

BLM'S 2019 *MAKING A DIFFERENCE* NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARD WINNERS

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

ROY THORNTON, BLM COTTONWOOD FIELD OFFICE, COTTONWOOD, ID: Roy Thornton, an 80-year old native Idahoan, has been a year-round volunteer camp host for nine years at several of BLM's Cottonwood Field Office Recreation Sites and Campgrounds, most recently at the popular Hammer Creek Recreation Site and Campground. Hammer Creek is one of Cottonwood's most active day use areas, with boat launch facilities and campgrounds on the Lower Salmon River, serving approximately 53,000 people and more than 11,000 vehicles representing 30 states in 2018. In 2018, Roy volunteered over 2,080 hours, educating visitors about the area recreation site and the campground rules for a dozen campsites, providing fire information and river flow levels as well as routine maintenance. He volunteers relatively independently at this site, and is often the only BLM contact who interacts with members of the public. Prior to Roy's arrival, this site generated approximately \$3,500 per year. In 2018, it generated approximately \$10,176. The increase in revenue and permit compliance is a direct result of Roy's friendly and welcoming personality as well as his ability to get along with all types of user groups. Roy will loan his tools to fix things, lend his air compressor or battery jumper cables to start vehicles, or give campers a ride to town. His love for the public lands is only exceeded by his passion to ensure that all users have a safe and enjoyable experience.

BLAKE RAMOS-MANZ, SERGIO RAMOS-MANZ, AND DYLAN BRENNAN, RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE NATIONAL MONUMENT, TAOS, NM: Blake, Sergio, and Dylan make up the core volunteer team that helps staff and manage the Wild Rivers Recreation Area located within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, at the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Red Rivers. They manage five campgrounds, 27 campsites, and over 36 miles of trail. In early January 2019, the Wild Rivers Recreation Area received a huge amount of snow. These three volunteers plowed over 13 miles of Wild River Backcountry Byway and continued performing daily rounds to ensure the protection of the resource and safety of the visitors. One day they observed an unusual track leading into the Big Arsenic Campground. The tracks appeared to be from a passenger vehicle, low to the ground and pushing through the snow like a plow. Although it was late in the day, the three volunteers decided to investigate. They discovered an elderly couple with three grandchildren stranded, snow piled over the hood of their vehicle. With no food, no water, and no winter clothes, their situation was becoming dire when the volunteers arrived. The volunteers spent almost an hour digging the vehicle out of more than a foot of fresh snow on the road, then broke trail to get the stranded group out of the gorge and back on solid roads. Without Blake, Sergio, and Dylan's courage and strong character, this scenario could have resulted in a far different outcome.

THOMAS PARKINSON AND PETER KEARNS, GRAND CANYON-PARASHANT NATIONAL MONUMENT, AZ: Thomas Parkinson and Peter Kearns have served as BLM volunteers at Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument for the past seven years. The Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument has a small staff consisting of both National Park Service and BLM employees, managed under Service First authority. Tom and Pete are important members of the team. They

have improved range operations by installing nearly 20 wildlife escape ramps in far-flung cattle stock-tanks and making spot repairs of fence-lines. They annually retrieve and deploy more than 10 weather, dark sky, and bat acoustic stations, which requires expertise in assembly, maintenance, and site camouflage. Tom and Pete help visitors navigate the Parashant National Monument and assist ranchers stranded by flat tires or impaired vehicles. Tom and Pete also constructed a portable classroom exhibit demonstrating watersheds and topography for the Interpretation Division. Tom and Pete contributed 400 volunteer hours in 2018 to multiple programs on the Parashant National Monument, including grazing, natural resources, recreation, and interpretation.

