

Northwest Passage Volume 3, Issue 2 – Summer 2011

Cover

Northwest Passage

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BLM Oregon/Washington

The Bureau of Land Management Magazine for Oregon and Washington

Summer 2011

Our Annual Recreation Issue

WIFI Wildlife

A High-Tech Treasure Hunt

OHV Riders Conserve Oregon Forests

At-Risk Youths Lend a Hand to Help the Land

Chatting with the Secretary of the Interior

[Photo of a Youth Holding a Yellow Sign]

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 San Juan Island Skyline]

Photo by Matt Christenson

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[youtube.com/blmoregon](http://youtube.com/blmoregon)

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Excellence in Interpretation, 2010 Silver Award, *Northwest Passage*

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

SUMMER SUN MAY BE SLOW IN COMING, BUT YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT IN OREGON AND WASHINGTON.

We at the BLM are thrilled to see so many families enjoying virtually every type of recreation in America's Great Outdoors come rain or shine. From hiking lush forests to riding OHVs on sustainable trails to rafting wild rivers, millions of folks in the Pacific Northwest love getting out on their public lands.

Inside our summer recreation issue of Northwest Passage, we're covering two activities that have seen recent rises in popularity. The first is geocaching, a modern-day treasure hunt. Participants use high-tech tools to pinpoint a hidden cache. But the biggest reward is not what's hidden, it's in the exciting journey to find it. And because using these tools is like bringing the internet to the outdoors, geocaching is a great way to get kids out of the house. Plus most smart phones have a free or low-cost application ("app") that will allow you to get out and join the fun right now.

The other activity we're spotlighting is off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding. At the BLM's Shotgun OHV Trail System near Eugene, Oregon, we've partnered with the local community to develop paths that are so good they keep riders on the public trails and off the nearby natural landscape and private property.

But recreation isn't all we're about this issue. The public lands in Oregon and Washington offer another exciting resource – jobs. Over the past decade, we've partnered with the Oregon Youth Authority, our state's juvenile crime prevention task force, to offer young people the opportunity to work on environmental restoration projects. These youths are helping not only their communities but also themselves as they get real-world job training that has prepared a number of them for careers upon completion of the program. When you read our interview with Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar also in this issue, you'll see we're right on track with the national effort to bring together youths, employment, and the outdoors.

Then after you've read about all the recreation and opportunities on your local BLM lands, I hope we'll see you out there this summer. No matter what your passion is, we've got you covered. Even if we don't need our sunscreen quite yet. Thanks for reading and see you soon.

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

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Take it Outside!

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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]

[Photo of a Youth Holding a Yellow Sign]

As a kid, I hated the outdoors. I know, I know... It's a strange thing to admit for someone who works for the BLM. But I couldn't stand the family fishing trips where the only thing I was guaranteed to catch was a bout of seasickness. Then at some point, some friends introduced us to the sport of mountain biking. (Though at the time in the late 70's, we called it "BMX.") Pedaling a rugged bike through trails, up and down (oh man, don't forget down) the hills of Michigan was the most thrilling thing I'd ever experienced. My first thought was to ask, "Is this the same outdoors I used to dread?" But I didn't because I was afraid someone would get wise and stick me back on my dad's fishing boat.

While I was divebombing those Michigan hills, surreptitiously getting incredible exercise, I came to realize each brand of outdoor recreation isn't necessarily for everyone. And that's okay. In fact, it's great. I didn't want my trails getting overrun just as my parents would have been sad to see their favorite fishing spots become too crowded.

In a way, this zenful attitude is the perfect illustration of the BLM's multiple use mission. Whether we're creating sustainable OHV trails (page 28), introducing people to geocaching (page 12), or highlighting our scenic and historic trails (page 16), the BLM has perhaps the most diverse selection of activities to be found on any public lands. And if none of the ones I've mentioned grab you, just check out our online recreation search engine. It's super easy. It maps out all the recreation hotspots nearest you: [blm.gov/j35c](https://blm.gov/j35c). Give it a spin and see what comes up.

See you on the public lands this summer!

– Matt Christenson

Our Contributors

[Six Photos of Contributors on Image of a Cork Board – Kurt Heckeroth, Ariel Hiller, Michael Mascari, Jeff Clark, Scott Stoffel, Matt Christenson]

1: A green thumb leads to a silver lining! Returning Northwest Passage contributor and BLM botanist Kurt Heckeroth has long worked with Oregon's at-risk youths on projects to restore the habitat around streams and forests. Thanks to Kurt's care for both the land as well as the people who live on it, these young people are now finding positive new career opportunities they never knew existed. And keep an eye on our YouTube(TM) page for a series of videos where you can meet Kurt in person: [youtube.com/blmoregon](http://youtube.com/blmoregon) (Page 22)

2: The Wizard of Writing. When we first heard Ariel Hiller was taking leave from her post as community planner for the BLM in Roseburg, Oregon, to work with the public affairs team, we at Northwest Passage literally begged her to sprinkle her magic dust on our summer issue. She generously worked with Kurt to give his project all the sparkle it richly deserves. Superstar! (Page 22)

