Gems Along the Erie Canal 2011
A Final Word from Syracuse...

By Cathy Patterson, Show Chair

With mixed emotions, I have left the sand and sun of Florida and am back north with my home club. Already daffodils and tulips are blooming and by the time you get here, everything will be “coming up roses.”

Your 2011 EFMLS/AFMS Convention and Show will be here, July 6-10, before you know it. We have just about 50 retailers and 11 wholesale dealers in the July 9-10 show, and, with your help, we are still hoping for 70 to 80 exhibits. Plus there are lots of opportunities to discover new things in this part of the country. Show time is time to socialize with friends new and old.

With the good help of Matt Charsky, EFMLS Show Coordinator, we will have a 12’ running length of cases from the Lillian Turner Estate. Lillian was the key person responsible for the first U.S. Postal mineral stamps. From her collection, we will have some stunning rutile crystals, some as large as 200 carats, and some wonderful replicas of noted diamonds.

A late addition to our speakers roster, which should benefit scores of clubs, is a presentation by John Washburn at 9 AM, July 9 at the Ramada Inn, just before the show opens. John will provide a tell all on how to add $2000 to ($6000 in their case) to your show revenue with just a little extra work. Now, who wouldn’t like to have that extra cash to play with? Like everything else, with costs going through the roof, this should be of great interest to most clubs that have an annual show. John promises his talk will be short, sweet, and to the point and he will have everybody out so you all can get to the show on time.

In addition don’t forget the most important ALAA meeting scheduled for Wednesday July 6 at the Ramada Inn at 7PM. You’ll want to know what’s going on regarding our ability to rockhound around the country.

If you have not yet done it, review your information packet or go on line and download it. Make sure you secure your room reservations as Syracuse is a vacationland and once school gets out the motel situation tightens and lots of rooms will be booked. The balance of your forms including the one for the banquet and field trips, have a cut off date of June 1. See your packet for mailing information.

Before signing off, I promise, we have scores of club members hard at work to make this exciting 2011 event happen. Ours is a special show and convention with several neat bonuses including lectures and workshops as well as field trips after the show closes. So do yourself a great big favor and come see what beautiful upstate NY has in store for you. We sure expect that you will have a great Rockhound time while doing your home club proud. See y’all soon.

Your Host Friends in Syracuse

(Complete information about the convention including motels and registration form may be obtained by visiting the AFMS website <www.amfed.org/show2011.htm> or the Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse website < www.gmss.us/gemshow.htm >).
The AFMS
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Seven Regional
Federations

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FROM THE TOP!
by Bob Miller, President

Summer’s coming.

Mother nature has been unkind so far this year with late snows, storms, tornados and cool weather, but as I see wildflowers starting to come up (and the morel mushrooms, yum!) there must be better days ahead.

This brings thoughts of being able to plan for collecting trips again and bring home the can’t leave, ‘leave-er rites’. While checking on last years tools don’t forget to look for your safety glasses. A little scratched?; new ones are real inexpensive and available at many discount stores. A couple of dollars brings a real investment. An erroneous chip could make you life miserable for some time or worse permanent.

I would like to urge all of the clubs to send a delegate to the AFMS/EFMLS convention in Syracuse NY this year. This is a good way for the clubs to learn what actually goes on “behind the scenes” instead of hearing the results second hand or in small portions in the newsletters. While you are at it why not purchase a couple of tickets for the endowment fund drawing. There are a lot of donated prizes to be given away this year. Clubs could purchase some and if won, the prizes could be used for door or other special prizes at a club meeting.

Meanwhile I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the convention. Have a safe summer collecting and I hope you find the “special one” you are looking for.

Cheerz,
Bob

AFMS Contest News

All- American Award - Entries have been received from your regional federation chairpersons and the AFMS judges are now busy evaluating the entries. Results will be announced at the AFMS Awards Banquet in Syracuse on Saturday, July 9th. It would be delightful to be able to present the awards to all entrants at that time.

