

BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NEW MEXICO

PUBLIC LANDS/LEGISLATIVE REPORT

NOVEMBER, 2017

Missed October Report

I apologize for not sending out an October Lands Report. Between attending the TWS conference in Denver and hauling my equines back to Georgia for the winter, I seem to have run out of time. I will do better in the coming months.

TWS Conference

The Wilderness Society (TWS) invited me and two other Back Country Horsemen members, one from Oregon and one from Colorado, to attend a conference in Denver on interacting with the Bureau of Land Management on wilderness and other land management issues. TWS was kind enough to pay our travel and hotel expenses. We learned about the BLM land use planning process, getting BLM to enforce land use restrictions, BLM appeals procedures, the BLM road closing process, and oil and gas leasing. Much of this information is also applicable in dealing with the Forest Service. At the conference I was able to make some valuable contacts with TWS staff and members of other conservation organizations working in New Mexico. I have been added to a couple of listservs used to get information on current issues to people working in the field.

TWS is participating in the ongoing Forest Planning process in New Mexico. All of our national forests are at some stage of preparing revised Forest Plans. As I have discussed in prior Lands Reports and at the State Meeting in September, other than clearing trails, participating in the forest planning process for the national forests in their area is the most important thing BCHNM members can do. I will forward information to you on planning meetings, documents, and deadlines as I receive it.

Military Flights over the Gila

Holloman Air Force Base is proposing to fly 10,000 training missions above the Gila National Forest annually, including low-level flights at 500 feet above ground surface, as well as 1,000 supersonic sorties. The F-16's will also train with air defense systems that drop toxic chaff and 30,000 magnesium flares annually. The proposal will be discussed before the Grant County Commission on November 14 at 6:00 pm. The NM Wilderness Alliance is holding a rally against the proposal at the County building at 5:00 pm that day. For more information, go to its website at nmwild.org and click on "Take Action."

Attacks on National Monuments

The Administration continues to propose revisions to the boundaries and uses of National Monuments. Changes in permitted land uses are proposed for the Organ Mountains and Rio Grande del Norte monuments in NM, although the available details on those changes are limited. A substantial reduction in size is proposed for Bears Ears in Utah and certain other monuments. Attached below is a recent alert from TWS on the monuments:

<https://www.e-activist.com/page/message?mid=4cb0b56b4f384498a9172769dfb074a8>

Additional information is available at nmwild.org.

Communication from Members

I may be in Georgia for the next several months, but I will be just as available to BCHNM members as I was this summer. Please call or e-mail me with information and issues. I can't do my job properly unless I hear from you.

Allen Olson
Public Lands/Legislative Chair
Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico
Cerrillos, NM
Albany, GA
allen@olsonaglaw.com
229-403-0925