

TRUSTEE'S REPORT

We all are aware of the dramatic use of 1906 Antiquities Act made by President Clinton in the closing days of his administration. Countless new acres were added to our system of national monuments that consist of some of the most outstanding landscapes left undisturbed in America today. The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), created in 2000, is intended to provide guidance for the management of not only the 15* new BLM national monuments, but for the national conservation areas, national historic, scenic and recreation trails, wilderness areas and the wild and scenic rivers managed by BLM as well.

Interior Secretary Gale Norton initiated the planning process for half of the new monuments in April with emphasis on the gathering of local opinion. Secretary Norton has indicated that the 4Cs apply in this current effort:

- Communication
- Consultation
- Cooperation
- Conservation

The Secretary has emphasized the importance of local input during the planning process; although the need to put these monuments in a broader, national context is equally important. The planning process will focus on management strategies for these special areas that emphasize conservation and will consider such things as transportation routes, habitat corridors, visual resource management, recreation activities and others.

Even though the NLCS was recently formed over two years ago, the planning process for its new national monuments and several national conservation areas has not passed us by. We, both individually and as a body of landscape architects, have the opportunity to help shape how these areas will eventually be managed. This public planning process requires active involvement by an "informed public" to establish the necessary underpinnings for management of these treasures.

What does that mean for Idaho and Montana? For us here in the Lean-n-Mean domain there are three projects that are currently under way. The scoping phase for the Craters of the Moon/Great Rift monument has just been completed. An open house was held in Boise on June 18, 2002 that included representatives from both the BLM and the National Park Service. The process will now move to preparation of a Draft Plan/Draft EIS. The draft plan is expected to be released this winter 2002/2003 when we'll have ample opportunity to review the document, attend public meetings throughout the state, and make comments on the plan. This is one of a very few land management units that is being jointly managed and planned by two different land management agencies, the BLM and the NPS, in this case.

The Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area planning process began earlier this year and scoping meetings were held in July. A Draft Plan/Draft EIS is expected later this year. Our review of the draft plan and our attendance at public meetings will be extremely important in the long-term decisions being made during this process. A Record of Decision expected in 2004.

In Montana, the Upper Missouri Breaks process is well under way and is nearing the end of its 120 day scoping period. Scoping meetings are taking place now through early August and there is still adequate time to get your scoping comments in before the end of August.

There is also a fourth monument whose process is currently on hold. Pompey's Pillar National Monument, east of Billings, has the only remaining physical evidence (other than mercury deposits in recently excavated latrines at Clatsop and Traveller's Rest) of the Lewis and Clark expedition in the form of William Clark's signature carved into the side of the soft sandstone bluffs. If you haven't seen this remarkable feature, take the opportunity to see it next time you are in the Billings area. It is a marvelous landscape setting. Custer camped just north of the pillar prior to his campaign in the Little Bighorn drainage.

What's the point of all this? The opportunities that should be evident include:

1. Aiding in the formulation of sound management policy.
2. Establishing new relationships with both BLM and the NPS.
3. Networking with other advocacy groups.
4. Advance the public image of landscape architecture.

Finally, for those LAs that can and do engage in the federal planning process, there may be opportunities to provide consulting services. EDAW just was awarded a contract for the planning of Headwaters Forest Reserve NCA in northern California.

First steps for us may include ASLA:

- Offering to facilitate meetings
- Working in consensus building
- Working discussion of alternatives
- Working and networking with other advocacy groups
- Inviting BLM and NPS officials to an upcoming meeting to speak about the planning efforts

For more information on the projects in our chapter area, please access the following project web addresses. Please take time to provide input.

Craters of the Moon – www.id.blm.gov/craters/

Snake River Birds of Prey – www.id.blm.gov/bopnca.html

Pompey's Pillar NM – www.mt.blm.gov/pillarmon/index.html

Upper Missouri Breaks NM – www.mt.blm.gov/ldo/um/index.html

For additional links to the BLM and the Monuments Planning Process, try these addresses:

BLM/NLCS www.blm.gov/nlcs.index.html

BLM Monuments www.wilderness.org/standbylands/monument/

BLM Scoping Process

www.wilderness.org/newsroom/pdf/monuments_scopingprocess.pdf

BLM Planning Process

www.wilderness.org/newsroom/pdf/monument_planning.pdf

*Twenty-two national monuments were established or expanded by President Clinton. Fifteen of the new national monuments are managed by the BLM, while the other seven are being managed by the NPS, FWS, USFS or the Bureau of Reclamation.