Whether you entered the competition this year or not, NOW is the time for you to begin gathering photographs, newspaper articles, etc. about your club events for this year (2011) so that you can easily assemble your club’s year review for submission in the competition next year.

Questions? Contact John Washburn, AFMS chair at <jrwashburn3@att.net>.

Bulletin Editors Contest - The top entries in each eligible category were forwarded to the AFMS judges in March. Each has now finished their work and all the entries have been returned to the AFMS chairperson, Linda Jaeger. Results will be announced at Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters on Sunday, July 10 during the AFMS Convention in Syracuse, NY.

If your club has a bulletin, do consider encouraging your editor to enter the contest next year (2011 bulletins and articles). Even if your bulletin does not earn top honors, the suggestions you’ll gather can be invaluable for your club. In addition, there are several categories for written articles and poetry. What a terrific way to say “thank you” to your hard working members!

Linda will have copies of the award winning articles for you to purchase at the breakfast or by mail afterwards. Details will be in the September AFMS Newsletter.

Questions? Contact Linda Jaeger, AFMS Chair at <ljgralg@aol.com>.

Website Contest - The top entries from the regional website competitions have been forwarded on to the AFMS judges who are now making their evaluations and writing suggestions and comments. Results will be announced at Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters on Sunday, July 10 during the AFMS Convention in Syracuse, NY. Our entries continue to improve! If your club has a website, do consider entering the competition next year. Even if your site does not earn top honors, the suggestions you’ll gather can be invaluable for your club.

Questions? Contact Phyllis George, AFMS chair at <pgeorge4@comcast.net>.

Full results of each of these competitions will be printed in the September AFMS Newsletter.
The prizes just keep rolling in and the excitement is building. I can’t wait to announce the winners of the thirty-three fabulous prizes that have been donated to the 2011 Endowment Fund Drawing when we get together for the AFMS Convention in Syracuse this July.

Although you need not be present at the Awards Banquet to win, having you there and being able to hand you your prize would be icing on the cake! Visit <www.amfed.org/show2011.htm> for more details.

Here are the latest prizes.

#29 Brazilian Agate Pendant set in sterling silver. The pendant is 1 1/2” long and 1 1/4” wide and was donated by Kitty and Marve Starbuck it has an estimated value of $75, (MWF).

#30 Opal Ring set in sterling silver. It was donated by Rose McArthur it has an estimated value of $100. (NFMS).

#31 Montana Agate Pendant wire-wrapped in gold fill. Donated by Cynthia and Donald Kelman the pendant has an estimated value of $120. (MWF).

#32 Amethyst Pendant and Earring set. Donated by SCFMS Vice President Virginia Adian, the set has an estimated value of $130. (SCFMS).

#33 Aventurine & Agate Pendant and Earring set. Aventurine and sterling silver beads with an agate pendant. Donated by Earlene Schooler of Schooler’s Mineral & Fossils, the set has an estimated value of $60. (MW).
The second student is still being selected.

State University.

Montana Martin, Students selected are:

The honorary recipient is Midwest Federation.

Kevin Eaton, is majoring in Geoenvironmental Studies. Students selected are:

Montana Martin, MA, Archaeology, Illinois State University.

The second student is still being selected.

AFMS Scholarship Foundation Honorees
by Dee Holland, Scholarship Foundation President

Our six participating Regional Federations have named their honorary award recipients for 2011 and all but two of the students who will receive the $4,000 monetary grants have been selected. We're delighted to share their names and fields of interest with you.

California Federation
Honorary Award recipients are Dee Holland and Shirley Leeson of LaMesa, CA. Both are AFMS Past Presidents and continue to be involved with many rockhound activities.

The two students selected attend San Diego State University Students: Both students are enrolled in the Dept. of Geological Sciences at San Diego State University, San Diego, CA.

Tom Colby, is working on fault zone architecture of the Copper Basin Fault, , Picacho State Recreation area on border of California and Yuma, Arizona. He is completing work on his MS.

