)

On a recent field trip, one of our members, Wooly, learned of an incident involving two gentlemen who were rock collecting on one of Nebraska's rivers. A big thank you to Wooly for doing the preliminary research and bringing this issue to our attention!

A landowner, who had recently encountered some less-than-polite "trespassers" partying on the river bordering his property, called the local constabulary to arrest the two rockhounds. Although the men were polite and non-disruptive, the landowner chose to make an example of them. His claim was that they were trespassing.

According to the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission:

Only the water belongs to the state of Nebraska. The riverbeds and all adjacent lands are the property of the landowner through which the water flows. Appreciate the fact that you have the privilege of using the waterway. Respect the landowner and their property. Nebraska statutes give you the permission to portage around fences and other obstructions; however, you are responsible for any damage to the property. You must have landowner's permission to picnic or camp.

However, the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that "rivers that are navigable in fact are navigable in law." If a river is physically navigable, it is legally navigable. No court or agency has to designate it as such.

According to the National Organization for Rivers:

Even rivers that are physically navigable only by canoe, kayak, and raft are still legally navigable. (The courts have also ruled that commercial recreational river trips qualify as commerce.) Because they are legally navigable, such rivers are held in trust for the public by the states, for navigation, recreation, and fisheries. The land along them is public land up to the ordinary high water mark (which can be quite a distance from the water - it's the land where the vegetation and soil show the effects of water.) The public can use this land for walking, fishing, resting, camping, and other non-destructive visits.

Public ownership of physically navigable rivers, including the land up to the ordinary high water mark, pre-dates property deeds. What the property deed says or doesn't say about the river is irrelevant.

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ALAA MEETING REPORT

LAUREN WILLIAMS, ACTING PRESIDENT

Our meeting was scheduled for Saturday October 24, 2015 at the Double Tree Inn in Austin, this was to be the show headquarters hotel/motel. However NASCAR decided that they wanted more room at the Inn so all of the AFMS functions were quietly moved to the show site, which had plenty of room to spare.

The resolution to change “Article IV, Section 8 - Quorum”: failed. The reasoning being that as written, that only one (1) person could be a quorum and who knows what mayhem could happen with a one (1) person meeting. I am going to reintroduce this resolution for Albany next year. I want to replace the “one third 1/3 of the Board of . . .” to “4 members of the Board of . . .”. My reasoning is that if I drive five days to get to Bangor, Maine and there is not 1/3 of the Board present I will be mightily upset if there is no meeting. The President, Secretary, and hopefully there should be at least 2 other Board members running around someplace at the show in order to make up a quorum. There was barely enough attendees to make up a quorum in Austin.

The resolution to delete “Article IV, Section 9 - Manner of Acting”: passed. The reason for this change is because Section 8, see above paragraph, takes care of this and says essentially the same thing.

Doug True, from Billings, was installed as President, Ruth Hidalgo from Palmdale, CA was installed as Assistant Treasurer/Membership Officer. Shirley Leeson was installed as a Two Year Term Director, and Hedemi Kira, current NFMS President, was installed as a One Year Term. All of the rest of the Officers and Directors were re-elected. Susy McMahan was reinstated as the Nebraska State Representative. We need to find a replacement for Jon Spunaugle as a One Year Term Director. Next year’s budget, 2016, was presented and approved.

Just because we were having meetings and a show in Austin does not mean the Conservationists and the ones who want to manage their area of authority from their air condition/heated offices took that week off too. They kept doing their thing which generally means a reduction of our freedoms. And as good as Blue Ribbon Coalition is about sending out alerts for all of the 50 states, someone has to tell them what is going on. ALAA does not have the manpower or finances to staff an office, full or part time, or to dedicate a computer to watch the Federal Register full time and someone to watch that computer.

ALAA should be driven from the bottom up. You, the members should have an ear to the ground, and be talking to everyone of your friends, this includes all of the government people, not just the fed’s, and enemies about what they know is going on around them. Don’t just shrug off what they say, ask questions. The Sage Grouse issue is still with us and that alone could shut down the lion’s share of the West.