3: Go Ducks?! Michael really, really wanted us to use this photo, but we're not sure what it means. We think his point is that he's such a massive Oregon Ducks fan he was willing to wear some random college's sweatshirt and take a public beating from a sweaty kid in a bird costume that's never seen the inside of a washing machine. The power of ducks? (My college mascot was a tree, so who am I to judge? - Ed.) (Page 28)

4: He's a Triple Threat! Back with two articles this issue is Jeff Clark. Director, photographer, writer: he literally can do it all. First Jeff continues his series about classic films shot on BLM lands with recent art house hit Meek's Cutoff produced in eastern Oregon. (Page 6) Then Jeff takes us to the future of treasure hunting with an article about geocaching on public lands. (Page 12) Apparently you use some newfangled sci-fi gizmo that tracks every move you make. Which sounds kind of like Facebook(TM) but without FarmVille or those repeated friend requests from your mom.

5: Speaking of newfangled technology... Scott Stoffel describes how the BLM uses WiFi technology to track sage-grouse in eastern Oregon. This project proactively studies their behavior patterns and habitat to carefully conserve the species in light of oncoming renewable energy projects such as wind turbines to be installed in the high desert. (Page 26) P.S. Sage-grouse want a faster internet connection, too.

6: I'm literally writing about myself in the third person. And it ain't pretty. Want to read about someone else? Like maybe you? Please submit articles, photos, or story ideas for future issues of Northwest Passage to [or\\_northwest\\_passage@blm.gov](mailto:or_northwest_passage@blm.gov). Then next issue we'll see your photo in the spotlight. In the meantime, I have a cool voicemail greeting. 503.808.6035 – check it out. (Page 8)

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BLM on Film

[Stylized image of a woman pioneer traveling across eastern Oregon in the 1800s.]

Pioneer's Progress

Filmed around BLM-managed land in eastern Oregon, Meek's Cutoff delivers a realistic portrayal of the pioneer journey on the Oregon Trail.

Before moving to the Northwest, my knowledge of the Oregon Trail was mostly limited to dying of cyber-dysentery in the classic computer game of the same name while eating fruit roll-ups in my parents' basement. I knew those 16-bit graphics minimized the harsh conditions faced by pioneers trying to cross Oregon. But recently, a new film promises to bring those trials to the big screen in a realistic way.

The new film is called Meek's Cutoff, and it's inspired by the infamous true story of mountain man Stephen Meek who was hired in 1845 to lead a wagon train over the Cascade Mountains. Claiming to know a shortcut, Meek took the group on an unmarked path across eastern Oregon's high plains desert only to become tragically lost. Isolated and running out of supplies, the group faced hunger, thirst, and a growing lack of faith in each other and their guide.

Meek's Cutoff was primarily shot around Hines and Burns, Oregon, in Harney County which means BLM-managed lands feature prominently in a film described by the Village Voice as "visually stunning and extraordinarily textured." Many reviews have specifically praised director Kelly Reichardt for her creative use of this austere landscape.

While Meek's Cutoff is in the middle of a limited release as of writing this article, it may not be in theaters by publication time. Fortunately, it should be available on DVD and Blu-ray soon. But you don't have to wait to see this land for yourself and learn more about the Oregon Trail. You can take your own journey out to the high desert in southeast Oregon. And you can learn more about the pioneers' travails by visiting the BLM's National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center near Baker City, Oregon. This BLM site offers living history demonstrations, interpretive programs, exhibits, multi-media presentations, and more than four miles of interpretive trails.

But if you're going to undertake such a journey, don't make the same mistakes as Meek's pioneers. Bring a map, stay on major roads, and make sure you bring enough supplies. I recommend fruit roll-ups.

To learn more about the Oregon Trail, please visit the BLM online at:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/oregontrail/>

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Interview with the Secretary

[Photo of Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar]

Northwest Passage's Matt Christenson provided photography support for Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's recent trip to Washington state. During a rare quiet moment, they had a chance to chat about youth employment, renewable energy, and funny voicemail greetings.

[Photos by Matt Christenson]

Northwest Passage (NWP): First things first. Seattle Mariners or Portland Trailblazers? Or the Portland Timbers, our new soccer team?

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar (KS): (Laughs) I think we'll go with the Portland Timbers.

NWP: Nice. They're my favorite, too. Okay, a little more substantive. I know your schedule is pretty relentless. But when you have downtime in the Pacific Northwest, is there anything in particular you like to do?

KS: What I'd really like to do is spend a lot more time out in the field. There are so many great places in Washington and Oregon. I've been to many of them. I've flown over them. Today we were above the San Juan Islands. And I'd really like to spend time on the Islands themselves. I'm planning on coming back to Washington in September and will be doing a number of activities including some river restoration efforts.

NWP: We'll be looking forward to it. In 2009, you established the Office of Youth in Natural Resources at the Department of the Interior. What's the best way the BLM can connect American youths with natural resources and their public lands? And what can they expect to get out of that experience?

KS: At the Interior and very much supported by the President, we have launched a major youth conservation corps initiative. We had 21,543 young people work with us in 2010. We expect to expand that (effort), and BLM is very much a part of it. The BLM has been a great participant in that effort, including here in the San Juan Islands where young people are signed up to work on the ground.

