

# BLM Volunteers Help Monitor Cultural Sites



*The view from Castle Butte Area of Critical Environmental Concern.*

*Preserving the past for our future* may be a common expression but it's not lacking in truth and significance.

Jim Busse is a true believer in those words and has become a site steward for a cultural site managed by the Bureau of Land Management near Billings called Castle Butte Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). For people like Jim and other BLM volunteers who are in essence an extension of BLM staff, our public lands and outstanding natural resources are something worth protecting for the generations that come after us.

Cultural resources are evidence of past human activities that we today have the privilege to enjoy. They tell a story of how humans lived and adapted to their environment through the ages. At Castle Butte, big sky country is in full effect. The 360-degree views from the high points along the butte explain why humans made their way to this natural landmark for centuries. The butte is composed of relatively soft bedded sandstones of the Upper Cretaceous Hell Creek Formation, leaving behind not only cultural remnants, but paleontological as well.

Mr. Busse's journey as a site steward began with an extensive Montana Site Stewardship training workshop held at Pictograph Cave State Park in 2013. This annual training program, held in different locations throughout Montana, is a partnership among the BLM Montana/Dakotas, Montana State University, and Project Archaeology. It promotes public awareness of both pre-contact and historic cultural resources in Montana. The two-day training consists of both classroom instruction and fieldwork, where participants:

- Learn about the mission and program goals of the Montana Site Stewardship Program;
- Discuss threats to site preservation;
- Review the duties and responsibilities of a site steward;
- Review historic preservation laws;
- Discuss safety and resource issues and concerns with agency personnel;
- Review a presentation on cultural resources located in the Billings Field Office;

- Learn how to fill out monitoring and photo logs;
- Participate in the tour of Pictograph Cave State Park;
- Participate in classroom discussions in which different ethical dilemmas involving cultural resources and the public are presented; and
- Participate in field training.

As a site steward, Mr. Busse will monitor and document the Castle Butte ACEC to look for potential changes to the area as a result of acts of nature, theft, or vandalism.

At the initial site visit with BLM Archaeologist Carolyn Sherve-Bybee, Mr. Busse received a packet of information about the location. Then he and Carolyn discussed a variety of topics including personal safety, the history of the site, as well as other issues and concerns. Also during the initial visit, the site steward takes baseline photographs to compare with the photographs he or she will take during quarterly monitoring of the site. These photos assist in discovering any evidence of damage.

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“Site stewards like Jim make the agency better,” says Sherve-Bybee. “They allow the BLM to have more eyes and ears on the ground, which helps us protect these true cultural treasures.”

The BLM Billings Field Office also has site stewards at Petroglyph Canyon ACEC, Four Dances Natural Area ACEC, and Weatherman Draw ACEC. The site stewards monitoring the Petroglyph Canyon ACEC participated in the very first Montana Site Steward Training and have been monitoring Petroglyph Canyon ACEC for four years. They also check on numerous sites in the Pryor Mountains, including the East Pryor ACEC and Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range.

The BLM is thankful for site stewards’ time and passion to protect this nation’s public lands, and we hope to have even more volunteers by the end of the summer in other locations.

Please visit the BLM Montana/Dakotas website at [www.blm.gov/mt](http://www.blm.gov/mt), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/BLMMontana](https://www.facebook.com/BLMMontana), or follow us on Twitter @BLM\_MTDKs. For more information about Project Archaeology and becoming a site steward, please visit: <http://projectarchaeology.org/montana-site-stewardship-program>.



*Carolyn Sherve-Bybee (above) and Site Steward Jim Busse (left) during their initial site visit to discuss and document Castle Butte ACEC.*

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