



VANTAGE

Spring 2006



Southern Regional Fire Training Center Officially Opens

Story and photo by Shayne Banks, Public Affairs Specialist, BLM-Eastern States, Jackson Field Office



(From left) On March 14, 2006, BLM-Eastern States (BLM-ES) Jackson Field Office Manager Bruce Dawson, State Director Mike Nedd, Hotshot Crew Superintendent Lamar Liddell, and former Director, National Interagency Fire Center Larry Hamilton, were present for the official opening of the Southern Regional Fire Training Center in Mississippi. Not pictured is Rob Collins from BLM's Washington Fire and Aviation Office.

Representatives from the BLM-ES, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, and the USDA-Forest Service participated in the official opening of the Southern Regional Fire Training Center on March 14, 2006, in Pearl, Mississippi.

Together the three agencies collaborated to build a fantastic, state-of-the-art training facility whose primary emphasis is wildland fire training and support functions. This facility is being used by Federal and State agencies and local volunteer fire departments throughout the Southeast to train wildland firefighters.

In addition to being a training facility, the Southern Regional Fire Training Center is also the new permanent home for the Jackson Hotshots. From here, they are deployed as a national resource for fighting wildfires and responding to emergencies throughout the United States.

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General Land Office Scans Last Serialized Patent

*Story and photo by Peggy Riek, Writer-Editor,
BLM-Eastern States, External Affairs*

On February 16, 2006, the final serialized patent issued for 80 acres in Wisconsin was scanned at BLM-ES, ending the second phase of scanning and indexing for nearly 1.25 million post-1908 land patents issued for the 30 Public Land States (those States not included in the original 13 Colonies), East and West. This second phase consisted of automating Federal land grant records from July 1, 1908, when the General Land Office (GLO) centralized the issuance of land patents out of their Washington Office, until the early 1970s when this authority reverted to the various BLM State Offices.

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State Director's Message



BLM-Eastern States (BLM-ES) cadastral surveyors are the official surveyors who identify, survey, and maintain legal boundaries on eastern Federal lands, Indian Trust Lands, and other Federal Interest Lands on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. Cadastral surveyors strive for quality customer service by protecting and maintaining the integrity of the Public Land Survey System. Additionally, they conduct research, maintain standards and procedures for surveying, and provide interpretations of laws, regulations, and court decisions pertaining to surveys.

Currently, BLM-ES surveyors are assisting other Federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service by locating and marking their land boundaries. These surveys accurately identify Federal boundaries so the agencies can develop and implement land use plans for public use on Corps of Engineers' land along the Mississippi River in Illinois and Missouri, in the Ozark National Forest in Arkansas, and this summer, on the George Washington Memorial Parkway in the National Park Service's National Capitol Region. Surveys are also being performed for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Tribes to locate and mark the boundaries of Tribal and Individual Indian Trust Lands. Surveys are being performed on Indian Trust Lands in Maine, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Cadastral surveys on Trust Lands are one of the Secretary of the Interior's Fiduciary Trust Responsibilities to Indian Country.

BLM-ES is also responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of Federal survey plats and field notes for the entire Nation. We have formed partnerships with States for the exchange of survey records, survey plats, and field notes. We have been automating, that is scanning, indexing, and performing quality assurance, official survey plats. To date, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Michigan, Mississippi, and Oklahoma have been completed, along with surveys in the original colonies for other Federal agencies. We are currently working with the State of Louisiana to automate their original plats. Associated with this project is the automation of the original field notes which is in the development and testing stage. Oklahoma is the "beta" test state with its field notes approximately 25 percent completed. These records would, otherwise, only be available for public use by visiting a county survey or records office, a State survey office, or a BLM State Office in their jurisdiction. The automated images will be uploaded to the Internet in the near future and will offer greater efficiencies for reliable and smooth flow of information to the public.

We anticipate an increase in survey workload for two reasons: 1) the need for surveys of Indian Trust Lands, and 2) as a result of the BLM-ES Public Lands Identification process that feeds into our land-use planning. Because of the scattered nature of BLM lands in the East, we expect surveys to be needed to determine or re-affirm the boundaries of these parcels, some of which may result in actions related to land ownership. We will also continue to automate plats and field notes to make them more available for public use.

BLM-ES' primary program areas include:

- * **Energy and Mineral Resources;**
- * **Wildland Fire;**
- * **Wild Horse and Burro Adoption and Compliance;**
- * **Natural Resources;**
- * **Lands and Realty;**
- * **Cadastral Survey; and**
- * **General Land Office Records Automation.**

In the coming months, BLM-ES cadastral surveyors will continue their efforts at the forefront of the Bureau to apply technology to provide the most precise and efficient surveys to the American public.