KS: There are really two reasons why we (employ youths). One is that it helps us do our work. Workers come in and help carry out the mission of the agencies and the Department of the Interior. And secondly, it's a great way to teach young people and get them involved with conservation initiatives across the country. We have many conservation initiatives with the BLM that I'm very proud of.

NWP: And for the young people themselves, what might they expect to gain from this experience?

KS: Once people have experienced the outdoors, they love it. Whether it's hiking or biking or mountain climbing. Whatever it is, they grow attached to it. Sometimes their whole livelihood is determined by the experiences they get to have with the Department of the Interior and its agencies.

NWP: Definitely. You've also championed a renewable energy economy that reduces our dependency on foreign energy sources. How do you see the BLM moving forward in that direction, and what are some of the more promising sources of renewable energy available domestically?

KS: The President and I have been pushing very hard for a comprehensive energy program that includes conventional fuels such as oil and natural gas but also renewable energy. We're working very hard to harvest the power of the sun, geothermal, and wind. And the BLM is the point of the spear on that (development). Under the leadership of (BLM Director) Bob Abbey, Deputy Director (Mike) Pool, and the state directors across the country, we've launched a whole new renewable energy agenda.

I'd say to the people of this country that if you want to look at renewable energy and where we're going, you really have to see what the BLM has done. What we've done in renewable energy over the last two and one-half years has been a game-changing program.

NWP: My last question is pretty short. Since we've been taping this interview on my phone, would you mind recording a personalized voicemail greeting for me?

KS: Hi, this is Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. Matt's busy right now protecting America's Great Outdoors. So please leave a message at the beep. Thank you.\*

\*To hear Secretary Ken Salazar's greeting, call Matt's voicemail at 503.808.6035

[Photos of Secretary Salazar and the San Juan Islands in the BLM's Spokane District]

## X Marks the Spot

Story and Photos by Jeff Clark

[Image of a large “X”]

### Welcome to the Future

The high-tech treasure hunt known as geocaching is getting kids off the couch to discover the excitement of America’s Great Outdoors.

Justin’s heart skips with excitement. Standing beneath a tall Douglas fir he awaits instructions from the group, most of whom are huddled around handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) units. “We’ve got the location,” his group leader says as they begin grabbing gear to move out. “Justin, try and find us a bridge. We need to cross this river.”

Justin heads toward the river’s edge. This is his favorite part of the hunt: visiting new lands and traversing different – and difficult – terrain. Spotting a bridge, he signals the others and waits for them to regroup so they can cross over the rapids into a fog-filled forest. As he waits, the sun snakes through the trees casting an ethereal glow over the landscape. The group arrives, moving soundlessly across moss-covered trails and mist-soaked wooden walkways.

Deeper in the forest, Justin’s group leader stops to consult her GPS unit. “We’re about 200 feet away,” she says. “Keep your eyes peeled.” Everyone slows down, scanning the trees and ground for signs of their target. Tyler calls to Justin, the nearest member of his team, “Do we have any idea what size this thing’s supposed to be?” “No,” Tyler answers. “There wasn’t any information in the file. It could be anything. Or anywhere.”

Justin sighs and takes in a deep breath. Secretly, he’d hoped they could find their objective quickly and that he would be the one to discover it. “Fifty feet,” calls his leader, “spread out, everyone.” The team scatters looking behind trees, under leaves, and below the wooden walkway cutting through the underbrush. A silent eternity later, Justin’s group leader emerges, silhouetted by trees holding an old army ammunition can. “I got it!” she cries. Disappointment flashes across Justin’s eyes for the briefest instant, but then he looks up excitedly saying, “Way to go, Mom!”

Geocaching is an international outdoor activity for all ages. Treasure hunters are on the chase at over 700,000 locations in more than 100 countries on all seven continents around the world. But geocaching got its start right here in Oregon when a GPS enthusiast hid a container and posted the coordinates on the Internet. And since then this high-tech treasure hunt has seen exponential growth in popularity as a fun and family-friendly activity that gets everyone from mom and dad to the kids to Fido off the couch – and, in our case, on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

“Geocaching can be a wonderful hobby,” says Anne Boyd, a BLM archeologist in the Spokane District. “The exercise you get and the chance to explore new areas while searching for treasure is hard to beat.” She says the reasons for geocaching are as diverse as the people who enjoy it. “For me, it’s all about getting outside and seeing things that I might not have known about. For some, it may be a way to get exercise or take the dogs for a hike. For others, it’s teaching the kids how to use a GPS and to appreciate the great outdoors.”

Falling squarely into the latter category is Jody Weil, BLM Oregon/Washington Communications Director, avid geocacher, and mother of Justin and Tyler. “Geocaching is something we do as a family,” Weil said. “One kid can decipher the clue, the other can be in charge of the GPS unit and be the leader. And we can all participate in the actual hunt. Sometimes we even get a little competitive and keep track of who finds the most caches first.”

In addition to healthy competition, Boyd and Weil each gave examples of how geocaching is highly informational as well. “There is one type of geocaching that is educational and significant to BLM lands in Eastern Washington – and that is earthcaching,” Boyd said. This particular activity leads people to learn more about the geology of an area by visiting the site and answering some questions. There’s no cache hidden at these sites – but the reward of the hunt to witness new scenery and learn about earth science is a highly valued prize of its own. Boyd continues, “Professional geologists, college professors, and other instructors are increasingly using the earthcache experience to introduce others to the nature of our area, and I think many folks have been surprised and excited to learn about these geologic treasures.”