Erin Voyles is using remotely sensed images along with field work to map the regional extent of the Taylor Lake Fault, from Picacho to Yuma, Arizona. She is currently working on her MS degree.

Eastern Federation
Honorary recipient is Dr. William L. Blewett, Dept. of Geography, Earth Science, Shippensburg, University of Pennsylvania.

The two students selected attend Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania

Veronica Woodlief is majoring in Geoenvironmental Studies.

Kevin Eaton is majoring in Geoenvironmental Studies, BS was in Meteorology.

Midwest Federation
The honorary recipient is Dr. Michael Want, Dickson Mounds Museum, Lewistown, IL.

Students selected are: Montana Martin, MA, Archaeology, Illinois State University.

The second student is still being selected.

Northwest Federation:
Honorary recipient is Dr. Paul J. Bybee, Utah Valley University, Orem, UT. Dr. Bybee was a 1990 AFMS Scholarship recipient.

Joshua Lively, University of Utah, Salt Lake City is a first year MS student. His thesis is on the evolutionary history and paleobiogeography of banded turtles of the Early Cretaceous through the Eocene periods.

The second student is yet to be announced.

Rocky Mountain Federation
Honorary recipient is Dr. Mike Nelson, Division of Science, Truman State University of MO, retired.

Deborah Wagner, is working on her MS in Paleontology, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado

Allen Tate is working on his MS in Paleontology, South Dakota School of Mines, Rapid City South Dakota.

South Central Federation
Honorary recipient is William Heierman, Wharton Co. Junior College, Sugarland, TX.

Lindsay Olindo, Ph.D student in Geological Sciences at the University of Texas, at Austin. She is working on evolution of stream channels by looking at how bedload transport is correlated to topography, mineralogy and related factors.

James Crane, Ph.D. student at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His thesis is on the effect of biofilms and biogenic gases on the elastic properties of soils with ramifications to the stability of the levee systems along the Mississippi River.

We expect the last two students to be named shortly and will bring you their names, schools and their dissertations in a future issue of the AFMS Newsletter.

Please remember that your donations to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation are what make these grants happen. Only the interest from funds invested in secure accounts can be used for these grants --- and with interest rates continuing to flounder, your contributions now are more valuable to us than ever. Thank you for your support.

Having Fun – Junior Activities
by Jim Brace-Thompson, Jr. Activities Chair

Head for the Show!
With the annual AFMS Show & Convention fast approaching in Syracuse, my juniors’ message is short and to-the-point this month. Simply stated: Head for the Show—and take the kids with you! I especially urge you to encourage any junior members within driving distance to enter displays. At last year’s AFMS Show, we had no junior exhibits.

Thus, we were unable to present the Lillian Turner Junior Award for an outstanding junior exhibit. The award consists of a $100 Series “E” Bond along with a ribbon and mineral specimen presented at the Awards Banquet. In conjunction with the AFMS Uniform Rules Committee chair, I’ll be selecting the Outstanding Junior by determining the highest-scoring competitive junior exhibit. In the event no juniors are entered in competition, a junior case in non-competition will be chosen by two persons appointed by the URC chair.

Also, I’ve been invited by the AFMS Show committee to host a 45-minute “junior activities discussion forum” during the Show. Rather than go it alone, I’ve invited Darryl Powell (also known as Diamond Dan) to co-host it with me. Time and room to be announced, but it looks like it may be 4:00 PM Saturday at the Fairgrounds. We invite anyone with an interest in juniors activities who will be in Syracuse to share in what we hope will prove to be both informative and fun!

Exchange Bulletins
from Ye Olde Ed

If you’re not already doing so, consider sending your club bulletin to your regional federation officers and editor, the AFMS officers and editor plus a lot of club editors via e-mail.

