

Northwest Passage Volume 2, Issue 4 – Autumn 2010

Cover

Northwest Passage

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BLM Oregon/Washington

The Bureau of Land Management Magazine for Oregon and Washington

Autumn 2010

Take It Outside!

Future Forward: Faces of the BLM

Into the Light: Solar-Powered Wells Water the Desert

Raise the Roof: Recycling a Barn

Top O' the Rock: An Outdoor Wonderland

Wild Mountain Nation

Ancient Aeronautics

An Officer and a Forester

[Silhouette of a BLM Employee in a Hard Hat]

BLM Recycles

[Image of Recycling Symbol]

[Image of BLM Logo]

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Op-“Ed”

[Photo of Ed Shepard, State Director, Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management]

[Photo of a Wooden Cabin with a Gerber Campground Sign]

Photo by Matt Christenson

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Letter from Edward W. Shepard, State Director, Oregon/Washington, Bureau of Land Management

Every autumn reminds me of the one constant in life: change. From the turning of fall colors ushering in a beautiful new season to my own memories of starting each brand new school year, change has always been a natural part of each fall.

Change is also the theme running through our latest issue of Northwest Passage – which just so happens to be celebrating our second anniversary if you keep track of such things.

As college students of all ages begin a new year, they might have some trepidation about the labor market. And certainly our fellow Americans in the workforce may be considering new career paths of their own. Should you or someone you know find yourself in any of the above categories, I’d highly recommend learning more about the BLM’s Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).

This program is an opportunity for college students from almost every major – from forestry to biology and from communications to economics – to apply for paid internships with the BLM that can turn into a full-time job after graduation. I know our current group of SCEP interns has been a wonderful addition to our staff, and I hope to see them all return to Oregon and Washington with diplomas in hand.

Another change is the BLM's movement toward our greater use of renewable energies. In this issue we highlight a unique partnership with our neighbors in eastern Oregon's high desert to install solar-powered wells which use the sun's natural rays to generate power and pull up water for wild horses and local wildlife.

Well, I suppose I could go on about all the other changes on the horizon. But why don't I let you read about them yourself. Many are right here, inside this very issue. And after seeing all our full-color photos, we hope you'll join us outside on your public lands to experience autumn's awesome beauty first-hand.

Hope to see you out there.

Edward W. Shepard State Director Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management

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Take it Outside!

Volume 2, Issue 4

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Mission:

The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Oregon and Washington, the BLM provides innovative leadership in managing natural resources of the Pacific Northwest.

This Month's Cover

[Reproduction of Magazine Cover Photo]

[Silhouette of a BLM Employee in a Hard Hat]

This summer, I had the awesome opportunity to travel to the BLM's Lakeview District and spend a week in the field with the Oregon BLM's college interns. These folks are part of the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and were thrilled to put their many different degrees to work in the real world.

Each member of the group demonstrated a strong sense of intelligence, wit, and creativity. All were motivated to embark on career of service on our public lands as well as incredibly fun to be around. (And, as I type these words, I realize I'm describing virtually every one of the talented hands at the BLM...)

But beyond my immediate impressions, I was interested in learning their personal stories, how their individual paths led them to the BLM. And I found an incredibly diverse group of men and women of all ages and backgrounds ranging from a young student not long out of high school to an Iraq War veteran back in college starting a new career.

Inside this issue (Page 8) you can read just a small portion of their story. Then I hope you'll follow their tale with a video and photos that are online at blm.gov/c64c.

And what about you? Are you interested in learning how you or a friend or a family member might join SCEP and begin a whole new adventure? You can visit SCEP's online home at blm.gov/404c for further details.

Who knows? Your journey to the BLM may begin right now with a single click...

- Matt Christenson

Our Contributors

[Six Photos of Contributors on Image of a Cork Board – Tara Martinak, Maria Thi Mai, Matt Christenson, Ariel Hiller, Christina Lilienthal, Jeff Clark]

1: This fall our deserts are turning...green? That's right – green energy! From the high deserts of eastern Oregon, Tara Martinak of the BLM's Burns District reports that they've converted the sun's rays into pure power pumping water wells for mustangs and other wildlife (Page 24). And when she isn't sharing the latest news on the BLM's ever-increasing focus on America's renewable energy, you can find Tara engaged in virtually every aspect of our majestic wild horses – from public adoptions to gathers to press highlighting the BLM's safety and care of these magnificent animals. (p.s. You can learn more about adopting your own wild horse at blm.gov) Hi-ho, Silver. Away!

2: Maria Thi Mai is back! And all is right with the world. This self-professed fan of warm weather trekked out to the deserts (near Tara in Burns, in fact) to help the BLM and Oregon Public Broadcasting film Native American Medicine Wheels from a hot air balloon high in the sky (Page 8). Then afterwards Maria visited Sheep Mountain where the University of Oregon's own archaeological team debated the mysteries of life from 12,000 BC years ago – as well as the latest episode of Survivor.