“Geocaching has taken us to places that have a story of their own,” Weil said. “We once found a cache along the Oregon Trail. Our youngest son, Justin, was studying the history of the Oregon Trail in his school class and was able to make a real life connection by going out and seeing the actual tracks still rutted in the ground. He was so proud to take the pictures into his classroom and show them the real thing. Geocaching allowed us to make that connection in a fun and tangible way.”

#### Pro Tips:

- Before you head out, select a difficulty level rating based on your outdoor skills.
- Check weather conditions and carry supplies such as water, food, maps, a compass, and extra clothes.
- Let someone know your destination and expected return.
- Travel sustainably, tread lightly, and leave no trace.
- Contact your local BLM office before placing a cache, planning a geocaching event, or conducting commercial geocaching activities on public lands. Don’t hide caches in protected wilderness areas or cultural and archaeological sites. And please don’t disrupt wildlife or create trails to hidden caches.

[Images of a GPS device, a hidden geocache location, and geocachers in an Oregon forest]

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[Photos of a solo hiker in the mountains and a pair of hikers along a tree-lined trail]

Ask the Experts Vol 2 NLCS National Scenic and Historic Trails

Map Out Your New Year

Oregon's best trails

BY Chris Knauf, Bureau of Land Management

Our Favorite Summer Hikes

The Magic of the Oregon trail

From Mexico to Canada: the Pacific Crest

Official Journal of The Bureau of Land Management Oregon and Washington

America's Best Kept Secrets are Yours to Explore

As we mentioned in our previous issue of Northwest Passage, the BLM is well-known for protecting a large number of America's treasured landscapes under a system known as the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). For more than 10 years, the BLM has protected and conserved these areas in their natural state for future generations. Now, with the partnership of National Geographic Magazine, the BLM has produced a map highlighting these incredible wide-open spaces. To visit some of these specially designated locales that have been intentionally set aside for public use and enjoyment, you can print a free copy of the BLM/National Geographic map at [blm.gov/or/resources/nlcs](http://blm.gov/or/resources/nlcs).

We'll be continuing this series over the next year, interviewing BLM experts to hear their insights and recommendations on how to best visit and explore these amazing places. So print out your own NLCS National Geographic map and get ready to see some of the best that America's Great Outdoors has to offer.

Last issue we chatted with BLM expert Jerry Magee about Wilderness Areas. This issue we speak with BLM expert (and rock and roll drummer) Chris Knauf about National Scenic and Historic Trails.

So what are Scenic and Historic Trails? Back in 1968, Congress established the National Trails System and designated the first of these trails. Historic Trails are extended journeys following a trail or route of national significance. Scenic Trails provide maximum outdoor recreation potential as well as conservation and enjoyment of locations known for their natural and cultural qualities. But these are just the dictionary definitions.

Let's chat with Chris to get the real story...

The National Landscape Conservation System is a lot of things. It includes a lot of special landscapes, such as the National Scenic and Historic Trails. In order for a trail to be under the National Scenic and Historic Trails System, it has to be designated by Congress.

National Scenic and Historic Trails draw visitors on multiple levels. In one sense, you can have a historic experience such as on the Oregon Trail where you can actually view the wagon ruts that pioneers made when they were coming across Oregon. On the other hand, you can get a great scenic experience on the Pacific Crest Trail that goes through many wilderness areas, monuments, and natural landscapes. That particular trail starts in Mexico and ends in Canada. So you could hike that trail for a couple of hours or conceivably for the entire summer season.

The Pacific Crest Trail is fairly close to Portland. If you drive U.S. Route 26 across Mount Hood, you can pick up the trail in a couple different locations in the Mount Hood National Forest. Other areas you might look at are the BLM's Medford District in southern Oregon which has a good portion of the Pacific Crest Trail as well as the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument which is also part of the NLCS. My favorite trail is the part of the Pacific Crest Trail that goes through the North Cascades National Park. I hike part of that trail just about every summer.

To get out on the trail you need decent shoes. Get good walking or running shoes. Hiking boots will certainly work – on a multiple-day trip, that's what you want to take. You need to be prepared for any kind of weather because the trails generally are high elevation. So in the spring you can get snow, and in the summer it can get quite cold. And you always need to let someone know where you're going – and when you'll be back. (Know your 10 essentials – Ed.)

On these trails, you're likely to meet a lot of people like yourself. Some of them are out for the day. Some of them have heavy packs and are out on multi-day trips. You're also likely to see some amazing birds, crystal-clear running streams, some great vistas, some great views, and a nice place to sit down and have your lunch.