I realize that Debra at my small post office isn’t too happy with this suggestion – after all, she’s there to dispense stamps and deliver mail, and the fate of this wonderful resource is certainly being threatened as we increase our use of e-mail, but the bottom line is that using electronic delivery does save your club money! And that’s important in an economy that seems to feature a shrinking dollar.

In addition to the federation newsletter, I also edit my local club bulletin - 18 pages per month. By sending issues out via e-mail, I save $1.09 per copy / $10.90 per year per copy by using e-mail for exchanges. I especially urge you to encourage your officers and editor to send your club bulletin to your regional federation officers and editor – 18 pages per month. By doing so, you save your club money and you prove to be both informative and fun!

AFMS Newsletter – June, 2011
Chocolate, Coffee and Eggs

Chocolate, coffee, and eggs all used to be “bad” for us. Then, they were “good” for us. Next, they went back to being bad. Fortunately, the last time I checked, they are now on and hopefully will stay on (assuming moderate consumption) the good list. Safety rules are another matter. Safety rules do not waffle forth and back as to whether or not they are good for us. It has always been and always will be good and proper for us to wear our safety goggles when hammering rocks. It has always been and always will be good for us to let others know our whereabouts when we go collecting; to bring a first-aid kit; to keep our tools in good shape; to wear proper attire for the task at hand; to handle acids with the utmost caution; and - well, I could go on but I think you have the general idea.

It is indeed true that things change. For example, hammer metallurgy will improve, but it will never be wise to use a nail driving hammer for hammering rocks. Different types of hammers are designed to do different things. Nail hammer metallurgy will improve but the hammer will still only be designed to hit nails, not rocks. The steel in hammers used to drive nails is not hardened the way the steel in rock hammers is hardened. To use the wrong hammer is to risk certain damage to the hammer but more importantly risk injury to ourselves.

Glove material will improve, goggles will improve, chisels will improve, diamond drills will improve. Our hands however will always need protection and so will our eyes, toes, bare arms, and so on. The technology will change but for the foreseeable future there will be a continuing need to protect ourselves.

We sometimes think of risks as not applying to us. Here in Maine we may think of rattle snakes, scorpions and old mine shafts as dangers for those folks who do their collecting way out west. Well, let me set the record straight. While the only scorpions we see in this state are usually encased in clear glass or plastic display domes, we should be mindful of the fact that the New England states do indeed have their share of dangerous snakes, including rattlers. One can also find extremely dangerous mine shafts, adits, loose talus slopes as well as shear rock walls and cliffs. Mine shafts and adits are never wise to explore. If you have ever seen any of those Discovery Channel or National Geographic programs about old mine, cave or similar underground exploration, you will have, no doubt, noted the most elaborate and extensive preparations needed for those explorations. Such explorations are best left to the professionals. The dangers are very real and the rules for working with, in and around them do indeed apply to us. Your safety should be of the utmost concern. Your safety matters.

For this month’s safety refresher please see the September 2006 issue of the EFMLS News for Bill Klose’s fine article on hammer safety and maintenance.

Stay well and be safe - your safety matters.

Regional Federation Conventions

Here are the dates I have for upcoming Regional Federation Conventions. You’ll notice that there are still a few holes in the calendar for 2012 (and one for 2011).

Please take a minute to notify me as soon as your federation selects its convention date so that we can bet it on the calendar and avoid conflicts with other regional conventions.

AFMS Convention Schedule

All events at Ramada Inn unless noted.

Wednesday, July 6
2 pm - AFMS Uniform Rules Meeting
7 pm - American Lands Access Association Meeting

Thursday, July 7
8:30 am - AFMS Meeting registration
9:00 AM - AFMS Annual Meeting - AFMS Scholarship Foundation meeting immediately following.
12:30 pm - Presidents’ Luncheon - (open to everyone)
4:30 pm - AFMS Cracker Barrel - Eric Canal Park, Camillus