3: Matt Christenson is growing a mustache. What do you think about it? Sure, you can be honest. Wow. Really? Ouch. We asked you to be honest, not brutal. Oddly, it's better than you might think. But before he started looking like a roadie for Foghat, Matt spent a week in the BLM's Lakeview District with Oregon's amazing college interns. Interviewing them and learning their stories was one of the highlights of his summer (Page 10). Well, that and the massive Wizard Fest co-headlined with Uriah Heep.

4: There's trees in them thar barns! And Ariel is going to save every one she can! Our newest contributor Ariel Hiller graces Northwest Passage with not one, but two articles this issue! Hailing from the Roseburg District where she's a community planner and volunteer coordinator, Ariel completed a detail in public affairs providing masterful support. Inside these pages she reports on the BLM recycling 100 percent of an old barn (Page 18) as well as a heroic forester who just so happens to moonlight as a decorated military officer (Page 22). Having lived most of her life in Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and other barren areas, Ariel is fascinated by the extremely large vegetation of the northwest – aka "trees."

5: A new harvest. Another first timer, Christina Lilienthal joins us from the center of it all – the BLM's Prineville District. Christina spent time with members from her local community who regularly come together to farm and landscape their very own public lands (Page 6). In protecting their local ecology by cultivating natural vegetation, these folks turn their work into fun weekends of family getaways and BBQs, and socials. Don't be surprised if you feel like picking up a rake after reading her article!

6: The good news is we haven't scared off Jeff Clark yet! After joining the BLM's public affairs staff in Oregon just in time to contribute to our last issue, Jeff is back with a full feature article (Page 24). He highlights the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Site and neighboring Table Rock Wilderness Area, two terrific spots sure to inspire the nearby city-dwellers of Portland and Salem to get outside and visit 'em – even in the winter. Hey, if a guy nicknamed "Sugar Bear" can hike Table Rock, you can, too!

Just past the Painted Hills in Oregon's John Day Basin,

there's a picture-perfect view of an old farmstead with a field adorned by bright yellow sunflowers. These days it's hard to imagine that this beautiful plot was once overrun by knapweed, cheat grass, and medusahead – noxious weeds of the west. But a long-term partnership between the BLM and the community that uses these lands have joined forces to create locally-sustained farmlands.

GREEN HARVEST

In 1992, a large land exchange provided the BLM's Prineville District with a number of former agricultural lands – the type of terrain that's highly susceptible to noxious weeds if left unattended. Following this exchange, the BLM initially launched a program to farm this area to maintain its ecological health. But after several successful years, BLM biologist Don Zalunardo began thinking these fields might benefit from a more community-based approach that would include folks who regularly use and have a personal stake in their public lands.

Enter the Redmond Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) and the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation (QUWF). Don and his cohorts from the BLM first contacted members from these groups to discuss a plan that would manage noxious weeds through a carefully designed conversion to forage and cover crops made available year round for wildlife such as deer, elk, birds, and small animals.

THE BIG FIELD

OHA Treasurer John Crafton says everyone agreed the first goal was to rid the area of noxious weeds followed by planting native grasses. The operation was financed through grant funds and the BLM's Prineville District with the OHA and QUWF supplying all labor. For example, a long weekend in May of 2010 saw volunteers generously giving almost 1,300 hours of hard work to plant 300 shrubs alongside three full fields of food across 15 acres. Volunteers then laid 600 pieces of pipe to irrigate the crops. And not least, two miles of fences were converted from old barbed wire to a new type of fence that has a smoother, more wildlife-friendly structure. And after the initial work was complete, volunteers came out regularly to water and farm the fields.

One major outcome of this effort according to Mr. Crafton is "...if we can draw the wildlife to our fields and keep them out of the private ranchers' fields, the animals will benefit and the ranchers will be happy not to have field damage." Board member Tim Van Domelen added, 'Being a hunter, it's an opportunity to give back to wildlife.'" He continued, 'In the high desert canyon lands, which reflect millions of years of erosive action, the green oasis of a wildlife plot is a valuable asset. It could mean the difference of herds making it through the winter and a healthy big game calf crop in the spring.'

SUNFLOWER STASIS

To those who have seen these community members come together and participate in such an ambitious effort, all agree it's an incredible sight. Weekend work parties are planned to include entire families who camp overnight to recreate and socialize in an atmosphere of hard work and giving. Days are spent planting wild roses or picking up irrigation pipe from fields. Folks walk through tall sunflower plants, pipe held high above their heads. Then nights after the work is done, volunteers gather for a steak barbecue over conversation about their lives, their work, and their land. And so it has come to be in this partnership between the BLM and the communities who live and work and play here, all find that their vision does indeed preserve the health of this natural landscape and its native wildlife for many generations to come.

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Ancient Aeronautics & Other Mysteries

In Search of Prehistoric Civilizations, Antediluvian Artifacts, and a Hill with at Least Two Bars of Cellular Coverage

Story by Maria Thi Mai

Photos by Corey Plank and Maria Thi Mai

[Photo from the BLM's Balloon with a Video Camera Hanging From It]

[Aerial Photo of a Native American Medicine Wheel]

[Photo of a Pickup Truck Carrying Helium for the BLM's Balloon]

[Photo of a Student Archeologist Filmed by Oregon Public Broadcasting for *Oregon Field Guide*]

Exposition

Do you Remember the childhood game “rock, paper, scissors”?

