



AIPG NEVADA SECTION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE:

By Nancy Wolverson

Welcome to our Nevada Section Newsletter!! I need volunteers to write articles, news or other content for future newsletters. Please contact me directly if you would like to help: nancyjeanw@aol.com (775) 770-4615

The newsletter will be published 3-4 times/year and will be digital only. Content will be determined by the type and amount of submissions that I receive. The Nevada Section consists primarily of CPG's that are AIPG members for many reasons, but generally for QP status with the regulatory agencies. We don't want to replicate the information or activities of other geologic organizations in Nevada, but rather focus on the reasons most of us are members of AIPG; QP status, Technical Reports, securities reporting, legislative and regulatory activities and ethical standards.

Please consider submitting content. I will email all Nevada Section members a month before each newsletter and I will also be talking to everyone I know to encourage submissions. I would like a broad spectrum of content, so please don't hesitate to email or call me.

Please contact me if you want to advertise. All money collected from ads will go toward support of students.

ALL SUGGESTIONS ARE WELCOME

AIPG ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL MEETING:

AIPG 2018 Annual Conference—Purple Mountain Majesties

September 8-11, 2018

Colorado Springs, Colorado

<http://aipg.org/2018Conference>

NEVADA SECTION:

Plans for a Nevada Section Meeting Fall 2018

AIPG Mackay Rockhounds Club

By Sage Gandolfo

The Mackay Rockhounds geology club at the University of Nevada, Reno is a club that is based around camping and exploring Nevada and nearby states. We are all about getting down in the dirt and collecting neat rock samples in new places. This spring 2018 semester I, Sage Gandolfo, was elected President of the club and I have many plans to vamp up the club trips and participation. I've been a club member since I started studying geology in 2015. I've arranged for one trip this spring and two camping trips in the fall semester and plan to keep the club well-funded for these trips by fundraising. I also am going to maximize club participation by having more frequent meetings throughout the year and arranging local group activities in Reno.

Mackay Rockhounds geology club is at it again this Spring 2018 semester with many trips planned. Most recently, the weekend of April 7th-8th the hounders will head to Black Rock Desert, Nevada to check out the awesome sight of Fly Geyser- a geothermal geyser just 20 miles north of Gerlach, NV. The cone shaped geyser is covered in built up thermophilic algae which gives it the beautiful vibrant green and red colors. The water coming out of the geyser is hot due to tectonic faulting and rifting. We will spend Saturday the 7th exploring the area of the geyser then proceed to drive to the alkaline playa nearby to walk around.

We have plans in the semester of Fall 2018 to go to Yosemite National Park, CA and Trona, CA. The annual trip to Trona, CA helps with our fundraising every year because we sell the mineral hanksite at our gem sales at the University of Nevada, Reno. The mineral hanksite is found naturally at Searles Lake, CA. Searles Lake is an endoheic dry lake in the Mojave Desert. Since Owens river feeds into a series of lakes before Searles, it would receive minor amounts of fine particles and would settle to form mud when the calcium carbonate precipitated from the water concentration. During dry periods, the salinity would rise and crystallize forming the mineral hanksite, among other minerals. The Trona trip is scheduled for October 13th-14th. We will also be traveling to Yosemite National Park sometime in November. There we will camp, explore many famous geologic occurrences, and hike all over the park.



Mackay Rockhounds at the Lava Tubes National Monument.

From left: Tenaya, Aaron, Sage, Quintin, Mathew, Sydney and Zack.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATE:

By Debra Struhsacker

Environmental Permitting & Government Relations Consultant, Reno, Nevada

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Fiscal Year 2019 Omnibus Appropriations Bill: In March 2018 Congress passed the FY 2019 Omnibus Appropriations bill that includes a one-year prohibition against the Department of the Interior/US Fish and Wildlife Service spending any money to designate the Greater Sage-grouse as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. In 2020, the agency has to revisit its 2015 decision not to list the bird. This bill also funds the Department of the Interior (BLM) and the Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service) for FY 2019.

Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act (H.R. 1107 and S. 414): The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1107 in January 2018. Congressman Mark Amodei is the sponsor of this bill; the other members of the Nevada House delegation are cosponsors. Senators Heller and Cortez-Masto are cosponsors of the Senate bill. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on S. 414 in February.