Michael D. Nedd
State Director, BLM-Eastern States



Fire Training Center...continued from page 1

Prior to the official grand opening, the Fire Training Center played a crucial role in providing briefings, staging relief efforts, and funneling resources to the Gulf Coast region following landfall of Hurricane Katrina. The

Fire Training Center is now playing a critical role in preparing wildland firefighters for the worse than usual fire season expected this year due to Hurricane Katrina's blow down and a drier than normal winter.

Last serialized patent scanned...continued from page 1

Historically, the GLO was established within the Treasury Department in 1812 to take charge of all survey and land title records. GLO became part of the newly-created Department of the Interior in 1849, and merged with the U.S. Grazing Service in 1946 to form the Bureau of Land Management. Today, the BLM-ES office is the largest Public Land title holder in the world. As the successor agency to the original GLO, BLM-ES maintains more than nine million historic land documents—survey plats and field notes, homestead certificates, cash patents, military warrants, and railroad grants. These records were among the very first land records developed from the Land Ordinance of 1785, which authorized the transfer of public lands to private individuals.

Over the years, these historic land patent books were continually used by BLM-ES, Federal and State agencies, title insurance companies, industry, researchers, and others. The continuous use of many of these old books caused much wear and tear, despite the efforts of artisan bookbinders using old skills and new technologies to help maintain the books in useable form. Consequently, BLM faced an urgent need to preserve and protect these records, but still ensure their availability for research. In 1989, BLM-ES launched a unique project—the GLO Automated Records Project—to copy these priceless conveyance documents onto computer-read laser disks. Once copied, these historic documents were retired and stored in acid-free boxes in climate-controlled vaults. In the years following, BLM-ES further expanded the GLO Automated Records System to offer these historic land patents online at the GLO Web site www.glorerecords.blm.gov.

Today, more than 4.2 million records are available to the public, and over 3,204,642 land patent records have been automated—scanned, indexed, imaged and posted to the GLO Web site since the project began in 1989. Title companies, historians, genealogists, and other interested people are able to view these fascinating and valuable records online at the Web site. This Web site provides the public with a wealth of historical data and literally tells the story of the settlement of the West.



On February 16, BLM-ES Legal Instrument Examiner Dave Meinke scanned the final serialized patent for 80 acres in Wisconsin. To date, the General Land Office (GLO) Automation Team has scanned and indexed 3,204,642 land patent records. These records are available on the GLO Web site at www.glorerecords.blm.gov.

“The GLO Web site remains one of the most popular Web sites at the Department of the Interior and was reconnected for use by the public on December 23, 2005. The Web site offers customers the ability to easily research and query the GLO database by name, land description, and county, and view and print these historic documents from their homes or offices, saving them time and money,” said BLM-ES Director Mike Nedd.

BLM-ES Establishes a WH&B Volunteer Foster Program

By Karen Malloy, Lead Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, BLM-Eastern States, Division of Natural Resources

In November 2005, the BLM-ES Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) program began a Volunteer Fostering Program to recruit past adopters to gentle young horses and place them into good homes. Volunteers were selected on the basis of their past experience with their own adopted animals, their training ability, and knowledge of program requirements. These volunteers will also mentor first-time adopters and perform compliance inspections on the animals before the Title Certification is issued.

Continued on page 4



Therapeutic Riding Program at BLM-Eastern States Meadowood SRMA Stables Begins Second Year

Story by Jinx Fox, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM-Eastern States, Lower Potomac Field Station, and Carol Corso, Founding Board Member for Simple Changes, Inc., a Mason Neck resident and parent of a Simple Changes Rider

Over a year ago, a newly formed, non-profit group called Simple Changes, Inc. began a therapeutic riding program for challenged children at the BLM-ES stables at the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), located on the Mason Neck peninsula in Lorton, Virginia.

Therapeutic riding is a form of physical therapy that benefits the body, mind, and spirit of the rider. The movement of the horse and the physical exertion of the rider work together to break down many of the barriers that clients with disabilities face. The therapy helps individuals with conditions such as Autism, Cerebral palsy, Stroke, Mental retardation, Epilepsy, Down syndrome, Shaken baby syndrome, learning disabilities, and more. Participants experience an improvement in muscle tone, balance, strength, motor skills, attention, vocabulary, social skills and a better mental outlook.