That's what comes to mind as I circle the ancient Medicine Wheel some 40 miles outside Burns, Oregon. I wonder if the sons and daughters of the people who built this terrestrial rock bracelet played games like we do.

Archaeologists tell us the Medicine Wheel is thought to be less than 2,000 years old whereas the oldest human inhabitants in Oregon lived almost 14,300 years ago. Interesting. Were the people who made the Medicine Wheel their descendants? Was the Medicine Wheel a place to play, dance, and tell stories? Did they convene council here to make crucial decisions? Who sat around the circle? Men? Women? Were children allowed? (Did rock beat paper?)

Rising Action

These and a plethora of other questions are what a team of field researchers from the BLM and the University of Oregon are here to explore. Joining us are Oregon Public Broadcasting producer Vince Patton and photographer Nick Fisher to film for an upcoming Oregon Field Guide story. And lugging seven tanks of helium is the BLM's own cartography crew: Corey Plank, Ed Zigoy, and Orrin Frederick. Local guides include BLM Burns archaeologist Scott Thomas along with Chuck Morlan.

Draining two tanks of helium, we fill our big yellow balloon to suspend a camera that will capture images of ancient symmetrical carousels. A Global Positioning System records our coordinates. And, as I ponder how ancient people oriented themselves, I wonder how our own technology will be studied by space-age archaeologists in the future.

Our cartography crew raises the balloon to film the BLM's version of a Google Earth™ image of the Medicine Wheel. Satisfied with our photos, we plan to move to the University of Oregon Archaeology Field School at Sheep Mountain, a hundred miles away.

Coming Down

When we arrive the next day, I squint to see Professor O'Grady halfway up the hillside sitting lotus style. He reminds me of Yoda from Star Wars contemplating how to travel through time and hyperspace. But actually, he's sitting in the only spot where we get cell reception. As we look toward the ancient past, our modern world continues.

The Sheep Mountain landscape is peppered with colorful tents and meandering cows. Enthusiastic twentysomethings in the high desert landscape create a cacophony of swishes and arrhythmic drumming as they pound and sift the dirt searching for Clovis-age artifacts. Hunched over large screens, they speculate who's going to be bumped off next on the reality show Survivor.

Dénouement

In the end, I believe children from the societies of Paisley Caves some 14,000 years past to Clovis 12,000 years ago to more recent millennia at the Medicine Wheel did indeed play games. And they told stories. Just as we do today, the mystery of life cycles forward. Each generation is born into their own world, a sovereign intersection of time and space, while the universal path marches ever on.

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Future Forward

Recruiting for the New BLM

Story and Photos by Matt Christenson

Are you a college student of any age looking for employment in your field of study? Read on to learn about the BLM's Student Career Experience Program, AKA SCEP – your Future Forward.

[Photo of the BLM's College Interns Standing Together at the Gemstone Collection Area]

Jonathan Foster and the Oregon BLM interns explore the Sunstone Collection Area outside Lakeview, Oregon.

At first glance Jonathan Foster may not appear to be the typical student intern. Before spending the past summer working for the BLM's Vale District in eastern Oregon, this Army veteran was an airborne infantry soldier from 1989 to 1992. Jonathan was deployed to both Operation Just Cause in Panama and Operation Desert Storm in Iraq. Then, after completing his military service, Jonathan worked a number of agricultural jobs until a construction injury led him back to school at the University of Montana. Now preparing to complete a degree in Natural Resources and Rangeland Ecology, Jonathan looks forward to a career steeped in nature and wildlife.

On the other side of the State, Lily Chen is just as focused on her own career change from a Portland office. After a tenure in healthcare, Lily realized her true calling was business and went back to school to complete her accounting degree. But unlike Jonathan's future in the fields and forests and streams, Lily saw her niche as part of a finance or budget team.

Two different backgrounds. Two vastly different degrees. But both Jonathan and Lily had the same question: "How do I find a career in my respective field in the current economy?"

More

[Arrow Points to Turn Page]

A New Workforce

Perhaps you're a recent college graduate. Or maybe a long-term veteran of the workforce. Finding a job these days can be difficult. Stories on the economy dominate the news. Friends and family talk about it at the dinner table. We see it with our own eyes.

In these challenging economic times, the American workforce has become an incredibly competitive place. With a greater number of qualified job seekers on the market, employers can be increasingly

selective. Which is why now, more than ever before, job seekers are finding the old adage to be true: “You can’t get a job without experience, and you can’t get experience without a job.”

It’s enough to make many folks sending out their resumes quake in their boots. So what’s an anxious student to do?

Jonathan and Lily know the answer.

Different Career Paths: One BLM

It was at the University of Montana that someone told Jonathan about the BLM’s student internship program. Lily heard about it at a University of Portland career fair. And thus two seemingly different paths converged upon SCEP: the BLM’s Student Career Experience Program.

SCEP connects students looking to use their new skills with real world careers serving America’s great outdoors and public lands.