Friday, July 8
8:00 am - Convention Registration
10:00 am - Show set up, NY State Fairgrounds
6:30 pm - EFMLS Meeting Registration
6:30 pm - AFMS/EFMLS Awards Banquet Social Hour
7:00 pm - EFMLS Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 9
10:00 am - Show Opens - NY State Fairgrounds
200 pm - EFMLS Annual Auction - Fairgrounds
6:00 pm - AFMS/EFMLS Awards Banquet Social Hour
7:00 pm - Awards Banquet dinner

Sunday, July 10
8:00 am - Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters. FREE for those staying at the Ramada Inn
10:00 am - Show Opens - NY State Fairgrounds
4 pm - Show closes

Chocolate, Coffee and Eggs

by Elery Borow, Safety Chair, from EFMLS News, May 2011

Chocolate, coffee, and eggs all used to be “bad” for us. Then, they were “good” for us. Next, they went back to being bad. Fortunately, the last time I checked, they are now on and hopefully will stay on (assuming moderate consumption) the good list. Safety rules are another matter. Safety rules do not waffle forth and back as to whether or not they are good for us. It has always been and always will be good and proper for us to wear our safety goggles when hammering rocks. It has always been and always will be good for us to let others know our whereabouts when we go collecting; to bring a first-aid kit; to keep our tools in good shape; to wear proper attire for the task at hand; to handle acids with the utmost caution; and - well, I could go on but I think you have the general idea.

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Does Your Society Exist?
EMBRACING THE ONLINE WORLD
By: Jim Brace-Thompson
from CFMS Newsletter, May 2011
I’ve read some depressing articles lately. One set was best summed up in an article entitled “Out of the Wilderness.” It was about a decline in outdoor activities. Did you know that compared to 1987, Americans spend one-fourth less time engaged in outdoor pursuits such as hunting, fishing, camping, and visiting parks? The National Academy of Science has called this a “fundamental and pervasive shift.”

The second depressing set of articles revolves around another documented decline: Americans are less likely to be involved in civic and community organizations than at any time in our history. Some folks have lamented our “disintegrating collective bonds,” with people less likely to participate in organized groups, such as the PTA or Kiwanis, or even in Friday night poker or bridge games, bowling, or community picnics.

One study has pegged both declines directly to the emergence in the 1980s of widespread use of desktop computers and the rise of the Internet. Declines in outdoor activities, for instance, have averaged one percent a year in per capita participation, a decline that mirrors the rise in Internet usage, videogames, online movie viewing, etc. (And gas prices haven’t helped much, either!) We increasingly live in a world where people are insulated and seek entertainment and connections sitting in front of a machine, “friending” people they may never meet via online “virtual” communities.

I don’t believe we can fight these trends, but it’s worth a try, and one way is by embracing rather than fighting that third trend. My own son is a perfect example of our new generation: born in the 1980s and having lived his entire life in an “Internet world,” if he can’t find it online, it doesn’t exist. By this standard, does your hobby exist? I’m always surprised when I turn to club directories of regional federations. Time and again, I find undeliverable outdated email addresses—or I find no email address at all. I find local society web addresses that are inactive. And some active ones aren’t much help—some haven’t been updated in years, some contain inactive links or incorrect contact info, or no contact info. And a really big thing: some lack photos showing real people having real fun.

We can’t turn back the clock. With increasing numbers of folks turning to computers and “virtual communities” of interest, what has your society done to build up its electronic profile that would make it vibrant and attractive and filled with info about this great hobby of ours? Is it your society’s web site easy to find? Is it a “destination” site that’s chock full of info and fun images that invite a viewer in? If not, a place to begin is by examining the rules of the CFMS and AFMS web site contest to see the sorts of features that make for an excellent site. Connect your society webmaster to those webmasters who have competed in the contest and connect them to your regional federation contest chair for advice and suggestions. (If you don’t have a society webmaster, appoint one—now!) In today’s world, the image you project on a computer screen is as important as the atmosphere you provide at your monthly meeting, workshops, field trips, and other events. It’s the first step—the doorway in—for so many of today’s prospective members. We reverse those “fundamental and pervasive” shifts away from outdoor activities and civic engagement? I don’t know. But the first step is clear: make sure they know we exist!