To learn more about National Scenic and Historic Trails in Oregon and Washington, please visit us online at: [blm.gov/g35c](http://blm.gov/g35c)

And meet Chris Knauf in person to hear more great stories about trails in his online interview at [youtube.com/blmoregon!](https://youtube.com/blmoregon)

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](http://blm.gov/or/districts/burns)

- The Burns District has become an active participant in the High Desert Partnership’s Education Initiative, working to organize field trips and provide outdoor exploration visits to public lands for local rural youth. The BLM also provides instruction and educational support in local classrooms. One of the goals of the High Desert Partnership is to bring together landowners, conservationists, social advocates, agencies, and other interested parties to address challenges facing rural and frontier communities. The Partnership’s Education Initiative specifically focuses on place-based science education for K-12 youth in southeast Oregon. Recently, about 100 students from seven counties toured the BLM’s Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines.
- This spring, the Moon Reservoir Recreation Site was upgraded with a new boat ramp, parking area, and improvements to the main access road. The site also benefits from an all-accessible restroom. Summer’s here so come check it out!

[Photo of the BLM’s Wild Horse Corrals in Burns, Oregon]

Coos Bay, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay](http://blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay)

- One hundred and fifty Reedsport and Elkton elementary students planted 3,000 trees in April as part the 66th Annual Lower Umpqua Tree Plant. The kids planted BLM-purchased trees on Roseburg Resources land with the help of BLM, private, and state foresters. At least 35,000 students have planted more than a million trees in the Lower Umpqua area since 1946. The tree plant is the longest running event of its kind in the nation and has received multiple National Arbor Day Foundation awards.
- In April, District Manager Mark Johnson and Fish Biologist Dan Van Slyke traveled to Washington, DC to receive the award for Extraordinary Action in Support of Fish Habitat Conservation from the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. The Coos Bay District was recognized for its cooperative efforts to restore habitat for fish and other aquatic and riparian species. Over the last five years, the District has placed more than 3,600 logs and 14 boulder structures across 52 stream miles.

[Photo of Mark Johnson and Dan Van Slyke in Washington, DC]

Eugene, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/eugene](http://blm.gov/or/districts/eugene)

- The Siuslaw Resource Area in the Eugene District conducted a 5K fun run fundraiser at the Hult Pond Equestrian Trailhead. Working with local organizers from Blachly, Oregon, the BLM held the event along the picturesque lake edge to raise money for testicular cancer research. Race organizers planned to provide money to a cancer patient in need of financial support or to a general fund. Approximately 100 participants attended raising more than \$1,000. This event was the second such race at Hult Pond and looks to become an annual BLM effort to raise funds for charitable causes in the local community.

Lakeview, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview](http://blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview)

- The employees of the Lakeview Interagency Office held a cleanup project to beautify the building's work and warehouse areas. They devoted an entire day to organizing common spaces, putting desktops in order, and identifying and resolving safety hazards. This effort will prevent allergic reactions to dust and mold, decrease the risk of illness, and enhance workplace safety. The individuals who participated in these activities were rewarded for their time and effort. Lakeview's Employee Activity Team provide all participants with a barbecue lunch in recognition of the good housekeeping practices they used to improve the health and safety of their office.

- The BLM helped the town of Lakeview celebrate its 2011 Irish Days Celebration on March 12 by competing with other Federal agencies in the local Potato Peeling Competition. A total of four teams entered the game and battled for first place in front of a rambunctious group of spectators. Employees of the Fremont-Winema National Forest peeled their way to a victory, but not before being seriously challenged by stalwart contenders Carol Benkosky, Esther Gruber, Tessa Teems, and Scott Stoffel who valiantly refused to concede the game until every single spud in their bowls was fully peeled!

[Photo of Potato Peelers in Lakeview, Oregon]

Medford, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/medford](http://blm.gov/or/districts/medford)

- The Medford District and the Nature Conservancy worked together to offer a series of 16 expert-led public hikes at Table Rocks during April and May. Hikes included a BLM wildlife biologist luring owls, a Southern Oregon University geology professor discussing the ancient lava flow that formed the Table Rocks, a professional photographer presenting nature photos, and a member of the Siletz Tribe addressing the history and culture of ancestral tribes who lived in this area. For over twenty years, the Medford District and the Nature Conservancy have provided spring hikes for the public to learn about the historical, ecological, and aesthetic values of the unique Table Rocks landscape.

[Photo of Folks Hiking Across Medford, Oregon]

*Continues on next page*

*More great news from the BLM in Oregon & Washington!*

Prineville, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/Prineville](http://blm.gov/or/districts/Prineville)

- A river runs through the Prineville District. Technically, many rivers do. And people love to run the rivers that run through Prineville. To protect these water resources while enhancing the river experience for people making their way downstream, the Prineville District has implemented a system for launch permits on two segments of the John Day River. Visitors can find all the information they need online at [johndayboaterpermit.com](http://johndayboaterpermit.com). And for updated boater pass requirements on the Deschutes River, please visit [boaterpass.com](http://boaterpass.com).
- The Prineville District hosted the Crook County American Red Cross blood drive in April. District staff and friends exceeded the Red Cross goal of 25 units of blood and blood products for emergency needs. The office was a constant hub of activity as generous members of the community provided life-giving donations.
- The Prineville District partnered with the Biak Training Center, the Oregon Youth Challenge Program, Cub Scout Pack #31, and the 224th Engineer Company of the Oregon National Guard to conduct their first annual Earth Day cleanup. Two separate weekends drew 165 people to participate in projects such as cattle guard and fence repair, kiosk installation, and trash cleanup. A total of 4,740 pounds of trash and tires were removed from America's Great Outdoors.