And because there are a wide variety of roles supporting the BLM’s multiple use mission, internships for students cover a diverse variety of career fields – which means SCEP interns don’t have to study forestry or ecology. They major in computer science, graphic design, communications, English, and more.

So how does SCEP work with a full-time class load? During the school year, SCEP interns focus on their classes. For example, Jonathan doesn’t work with the BLM at all during the academic year. But there are other options.

As a SCEP intern, Lily works full-time – even during the school year. And she’s able to receive benefits and medical coverage along with a competitive salary.

In addition, SCEP interns may find they merit tuition and travel assistance. And at the end of their degree? Once they successfully graduate, SCEP interns are eligible for non-competitive conversion into permanent Federal positions.

How I Spent My Summer Vocation

No matter how much a SCEP intern participates during the school year, his or her summer job is fully covered. Once classes wrap up for the year, SCEP interns can be found working full-time for the BLM in positions that most closely match their academic majors.

In addition, for one week each summer, the SCEP interns of Oregon and Washington get together for one week to learn about the overall mission and various diverse programs of the BLM. Most recently, the interns met each other in the BLM’s Lakeview District where they interacted with representatives from almost every field of expertise offered by the BLM.

And this summer job is the first time many of the interns get to use the knowledge they’ve gained in college. SCEP intern Laura Jones from the BLM’s Lakeview District says, “It’s kind of cool to be able to use what seemed like abstract theories...and see how they’re applied in the real world!”

The Real World: BLM

Jonathan has finished his summer internship and heads back for his senior year at Montana. Lily continues to work full-time for the BLM in Portland until she finishes her degree this December. Though the SCEP process cannot guarantee a full-time position, both student interns feel confident that their experiences have successfully positioned themselves to be hired as full-time BLM employees once they receive their diplomas.

And considering the current state of employment, that's a pretty nice place to be.

When asked about her experience, Lily says, "You can't find this same thing in the private sector. I'm working full-time with medical and benefits, and the BLM is even helping me with my tuition."

Jonathan's measured tones give way to his wisdom. So how does he feel about SCEP now? "Do it. I'd recommend it to anybody," he says, laughing, "not that they'd listen to an old man."

Given Jonathan's maturity and experience, perhaps they will.

[Photo of Jonathan Foster]

[Photo of Lily Chen and Heidi Rogers]

[Photo of BLM Student Interns in a Forest Near a River]

"I got to learn a lot of new things, meet a wide variety of people, and get a lot of good experience and a foot in the door for a future career."

– Amy Thorpe, BLM SCEP Intern

Check out a video spotlighting Jonathan, Lily, and all the SCEPs at: blm.gov/c64c

To learn more about SCEP, visit us online at: blm.gov/404c

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District Round-Up

Welcome to news from the BLM in Oregon & Washington!

[Illustrated Map of Oregon & Washington with all ten Districts Identified]

Your BLM Districts are “All Over the Map!”

Burns, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/burns

- The Annual Chris Miller Memorial Steens Rim Run was held on Steens Mountain in southeast Oregon on August 7. The Burns District has been a partner and race supporter for this event for two decades! 2010 was a record-breaking year with new paces to beat in both the men’s and women’s walk and the women’s run. Plus, with over 250 registered participants, the event boasted its largest turnout yet. For more information, please check it out online at www.steensrimrun.com.
- Wild Horses were gathered from southeast Oregon Herd Management Areas (HMA) this past July and August. The Cold Springs and Stinkingwater HMAs brought over 200 mustangs to Oregon’s Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines. And you can adopt them in person at the Corral Facility or online at www.blm.gov/adoptahorse. Horses from the Warm Springs HMA southwest of Burns will be gathered in November.

[Photo of a Wild Horse Gather]

Coos Bay, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay

- Bastendorff and the North Spit were spruced up as part of the National Public Lands Day and the Great Oregon Beach Clean-Up on September 25. Approximately 120 people participated in picking up 25 yards of trash, rehabilitating four miles of trail, and clearing one acre of noxious weeds. Thanks, volunteers!
- The Coos Bay District Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) approved over \$3.3 million in restoration projects at their meeting in July. Projects in Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties include road maintenance, fish passage improvements, stream habitat improvements, fire fighting helipond repair, and noxious weed control. Plus! The Coos Bay RAC still has upcoming vacancies to fill, so if you’re interested or know someone who is, please contact Glenn Harkleroad at (541) 751-4361.

[Photo of Volunteers at the Beach Cleaning Up Coos Bay]

Eugene, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/eugene

- September saw the dedication of the Springfield Readiness Center, home of the Eugene District. Sharing this space with the BLM are the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Reserves, and the Oregon Army National Guard.

- Happy Trails to three members of the Eugene family. After over 35 years of public service each, Rich Kelly, Dave DeMoss, and Emily Guiland are hanging up their hard hats and getting ready for their next adventures. Best of luck!

