

Volunteers play a big part in protecting our public lands *Prineville BLM announces their volunteer of the Year*

Central Oregonians love their public lands. We visit public lands for all sorts of reasons and most of us are satisfied with our experiences. A few visitors, as I noted in February, abuse our public lands. Another group of people do something else. They volunteer their time and energy to improve public land or to help public land visitors.

In 2001, BLM volunteers—young and old, individuals, couples, and groups—donated more than 1 million hours of their time and talent to improving America's public lands. In Oregon and Washington BLM volunteers provided over 190,000 hours of service, and for an investment of about \$222,000 delivered work valued at over \$3,000,000.

Examples of the work done by volunteers include field surveys to support our wildlife programs and environmental education/interpretation, helping us adopt wild horses and burros, serving as campground hosts, and even assisting in running our minerals programs.

In Central Oregon over 30 citizens or groups have signed up to participate in the Prineville District's 'Adopt-an-Open-Space' program.' The concept is simple. Volunteers pick a location, conduct clean ups several times a year, and let BLM know about issues or trends that need our attention. Volunteers in this program may help post signs, install gates, fix fences or do other tasks that protect or enhance public lands.

George Krautsheid of Redmond is an outstanding example of an Adopt-an-Open-Space volunteer, demonstrating a strong commitment to healthy and safe public lands. Since signing on as a volunteer George has collected many truck loads of trash, often paying dump fees from his own pocket instead of requesting a voucher from the BLM. George does something that warms the hearts of bureaucrats, he gives us frequent reports on his activities. George Krautsheid clearly demonstrates a great natural resources ethic, and is a wonderful example of giving back to our community. For his hard work, Mr. Krautsheid was honored as the District's Adopt-an-Open-Space Volunteer of the Year for 2002.

If you would like to learn more about the Adopt-an-Open-Space program, give Robin Snyder a call at 416-6666 or send her an email at Robin_Snyder@or.blm.gov. If you would like to learn more about other BLM volunteer opportunities, check out www.blm.gov/volunteer.

Finally, I would like to thank the many readers who responded to my column on litter in the Interface. Suggestions ranged from posting rewards for tips on trash dumpers to programs to foster a sense of stewardship towards public lands. Many of you suggested lowering dump fees. We will be pursuing your suggestions. One new effort organized by Robin Snyder of the Prineville staff involves scheduling three Corrections Crews to remove litter from 150 sites this summer. I'll keep you informed as other ideas are implemented.

With the help of volunteers like George Krautsheid and the rest of the Adopt-an-Open-Space team we can protect Central Oregon's public lands.