And OH YES, We will need to approve the minutes from the Austin meeting. I am going to introduce an OP that says the Secretary is the ‘Official Keeper’ of the By-Laws and OP’s and that the President will also have a copy of the By-Laws and OP’s on their computer. I want it in black and white. No assuming! Do you know what problems I had getting a copy of ALAA’s By-Laws and OP’s and that is nothing compared with what I had getting a copy of the Scholarship’s By-Laws and OP’s.

Quartzsite meeting will be January 22 at 7:00 pm at the new Quartzsite Community Center. The speaker will be Michael Hunerlach, Mining Geologist and Mineral Specialist, Pacific Southwest and Regional Liaison for the USFS.

The ALAA Executive Board Meeting is still to be determined.

Get on the notification lists, attend the meetings, make your comments, write and email and snail mail your letters! Nothing happens until someone, (you) does it! Do it!! Do it now!!!

ROCKHOUND SOAPBOXJOHN MARTIN - www.info@amlands.org

Grass Roots! Those two words are now the most important words in the Rockhound vocabulary at this point in time. Without the grass roots effort of Rockhounds, Fossil and Mineral Collectors collecting areas will soon be swallowed up in Wilderness, National Monuments, and Environmental Study Areas and maybe even by Wind and Solar generating facilities. The Rockhounding Organizations do not have the financial resources, personnel or legal representation needed to wage the struggle contrary to the groups opposing open access to public lands. These opposing groups advocate the closing of access to collecting areas whether in the US Forest System or the BLM. The only way to keep collecting areas open is with grass roots effort by all Rockhounds that may collect or have collected in these areas of concern. The voice of the Rockhound needs to be heard and as loud as possible. If our voices are not heard in the location where the Rules, Regulations and Legislation are taking place the voices will not be heard and if we are not heard we, the Amateur Collectors of rocks, minerals and fossils, will lose access now and for Future Rockhounds.

DEFINITION OF WILDERNESS

(From the Wilderness Act of 1964)

“(c) A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”

USFS and BLM Public Lands which have roads (Logging, Recreational, access to collecting sites, grazing access, etc.), Mines (Active or inactive), Transmission lines, Microwave, Communication and cell phone Towers, do not meet the definition of a wilderness area as defined in the statement above. Man has left his imprint on the land and therefore it can no longer be considered as a wilderness or wilderness study area by their own definition (the full text and additional reference may be found on the ALAA Website <http://www.amlands.org/6652/index.html> near the bottom of the Active Access Issues page).

Here are some Grass Roots thoughts that may help.

Tell all of the city and county officials how much tax money they will lose if the wilderness is created and withdrawn from the tax rolls. Remind the Forest Service and BLM that it is against the law to include roads and active mines in a wilderness area. You collect there, that makes it an active mine. Tell the Forest Service or BLM how many members are in your club and how many members from your area that uses the mine. Numbers speak so do not be afraid to mention them. Use dollars to estimate the cost lost to restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores will lose. Remind the sheriff that he is the legal law officer and that only he can arrest people. If you have the resources or funds send a fact sheet by mail to everyone in the counties where the wilderness is proposed, especially the property owners who will share their property lines with the wilderness. Send speakers to other service clubs and present your

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“Rockhound Soapbox” - Continued from Page 7

view. Have a booth or table set up at other public events or gatherings like your Rock Show and hand out your information. Get other organizations involved. Remind your club members that if they do not do it then who will. And when a Closure Activist says that 'studies show that . . .' call their bluff and demand that they show proof of that study, and do not ever let them off the hook. They made the statement now make them prove it.

Within the Rockhound Community the American Federation has the Conservation and Legislation Committee; afmsclc@antelecom.net Regional Federations may have a Public Lands Advisory Committee (PLAC) and the American Lands Access Association (ALAA) info@amlands.org www.amlands.org all may be able to assist you in making your voices be heard. No matter how one looks at it, saving your collecting areas for future Rockhounds will require a well-organized Grass Roots effort.