Lakeview, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview

- Helping Hands Improve Local Recreation Site! The Lakeview Resource Area held its 2010 National Public Lands Day event at the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area on September 18. Over 30 volunteers participated, including BLM and U.S. Forest Service employees, Lakeview High School students, Boy Scouts, and community members. Workers removed four rock jacks, constructed 75 feet of rock wall, collected 10 bags of trash, and built a picnic table. The day's activities concluded with volunteers enjoying a lunch provided by the BLM and reminiscing about contributions made. Participants' efforts were awarded with a complementary National Public Lands Day tee-shirt and "fee-free" coupon good throughout the next year for admittance to one recreation site managed by the BLM, the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Army Corps of Engineers.

- The Klamath Falls Resource Area hosted its own National Public Lands Day event on September 25. About 25 volunteers donated their time to a number of maintenance projects at the Gerber Potholes Campground. Workers helped repair or replace 10 wood duck boxes, plant over 110 willow cuttings, and load and unload firewood for distribution to Klamath Basin senior citizens in need. Following a morning of intense manual labor, participants were treated to a barbecue lunch along with a free tee-shirt and day pass. Don Holmstrom, Field Manager for the Klamath Falls Resource Area, expressed his appreciation for the day's accomplishments by stating "These volunteers assisted the BLM with some very important hands-on work that will directly benefit the natural resources we manage and members of the communities we serve."

[Photo of a Youth Volunteer Cleaning up Lakeview]

Medford, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/medford

- The Medford District worked with Americorps, The Job Council, and the Northwest Youth Corps to provide over 5,300 hours of summer employment to young workers. These groups provided improvements to the Pacific Crest Trail, the Rogue River National Recreation Trail, the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail, and trails throughout the Cathedral Hills area. Projects included trail maintenance, brushing, snag removal, resurfacing, water bar improvements, bridge repair, and rock wall reconstruction.

- The Medford District also held National Public Lands Day events at the Ashland Resource Area's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument as well as at the Rogue Wild and Scenic River. Close to 100 volunteers at the two areas donated their time and muscles to remove barbed wire fencing, rebuild

hiking trails, paint parking lots and boat ramps, remove noxious weeds, and much more. At the end of a fantastic day, all workers were brought together for a volunteer appreciation meal.

Continues on next page

More great news from the BLM in Oregon & Washington!

Prineville, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/Prineville

- This summer, the Prineville District celebrated the official designation of the 29,000-acre Oregon Badlands Wilderness at the Badlands Rock Trailhead. As part of the 10th Anniversary of the National Landscape Conservation System, this event was a perfect time to share the special values that a Wilderness holds. A diverse audience of friends, partners, organizations, and both local and state-level BLM employees took part in the happy occasion. David Eddleston from Friends of the Oregon Badlands Wilderness then led a guided hike into this area to demonstrate its many unique characteristics.
- Prineville's National Public Lands Day event was held on September 17 near Biak Base near Redmond, Oregon. Participants included over 140 cadets and staff members from the Oregon Youth Challenge Program. The cadets cleaned, repaired, and painted cattle guards. They also cleaned up almost a ton of trash from five square miles of BLM land. Finally, they removed about 100 pounds of noxious weeds. Great job, cadets!

[Photo from Prineville's National Public Lands Day of a Cadet Repairing a Fence]

Roseburg, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/roseburg

- During July, Roseburg District archaeologist Isaac Barner hosted a PIT-style dig. PIT refers to the U.S. Forest Service's Passport in Time program to link volunteers with archaeological excavations. Volunteers were thrilled to break sod and sift it through a fine mesh screen to find artifacts from the Late Archaic Period. Volunteers ranged from a local teen on a nearby farm to a couple who traveled from northern California and made the project their vacation. Altogether, volunteers contributed over 500 hours to the project, with 100 hours coming from folks under the age of 25. Artifacts found included projectile points, scraping tools, and a fishing net weight.

[Photo of Young Archeologist Searching for Ancient Artifacts]

Salem, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/salem

- An independent film production spent two days shooting scenes for a feature film in the Molalla River Corridor this past August. Twenty-five film crew members and their equipment squeezed into the Hardy Creek Equestrian Trailhead parking lot alongside public trucks and horse trailers. Two actors were filmed at sites along the river. "The film is about an Iraq War veteran," said Jodi Murphy, Salem District Realty Specialist. "The crew was predominantly from North Carolina, New Jersey, and the Portland area. Those who were new to Oregon thought the area was very beautiful and were grateful for the chance to get to work in such a great place!"

- Eugene District K9 Ranger Jason Cox hosted the annual refresher training for BLM K9 officers at the Salem District Office. A number of areas within the district were used to train five BLM K9 Rangers who traveled from Southern California, Arizona, Nevada, and Montana to attend this refresher. Two K9 training officers from the United States Border Patrol Academy located in El Paso, Texas assisted with the instruction. The three-day course focused on the proper utilization of police work dogs.