Simple Changes, Inc. first operated under a temporary 3-month Special Recreation Permit issued by the BLM-ES. It began with two horses and two part-time staff members. Their goal was to use the natural richness and beauty of the Mason Neck area to create a recreational therapeutic riding program that would not only benefit children with disabilities, but their families and the community at large. Simple Changes, Inc. has since expanded to a four-horse program with over 30 riders. The therapeutic riding sessions are full, and the program has a



Photo by Jinx Fox

Volunteers from the community assist with therapeutic riding sessions conducted by Simple Changes, Inc. at BLM-ES Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area in northern VA.

2-year waiting list, which illustrates the demand for this type of therapeutic activity in the area. Clients range in age from 2 to 50 years old, with the majority between 4 and 12 years of age.

Today, Simple Changes, Inc. operates under a 5-year Special Recreation Permit issued by the BLM-ES. They have created a wonderful volunteer opportunity which allows northern Virginia's equestrian community, as well as the public in general, to give back to the community. Over 50 volunteers assist the program in a variety of ways, averaging 90 hours of volunteer hours per week. Since April 2005, volunteers have contributed over 3,000 hours to a program they love and enjoy.

WH&B Volunteer Foster Program...continued from page 3



Volunteer, Lorretta Johnson, feeds her two fostered colts, in Maywood, MO.

Following each adoption event, unclaimed yearlings can be put into temporary foster care with approved fostering volunteers. Volunteers must feed and care for the animals,

begin their halter training, and advertise them locally. Potential adopters submit an adoption application to their servicing office and complete a Private Care Agreement by mail. After all the required paperwork is received, along with a check for the adoption fee, the new adopter can take possession of the animal.

Volunteers are reimbursed for their feed costs and receive a bonus if the animal is placed within 60 days. BLM pays for any veterinarian expenses while the animal is in foster care. The cost of fostering is less than the cost of sending animals to adoption events, and saves BLM approximately \$100 for every animal placed by volunteers. So far 54 animals have been placed through the Volunteer Foster Program since December, with another 36 animals awaiting adoption.



Unique Drilling Method Takes BLM-ES Inspector a Step Back in Time

Story and photo by Jim Wood, Petroleum Engineering Technician, BLM-Eastern States, Milwaukee Field Office, Marietta Inspection Office

As BLM-ES Milwaukee Field Office Petroleum Engineering Technician, I have been inspecting drilling operations for over 23 years and have been on wells drilled to 21,000 feet in depth, wells drilled horizontally, sidetracked wells, and hydrogen sulfide (an extremely poisonous gas) wells, but I have never inspected a cable tool operation until this past winter.

I am impressed with the cable tool operation, and found the operation like another world compared to a rotary operation. A cable tool operation uses a bit, like a chisel, which is picked up and dropped approximately 3 feet on each stroke. A rotary rig spins and chews a hole like a power drill.

Onshore Order (OO)#2, provides the guidelines for drilling wells on Federal minerals, but does not apply to a cable tool operation, as many of the requirements in OO#2 call for testing of certain equipment which is not used in a cable tool operation. Walking onto the drilling floor is like stepping back in time. I can only imagine what type of hardships early drillers endured after witnessing aspects of this cable tool operation with Carlton Oil Corporation.

The equipment used to drill the first oil well was known as cable tool, or percussion, drilling. Percussion drilling is documented back as far as 600 B.C., as a method of finding water in China, when metal tipped bamboo sticks were used to penetrate the earth's surface.

In 1859, Colonel Edwin Drake, known by many as the "father" of the commercial oil business, was credited with drilling the first commercial oil well near Titusville, Pennsylvania. The technology he used to drill the first well was basically invented as they proceeded, which had many setbacks as well as successful procedures that are still in use today. Drake's well took approximately 4 months to drill with a depth of 69.5 feet.

Today, the same technology used to drill the first oil well is being used to drill a 2,000-foot oil and gas well on the Wayne National Forest in Monroe County, Ohio.



Lane drilling rig #1 is drilling the 2,000-foot oil and gas well, Lisk #2, for Carlton Oil Corporation on the Wayne National Forest in Monroe County, Ohio. Carlton Oil Corporation is using the cable tool rig due to a 3-year shortage of rotary rigs in southeastern Ohio.

Carlton Oil Corporation is currently drilling the Lisk #2 well into Federal minerals, and plans are underway to drill another Federal well upon completion of the Lisk #2.

