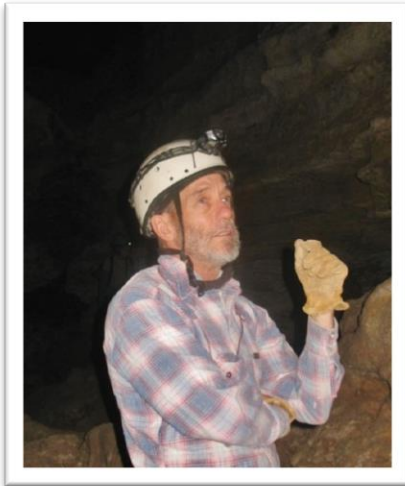


AMERICAN RECREATION COALITION
LEGENDS AWARDS
BLM New Mexico Nomination

Jim Goodbar
National Cave and Karst Specialist
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Introduction: BLM New Mexico is nominating James (Jim) Goodbar for the BLM Legends Award under WO-IB-2016-041. His nomination is supported by Carlsbad Field Manager George MacDonell and New Mexico State Recreation Lead Terry Heslin.

Jim Goodbar is the Senior Cave/Karst Specialist at the Carlsbad Field Office in Southeastern New Mexico and the Washington Office lead for Cave/Karst. He is one of many BLM employees fortunate enough to turn a lifelong passion into a lifetime career. Jim began caving at age 9 with his family in Texas. His parents had always been outdoor enthusiasts but, attendance at a cave grotto meeting one night forever changed their lives and that of their young son.

Jim's first BLM seasonal job opportunity came in 1978 as a recreation technician. Short seasonal jobs with the BLM and Forest Service confirmed his career goals. In 1982, he landed his first permanent job as an Outdoor Recreation Planner at the Roswell Office. As the oil and gas industry boomed, a decision was made to establish an office in Carlsbad. There, Jim worked for six years as a Realty Specialist to accommodate critical staff needs. Eventually, he was able to return to Recreation where his knowledge, research and dedication, resulted in a separate position dedicated solely to caves and karst. He is the agency subject matter expert for caves.

Jim is known nationally and internationally for his caving skills, knowledge and intense passion for the resource. He is an explorer, instructor, author of national cave policy, has served on numerous boards, appeared on television, in magazines, newspapers and all forms of media promoting public knowledge about caves and cave stewardship. Jim was also the inspiration for a character in "Blind Descent," a book by Nevada Barr. In real life, Jim was one of the rescuers involved in the multi-day rescue of a woman from Lechuguilla Cave in 1991. He truly is a living legend in the world of caves.

Award Criteria Narrative:

1. Quantifiable improvements in Recreation Opportunities

Jim Goodbar has been a permanent fixture in the Bureau of Land Management's Carlsbad Field Office for nearly 35 years. He is responsible for bringing attention to caves and giving them proper respect as a natural resource. Jim is the national expert for caves and karst. He has located, mapped, surveyed and inventoried and documented hundreds of caves and karst features.

Jim was a pioneer in the enactment of the Federal Cave Resource Protection Act of 1988. He collaborated with other federal land management agencies, drafted policy and traveled to Washington DC on numerous occasions to ensure this important legislation would be recognized and given proper consideration.

Jim would be the first to point out how all resources affect caves – groundwater, vegetation, fire, wildlife and weather. He has conducted dye tracing studies to determine water flow and impacts to cave systems. Jim procures funding and awards annual grants to attract scientists, researchers and others to gather and provide extensive data on BLM caves. White Nose Syndrome (WNS) in bats has consumed much of his time during the past decade - assisting researchers, drafting and testing protocols to help prevent spread of the fungus, and advising field offices on the most current and effective practices when dealing with WNS. He is in the process of drafting an updated cave management handbook and continues to be an instructor whenever called upon. He passed on his love of the outdoors and caving to his grown son and continues to focus on youth outreach.

