

BLM



NEWS



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For Immediate Release:

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BLM Volunteer John Corcoran III of Roswell, New Mexico Recognized by “Take Pride in America” Programs

John Corcoran III of Roswell, NM received special recognition from Interior Secretary Norton as she launched the new and revitalized “Take Pride in America” Campaign. John performed over 16,200 hours over 37 years with the Bureau of Land Management in New Mexico.

John’s association with the BLM began in the early 1960s when he started visiting caves on BLM-managed public land. He started caving in 1960 and first visited the BLM’s Fort Stanton Cave in 1962. When the Southwestern Region of the National Speleological Society (NSS) appointed John as their first liaison, his volunteer work for BLM really took off. John helped coordinate NSS and BLM caving interests, and, under his guidance, the SW Region of the NSS worked with BLM to inventory, map and study caves within the Roswell District.

Over the following decades, John’s caving interests drew him to sites throughout the country, but he kept returning to his volunteer work with the BLM caves in New Mexico, particularly the scientifically significant Fort Stanton Cave on the Lincoln Plateau. This remarkable cave has been known for over 150 years and currently has about 7.8 miles of surveyed passages. In 1994, John and other members of the Cave Research Foundation started a long-term project at Fort Stanton Cave and the surrounding area. They worked closely with the BLM and finally, in 1997, after much hard work and long hours by the BLM’s Roswell District, the team acquired a digging permit and volunteers began a serious effort to study, document and map the area. Over the last six years, John and his team have donated thousands of volunteer hours with six to seven volunteer expeditions annually, each lasting up to ten days. Their digging efforts finally paid off in a major breakthrough into the Starry Nights and Snowy River passages in the Fort Stanton Cave.

John and his wife of 31 years, Dorothy Mae Corcoran, have 3 children: Gavin (26), Carrie (24), and Shannon (21). All are avid cavers and have also volunteered their time generously for America’s public lands. John describes his volunteer association with the BLM, “My reasons for being involved in the volunteer work are probably more selfish than not. They include the need to somehow return value for the cave resources, mountains, canyons, rocks trees, and friendships that have added so much to my life.”

Modeled after the highly visible and successful national cleanup endeavor initiated by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, the new Take Pride In America was unveiled by Secretary Norton at a luncheon newsmaker speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. It will become part of President George W. Bush’s Freedom Corps.

“By working with fellow volunteers, young and old, we lend our hands to heal our land, one acre at a time. And in so doing, we are celebrating the start of the national, grassroots, bipartisan Take Pride in America program,” Secretary Norton said. “Take Pride In America will empower volunteers from every corner of America to restore and improve our parks, refuges, recreation areas and cultural and historical

sites. The program inspires citizen stewardship through a bold and innovative public communication campaign. Outstanding volunteer efforts are rewarded with presidential recognition.”

With the announcement of the new Take Pride In America, the Department of the Interior launched a special Take Pride Web site - www.TakePride.gov - that outlines program goals and offers ideas and suggestion for citizen, group and corporate involvement. Interior will serve as the lead federal department and will enlist the cooperation and commitment of all agencies in the federal government.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land - 261 million surface acres - than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.9 billion and a workforce of some 10,000 full-time, permanent employees, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

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