The drilling method was not Carlton's first choice, but the scarcity of available rotary rigs caused Carlton to contract with an owner of this cable tool rig to drill the two wells. The actual drilling for each well is estimated at 30-40 days, if no problems are encountered. In contrast, a modern rotary drilling rig using air as drilling power could drill a 2,000-foot well in approximately 2-4 days. Although the time to drill a cable tool well is considerably longer, it does have some advantages over modern rotary drilling, such as—being less expensive, requiring less maintenance and energy, providing a better sample recovery, and causing less surface disturbance.



BLM-ES Lands Expert Commended by the DOI Solicitor

By Ida Doup, Chief, Branch of Lands and Realty, BLM-Eastern States, Division of Land Resources

BLM-ES Lead Land Law Examiner Nate Felton recently received a letter from the Office of the Solicitor commending him on his testimony on BLM land patent records and historical matters used during a court case. He was also recognized for his professional composure under rapid fire and hostile cross-examination by the opposing attorneys.

Nate represented BLM-ES as the lead witness to resolve a land title conflict under the Quiet Title Act (to establish ownership of property). While working at the BLM-ES for the past 30 years, Nate has become an expert in the field of lands title work.

Over the years, Nate has dealt with many land conflict issues in the East, a few of which include: a dispute over title to lands and minerals surrounding lakebeds in Louisiana, the disposition of ownership rights for islands located on the Gulf of Mexico, and cases dating back to the late 1700s.

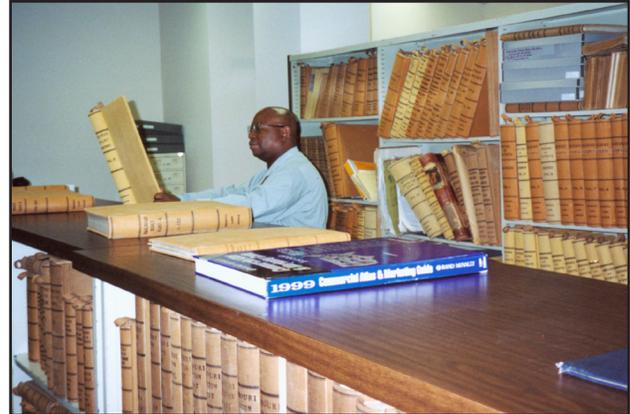


Photo by Peggy Riek

BLM-ES Lead Land Law Examiner Nate Felton studies a land patent book to prepare for a deposition involving land title issues.

BLM-ES Jackson Field Office Realty Specialist Mary Weaver also attended the hearing as the Bureau's witness relative to the Recreation & Public Purposes Act program. Although she did not testify during the hearing, Mary provided valuable information and support to the DOI, Solicitor and the U.S. Attorney during preparation for the case.

Wildlife and Natural Resources Leaders Meet in Ohio

By Geoff Walsh, Wildlife Biologist, BLM-Eastern States, Division of Natural Resources

From March 22-24, BLM-ES participated and provided support at the 71st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, sponsored by the Wildlife Management Institute, in Columbus, Ohio, with a conference theme, "Natural Resource Conservation...the Other Homeland Security." The conference again served as the premiere annual forum for the North American's leading scientists, managers, educators and administrators to address prevailing issues, policies, and practices of professional management of wildlife and other natural resources.

BLM-ES Wildlife Biologist Geoff Walsh and Milwaukee Field Office Natural Resource Specialist June Wendlandt staffed an exhibit, and provided attendees with answers to questions about wildlife habitat management and BLM work related to both eastern and western wildlife and natural resources issues.

The conference and exhibits provided attendees with an opportunity to disseminate wildlife and natural resource information while networking with industry decision makers and local and national organization representatives.



New Program to Certify Licensed Land Surveyors Performing Boundary Surveys in Indian Country

By Ron Eberle, Land Surveyor, BLM-Eastern States, Division of Land Resources

Soon, the BLM-ES will be using the new program called the Certified Federal Surveyor (CFedS) to help improve boundary surveys in Indian Country. The CFedS program was initiated by the BLM, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians as a means for professional, licensed land surveyors to perform boundary surveys in Indian Country. CFedS is a voluntary program to train and certify land surveyors to perform the commercial activities of boundary surveying and related services to Federal surveying standards as established by the BLM.

The program will consist of three components:

- 1) initial training, 2) certification examination, and
- 3) advanced continuing education modules. The initial training is designed to provide a basic understanding of the Public Land Survey System, metes and bounds surveys (non-rectangular surveys), the effects of case law, interpretation of the "Manual of Instructions for the Survey of the

Public Lands of the United States, 1973," accepted field procedures, and proper documentation. Upon completion of the initial training, the surveyor must pass the certification examination to be placed on the roster. The continuing education modules will be required to retain certification and will examine more complex issues.

