

**RAY HANSON
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANNER
LANDER FIELD OFFICE, LANDER, WYOMING
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
2005 LEGENDS HONOREE, GREAT OUTDOORS WEEK**

The Bureau of Land Management is honored and proud of its outstanding 2005 Legends Honoree, Ray Hanson, Outdoor Recreation Planner from the Lander Field Office in Lander, Wyoming.

Ray is recognized by managers and peers alike as an outstanding professional based on his exceptional work with nationally significant public land resources for the past 30 years. His specific contributions include helping plan and develop sections of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST), contributing to both the BLM's National OHV Strategy and National Mountain Bicycling Strategy, and implementing innovative management strategies for Wyoming's National Historic Trails. He places great emphasis on public service drawing upon first-hand knowledge of these national level recreation issues.

Ray also "practices what he preaches" concerning public land use ethics and taking care of our nation's public lands. He has also assisted in developing and teaching recreation related courses for the Bureau's National Training Center, and is universally respected for the personal and professional touch he brings to his work with others who use and care about the public lands. Both the Public Lands Foundation for American Heritage and the Continental Divide Trail Alliance have recognized Ray as a premiere natural resource management employee.

As the Bureau's trail liaison and lead for the CDNST in Wyoming, Ray utilized cooperation, consultation, and coordination in tackling the issue of motorized and non-motorized recreation along the designated route. By researching the National Trails System Act, the 1985 CDNST Comprehensive Plan and other background information sources Ray was able to complete the designation process for 190 miles of trail. The designation decisions permit the joint use of existing primitive two-track roads by motorized and non-motorized recreationists, including CDNST hikers and equestrians.

While not all trail groups fully support the joint use of these primitive two-track roads, they agree that the approach taken in Wyoming was an environmentally sound course of action. Trail users, both hikers and equestrian, also agree the approach was logical and provides a great recreational experience. Hanson's commitment to communication, cooperation, and consultation allowed the BLM to ensure conservation of a nationally significant resource all the while facilitating diverse, responsible, and sustainable recreational use of the area. This is one of many examples where Ray's superlative ability to work with stakeholders (while ensuring Bureau mandates and policies) diffused a potential contentious situation.

Ray's work with the National Historic Trails (NHT) is another example of his commitment to unassailable community based stewardship. In 2002, Ray foresaw the need to proactively manage a substantial increase in visitation to a 26-mile segment of the Oregon/Mormon-Pioneer/California/Pony Express National Historic Trails. Ray's ability to cooperate, consult, and coordinate with all stakeholders (special recreation permittees, local/national publics, and other agencies), facilitated a sound conservation strategy for an irreplaceable resource. The highlight of Hanson's proactive management approach was the establishment of a visitor carrying capacity threshold that has been widely accepted by his peers, National Landscape Conservation System leadership, State, and National BLM decision makers, and most importantly all the stakeholders involved.

Ray has also integrated the 4-C's into future recreation planning endeavors. With his personal interest in mountain biking Ray has initiated a recreation project that would lead to the development of a managed multiple use trail system in a popular biking, hiking, and equestrian use area. This project will be a multi-year planning and implementation effort that will utilize local user groups and grazing permittees in both the planning and implementation phases of the project. Ray has established the planning framework to make this effort a reality and a success.

He continues to use numerous public outreach channels to foster an outdoor ethic for the public lands. One of Ray's most notable achievements in this sector has been his ability to disseminate the 'Leave No Trace' principles of ethical outdoor recreation. Hanson has taught a Leave No Trace Masters course in an arid environment, he has conducted several in Field presentations on the subject, and advocated the principles to all CDT hikers and Special Recreation permittees. The true frequency of publics reached by Hanson's efforts is infinite and invaluable. Ray meets annually with the Mormon Trail handcart trekking permittee leadership teams to provide an overview of the do's and don'ts on the trail and conveys a strong trail stewardship philosophy for trail users.