[Photo of a Law Enforcement Officer Training with a BLM K9]

Spokane, Washington: blm.gov/or/districts/spokane

- After a 36-year absence, the nation's flag flies over BLM's Turn Point Light Station on Stuart Island! The U.S. flag was lowered in 1974 when the Fog Signal at the Light Station located in Washington's San Juan Islands was automated and there was no longer a need to post Coast Guard personnel at the installation. But this summer a new flag pole was erected on the historic footing by the Turn Point Lighthouse Preservation Society. This flag was first raised by Dan Alexander, a Coast Guardsman who was stationed at Turn Point Light Station from 1949 to 1951. Approximately 40 people (and an enthusiastic pod of Orcas) were in attendance.
- Spokane has gone green! In June, the Spokane District planted a large raised garden bed in an empty corner of the District's wareyard. The new community garden is equipped with a solar-powered pump and a drip irrigation system. District staff have been enjoying the fruits of their labor with fresh-picked tomatoes, cucumbers, and jalapeno peppers!

[Photo of the American Flag Flying over the BLM's Turn Point Light Station on Stuart Island]

Vale, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/vale

- You can always tell it's summer in the Vale District by the number of new faces in the resource areas and fire organization. Over 100 temporary positions were filled this year, and these summer hires accomplished much needed field work on range improvements, range condition monitoring, road inventories, the installation of cattle crossings, fence construction, plant inventories, archeological surveys, native seed collections, weed inventories and eradication, wild horse gathers, and fire suppression. And speaking of fire, the firefighting organization ensured no blazes on Oregon public lands got out of control – in addition to supporting New Mexico, California, Washington, and Idaho.

Public Lands Live

[Image of the State of Oregon]

Oregon is For Lovers of Public Lands!

Raise The Roof

Return of the Living Barn

[Photo of a Falling-Down Barn in a Green Field with a Blue Sky]

When a barn dies, what happens to it? Does it go to some big barn heaven in the sky? Or can we recycle and reuse it down here? Recently, the BLM put this question to the test when it decided one of its old barns was an excellent candidate to be an “organ donor...”

Continues

At the BLM’s Roseburg District in southern Oregon, we use a number of barns to store everything from field equipment and fencing supplies to irrigation materials and a fantastic woodshop which we created almost entirely from reclaimed and recycled materials. But when rot and decay caused the Middle Barn at our North Bank Habitat Management Area to lean further than Italy’s Tower of Pisa, we knew it was time to send it to that great barn heaven in the sky.

Now at this point, other organizations might have simply pulled down the building only to fill big dumpsters with debris destined for a landfill. But the BLM is dedicated to conserving and protecting our natural resources. And we knew we could find a way to resurrect new life into this ol’ barn.

Everything’s Gone Green

We undertook what I’ve taken to calling the “Green Barn Project.” And it serves as a role model for the kind of forward-thinking the Federal government is becoming known. By ensuring that virtually all our materials were recycled or reused to the fullest possible extent, we guaranteed that not only the wood and large metal would find new purpose in future construction, but that we’d also be recycling every piece of metal hardware to include small nails, brackets, screws, and roofing material. Nothing would be wasted!

And so with the help of two long-term BLM employees, Kate Read and Randy Lopez, we created a plan to make our Green Barn Project possible. Their flexibility, ingenuity, and assistance made this effort possible.

Recycling Local Jobs

An additional positive outcome of this project was that it provided jobs to Oregonians. We were very happy the bid went to an Oregon contractor thus boosting employment in our communities.

Per contract, the BLM stipulated our all-important clause that all materials were to be recycled and reused. And by working directly with a local employer, we were happy to see they had a great understanding of the BLM's goal. After some 20 hours of labor to take apart the barn, they accomplished virtually 100 percent of our mission!

Breathing New Life

All lumber that was still useful was salvaged for reuse in other construction projects. This means that boards and beams which previously leaned at a 45-degree angle can now stand straight and tall holding up sound new structures. And what of the unsalvageable lumber? Our timing couldn't have been more perfect. With autumn arriving, folks need firewood. And recycling this type of wood means cutting fewer trees!

Further, concrete items like old post anchors were crushed for use in construction fill on other projects. And after recycling the smaller pieces, the only items to end up in a landfill were a few fiberglass panels that had served as primitive skylights in the roof. Not bad!

Coming Full Circle

So what's next? We're currently looking to get quotes on lumber and to work with Kate and Randy in creating a plan for a new barn. Hopefully by next summer! And for that project, we'd love for the BLM to engage local youth from the Wolf Creek Job Corps.

In addition, the BLM's Roseburg District's very own Green Team is planning new ways to continually improve our local recycling program as well as to incorporate green cleaning products into our facility.

Our dedication to conservation isn't limited to the Green Barn Project. It's an everyday commitment.

[Photo of Hands Holding Building Materials from the Recycled Barn]

[Photo of Wood in the Bed of a Truck]

[Photo of Old Chains]

Story and Photos by Ariel Hiller

Pioneers

[Image of an Outline of the State of Oregon]

[Photo of a BLM Forester in the Woods]

[Photo of a Military Officer Conducting an Interview]

An Officer and a Forester

A Decorated Soldier Returns to His Post with the BLM to Present an Award of His Own

Story and Photos by Ariel Hiller

Army Reserve Major James Mahaffy was thrilled to return to the United States.

Following his successful and safe deployment to Iraq, he had many reasons to celebrate. The warm embrace of his family. A grateful nation's homecoming. And, for more than a year and a half, a new job with the BLM awaiting his arrival.