The CFedS program is open to all State licensed surveyors, with an emphasis on Tribal and BIA surveyors. Registration for the CFedS program will begin in fall 2006.

The BIA, Tribes, individual allottees, and other Federal agencies will be encouraged to select surveyors from the CFedS roster when contracting for boundary surveys or other cadastral services. For more information, visit the CFedS web site at www.blm.gov/cadastral/cfeds/cfeds.htm.

The Fayetteville Shale Gas Play

By Lars Johnson, Geologist, BLM-Eastern States, Jackson Field Office

There is a rapidly developing shale gas play in northern Arkansas' Arkoma Basin and into the eastern Arkansas and western Mississippi areas of the Mississippi Embayment along the Mississippi River. This play has the potential to greatly accelerate drilling activity for the BLM-ES Jackson Field Office.

The Fayetteville Shale is an organic-rich, black pyritic shale containing varying amounts of silica and carbonate that is characterized on well logs by high gamma-ray and moderate-to-high resistivity responses. It is believed that the Fayetteville Shale gas play contains commercially recoverable quantities of gas, however, it has extremely low permeability. The natural gas is contained in shale-dominated, fine-grained rocks in depths ranging from 1,500 to 6,500 feet, making it costly and difficult to extract. With new drilling techniques and natural gas prices at near-record levels, dozens of companies are buying up leases and investing millions to obtain the mineral rights on this huge geological formation.

Companies began assessing the shale by drilling vertical test wells, which were extensively logged and

evaluated. However, to maximize the gas production, almost all of the 2,006 wells will be drilled horizontally. The whole play is turning toward horizontal wells. They typically drill about a 3,000-foot lateral that is parallel to the maximum compressive stress direction in the subsurface. Then they do multistage fracs on them. Most of that fracturing work has involved nitrogen foam fracs, with a subordinate amount of slick water frac applications. Typical initial production has ranged from two million to three million cubic feet of gas per day for the horizontal wells.

The Fayetteville Shale is an unconventional gas reservoir. It is a Mississippian-age shale that is the geologic equivalent of the Caney Shale found on the Oklahoma side of the Arkoma Basin and the Barnett Shale found in northern Texas. The Fayetteville shale gas play began in the northwestern Arkansas' portion of the Arkoma Basin. Major players in the area include Southwestern Energy subsidiary SEECO Inc., Chesapeake Energy, Shell Exploration and Production, Hallwood Petroleum and Maverick Oil and Gas. For more information, visit www.state.ar.us/agc/FayShGas/Play.



BLM-ES Supports the Joint Spring 2006 ELRC/WSLCA Conference

By Peggy Riek, *Writer-Editor, BLM-Eastern States, External Affairs*



Photo by Peggy Riek

On March 28, 2006, BLM's Deputy Director for Operations Larry Benna (second from left) spoke on a panel about "Emerging Issues in Land Transactions and Appraisals" at the Joint Spring 2006 ELRC/WSLCA Conference held in Washington, D.C. Seated at left is Session Moderator and Deputy Director, Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners John Brejcha, and at Benna's right are BLM's Acting Group Manager for Lands and Realty Jeff Holdren, and USDA-Forest Service, Lands Staff Director, Gregory C. Smith.

From March 26-29, 2006, BLM-ES representatives provided logistical support for the Joint Spring 2006 Eastern Lands and Resources Council (ELRC) and Western States Land Commissioners Association Conference (WSLCA) held in Washington, D.C. BLM-ES and the ELRC have been partners since 2002. The agencies work together toward the development and promotion of sound Federal and State public land management policies.

The joint conference provides Federal and State land and resource managers from across the Nation an opportunity to share information and collaborate on common issues and concerns. Conferees heard land and resource managers from Federal, State, and non-profit organizations speak on the conference theme, "Economic Strategies for Public Land Managers." Sessions covered topics such as improving management decisions on habitats for threatened species; protecting the water supply; strategies to protect the Chesapeake Bay through riparian buffers; the IRS view of conservation easements; Point - Counterpoint: Update on NEPA and wetlands mitigation; perspectives on energy and land use policy;

emerging issues in appraisals, disposal of surplus properties, and land exchanges; rethinking flood plain management in the Wake of Katrina; forest recertification; meeting challenges in the Forest Legacy Program; update on Endangered Species Legislation; leasing onshore and offshore wind energy projects; an MMS update on offshore oil and natural gas leasing; designating energy corridors and rates for rights-of-way; and Indian energy initiatives.