GROUP EXCELLENCE

PEDAL UNITED CHAPTER, INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BIKING ASSOCIATION, BLM BILLINGS FIELD OFFICE, BILLINGS, MT: The Acton Recreation Area near Billings, Montana, has evolved into a diverse network of mountain bike trails utilized by riders of all ages and abilities, due to a partnership between Pedal United and the BLM Billings Field Office. Over the past four years, Pedal United volunteers have developed more than 28 miles of mountain bike trails and a trailhead facility. In early 2018, Pedal United completed construction of 10.1 miles of new trail in less than four months. Since 2015, Pedal United has provided more than 1,400 volunteer hours for the development of the Acton Recreation Area mountain bike system. The group, in partnership with the Joliet, Montana High School Future Farmers of America Chapter and the Montana Conservation Corps, constructed three mini cattle guards for use along the mountain bike trail system in 2016 and four more in 2017. Pedal United built an additional three ride-overs in 2018, and will install them in 2019. In the summer of 2018, Pedal United helped host the Big Sky State Games mountain bike race, Acton's first mountain bike event, with 54 competitors. Pedal United members have volunteered and worked tirelessly to improve mountain biking opportunities at the BLM Acton Recreation Area. Their efforts will continue in 2019, in part through a new assistance agreement with BLM to improve access roads and develop primitive campsites in the area.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

WALT AND KATHY HORSFALL, GILA BOX RIPARIAN NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA, SAFFORD, AZ: For 13 years, Walt and Kathy Horsfall have served as site hosts for the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area (NCA), located near Safford Arizona. Stationed at the Riverview Campground, they provide a full time, dedicated presence for eight months each year. Walt and Kathy maintain facilities that include a popular campground, several day-use picnic areas, a wildlife viewing area, a river rafting launch and take-out area, and a large group picnic area. Walt and Kathy often went beyond basic site host requirements, providing information tailored to visitors' interests. In addition to their daily duties, Walt and Kathy played an integral role in the field office's route inventory and evaluation process, collected data on hundreds of miles of roads around the Gila Box Riparian NCA, and supported and supervised two youth conservation crews each year. They most recently worked to install new signage throughout the Gila Box Riparian NCA. Since 2007, the Horsfalls have served as site hosts for eight months every year. After this season, the team will have surpassed 20,000 hours of volunteer service, a

value of almost \$500,000. The Horsfall's contributions foster visitors' increased understanding and appreciation of Gila Box Riparian NCA's natural resources and the value of public lands.

TRACY GREENWOOD, BLM MOTHER LODGE FIELD OFFICE, EL DORADO HILLS, CA: Tracy Greenwood has single-handedly managed and operated the Briceburg Visitor Center at the Merced River Recreation Area near Yosemite National Park each summer since June 2000. Tracy manages everything from ordering books from Yosemite Conservancy, preparing the Visitor Center building each season, stocking and decorating, inventorying sales and accounting for the educational books and materials, and end-of-year reporting to the Mother Lode Field Office each September. Tracy came to the Mariposa area in 2000 with her husband, a BLM River Ranger. She offers visitors first-hand advice about a variety of activities and attractions based on her own extensive explorations of the Yosemite Region including rock climbing in Yosemite, rafting the Merced River, and hiking and backpacking in the Sierra high country. Tracy has weathered myriad challenges over the years. These include major fires, mudslides and rock falls, drownings, a multiple fatality car accident near the Visitor Center, and numerous campers calling at all hours at her on-site BLM residence for "emergency" assistance. Tracy's tireless service truly promotes BLM's mission to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

PHIL AND CHRISCINDA JAMISON, BLM NORTHEASTERN STATES DISTRICT, MILWAUKEE, WI: The Jamisons have supported the Wild Horse and Burro Program in the Eastern States Office as BLM volunteers for fifteen years. They have promoted the Wild Horse and Burro Program as media contacts and program ambassadors; assisted with adoption events; fostered and found homes for dozens of Mustangs; conducted routine compliance inspections, and responded whenever an animal was in need. They provided support to other local adopters, and served as a valuable resource to anyone interested in adopting. In 2014, the Jamisons opened Old Family Farm Trail Rides, a trail riding business using only Mustangs, in Macks Creek, Missouri. They have led over 350 trail rides annually. Their promotional materials highlight that all the horses are Mustangs, and the business receives extensive local media attention. The Jamisons heightened local awareness of the BLM Wild Horse and Burro program, provided a home for numerous animals, and rendered valuable assistance to the Northeastern States District, truly "making a difference" for the BLM.