Just A Moment
by Ellery Borow, EFMLS ACROY Chair, from EFMLS News, May 2011
Just a moment, yes, just a moment is all it takes to be a great candidate for Club Rockhound of the Year (ACROY). I’m sure clubs have within their memberships those dedicated folks who year after year, time after time support our activities. We, here on the ACROY committee, urge clubs to submit the names of those dedicated folks to become their club’s Rockhound of the Year. Yes, I’m sure every club has such dedicated folks. But then, let us not forget the other ways members support our clubs. Many of the ways our clubs are supported can be brief, fleeting moments of inspired and inspiring goodwill.

Just a moment is all it took for the following examples I’ve witnessed: An impossibly busy show chair is racing about the hall trying to be everywhere and do everything. This person stopped dead in their tracks to spend precious time to help a kid find what information they needed for the club’s treasure hunt game at the show. A club librarian who was valiantly trying to log in all the books coming and going before the meeting room closed for the evening somehow managed to find time to help a member with their research question. A normally dour and grumpy club member suddenly brightens when asked by another member about a long-closed collecting site. The member asking the question knew it would brighten the day of the usually dour member if they were asked about their long-ago collecting adventures. All of these inspiring events took just a moment, yet no doubt made a great impression, or taught us all a valuable lesson.

Surely, you have your own stories to tell of similar kind acts which not only support the hobby but each other as well. Truth be told, such kindnesses were probably not one of a kind events but instead glimpses into truly dedicated individuals—ones who also deserve to be recognized as your club’s nominee for Club Rockhound of the Year. Let’s hear it for these good folks who help in either the grand or small (yet still grand) ways. Let’s hear about your club’s good folks!

The rules—clubs may submit the name of one person (or couple) per year as well the name of one junior. Along with the name of your candidate, please send me a brief, 75 words or less, write-up of their story in supporting your club. Any club member may make a submission for their club. Please find my address under Club Rockhound of the Year toward the back of this newsletter.

Thanks, and hope to hear from your club soon.

On Vacation!
from Ye Olde Editor
Time to recharge your batteries!
See you after vacation.
The next AFMS Newsletter will be published in September—deadline is August 1.

In the meantime, have a safe and productive summer and use some of the time to write an article for your local club bulletin! Your editor and fellow members will be delighted with your effort.

The AFMS Team
Carolyn, Sir Barkley Bigfoot and Caesar aka Sir Belch-a-lot
Here is the listing of the people who have agreed to serve as Committee Chairs for 2010 – 11. Please feel free to contact these people if you need information, have questions or would like to share ideas with them.

All American Club
John Washburn
<jrwashburn3 at att.net>

AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year
Loretta Ogden
<Florkr1 at aol.com>

AFMS Newsletter
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Conservation and Legislation
John Martin
<smaart at antelecom.net>

Endowment Fund
Pam Hecht
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Financial Investment
Lauren Williams
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Historian
Shirley Leeson
<shirleyleson at cox.net>

International Relations
Bob Jones
<jonesb52 at gmail.com>

Inter-Regional Field Trip
Doug True
<drtruefossils at yahoo.com>

Judges Training Seminar
Dee Holland
<beauholland at centurytel.net>

Junior Programs
Jim Brace-Thompson
<jbraceth at roadrunner.com>

Long Range Planning
Emerson Tucker
<emersont at suddenlink.net>

Name Badges
Frank Mullaney
<rockyfiv at aol.com>

Nominating
Emerson Tucker
(see Long Range Planning)

Parliamentarian
Dee Holland (See Judges Training)

Past President’s Advisory
Emerson Tucker
(see Long Range Planning)

Photography
Steve Weinberger (see Bylaws Revisory)