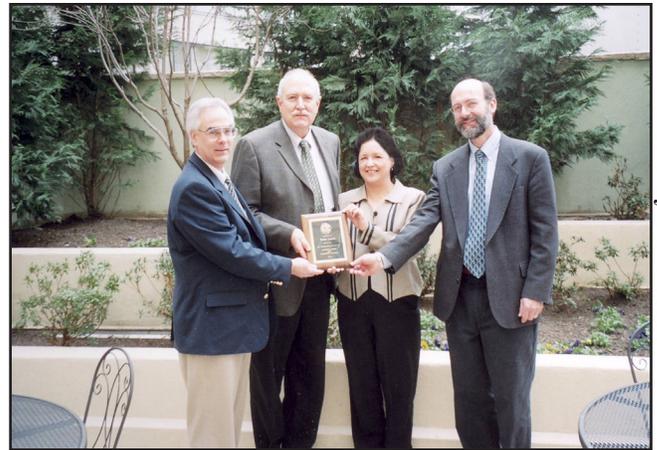


Photo by Dave Stout

(From left) ELRC Member at Large Ed Meadows from the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources, BLM-ES Acting Associate State Director Terry Lewis, Writer-Editor Peggy Riek, and ELRC President Bob O'Connor from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs share congratulations for the Outstanding Service award both Terry and Peggy received from the ELRC during the conference held in Washington, D.C. BLM-ES State Director Mike Nedd (not pictured) also received the award.

WH&B Adoptions in the East

BLM-Eastern States Wild Horse and Burro Adoption and Compliance program continues its success with adopting America's "Living Legends" to good homes. Since Fiscal Year 2006 began, 876 animals have been adopted in the East through the efforts of the BLM-ES Jackson Field Office, Milwaukee Field Office, and Internet adoptions. Forty-five animals were adopted through the Internet in January 2006, and 34 animals were adopted during the March 2006 Internet adoption.



BLM-ES Photo Highlights



Brian Kennedy, BLM-ES JFO Geographic Information Specialist is currently serving in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. He was deployed in August 2005 and is expected to serve for at least 1 year. JFO employees have continued to show support to Brian by sending several care packages.



Photo by Bill Davenport

On January 23, 2006, Eastern Lands and Resources Council partners from the State of Ohio's Department of Natural Resources made a visit to BLM-ES. (From left) Real Estate and Land Management Deputy Chief Ron Kolbash and Real Estate and Land Management Division Chief Paul Baldrige, BLM-ES External Affairs Chief Terry Lewis and Acting Associate State Director Bruce Dawson review a cadastral survey map during the visit. Paul and Ron also took a tour of the vaults and the General Land Office.



BLM-ES Lower Potomac Field Station Environmental Education Specialist Theresa Jefferson points out waterfowl to students from the Nokesville 4-H Club on

a bird walk at Veterans Park in northern Virginia. Students observed Great Blue Heron, Canada geese, mallards, a red-bellied woodpecker, gulls, and muskrats swimming under the ice. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service volunteer Dr. Larry Underwood assisted Theresa on the walk.



Photo by Tami Heilemann, DOI

On May 4, Jim Wood, Petroleum Engineering Technician (at right), from BLM-ES Milwaukee Field Office, Marietta Inspection Office in Ohio, was presented with the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) "Valor Award" during the DOI's 63rd Honor Awards Convocation in Washington, D.C. Pictured from left are BLM's Deputy Director for Operations Larry Benna, and DOI's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land & Minerals Management Julie Jacobson and Acting Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett. Jim received the award for his assistance, along with the occupants of a commercial truck, in rescuing a man from an overturned, burning vehicle in Michigan. The man was trapped in the back seat of the vehicle with his arm pinned under the roof of the vehicle. Congratulations, Jim!



Photo by Theresa Jefferson

On April 22, the Washington, D.C., Wonderful Outdoor World (WOW) program celebrated Earth Day at BLM-ES Meadowood Recreation Management Area (SRMA) in Lorton, VA.

Students participated in environmental activities at the annual Eagle Festival at Mason Neck State Park which included, "Reptiles Alive, Under the Sea" and other environmental activities. The students returned to the Meadowood SRMA to set up tents for a night of camping, fishing, and hiking on the Wood Thrush Trail. On Sunday morning, WOW youngsters are shown planting a tree near the visitor center.