[Photo from the Beautiful John Day River]

Roseburg, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/roseburg](http://blm.gov/or/districts/roseburg)

- The Roseburg District Green Team led by Community Planner Ariel Hiller with the help of Facilities Manager Hughie Watters recently made several upgrades to the district recycle program. Roseburg has long recycled paper and refundable bottles and cans, but now employees visiting the break room can find new options to recycle glass, plastic, metal, cardboard, batteries, and CDs. Since collection of batteries began, the Roseburg District has been keeping about 45 pounds of batteries out of the local landfill each month. Green Team members monitor recycle bins in the break room and bring bagged items to a central collection area when they get full. Watters personally wrangles several hundred pounds of white paper recycled monthly through Sunrise Enterprises Inc., a local company that also manages trash collection and provides janitorial services for the Roseburg District by employing members with disabilities from the local community.

[Photo of Roseburg's Green Team Keeps their Office Clean!]

Salem, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/salem](http://blm.gov/or/districts/salem)

- The Salem District's Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area is reestablishing the historical lighthouse keeper vegetable garden. The original site – along the main road to the lighthouse – has been marked off and fenced. Summer youth crews will be tilling the garden area and preparing it for planting. Though the cool wind-swept headland presents some challenge to growing vegetables, a few kale plants, descendants from the original gardens, have already been found.
- Fat Tire Farm, a Portland-based mountain bike business, and the Salem District cosponsored a special recreation permit event along with the Sandy Ridge spring break race series. Three weekend races

served as a fund raiser for the Sandy Ridge Trail System, drawing almost 300 participants and raising approximately \$7,000 toward the continued development of the Sandy Ridge Trail System.

[Photo of Off-Road Rider on the Sandy Ridge Trail System]

Spokane, Washington: [blm.gov/or/districts/spokane](http://blm.gov/or/districts/spokane)

- Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar visited the San Juan Islands to meet with local residents and chat about new opportunities for improving local public lands as well as enhancing partnerships between Interior agencies. Secretary Salazar (also on page 8 - Ed.) was overheard remarking about the unique special qualities and beauty of the San Juans stating that he's already planning a return trip in the fall. In addition, both Secretary Salazar and local residents recognized BLM Recreation Planner Nick Teague for his unparalleled dedication and commitment to the community.
- The Spokane District eagerly welcomed Daniel Picard as the new district manager with his official swearing-in ceremony. In the interim between managers, Spokane was fortunate to have Pat Ryan (Malheur Field Manager) as acting district manager. Pat's contribution to the district was greatly appreciated.
- The Spokane Office is looking a little more polished these days thanks to a recent office remodel effort. "Recycled" cubicle system furniture was procured from the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise. Stop by and see for yourself on your next trip to Spokane!

[Photo of Sunset on Patos Island in the San Juans]

Vale, Oregon: [blm.gov/or/districts/vale](http://blm.gov/or/districts/vale)

- Winter had been holding on with snowstorms continuing late into March, but it appears that warmer weather has finally returned to eastern Oregon. A sure sign of spring is seeing Vale District staff busy preparing to head into the field to work with local ranchers holding grazing allotments. River rangers are also getting out to keep the public safe and out of harm's way as many Vale rivers have risen dramatically in recent months. Plant, shrubs, and flowers are also sprouting, and the mating season of the sage-grouse has begun. Seasonal crews have been hired and are being trained for this summer's firefighting season. The Vale District also welcomes its new employees and says a fond farewell to those who have moved elsewhere. As the local staff continue to plan and manage resources in their community, so goes the cycle of the Vale District.

Plus daily updates at Facebook and Twitter!

Restoring the Land, Restoring the Human Spirit

By Kurt Heckerroth with Ariel Hiller

A partnership between the BLM and the Oregon Youth Authority benefits more than streams and forests; it also helps youths at risk.

[Photo of a Wheelbarrow Carrying New Plants]

Photo by Jeff Clark

[Photo of Oregon Youths Working to Improve a Local Forest]

Photo by Maria Thi Mai

It's a silent, misty morning. Majestic elk weave slowly through the forest. Watching them from nearby, a group of young workers headed to their job site waits quietly for the wild animals to pass, enjoying the stillness before their hard work begins. Today these youths will be restoring a streambed, planting native trees and shrubs that they cultivated for this purpose.

Soon the elk have passed, and the crew finishes their hike to where they'll be working today. Into a large pile, they drop off heavy planting tools, food and water, and necessary supplies. Days for the Camp Tillamook work crew are long and hard and physical. A layer of mud and sweat and rain will coat everyone before their work is done.

#### THESE STRIPES ARE GREEN

Before we follow our workers further into their project, let's learn a little more about them. These young folks who are giving back to the land and helping complete environmental restoration were all considered at-risk youths before they came to the Oregon Youth Authority's (OYA) Camp Tillamook work crew. The OYA's mission is to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth offenders accountable for their behavior. The OYA provides the treatment, education, and job training to provide youths with the opportunity to learn personal responsibility and develop the skills and behaviors they need to make positive choices for themselves. Ultimately, the OYA seeks to help youth offenders lead crime-free lives and become productive members of their communities.