“HAPPY ROCKHOUNDING AND ENJOY YOUR PUBLIC LANDS”

“Rockhounding on Rivers” - Continued from Page 5

The state does not actually own the river, but holds it in trust for the public for navigation, recreation, and fisheries. The state is obligated to preserve the river for these public benefits.

See more at: <http://www.nationalrivers.org>.

If you want to avoid the risk of any kind of confrontation, obtain permission from the landowner. Otherwise, should you encounter an angry landowner or an officer of the law, remember to keep cool and be polite. Do not argue with either because it will only end up being bad for you. And always remember the AFMS Code of Ethics when you are out and about.

MEMBERSHIP

BY- RUTH HIDALGO

I look forward to serving as your new Membership Chair. A very big THANK YOU to Cheri George for her service as your Membership Chair and for providing me with everything I need to serve you in a well-organized format.

An avid self-collector and outdoor enthusiast, I am thrilled to be part of an organization that is committed to protecting access to our collecting spots on public lands.

Green Energy policies pose a relatively new threat to access to our public lands. Huge solar and wind farms are being built at a record pace with little or no consideration to the loss of recreational access to those areas. Such projects are also creating a push for more protection via wilderness or monument designations, leaving little consideration to the loss of recreational use.

Membership dues help ensure we have an organization focused on the issues that threaten Rockhounding specifically. Please be sure to pass the word along to your clubs and fellow Rockhounds. Membership Applications can be found at www.amlands.org.

“We Spoke” - Continued from Page 2

A very big Thank You to ALAA for recognizing the significant impact the DRECP has on recreational access in the Southern California Deserts and for providing the resources and tools for Rockhounds to have made an impact on the Final Draft.

Good Morning;

I know this is too late for the 3rd Quarter Newsletter, but would you keep it for the next issue. This is the best example of why rockhounds and off roaders MUST get involved in Forest or BLM Plan Revisions I've seen. In this instance, it's about New Mexico, but will work anywhere.

Somehow, we must get rockhounds involved. I hope this explanation will give them an incentive.
Shirley Leeson

**CARSON NATIONAL FOREST STARTS SCOPING FOR FOREST PLAN REVISION
ACCESS ALERT
FROM NEW MEXICO OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE ALLIANCE (NMOHVA)**

What is This? And, Why Should I Care?

The Carson National Forest is about a year into the four-year process of revising their Forest Plan. To this point, all of the input gathered from the public and “work” completed has been in preparation for the actual NEPA process necessary to revise a Forest Plan. The Notice of Intent (NOI) published on 10/7/15 officially starts the formal NEPA process that will result in a revised Forest Plan.

What Does a Forest Plan do?

The Forest Plan does not, itself, create any new “action” on the part of the Forest Service or authorize any specific change in use. The Forest Plan provides “broad guidance” for planning any specific future projects, actions, or activities. This revised Forest Plan will include all six Districts of the Carson National Forest: Camino Real, Canjilon, El Rito, Jicarilla, Questa, and Tres Piedras,

Why is the Forest Plan Important?

Federal regulations require all Forest projects and activities to be consistent with the Forest Plan. If a proposed project is not consistent with the plan, the project cannot proceed as proposed unless the Plan is amended so that the project is consistent with the Plan. As example, new motorized routes cannot be approved unless the Forest Plan describes a need for additional motorized routes or meeting motorized recreation needs. That is why a Forest Plan is so important even though it doesn't take cause any action itself.

What is “Scoping”?

“Scoping” is the first phase of the NEPA process for revising a Forest Plan. Written comments received by the Forest Service during this phase should be used to identify any additional needs for change to the existing plan, further develop the proposed action (the first revision of the revised plan), and identify “significant issues”.

Why is Scoping Important?

The “significant issues” are used to develop the alternatives that will be considered in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS is the 2nd major step in the NEPA process. Here is very quick example to help explain why the significant issues and alternatives are so important:

If there no scoping comments identifying a lack of quality motorized trails (an “issue”), none of the alternatives will include a statement such as “Objective: Provide additional motorized trails to meet the growing use by the public.” If there are no alternatives with this objective defined, the Forest Plan has zero chance of including this in the Final version. If the Final Forest Plan has no objective supporting additional motorized trails, the Forest Service will respond to any future requests for motorized trails with, “Additional motorized trails aren't consistent with the Forest Plan.”