The 2004 Sweetwater Canyon Wilderness Study Area National Public Lands Day event exemplifies Ray's commitment to promoting a community wide land ethic. On September 19, 2004 Hanson led a tour group of volunteers through the Wilderness Study Area. The participants received a work packet (developed by Hanson) that provided information on the directives of the wilderness act as well as the Bureaus interim management policy. In addition, the packet also included a work sheet for volunteers to document (via photos and a narrative) wilderness values as well as impairments. All volunteers left that day with an enhanced understanding of the Bureau's commitment to managing the WSA and the role that they, as recreationist, play in preserving the inherent values of the area.

He has also utilized the Bureau's Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) to enhance outdoor ethics within the agency. During a period of augmented workloads, Ray still took time to mentor a young student for approximately 4 years. Ray's teaching and leading by example techniques has fostered a new Bureau employee that has retained critical institutional knowledge and a premium land use ethic.

In Wyoming, Ray is the lead for the Lander and Rawlins Field Offices for over 190 miles of the congressionally designated CDNST. Ray also served as the BLM's CDNST Liaison with trailwide responsibilities of assisting the other BLM Field Offices in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and New Mexico in their management efforts of the trail. He has set the standard for others to follow in providing specific information on the Wyoming segments of the CDNST.

After the on-the-ground designation of the CDNST, Ray conceived and developed, with technical assistance from other BLM staff, GPS/GIS produced maps of the route, a description and GPS location of all potential water sources along the route, and other necessary information to aid the trail user in both planning their adventure and in negotiating the Great Divide Basin, arguably one of the toughest segments of the 3,100 mile CDNST. All of this information was made available on a web site link on the BLM Wyoming homepage.

Ray developed an Assistance Agreement with the State of Wyoming for the joint management of state lands that were designated as segments of the CDNST that link directly with those on the BLM administered public lands. In addition, Ray has been identified within the long distance hiking community as an excellent source of information to hikers planning to tackle the CDNST through the Basin.

His expertise is relied upon by many trail users who say they wish other trail managers could provide the same level of detail along the rest of the CDNST. The Continental Divide Trail Alliance presented Ray their "Agency of the Year" award in 1998 for his work on the CDNST and his extensive use of volunteers to accomplish many of the tasks involved in managing the trail with significant cost savings. Ray has been labeled as the "trail angel" of the CDNST by Jim Wolf, President of the Continental Divide Trail Society.

Even trail users whom Ray has not personally met or communicated with place him in high regard. Comments in trailhead register boxes in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico have suggested CDNST users contact Ray for excellent information on traveling through the high deserts of BLM administered public lands on the CDNST. The Continental Divide Trail Alliance, the Continental Divide Trail Society and the sister agencies of the USDA Forest Service and USDI National Park Service all think highly of Ray's accomplishment in the management of the CDNST. Numerous volunteers have also praised Ray's efforts and enjoy working on projects with him.

An interpretive site developed at Steamboat Lake is an example where Ray has enhanced the BLM's natural and recreational resources through innovative and successful partnerships. The Steamboat Lake interpretive pullout off of Wyoming Highway 220 was developed as a partnership between the BLM and the Audubon Society. The interpretive panels promote public understanding of natural systems such as avian species, alkalinity around prairie lakes, and other wildlife of the area. The partnership

has proven to be very successful and has set a criterion for recreation cost share projects in Wyoming and across the BLM. The Recreation Management Information System estimates that the interpretive pullout receives 750 visits each year. The quality of the site Hanson developed ensures that every one of these visitors leave with a positive view of the BLM and its role in managing sustainable multiple uses.

Two other issues of recreational interest Ray became involved with were the development of the Bureau's National Management Strategy for Motorized Off-Highway Vehicle Use on Public Lands and the National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan. As an outdoor recreation planner and mountain bike enthusiast, Ray was concerned with the decision to include mountain bicycling in with motorized vehicle management. Because of his comments he was brought onto the OHV team to assist in removing mountain bicycling from the motorized strategy.

During this time, he assisted in working with the International Mountain Bicycling Association that led to the BLM's decision to develop a separate strategic action plan for mountain biking on BLM administered public lands. Initially, Ray was assigned to the mountain bike team as an advisor but was later called upon to become an active team member. Upon completing the action plan, Ray was asked by the team leader to continue to be a resource for the BLM's Travel Management Team to represent mountain bike interests in the management of the public lands.