
BLM News Release

For Immediate Release

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LOCAL VOLUNTEER, FOURMILE PROJECT GAIN NATIONAL BLM RECOGNITION

Salida – Local Bureau of Land Management (BLM) volunteer Alan Robinson has just received the Agency’s National Volunteer Award for 2007. The annual BLM “Making a Difference” awards program recognized seven individuals and a volunteer group from around the United States with the honors.

At a ceremony May 10, 2007, at the U.S. Department of the Interior headquarters building in Washington, D.C., Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne commended recipients of the Bureau of Land Management’s National Volunteer Awards, saying these committed volunteers are outstanding examples of community partners across the country who help to protect, conserve, and manage the richness of America’s public lands. Earlier, in a private session with award recipients, the Secretary spoke personally and emotionally of his respect for the thousands of individual volunteers who contribute to all of Interior’s public land management agencies.

Alan spends hundreds of hours patrolling public lands on foot, mountain bike and all-terrain vehicle, educating visitors along the way. He helped obtain grants totaling over \$100,000 for public land interpretation and restoration projects and has developed many presentations to help raise community awareness of public land resources and issues. He also helped organize Friends of Fourmile, a chapter of the local non-profit conservation institution, Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA), an active group of volunteers that helps BLM and the U.S. Forest Service monitor and implement management plans for this heavily used area of public lands near Buena Vista. Under the leadership of Alan and other founding members, this dedicated group has completed numerous projects and provided thousands of hours of volunteer service focused on establishing a balance between sometimes competing uses, and on helping educate public land visitors on land use ethics.



Alan's view on this honor is "Certainly I'm pleased my name is on the plaque, but really this represents recognition of a whole lot of volunteers and BLM and Forest Service staff who have been working for over 6 years to get some really remarkable public agreement and cooperation over management of an important piece of public lands we all use."

Like many other local volunteers, Alan's initial participation in one project - the "Friends" group - led him to get involved in related activities, including the GARNA Board, the Chaffee County Heritage Board, the Collegiate Peaks Scenic and Historic Byway, the Lake County Open Space Initiative, on-going discussions of county zoning, and public hiking and bicycle trail initiatives.

Alan and his wife Karen, another active "Friends" volunteer, have lived in Buena Vista for more than 10 years, moving here after Alan retired from the National Park Service. In addition to his volunteer work in Chaffee County he continues to do one or two volunteer projects a year in the field he specialized in during the last years of his professional career: helping indigenous communities and groups of poor people to develop sustainable and profitable ecotourism opportunities in developing nations in Africa, South American and Southeast Asia. According to Alan "The volunteering tradition seems to have been a part of my life since I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Africa way back in the 60's; it just feels like the right thing to be giving back some of the good things which have come my way since."

BLM Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area River Manager, John Nahomenuk said "Alan is really energetic and has a passion for public land health and the natural environment, and he seems to have a knack for interacting with visitors. He has a quiet, calm and professional manner that makes him a pleasure to work with and his enthusiasm is definitely contagious."

Nationwide more than 20,000 BLM volunteers make significant contributions on America's public lands each year in every aspect of public land management. In 2006 alone, BLM volunteers donated more than 1.3 million hours with an estimated value of more than \$25 million, equivalent to the work of more than 700 full-time employees.

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