BLM-ES Happenings

From January 6-8, 2006, BLM-ES Milwaukee Field Office's (MFO) America's Outdoors (AO) participated in the Chicago, IL, area, Adventure Travel Expo, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). This was a national event that focused on recreational adventure opportunities across the United States. AO showcased an exhibit titled, "Special Places," and provided resource materials on recreational opportunities on Federal lands.

BLM-ES Jackson Field Office (JFO) Public Affairs Specialist Shayne Banks and Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) Program Supervisor Vicky Craft staffed a WH&B booth at the Dixie National Equine Expo in Jackson, MS, February 15-19, to help promote the Tunica, MS, adoption held in March.

BLM-ES MFO's AO participated in the 66th Annual Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show from March 10-19, providing attendees with a variety of recreation material and information about public lands. More than 150,000 attendees visited the show.

On March 23, BLM-ES held a Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale in Springfield, VA. One hundred twenty-four parcels of Federal subsurface mineral estate were offered for sale in the States of AL, AR, LA, MI, MS, and WV. The Sale brought in over \$2,540,277. Bonus bids, filing fees, and rental revenue amounting to over \$1,907,353 will go to the U.S. Treasury and over \$632,924.38 will be shared by the affected States. Barry Jeremiah of Fort Smith, AR, paid \$832,611.50 for a 2,240.20-acre parcel in Lee County, AR. Mr. Jeremiah's bid of \$400 per acre on another parcel in Lee County, AR, was the highest per acre bid of the auction.

BLM-ES MFO Archaeologist Troy Ferone attended the Bois Forte Band of Minnesota Chippewa, Tribal Council meeting, to answer questions and formalize opportunities for long-term partnerships in the collaborative management of cultural and traditional (Tribal) resources on BLM islands in the Lake Vermilion Recreation Area. A Tribal Resolution received on March 30 affirms the mutual interest, support and collaboration by tribal agencies and partners in northern Minnesota.

BLM-ES Old Towne, ME, Cadastral Surveyor Ken Roy, volunteered his time and to make a presentation on March 24 to the Practicable Field Operations Surveying Class at the University of Maine, in Orono, ME, concerning BLM's field and office methods and procedures. Ken is

a licensed professional land surveyor in the State and President of the Hancock-Penobscot County Chapter of Maine Society of Land Surveyors.

On April 4, BLM-ES JFO representatives Patrice Junius, James Hood and Dorothy Burnett conducted Wild Horse and Burro outreach to over 200 5th grade students at the Crystal Springs, MS, Environmental Education Field Day. The students learned about the history of wild horses, how to read a freeze-brand mark, and how to adopt a horse or burro.

BLM-ES and U.S. Customs employees participated in the Greater Chesapeake & Potomac Regional Red Cross Blood Drive on April 6. Doners contributed 41 units of blood to help save lives. Thanks!

On April 8, BLM-ES Lower Potomac Field Station (LPFS) Recreation Specialist Jeff McCusker led volunteers from Friends of Nanjemoy during a cleanup effort along the banks of the Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area, at Douglas Point, MD.

In observance of Earth Day, held April 22, the BLM-ES MFO conducted a "Great American Clean Up" in collaboration with Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful and the Lynden Hill Garden Club. Activities included litter pickup and weeding flower gardens at Milwaukee's Urban Tree House Site, Lynden Hill, in the Midtown Milwaukee neighborhood in Wisconsin. Seventeen volunteers participated.

BLM-ES JFO Outreach Coordinator Patrice Junius led efforts during the 2006 Environmental Education Camp held from April 19-24 at Piney Woods School, Crows Neck Environmental Learning Center in Tishomingo, MS. Campers also took a 1-day field trip to Shiloh National Military Park in Tennessee.

In April, BLM-ES representatives, Larry Cave, Kate Marks, John Butterfield, Pat Tyler, Ron Eberle, Joe Beaudin and Dave Stout, conducted a tour for U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) personnel, Ione Taylor, Robert Dier, and Paul Young, which included the tract book room, General Land Office patent automation, cadastral survey plat and field note automation, and the USGS topographic maps used by surveyors.



Katrina Changes BLM-ES Employees' Lives Forever

On March 1, 2006, BLM-ES Volunteer Coordinator Michelle McClanahan and Legal Assistant Jennifer Spencer from Springfield, VA, and Program Assistant Pam Taylor from Jackson, MS, were deployed to Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, to support the Gulf Coast hurricane recovery effort caused by Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005.