In the late 1990s, the OYA developed a number of informal partnerships which led to these restoration projects. Recognizing the potential of these young people, the BLM, local watershed councils, and soil and water districts enthusiastically joined forces with the OYA to develop crews that would restore more than 400 miles of degraded streambeds and nearby forest areas. For years all these agencies worked together informally. It wasn't until 2003 that their partnership was officially sanctioned by written agreement, and they received funding for the first time.

Over this period of time, Camp Tillamook has become the hub for stream and forest restoration on the northern coast of Oregon. Here the OYA supports the production of local plants for crucial restoration projects. This campus houses a small nursery that annually produces 15,000 indigenous trees and shrubs, the majority of which are planted by these local partnerships to continually improve Oregon's environment.

#### FROM GREEN TO GOLD

The benefits of this relationship are many. The BLM and their partners receive a consistent work force. And in turn, Camp Tillamook work crews are given the opportunity to learn about plants and nursery operations and environmental conservation. Youths are educated on the science of seeds. And thanks to this on-the-job experience, a number of young participants have secured employment at local private nurseries upon their release from the OYA.

Not surprisingly, this partnership is getting a lot of attention. "Because of their dedicated efforts and long-term contributions to BLM projects, the partnership has received three national awards," says BLM Botanist Kurt Heckerroth who oversees the BLM's seedling production for northwest Oregon. "The nursery at Camp Tillamook is a huge undertaking. If it wasn't for the OYA Youth Study Program, we would never have started a nursery here in Tillamook." Kurt also mentions that, in addition to restoration projects, tending the nursery, and planting trees, the OYA work crews also cut firewood for the elderly, help the state park clear debris from storms, and support local cleanups following floods.

#### AND HOME AGAIN

Several awards and accolades later, we're back at today's job site. The crew is breaking for lunch. The elk have long wandered off, and even the constant Oregon rain is taking a rest. Workers eat and chat about their struggles. They joke about how the mud is thick, the hikes are long, and their hands and backs feel the good strain of a morning's planting.

Crew leader Brad Keith understands. He works right along with them. He adds, "They're learning job skills, they're giving back to the community, they're helping wildlife, and they're working together as a team." These youth workers are leaving behind their old ways of interacting with the world, ways that weren't working for them or their communities. As they continue to labor and learn at the OYA's Camp Tillamook, the youths continue to move forward towards a new model of behavior and success – a model that happily welcomes them back to society. The BLM is proud to be a member of this partnership shaping the next generation of land stewards.

In some ways, it's not easy to say which benefits more: the restoration of nature or the restoration of the human spirit. Perhaps they are one and the same.

WiFi Wildlife

Story by Scott Stoffel

The BLM employs wireless technology to balance renewable wind energy with the conservation of Oregon's wild animals in their natural habitat

Photos by Merrie Richardson & John Craig

[Images of Sage-Grouse, a Wind Turbine, and BLM Employees Taking Inventory in Nature]

The testing of potential locations for new wind energy projects has increased dramatically over the last four years on public lands managed by the BLM's Lakeview District. And this trend will likely continue into the foreseeable future as part of the President's emphasis on renewable energy production. (See page 10 for the Secretary of the Interior's comments on this very topic. – Ed.) Thus it's essential that scientists better understand how wind energy development may affect sensitive species to prepare the BLM to continue its mission conserving native plant and animal communities while supporting renewable energy initiatives.

Specifically, the greater sage-grouse is a candidate for protection under the Endangered Species Act. And eastern Oregon is home to some of the best habitat for this bird, with roughly 30 percent of this territory managed by the Lakeview District. It also happens that many of these sites inhabited by the sage-grouse have a strong potential for wind energy production. For the BLM, a balance must be achieved.

In 2009, wildlife biologists from the Lakeview Resource Area developed a project to establish baseline data for sage-grouse habitat. These reference records are to serve as a starting-point for comparison purposes with future proposals for wind energy development within the bird's home range.

As part of their study, BLM scientists employed wireless technology to mark and track the greater sage-grouse across over 300,000 acres of shrub-steppe grassland on which four wind energy projects have been granted right-of-way access. A total of 120 sage-grouse were fitted with radio collars and monitored from September 2009 to September 2010.

BLM biologists collected data related to the bird's population numbers, productivity, mortality, seasonal habitat use, movement patterns, and group behavior. Additionally, data related to how juniper plant growth may impact the nesting of sage-grouse was also part of this research. This juniper-related information may ultimately be used by the Natural Resource Conservation Service for an additional research project evaluating the sage-grouse response to the removal of encroaching juniper.

Initial reports from the BLM study have been very helpful in creating a picture of the sage-grouse's habitat before any wind energy projects are constructed – so much so that the scientists will extend

their research a second year. Soon, the data generated from this project will help the BLM develop wind energy projects that provide not just the necessary energy our nation requires, but also to conserve the native sage-grouse who call the land their home. This majestic bird shall continue to dance across the high-desert landscape as it has for centuries.

## Bridging the Gap

By design, the BLM's Shotgun OHV Trail System bridges the breathtaking thrills of off-road riding with the careful conservation of Oregon's natural forests.

