

BLM'S 2007 "MAKING A DIFFERENCE" NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARD WINNERS

VOLUNTEER WINNERS (ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY STATE)

ARIZONA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY – AJO CHAPTER (AZ): The Arizona Archaeological Society – Ajo Chapter is dedicated to studying and protecting heritage resources in Arizona. This group of volunteers has taken the initiative to perform ongoing, in-depth archaeological investigations of several sites on 1,860 acres of BLM-managed lands within the Phoenix District. Many of the chapter members are winter visitors or part-time Arizona residents, who each year only have a small window of opportunity to accomplish their goals. These devoted volunteers meticulously plan their projects in advance and work cooperatively to accomplish as much as possible in a short time. They patrol cultural sites, perform inventories, and document resources, and are preparing and implementing a treatment plan according to BLM standards. In addition, they build relationships with local tribal leaders to aid in data recovery on imperiled archaeological features. Thanks to the chapter's role as BLM's "eyes on the land," BLM has gained important cultural resource information about a relatively unstudied part of Arizona.

DAVID BURTON (CA): David Burton is the principal investigator and driving force behind the Aspen Delineation Project, a collaborative effort among BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game to assess the extent, condition, history of treatment, and management options for aspen trees in eastern California and northwestern Nevada. In 2006, David developed proposals and secured matching grants for a challenge cost-share project that resulted in the restoration of 440 acres of aspen habitat. He also coordinated the implementation of a standardized monitoring protocol to document aspen trends on BLM rangelands. David created and maintains a website that serves as a centralized source of reference information concerning the ecology and management of aspen communities in North America. It is designed to provide bibliographic, research, and management information to all stakeholders, including land and resource managers, scientists, private landowners, and the general public. The aspen restoration and monitoring work stimulated by David Burton in 2006, which continues today, has contributed significantly to BLM's mission by helping to restore and maintain at-risk resources.

STEVE SMITH (CA): After serving as BLM-Ridgecrest's Branch Chief for Recreation and Wilderness as well as the office's volunteer coordinator, Steve Smith recently retired from Federal service but didn't miss a beat: immediately upon retiring, he signed up as a BLM-Ridgecrest volunteer. Steve's work in the Rademacher Hills and Indian Wells Canyon has included trash pickup and outhouse cleaning (now, *that's* real dedication), trail maintenance, the placement and upkeep of BLM public information kiosks, and the installation of picnic tables, benches, and trailheads. He also performed maintenance and long-term restoration work at the Seibert Cabin, an old miner's cabin that hikers may now use for overnight lodging. In July 2006, Steve organized and led an expedition of 40 people in 16 vehicles to the Ballarat Ghost Town, Briggs Mines, and the Barker Ranch in order to generate interest among prospective volunteers for future BLM projects. It's not all field work for Steve, though; he also ventures indoors to attend public and interest-group meetings on behalf of BLM, and provides the public information and educational materials about BLM and the public lands. And Steve is caring for the future of

the BLM Volunteer Program, too: he serves as a program trainer for BLM volunteer coordinators around the nation, and on a BLM team of technical program experts.

ALAN ROBINSON (CO): Alan Robinson is another “Federal-retiree-turned-BLM-volunteer,” but with a twist: Alan retired from the National Park Service. His work on the joint BLM/U.S. Forest Service “Fourmile Travel Management Plan” on lands within the Royal Gorge Field Office led to the creation of the Friends of Fourmile (FOF), where he is now publicity director. This group has contributed thousands of hours of volunteer service to educate the public on land use ethics and complete resource protection projects. Alan’s media relations skills have led to numerous local and regional newspaper articles and radio public service messages stressing the importance of responsible recreation on public lands. He also develops presentations to help raise community awareness of public land resources and issues and the importance of volunteerism. In his “free time,” Alan spends hundreds of hours patrolling public lands on foot, bike, and all-terrain vehicle, educating visitors along the way. He also obtained grants totaling over \$75,000 for public land projects, including brochure and interpretive sign development, restoration work, kiosk and trail development, and education programs.

CHRIS NOBLE (NM): Chris Noble was the Volunteer Recreation Host at BLM’s 2,850-acre Dripping Springs Natural Area (DSNA) within the Las Cruces District. The popular natural area hosts more than 22,000 visitors each year. Initially, Chris’s duties were opening and closing the natural area and visitor center; staffing the visitor center; ensuring fee collection; and monitoring the campground. Within two months, however, Chris was working ten- to 12-hour days, five or six days a week, and performing most of the trail work and maintenance at DSNA. And within a year, he’d volunteered to expand his work to Aguirre Springs Campground, which happens to be BLM-New Mexico’s most utilized recreation site. Chris served as the substitute host at Aguirre Springs, where he cleaned and painted tables and bathrooms; installed water bars at picnic areas; maintained trails; and instituted fire prevention measures at the campground. At both recreation sites, Chris always represented BLM positively, whether in friendly conversation with recreationists or during his environmental talks with schoolchildren. In the two years and ten months that Chris worked with the Las Cruces District Office, he contributed a staggering 6,189 hours of volunteer service.

MIKE SATTER (UT): In 2006, Mike Satter served as president of Grand Staircase Escalante Partners, a private, non-profit, community-based organization he helped to form three years ago. The Partners are dedicated to increasing awareness and appreciation of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, BLM’s first national monument, while also supporting the Monument’s particular missions of interpretation, education, science, and research. As president, Mike successfully applied for and received a seed grant for \$35,000 to provide funding for a paid Volunteer/Membership Coordinator, four high school interns, one college intern, and critical media equipment for the organization. Mike supervised staff and the overall program, recruited community volunteer board members, and organized meetings, field trips, work projects, and community presentations. He has worked tirelessly to build a volunteer organization at the grassroots level, engaging local citizens in resource, science, and educational activities on public lands. The efforts that Mike and Grand Staircase Escalante Partners contribute to BLM not only supply the National Monument with a “second workforce” and foster

awareness of BLM programs, but are a continuing inspiration to BLM employees to collaborate with dedicated private citizens in local communities around the nation.

WINNING BLM EMPLOYEE TEAM

ANN BOUCHER AND SANDY PADILLA (MT): Ann Boucher and Sandra Padilla of BLM-Montana/Dakotas served as co-volunteer coordinators for *Clark on the Yellowstone*, the hugely successful Lewis and Clark Bicentennial National Signature Event held at Pompeys Pillar National Monument in July 2006. These two capable BLM-ers recruited, trained, organized, and managed 377 volunteers for the four-day event, which drew 47,000 visitors to the Monument. Beginning six months prior to the actual festivities, Sandra and Ann conducted biweekly volunteer training sessions to prepare volunteers for the tasks ahead, matching volunteer schedules to both interests and availability. Volunteers set up a temporary “tent city,” facilitated visitor parking without a single accident, distributed information, staffed interpretive displays, delivered refreshments, and removed trash. After the event, Ann and Sandra ensured that each volunteer received timely recognition for his or her contribution. Ann and Sandra’s sensitivity, dedication, attention to detail, keen organizational skills, and ability to anticipate needs were crucial factors in building such a capable volunteer workforce. After such a positive experience, many of these same volunteers continued their service at Pompeys Pillar. Thanks to the work of Ann and Sandra, the *Clark on the Yellowstone* event left the public with a lasting impression of BLM’s deep commitment to the public lands and local communities.