“There wasn’t a lot of information about our assignments, only that we would be working 12 hours a day for 7 days a week for 30 days,” said Michelle McClanahan. “After arriving at the Baton Rouge, LA, airport, we reported to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Louisiana Recovery Field Office to receive briefings, cell phones, and identification badges. The following day we departed to our hotel in New Orleans. That evening we had our first group meeting and learned that we would be working about 45 miles southeast of New Orleans in an area called Plaquemines Parish, one of the hardest hit areas in southeastern Louisiana. The area sustained heavy rains, wind in excess of 125 mph, storm surges of 20 feet and higher. The levees failed and broke, causing widespread flooding, which lasted for 12 days. We saw first-hand, the extreme devastation—destroyed homes and household items strewn everywhere. One day folks had normal lives, the next day their lives were shattered.”

How did you feel about the devastation you encountered?

Pam was surprised at how much damage there was in the area. She expected that much more would have been accomplished since the hurricane had hit nearly 6 months earlier. She said that the area seemed like a ghost town, a forgotten place. **Jennifer** felt it was truly heartbreaking. She thought she was prepared from watching the news stories and seeing pictures on the Internet. **Michelle** said that it was unbelievable—pictures and news videos did not really show the total devastation.

What was your assignment for the effort? We started working as Debris Quality Assurance Representatives in a group of 22 people, spread over a 25-mile radius. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hired contractors who operated heavy equipment for debris clean-up. When we opened a property for debris clean-up, it was our job to define the maintained area of the property and make the contractor understand the items that the property owners wanted to keep. We also made sure the contractor separated the debris from the dirt—a job which was easier to do on-site rather than at the dump. Once the truck was loaded with debris, we issued the driver a Load Ticket, similar to writing a check for their work. We then closed the property once the job was done.



Hurricane Katrina debris clean-up crew in LA during March 2006.

What was the most disturbing sight you saw?

Jennifer said it was seeing dead animals (horses, cows, pigs, etc.) and the overwhelming smell. She added, it was also bizarre to see houses that spilled over the levees into the Mississippi River, boats lodged in trees, and houses sitting on top of cars. **Michelle** was most disturbed by all the personal belongings scattered everywhere. **Pam** was disturbed seeing starving animals and scattered coffins.

Did you talk to the local people, and what were their views? **Pam** talked to several local people who wanted to know where the government was and why was more not being done. They were also concerned about getting their insurance checks and frustrated with the insurance companies. **Michelle** spoke to several homeowners who were very grateful for the group’s help with the clean-up. Many homeowners were anxious to see their home demolished so they could begin to rebuild.

What would you suggest to the readers of Vantage for continued ways Americans can still help the relief cause? **Jennifer** and **Pam** agreed that readers could still check with the American Red Cross to see what items were still needed. As a lesson learned, **Michelle** stressed the importance of writing to your insurance companies to make sure you have adequate coverage, and to volunteer.

How has the experience to provide Hurricane assistance changed/affected your life? **Michelle** said that she realized how precious life truly is. **Pam** commented that she was glad to go, but really did not want to do it again—too depressing. **Jennifer** concluded saying that it was truly a lifetime experience that she would always carry with her. She added that she was grateful to be a part of the disaster recovery effort.



E-mail Briefs

General Land Office.—“The restoration of the BLM web site is the best holiday gift that genealogists can receive from our Government.” *Connie Lenzen, President, Board for Certification of Genealogists*

“I was thrilled to finally see the gloreCORDS.blm.gov Web site up and running again. Your “down time” has been a painful break in my genealogical research. Your land records database is one of the best uses of my taxpayer

Eastern States Vision Statement—As Guardians of the Past, and Stewards for the Future, Eastern States is committed to sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands spanning the 31 states east of and bordering the Mississippi River for present and future generations.

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money; perhaps it’s the only positive use that I can enjoy! Thank you. Welcome back.” *Patrice (Fulton) Stark*

“To all at BLM! Thanks to you for getting the GLO land patent database back online. The genealogists and history researchers are so delighted to see it! This database is invaluable, and we are grateful to you for making it available to the public.” *Sincerely, Lannie Hartman*

Wild Horse and Burro.—“Great job! Placing older animals is difficult. I applaud your efforts.” *Unknown*

Comings & Goings

Transfers.—Kim Malicki, Property Management Specialist, SO, from BLM-ES Milwaukee Field Office.

Retirees.—Ken Fitzpatrick, Economist, Division of Natural Resources, SO.



*We wish the Jackson Hotshot Crew
a safe 2006 Fire Season!*

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