Naturally, this is a very simplistic example but it shows why having the right “issues” identified is so important at the beginning of this process. Issues identified NOW lead directly to alternatives. Anything not in an alternative has no chance of being in the Final Plan. If something is not in the Final

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"Forest Plan Revision" - Continued from Page 9

Plan, it has very little chance of ever being considered for implementation. It also illustrates why we need to be "thinking ahead" when we identify "issues" for the planning process. If we think we will want/need additional motorized recreation in the coming 15-20 years, we need to identify that "need" as an "issue" now!

How do Scoping Comments Have to be Written?

The good news is that there is no required format. The most effective Scoping comments are those that help identify issues that we want the Forest Service to address in the new Forest Plan. And you do not necessarily have to suggest solutions to the problem (that is what the Forest Service are supposed to develop during analysis). Here are some examples of "Significant Issues" to get you started thinking:

Travel Management has reduced the amount of roads and trails available to the public for motorized recreation. This will contribute to crowding on the trails as motorized recreation continues to grow. The Forest needs more trails open to meet this growing need. The Carson National Forest's Assessment identified that it is not meeting the need for motorized trail opportunities.

Forest budgets are shrinking, putting trail maintenance at risk. The Forest doesn't have an adequate plan for how it will utilize public/volunteer labor and resources to create and maintain motorized trails.

Non-motorized users have been successful in reducing motorized opportunities by claiming "conflict" with motorized users. The Forest needs to develop a plan for how it is going to educate other users and properly set user expectations in shared use environments.

Where Do We Send the Comments?

E-mail comments should be sent to: carsonplan@fs.fed.us

Letters should be mailed to:

Carson National Forest

Forest Plan Revision

208 Cruz Alta, Taos, NM 87571

When are the Comments Due?

Your Scoping comments are due by November 20th. This date is roaring up on us! Start working on your comments now!

Where can I find more information?

The website that contains all of the information that the Forest Service has released so far during this process is at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/carson/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5443166>

What Happens Next?

The Forest Service will read the Scoping comments, identify issues, create alternatives, and issue a draft EIS. NMOHVA will continue to monitor the process and give you a "heads-up" when you can comment on the draft EIS.

Didn't We Just See Another One of These?

Yes, all FIVE of the National Forests in New Mexico are in the process of revising their Plans. The Cibola is the farthest along. They started their Scoping in February of this year. The Carson and Santa Fe are currently at about the same place in the process. We sent out a similar Access Alert for the Santa Fe this past week. The Gila and Lincoln are just starting the Assessment Phase of the process and are about a year behind the Santa Fe and Carson.

Having all five Forests revising their Plans can be confusing and is certainly a little daunting. Can we stay focused and "on-point" during these long processes? We must...our future motorized recreation **DEPENDS** on it!

WOBBLING OUT OF WASHINGTON

LARRY E. SMITH - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AMERICANS FOR RESPONSIBLE RECREATIONAL ACCESS (ARRA)

On the last day of the 1st session of the 114th Congress, there was a mad dash by most members to get out of town for the holidays. But leading up to that very last day, the pace was more like a wobble because those final days of the session had a cliffhanger feel as the House and Senate grappled with approving an omnibus appropriations measure for FY 2016.

In the end, they got the job done. Here are some takeaways from the spending bill that I would like to share with you.

LWCF Renewal - The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) got a new three-year lease on life with a couple of policy changes included in the reauthorization. The use of eminent domain to secure new lands will no longer be permitted and funds will now be allocated at a state/federal split of 50-50. The funding level was set at \$450 million. Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT), Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, vows that he will continue to work on a major restructuring of the fund, but for advocates of the program, knowing that they have at least three years of certainty is good news.