Eighteen months prior, the BLM hired James as a forester in the Roseburg District in southwest Oregon. At the time, both the BLM and James knew he'd soon be sent to the Middle East. But while such circumstances may have troubled other new hires, the BLM quickly allayed any of James' concerns by supporting both his new position as well as his commitment to military service.

And so it was that, after he returned to an American chorus of gratitude for his dedicated service, James found he was far more interested in sharing his own appreciation and accolades for the BLM's commitment to soldiers like him.

Enter the Patriot Award.

The Patriot Award is a program from The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. This award develops and promotes a culture in which American employers champion the military service of their employees. Regarding his own experience Major Mahaffy says, "The BLM and my supervisor are incredibly accommodating regarding my monthly Reservist Drills and the agency has also indicated support for upcoming training missions and future deployments. The sacrifice this organization has made and will continue to make needs to be recognized."

Thus James was scarcely back at work when he submitted the BLM and his manager, Al James, for the Patriot Award. And, much to his delight, the BLM and Al were soon recognized.

As the BLM and his supervisor received the award, James explained how he initially became interested in forestry. He mentioned his Uncle Bob who lived near the dairy farm in Coos Bay where James grew

up. “Dairy farmers are interested in what grows down low and feeds cows. We kind of ignored the trees.” But Uncle Bob took James out to the woods to instill in him a deep respect for trees and nature. James describes his uncle as a unique character and progressive forester who would stage horse logging demonstrations and create snags for wildlife habitat with high powered rifles – all the while quoting Plato and Aristotle. A true renaissance forester.

Given James’ own diverse interests which include his passionate commitment to military service, it seems Uncle Bob isn’t the only renaissance forester in the family. And with the support of the BLM and its managers like Al James, it looks like Major Mahaffy will be able to follow his passions well into the future.

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Into The Light

How the BLM is Harnessing the Renewable Energy of Our Sun to Supply Water for Oregon's High Desert

Story by Tara Martinak

Photos by Rob Sharp

[Photo of a Solar[Powered Water Well]

A few years ago, I read a statistic about places in the United States (outside of Alaska) with temperatures below freezing for 180 or more days per year. And I bet you're thinking what I'm thinking: who comes up with this stuff? You know what? I don't know. But a quick read showed that my little Harney County town of Burns, Oregon, came in at #5 on the list with an average of 205 below-freezing days per year.

205? Somebody hand me my coat, please.

Fortunately, cold does not necessarily equal cloudy, and Harney County also has a surprising statistic about sunshine: the towns of Burns and Hines proudly boast over 300 days of rays – just as many as Miami, Florida. Give us a disco and a few more celebrities, and I'll bet you can't tell the difference.

So let's pretend I never mentioned the cold weather and, in your best Temptations impression, join me as I sing: "I've got sunshine..."

Get Energized – Solar Style

In addition to our plethora of sunny days, the BLM's Burns District is also no stranger to renewable energy projects. Several wind testing sites currently record data for potential wind power development. There's also a proposal for a wind farm on private land. And biomass projects are already generating power annually through stewardship contracting.

But I did mention all our sunny days, didn't I? What renewable energy haven't I mentioned yet? That's right. Solar. There are a number of solar-powered weather stations, portable generators, and wells scattered across the District.

Who benefits from this sun-kissed energy? Would you believe horses? Wild horses in the Warm Springs Herd Management Area (HMA) are actually one of Harney County's most recent beneficiaries of green power.

For the last several years, water sources have been scarce across the Warm Springs HMA. Several seasons of drought and below-average snowpack left all but three waterholes in the 303,000 acre West Warm Springs portion of the HMA dry in 2009.

“Drought,” you say? Don’t be surprised. Harney County is deep in the high desert where “sunny and dry” are the weather reporter’s favorite words. But I digress.

The challenge with the dry weather is that livestock permittees in the West Warm Springs area operate three wells on BLM-administered land with fuel-type generators for one to two months while livestock are on the allotment. However, these water sources go dry once the cows are removed. And cattle aren’t the only land users out there. So it made sense to find a way to keep water available in the HMA year-round.

‘Scuze Me While I Kiss the Sky

With these available wells and water sources, BLM employees who are experienced solar pump and storage system designers met with Bill and Lori Peila along with Geren Moon, willing allotment permittees who paid for well-drilling, metal troughs, and a storage tank. And between everyone’s hard work and a boatload of sunshine nearly year-round, they discovered that solar energy proved to be a very bright idea indeed.

Over the last year, the three existing wells were each equipped with a solar-powered energy system that provides a constant supply of water to a trough, a storage tank, and an overflow pond during sunlight hours. Remember when we talked about it being cold and sunny here? Well, here are the brains about this operation: each solar unit is designed to deliver at least eight gallons per minute during a typical sunny day. But then they’ll self-drain when not pumping to avoid damage during freezing temperatures.

Bottom line? These systems take advantage of the Miami-like sun we enjoy here in Harney County, but they can also handle those 205 below-freezing days per year! Voila – horses gone thirsty won’t be an issue ‘round these parts. Nor will used-up natural resources or non-renewable energy because we’ve got the sun, baby.