"You don't think of anything but what's immediately in front of you. you have a variety of trails. you're concentrating on the challenge of getting your bike through the course. it's a great diversion from the stresses of life," says Jared Achepohl, Emerald Trail Riders Association.

[Photo of OHV Rider at Salem District's OHV Trail System]

For almost 20 years, the BLM's Shotgun Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail System near Eugene, Oregon, has been a favorite destination for dirt bikers and four-wheelers who love bouncing over rocky beds and muddy craters beneath a picaresque forested canopy. Covering over 35 miles, Shotgun's trails provide a diverse set of opportunities and challenges for riders of all abilities. Riders like Jared Achepohl say it's this very diversity of trails that is the key to its extraordinary riding experience.

"A small system really gets beat up and used. A good system has a lot of mileage which is hard to do in this area. A trail that incorporates different terrain features and provides challenging stuff makes for a great trail. Riders enjoy Shotgun because it has several different types of terrain."

## TRAILHEAD

Historically, the lands around the Shotgun OHV Trail System were plotted in a checkerboard pattern under a Congressional land grant during the 1860s. And while such a checkerboard layout of public and private lands may not have posed a problem in the 19th century, modern OHV riders haven't always known where BLM lands end and private lands begin. Unintentional trespasses have been a regular occurrence.

To reduce this confusion while still protecting the land and providing a quality trail experience, the BLM developed the Shotgun OHV Trail System in 1993. The objective was to develop a progressive trail system that stayed within the confines of BLM lands while making use of an incredibly well-designed path allowing riders to cover a wide area of rideable land.

## HITTING A BUMP

The BLM has so far maintained the Shotgun System by regularly incorporating new plans and refurbishing existing trails. But as its popularity increased, greater usage has caused some areas to become rutted and impassable. So to avoid getting bogged down, riders have left the main course to blaze their own trails, eroding soil and damaging the natural landscape.

## BLAZING A NEW TRAIL

Recognizing the need for a new generation of trail support, BLM Outdoor Recreation Planner Liz Aleman and Recreation Technicians Mike Fieber and Mike Millay took an inventory of all the necessary improvements needed at the Shotgun System. Avid riders themselves, the two Mikes had spent a great deal of time at other trails and wanted to improve the BLM's own offering.

"We rode the trail and, after seeing many deteriorated spots, we wanted to make a more permanent, sustainable system," said Fieber. "People don't want to ride in ruts and get stuck. They want good surfaces."

With Aleman securing the necessary funding, the two Mikes enacted a plan that differed from past iterations by incorporating state-of-the-art materials like geotextiles as well as cinder block, gravel, and large rock to both protect the integrity of the soils and ensure long-term preservation of the trails. The Mikes also obtained seeds and trees from the Eugene District to fill in old routes and rerouted trails to avoid streams.

The new trails often seem more like a cobblestone road than a dirt path. Not only are they designed to last longer and protect the forest, they're also great for riding.

Regarding environmental concerns, Achepohl of the Emerald Trail Riders Association (ETRA) describes most riders as very interested in conservation. Protecting the integrity of trails is crucial to those who use them. He adds, "When you don't have enough trails people create their own, which harms the environment. And they can be risky or dangerous. We try to be good stewards of the trails so future generations can enjoy."

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

The Shotgun OHV Trail System wouldn't have been possible without the support of partners. Workers from the Northwest Youth Corps, the Oregon Department of Youth Corrections, and the BLM worked tirelessly to construct a trail system rugged enough to survive regular usage with a strong appeal to ensure riders use this designated system and not pirate trails. And the ETRA regularly organizes work parties to construct bridges, clear trail debris and brush, and build connectors. The Shotgun System is very much a part of its community.

"It's great," Achepohl said. "The two Mikes have been real proactive in getting more quality miles in the system. Due to the checkerboard factor and the private land around it, it's been a long hard road to build a quality trail system there. They've nailed it."

## RULES OF THE ROAD

In the State of Oregon, riders must obtain a permit to operate OHVs and drive on OHV trails. The cost is \$10 for a two-year pass. The money from these passes helps pay for trail and facility maintenance and wages for work crews. For more information, please visit online:

<http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/atv/permits.shtml>

[Photos of Workers Improving the Shotgun OHV Trail System and Riders on its Trails]

Back Country

[Photo of a Hang Glider at Woodrat Mountain in the BLM's Medford District]

Photo by John Craig

'Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky

You know the BLM manages the public land, but what about the public air? Here at Woodrat Mountain near Medford, Oregon, high-flying adventure-seekers step off a cliff 1,000 feet above the ground with nothing but a glider strapped to their back.

Want to try this for yourself? Yeah! But there's probably some training you should take first. And then you need equipment. Hmm... Hey, why not watch our video first?

We placed a helmet camera on an experienced hang glider to share the first-person experience with everyone. You'll see the same thing our pilot sees as you (virtually) join him on a ride through the ether.

And speaking of videos, they're not limited to hang gliding. The BLM in Oregon has more videos at our YouTube™ page than any other state in the agency. And we add a brand new one every Monday – with many of our shorts accompanying stories right here in Northwest Passage.

So... Are you ready to step off the ledge and see what gliding from 1000 feet off the ground looks like? It's at [blm.gov/p25c](http://blm.gov/p25c).

See you up there!