These bipartisan bills were developed using a stakeholder-driven, consensus-based process to develop legislation that will accomplish the following important land use objectives:

- End the 30-year old stalemate over Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) by designating some areas as wilderness and restoring the multiple use management status to WSAs that BLM recommended as unsuitable for wilderness designation;
- Protect and enhance important habitat, including Greater Sage-grouse habitat, and creating funding for habitat enhancement, drought mitigation, and wildfire suppression;
- Preserve existing road access into newly designated wilderness areas so these areas remain accessible to sportsmen, conservationists, and ranchers;
- Create a process for the County Commissioners and the Secretary of the Interior to allow qualified buyers to purchase or exchange public land sections in the public-private checkerboard to result in consolidated blocks of public and private lands that are easier to manage;
- Give qualified mining claim owners an opportunity to pay fair market value for the lands where their operations are located, which will expedite mine expansion and reclamation and bring good jobs and tax revenues to Pershing County;
- Facilitate post-mining re-purposing of mined lands to achieve long-term sustainable development that will continue to provide jobs and tax revenues once mining has ceased; and
- Authorizing Pershing County to purchase the Unionville Cemetery so people can continue to bury their loved ones in this historic graveyard.

The Pershing County Commissioners, the five mining companies involved with the bill, and other Pershing County stakeholders are hopeful the bill will advance in the Senate and be enacted into law by this Congress.

Other northern Nevada counties are considering the stakeholder dialogue process that was the foundation for the Pershing County Development and Conservation Act as a possible template for bills in other counties to resolve the challenging land use issues associated with checkerboard areas along the I-80 corridor.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATE (continued):

REGULATORY UPDATE

CERCLA 108(b): The U.S. EPA issued its final CERCLA 108(b) rule determining that the existing state and federal financial assurance (bonding) requirements for the hardrock mining industry are sufficient and that the additional \$7.1 billion financial assurance program outlined in EPA's 2016 Proposed Rule was unwarranted. In their comments on the proposed rule, many mining states, the federal land management agencies (e.g., the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service), and numerous mining companies and trade associations provided substantive documentation of the strength and comprehensive nature of existing financial assurance programs. Based on this record, EPA concluded that there was no need for additional financial assurance under CERCLA 108(b). The industry anticipates that anti-mining groups will litigate the final rule.

Sage Grouse: The BLM terminated the proposed 20-year withdrawal from operation of the Mining Law of the 10 million-acre Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA). The SFA, which affected six western states, included 2.8 million acres in Nevada – mainly in Elko and Humboldt Counties. BLM's 2017 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analyzing the proposed withdrawal revealed that mineral activities are projected to impact fewer than 10,000 acres in the SFA in the next 20 years. Based on this analysis, EPA determined the proposed withdrawal was unnecessary to protect Sage-grouse habitat in the SFA.

In March 2017, the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada in the Nevada sage grouse litigation, (*Western Exploration LLC et al v. Department of the Interior et al*), remanded the Nevada-Northeastern California EIS and Land Use Plan Amendment back to the BLM and the Forest Service, and required the agencies to prepare a Supplemental EIS to evaluate changes to the 2015 Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendments (LUPAs). The 2015 LUPAs include the proposed SFA withdrawal and other land use restrictions that are problematic for mineral exploration and development and other multiple use activities. The agencies are preparing a Draft SEIS, which is anticipated to be published this spring. Publication of the Draft SEIS will initiate a public comment period.

Executive and Secretarial Orders: The Trump Administration has issued a number of Executive Orders (EO) and Secretarial Orders (SO) to implement President Trump's regulatory reform agenda. The following orders have important implications for the mining industry:

- Secretarial Order 3355 – Streamlining National Environmental Policy Act Reviews and Implementation of Executive Order 13807
- Executive Order 13807 – Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects
- Executive Order – 13783 Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth
- Executive Order 13817 – Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure/Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals
- Secretarial Order 3359 – Critical Minerals Independence and Security

The NEPA Streamlining SO directs all Department of the Interior agencies, including BLM, to complete Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) in about a year and to limit these documents to roughly 150 pages except for complex projects, which may be up to 300 pages long. This order also directs BLM to complete Environmental Assessments (EA) in about five months and to limit EAs to roughly 25 pages.

The Critical Minerals EO directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop a draft critical minerals list. USGS published its draft list in February 2018, which unfortunately took an academic approach to defining critical minerals that was inconsistent with President Trump's critical minerals definition. The mining industry is advocating expansion of the list to include gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, and other infrastructure and technology minerals. The critical minerals EO and SO mandate permit streamlining for mineral exploration and development, improving access to lands with mineral potential and increasing critical minerals discovery, development, and processing. The Administration's recognition of the importance of supporting domestic mineral exploration and development is a significant change from the previous administration's anti-mining policies.