Now every story has its pros and cons, so let’s put it all out there. Here’s the good: 1) solar power helps us maintain the wild horse range during periods of drought thus reducing the need for emergency gathers; 2) solar power provides for additional sources of year-round water which also supplements grazing habitat; and, 3) more available water means improved animal distribution and reduced utilization levels and forage competition. Healthy water. Healthy lands. Healthy animals. Now here’s the bad. Ready? Are you sure? Okay. Darn. I can’t think of anything.

[Photos of a Solar-Powered Water Well]

Over the last year, three wells were equipped with a solar-powered energy system to provide a constant supply of water.

[Photo of a Wild Horse and a Cow in the Field]

Water from the wells provides both horses and cattle year-round sustenance.

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Top of the Rock

Story and Photos by Jeff Clark

[Photo of Table Rock Wilderness Area]

From High Atop a Majestic Peak...

RALLY! Don't put up your camping gear and hiking boots just yet!

If Salem and Portland are where you hibernate during our cold weather months, the BLM has a few sites very near to you that will make enjoying the great outdoors this fall and winter easier than you might think.

[Photo of the Molalla River]

...To the Wild Rushing Streams Below.

"The Molalla River Corridor offers really easy access to everyone in Portland, Salem, and the surrounding communities to enjoy a ton of recreation options and dramatic vistas and still be back home by five o' clock."

– Zach Jarrett

The BLM's Salem District manages both the Molalla River Corridor Recreation Site as well as

its neighbor, the Table Rock Wilderness Area. Both

locations are perfect spots for anyone who'd like to take a quick easy drive for an excursion in our nearby woods, mountains, and streams.

For visitors to Molalla, there are ample opportunities for picnicking, camping, and fishing with easy river access. Visitors can also hike, ride horses, or mountain bike within the Molalla River Shared-Use Trail System. This extensive network of non-motorized trails provide varying degrees of difficulty alongside scenic shots of the Molalla River and Cascade Mountain Range. Perfect for mountain bikers looking for a day trip this winter! And you won't soon run out of dirt to explore more than five thousand acres along 12 miles of the scenic upper Molalla River extending a mile and a half south to the Table Rock Wilderness.

Once you get to Table Rock, you'll park your bike or motorized vehicle and find a massive point made from basalt rock surrounded by lush green trees and plants. And at almost five thousand feet elevation, there's plenty to see while keeping your mind off the steep switchbacks that lead you to spectacular views on the summit. On a clear day, hikers can see peaks in three states – from Washington's Mount

Rainier all the way down to California's Mount Shasta. This beauty, in such close proximity to Oregon's urban centers, is a major draw for both Molalla and Table Rock.

One special note on the trails in this area: they were developed by a fantastic cooperative effort between the BLM, the Molalla RiverWatch, and a large group of interested parties that make up the Molalla River Alliance.

Zach Jarrett, Lead Outdoor Recreation Planner for the BLM's Salem District says, "The Molalla RiverWatch has been a key partner with the BLM for the past 14 years. They've really helped with public outreach and special events like river cleanups with groups like SOLV (Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism.)"

Thanks to their generous labor, everyone can enjoy this area year-round! Plus with accessibility only minutes from Portland and Salem, these areas provide a wonderful outlet to stay active and outdoors, even in the winter.

Giving us the last word, Zach states that "...the Molalla River Corridor offers really easy access to everyone in Portland, Salem, and the surrounding communities to enjoy a ton of recreation options and dramatic vistas and still be back home by five o' clock."

Beauty and recreation only minutes away? See you there!

[Photos of visitors to the Molalla River and Table Rock.]

[Image of a Map Identifying the Molalla River and Table Rock.]

Trail maps are available at the BLM's Salem District office and online at: <http://blm.gov/h44c>

More information about the groups mentioned in the article can be found at: molallariveralliance.org, molallariverwatch.org, and solv.org.

BackCountry

Cinematic Social Media

[youtube.com/BLMOregon](https://www.youtube.com/BLMOregon)

[facebook.com/BLMOregon](https://www.facebook.com/BLMOregon)

[flickr.com/photos/BLMOregon](https://www.flickr.com/photos/BLMOregon)

twitter.com/BLMOregon

Are you ready for your close-up?

The BLM in Oregon and Washington is producing movies to document our myriad diverse programs and projects – from wild mustangs and mountain biking to fish, flora, fauna, and everything else in between. And now you can check out any one of our 25 videos at YouTube™ – with fresh new content updated weekly!

What else, you say?

Well, we're also tweeting up a storm and providing daily programming to our Facebook™ page. And don't forget our growing collection of free photo albums at Flickr™.

The BLM in Oregon and Washington has fully embraced social media to reach out to all the fans of public lands. And now you can actively take part in discussions and news about your community. Comment, chat directly with us, and let your voice be heard. And don't hesitate to send your requests for future videos, photos, and topics of interest.

See you online!

[Photo of a Man Filming a Wild Horse Gather]

[Image of an Outline of the State of Oregon]