**ARRA Newsletter** - June 2008

## Heading Out of Town

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With less than eight months remaining for the Bush Administration, we are already seeing signs that it is preparing to close up shop. On May 9, 2008, the President's Chief of Staff, Josh Bolton, issued a memorandum to all Executive departments and agencies that read in part: "except in extraordinary circumstances, regulations to be finalized in this Administration should be proposed no later than June 1, 2008, and final regulations should be issued no later than November 1, 2008."

In other words, no last minute surprises. No last minute regulations and perhaps, just perhaps, no last minute designation of monument areas by the stroke of a Presidential pen like we witnessed during the closing days of another Administration.

Less is better, and in this case, we agree.

## Closure of Clear Creek Management Area

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One of the premier OHV riding areas in California was abruptly closed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) because of a recent study by the Environmental Protection Agency on the risk of asbestos exposure for visitors to the Clear Creek Management Area in Central California. The closure was effective on May 1, 2008.

While government officials have been concerned about asbestos dust in the past, which resulted in the seasonal closure of Clear Creek during the driest months of the year, June - October, the new year-round closure came as a shock to OHV enthusiasts, hikers, campers, and rock climbers who were regular visitors to this popular recreation area of approximately 31,000 acres. The closing of a recreation area of this size is a major disappointment to outdoor enthusiasts.

No word on how long it will be before BLM reopens the area to visitors. However, if the agency decides to undertake a new Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Clear Creek, it could be a very long time before people will be able to enjoy this very special recreation area.

ARRA will keep you posted on any new developments.

## Senate Hearing on OHV Management Issues

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The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee has scheduled a June 5th hearing on federal OHV management issues. Testifying will be officials from the U. S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management along with a number of public witnesses. We anticipate a vigorous debate between advocates for OHV recreation and those who want to close public lands to motorized recreation.

ARRA, along with other OHV recreation groups, believes that OHV recreation can be

successfully managed by our federal public lands agencies. We believe the hearing will highlight some of that success while also focusing on some of the challenges ahead.

**Summertime**
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The carefree days of summer are upon us. With gas at the pump at an all time high, people are carefully planning how and where they will take their summer vacations. Travel experts say that many people will be staying closer to home and perhaps, taking more day trips with family and friends. Boating and OHV recreation fit perfectly in this lifestyle of staying close to home, especially for those lucky enough to live close to areas providing such recreational opportunities.

Sometimes when we are carefree, we tend to forget the importance of rider safety. For those of us responsible for planning those day trips, rider safety has to be foremost on our minds. This means having an ample supply of life preservers on our boats, as well as helmets for all ATV and off-highway motorcycle riders. And yes, buckled seat belts for everyone in cars and 4X4's, on and off the highway. A little bit of prevention makes for an enjoyable and safe summer for all members of the family. It makes for a summer we will want to remember rather than one we would rather forget especially if a loved one is injured because we failed to make safety our first priority.

Enjoy the summer! Recreate safely and responsibly. Then come Labor Day, we will all be able to look back and say we had a great time together despite the high gas prices.

Sincerely,

Larry E. Smith
Executive Director
Americans for Responsible Recreational Access