2. Reliance upon partnerships with for-profit and non-profit organizations in the private sector

Caving is a team sport – cavers rely on each other for safety, knowledge and technique. Jim works with cavers and caving grottos locally and across the country. The Pecos Valley Grotto in Carlsbad hold gate keys and leads trips into some local BLM caves. This interaction creates cohesiveness among cavers and the BLM. It also ensures responsible caving and protection of the resource. Jim has strong partnerships with other agencies such as the Forest Service and National Park Service. He has provided cave and karst training to many of their employees. The name Jim Goodbar is well known among the massive membership of the National Speleological Society. A former board member, Jim is an icon among this close-knit caving community. Young cavers often have a look of awe when they meet him and feel very special when he takes time to speak with them one-on-one. Cavers nationally and internationally often stop by the Carlsbad Field Office when visiting the area in hopes of getting to visit with Jim Goodbar – a caving legend they may have only seen photos of and read about. The educational institutions that Jim works with are too numerous to mention. He consults with professors and students nationally and internationally on a regular basis. He is a well-respected peer whether he is working with a group of PhD's or a troop of Boy Scouts.

3. Use of creative solutions and programs, and demonstrated efforts to share news of creative solutions within the agency

Jim has taken cave outreach and education to a whole new level. In the early 70's he had a vision of creating a portable cave that could be constructed and taken "on the road" to teach the public (especially youth) about the fragile environment of this unique resource. He bought massive amounts of chicken wire, plaster, spray foam, cardboard, paint and whatever he could find to construct a life like cave that people could walk through. It even had a section with running water. This exhibit worked well for several years but, the logistics of hauling and setting up were a challenge. Two trucks with trailers were required for hauling and set up required several people and at least a full day.

As technology evolved, Jim began exploring more portable options for a cave exhibit. Inspired by huge inflatable bounce houses and other inflatable party rentals for children, he researched the possibilities for a portable cave made with similar technology. After years of research and collaboration with various companies, BLM's portable cave exhibit came to life. It is inflatable (however you never refer to it as the inflatable or blow-up cave around Jim) and has three passageways complete with formations, bats, interpretive flip-up signs and air flow. Entrances are crawl-in or walk-in and an inconspicuous flap opens up to accommodate visitor with accessibility needs.

The new cave can be deflated, folded and loaded onto one trailer with the generator. Since its creation in early 2000, the cave exhibit has had more than 100,000 visitors go through it all over the country. The maiden voyage was a trek from New Mexico to the East Coast for a scout jamboree. BLM offices all over the West have hosted the exhibit with great success. The National Wild Turkey Federation requested it to be set up at a convention in Tennessee. Thanks to Jim's vision and desire to share his passion for caves and caving, thousands and thousands of children and adults have experienced the cave exhibit. He is most rewarded with knowledge that some will become inspired by their visit to the cave exhibit and perhaps follow in his footsteps.

4. Community support for the work of this individual, as reflected in awards, roles on community boards and committees, etc.

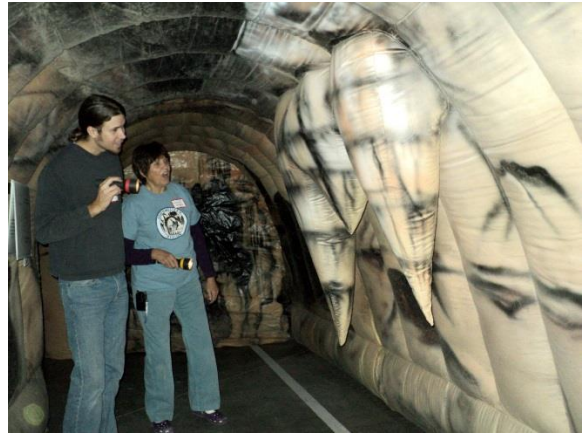
Jim Goodbar is known among his colleagues and friends as the "Cave Guy." Small in stature, he has gone where many have never gone before. However, he is also known for his strength – an Iron Man competitor, red carded wildland firefighter, cyclist, swimmer, runner, equestrian and Civil War re-enactor.

Jim was instrumental in establishing the National Cave and Karst Research Institute in Carlsbad. He served on the board of directors for several terms. He served in several high positions within the National Speleological Society and has authored many white papers on caves and cave related issues. He has a long term partnership with the National Outdoor Leadership School and many institutions of higher learning.

If you want to know anything about caves, caving (it is not referred to as spelunking because real cavers rescue spelunkers) or anything related to caves, the Cave Guy is the one to contact. Whether you are face-to-face or on the phone, his passion for caves will be evident.

Jim Goodbar in BLM's Endless Cave giving a pre-restoration briefing to volunteers. Carlsbad cavers Aaron Stockton and Phyllis Boneau admire the new cave exhibit.

Photos by Deanna Younger



Jim Goodbar smiles as he observes short-faced bear bones in a cave. Photos by Gosia Allison-Kosior