Program Competition
Marge Collins
<margaret at qtm.net>

Publications
B. Jay Bowman
<bjb at wildblue.net>

AFMS Scholarship Foundation
Dee Holland, President
(see Endowment Fund)
Bob Miller, Vice President
Ruth Bailey, Secretary
Jon Spunaugle, Treasurer

Public Relations
Fran Sick
<ednfran at epix.net>

Safety
Owen Martin
<owenmartin at yahoo.com>

Show Consultant
Bob Livingston
<gemguy at verizon.net>

Uniform Rules
B. Jay Bowman
(see Publications)

URC Eligibility Files
Anne Cook
<secretary at amfed.org>

Ways and Means
Marve Starbuck
<greenstone at iserv.net>

Website/Webmaster
Marty Hart
<webmaster at amfed.org>

Web Site Contest
Phyllis George
<pgeorge4 at comcast.net>
I have been asked “What good does it do for me to write to my congressman/senator about a Wilderness Act (or other legislation) that is for another state.” Well, Tom Noe, an ALAA member from South Bend, IN sent me an article he wrote that is a good answer to the question.

After you read the following article by Tom I hope you will be inspired to join with other ALAA members and rockhounds to write a letter to your congressman no matter where you live. A good place to start is with the “Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act” (HR1581). The Bill provides for the release of over 6.72M acres of Wilderness Study Area the BLM deems are not suitable for a wilderness designation and should be returned to Multiple Use designation. ALAA supports this bill. To learn more about this Bill and get a sample letter to send to your congressman go to the ALAA web site – www.amlands.org. On the ALAA home page click on “Active Legislation” in the left hand column, then check out the links under “Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act.” You will find a summary and full text of the Bill, a list of supporters and status of the Bill (which is currently in committee.) This is a prime time for us, for you to have an affect on legislation. You will also find a link to where your Elected House Member can be found and on legislation. You will also find a link to where you can find the sample letter for you to send.

New Jersey Legislators Vote on Wyoming’s Public Lands!

By Tom Noe

That’s right, they do. And so do legislators from Rhode Island, Florida, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Kansas, South Carolina and 43 other states. They all vote on Wyoming’s public lands. Every senator and every representative of each and every US state casts a vote on public lands legislation. That’s the way Congress works. These are federal laws, not state laws. It doesn’t matter that nearly all public lands are located out West. Every legislator in the US Congress votes on public land bills.

Now, let’s ask ourselves: “Who gets more constituent letters about land-closing bills—NJ legislators or WY legislators?” Probably WY. How many letters do the KY legislators get? Again, probably not as many as in WY, either pro or con. Public land issues are not as newsworthy in NJ and KY. But do those NJ and KY legislators vote? Yes, they do. And do their votes count just as much as the votes of the WY legislators? Yes, their votes count just as much, exactly. And the majority rules.

We know that legislators track the input they get from constituents. Let’s say the WY legislators get an extra 25 letters about some bill, but they have already received 5,000 letters on that bill. Will those 25 letters make a huge difference in those WY legislators’ minds? Doubtful. But consider this: What if the NJ legislators (who have only received 15 letters about that same bill) receive an extra 25 letters? Those 25 letters can make a huge difference. Those 25 letters could be vote-changing letters. Those 25 letters could convince the NJ legislators that more NJ constituents want US public lands to stay open than want them to be closed off.

Your constituent letters and emails from AR and NJ and AL and MO and MI and KY (yes, even HI!) can have a lot more impact than the letters of our friends in WY do.

Think about it.

I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner’s permission.

I will keep informed on all laws, regulations of rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.

I will to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.

I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.

I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind - fences, signs, buildings.

I will leave all gates as found.

I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.

I will discard no burning material - matches, cigarettes, etc.

I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock.

I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply.

I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.

I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.

I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and Will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.

I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas.

I will report to my club or Federation officers, Bureau of Land management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.

I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.

I will observe the“Golden Rule”, will use “Good Outdoor Manners” and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public “image” of rockhounds everywhere.