



# BLM NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Department of the Interior • Bureau of Land Management • Washington, D.C., Office • 1849 C Street N.W. • Washington, D.C.

Bureau of Land Management  
For release: Nov. 29, 2010

Contact: Brianna Candelaria  
(202) 912- 7583

## **BLM Presents Fifteenth Annual “Excellence in Interpretation or Environmental Education” Awards at 2010 National Association for Interpretation National Workshop**

For the fifteenth consecutive year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recognized outstanding BLM interpreters and educators at the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) National Workshop, held this year in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The BLM “Excellence in Interpretation or Education” Awards, presented at a November 18, 2010, ceremony, recognized outstanding BLM interpreters and educators for their work on employee-conducted programs that enhanced public appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural riches on our public lands, as well as management issues in the context of the BLM’s multiple-use mission.

The BLM’s 2010 “Excellence” award winners were:

**GOLD AWARD winner:** Rachel Sowards-Thompson, Interpretive Outdoor Recreation Specialist, King Range National Conservation Area, CA, for diverse family and youth education programs.

**SILVER AWARD winner:** Matthew “Matt” Christenson, Writer/Editor, Oregon/Washington State Office, for *Northwest Passage*, the magazine about BLM Oregon/Washington.

**SILVER AWARD winner:** Joyce “Joya” Szalwinski, Interpretive Park Ranger, El Centro Field Office, CA, for “Take it Outside! Off-Highway Vehicle Family Activity Cards” set.

Each of this year’s winners has done exceptional work with partners and communities to create meaningful interpretive and/or educational experiences and materials for public land users.

In presenting the awards, BLM Deputy Director Mike Pool stated, “The BLM depends on its interpreters and educators to help the public understand what keeps our resources healthy, appreciate how the wealth of our nation’s public lands can enrich their lives, and guard the legacy we will leave for future generations.”

The three winning BLM employees were selected by a review panel composed of both BLM staff and representatives from partner organizations, including the National Association for Interpretation. BLM “Excellence” nominees were judged on the quality of their work, their ability to involve partners, their effectiveness in enhancing public understanding of cultural and natural resources, their programs’ or products’ accessibility and sensitivity to diverse audiences, and their efforts’ success in helping the BLM to accomplish its management goals.

The BLM awards were presented in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service's "Gifford Pinchot Award," the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's "Sense of Wonder Award," the National Park Service's "Freeman Tilden Award," the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' "Hiram M. Chittenden Award," and NAI's "Master Front-Line Interpreter" and "Master Interpretive Manager" Awards.

The BLM manages more land - more than 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.