Wildfire Suppression - Congress provided a \$593 million boost in wildfire funding over what the government had spent previously. This infusion of additional funds will likely alleviate the need for the land agencies to reprogram funds in 2016 to cover the unexpected costs of fighting wildfires. This funding increase provides a bridge until Congress can work on a more extensive restructuring on how it provides funds to the Bureau of Land Management and the U. S. Forest Service for the containment of wildfires. This increase is welcome news, but a long term solution is still necessary and one we hope the Congress will address in coming days.

Sage Grouse Habitat - The spending bill earmarked \$60 million for the Bureau of Land Management to be used to conserve sage grouse habitat. Funds can be used to remove juniper trees, prescribed burns as well as the eradication of invasive weeds, all designed to improve sage grouse habitat. This is a substantial increase over previous years.

National Park Service - The Park Service received an appropriation of \$2.9 billion. This is a \$237 million increase over 2015 funding and part of this increase is to be used towards the Park Service's huge maintenance backlog, something that ARRA has been very concerned about.

Bureau of Land Management - The Bureau will receive an appropriation of \$1.2 billion, a \$117 million increase over 2015 funding levels. The \$60 million earmarked for sage grouse habitat comes out of the \$117 million increase.

U. S. Forest Service - The Forest Service will receive a \$1.5 billion appropriation, a \$69 million increase over 2015.

Pulling together an omnibus spending bill is a complicated, unwieldy process that no one likes. The stated goal of the Republican leadership for 2016 is to pass 12 separate appropriations measures, a process far preferable than the omnibus approach. Doing the separate measures requires a far more disciplined approach than the Congress has been able to muster in recent years. It would certainly be an improvement in legislating and we are hoping they can make this goal reality!

Continued on Page 12

"Wobbling" - Continued from Page 11

2016

2016 is going to be quite a year. First, it will be President Obama's final year in office. We expect that national monument declarations will continue to be front and center on his public lands' agenda. We continue to have grave concerns over the power of the presidential pen when establishing usage policies for our public lands. Too often these directives affect hundreds of thousands if not millions of acres of federal lands with little or no public input by those citizens living in the vicinity of the newly designated monuments.

Second, the entire election cycle will dominate the congressional agenda as well as the congressional schedule. While there will be many votes on controversial issues, the likelihood of major policy reforms being enacted into law is slim at best. We will be looking for small victories here and there while also realizing that we are going to have to wait for the results of the 2016 elections before we can gauge what to expect in terms of policy directions for keeping our access to federal lands.

Finally, in mid-December we sent out an alert about the 2016 Free-Fee Days on Federal Lands. This is a very good way to save money and to enjoy our public lands all at the same time. [Click here](#) if you would like to see what is available for free!

Happy New Year!

Editor's Note: We are members of CORVA (California Off Road Vehicle Association), and as such, we are indirectly members of ARRA.

FREE ADMISSION TO NATIONAL PARKS FOR 16 DAYS IN 2016

DECEMBER 2, 2015 BY DESERTUSA - NEWSBLOG

WASHINGTON - The National Park Service turns 100 years old in 2016 and wants everyone to celebrate! All national parks, including Joshua Tree National Park, will *waive entrance fees* on 16 special days in 2016.

The 16 entrance fee-free days for 2016 will be:

- January 18 ----- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- April 16-24 ----- National Park Week
- August 25-28 ----- National Park Service Birthday Weekend
- September 24 ----- National Public Lands Day
- November 11 ----- Veterans Day

Superintendent, David Smith said, "We are committed to ensuring that all Americans have a chance to enjoy their National Parks, regardless of ability to pay. We recognize that entry fees can be a barrier to some of our park users and are pleased that we have been allowed some flexibility in regularly suspending entry fees."

Joshua Tree National Park usually has an entrance fee of \$20 per car. The entrance fee waiver does not cover campsite fees, Key's Ranch Tours or special use events. Annual passes for Joshua Tree are \$30 per car and provide a full year of park access.

While the 2015 numbers have not been released yet, Joshua Tree National Park had 1.6 million visitors in 2014. Those visitors spent \$74 million dollars in local communities and helped to support 1,030 jobs. Source: NPS

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