

# CHIRICAHUA REGIONAL COUNCIL

## NEWSLETTER

NO. 17  
December 2004

P. O. Box 16480  
Portal, AZ 85632

In this issue: Two upcoming local meetings/lectures and one in Douglas, all of interest to our members; Rustler Park closed; Chiricahua National Monument Fire Plan proposals; marble mining in the Dragoons runs into a snag; gabions appreciated.

**BUDGET CUTS CLOSE RUSTLER PARK CAMPGROUND.** Due to recreation program budget cuts, the Forest Service plans to close campgrounds in the Coronado National Forest that are more remote, and hence more expensive to maintain in relation to the income they generate. The intent is to concentrate limited funds on maintaining and improving campgrounds located closer to areas where maintenance personnel are based, and thereby provide a better quality experience at those campgrounds.

Rustler Park campground is already closed, probably for at least two years, not just for the winter. The gate near the restroom and small parking area just below Rustler Park is locked, requiring a relatively short hike to Rustler Park but a much longer hike to the Long Park area. Drivers of four-wheel drive vehicles can easily bypass this gate and some of them cause signif-

icant damage in the Rustler Park area, particularly by driving donuts in the meadow, principally when snow is present. The FS is considering sites for a new gate some distance down toward Onion Saddle, at a location where both sides of the road would be too steep for vehicles to bypass the gate. According to Douglas District Ranger Doug Hardy, the new gate will be open during the birding season, allowing tour groups and others to drive to within easy walking distance of Rustler Park. But for some enthusiasts the birding season is unending.

**DRAGON MTNS. LIMESTONE/MARBLE DRILLING PROPOSAL ON HOLD.** In a letter dated November 22, 2004, Forest Supervisor Jeanine Derby advised that the Dagoon Mountains drilling proposal (see Newsletter 16) "is on hold, pending further review of the issues and concerns that arose during the

initial scoping for this project." The letter goes on to say that "there is insufficient information on the quantity and quality of the marble for the Forest to consider the mining proposal at this time."

Alpha Calcit Arizona, Ltd., has completed one exploratory drill hole to date. The Forest has requested additional exploratory drilling, the results of which would be used to determine whether or not mining will be authorized. Questions or comments concerning the mining proposal may be directed to Forest Geology and Minerals Program Specialist Beverley Everson in the Tucson office at 520 388-8428, or to: comments-southwestern-coronado@fs.fed.us.

#### **BILL RADKE TO SPEAK IN PORTAL.**

Chiricahua Regional Council has invited Bill Radke, Manager of both the San Bernardino and the Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuges, to speak at the Portal Fire Station at 7 p.m. on Monday, December 13, 2004. Those who have heard Bill speak know that we are in for a treat. We can look forward to learning much about what has been done on these two refuges to manage endangered fish and other species, what unexpected facts the Fish and Wildlife Service has learned about the lives of such critters as the Green Rat Snake, and maybe even how long hydrologists now believe it takes for snow melting high in the Chiricahuas to filter down to the San Bernardino Valley. Hope to see you at the Fire Station classroom on December 13!

#### **MALPAI SCIENCE CONFERENCE.**

The Malpai Borderlands Group Annual Science Conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, January 3, 2005, at the new Visitor Center in Douglas. The Center is near the old train station along Pan American Avenue at 345 16<sup>th</sup> Street, directly north of the Police Station and just a short distance south of Highway 80. At this one-day, open-to-the-public conference, Malpai Borderlands Group will be celebrating its 10th anniversary. A series of invited speakers will summarize results of 10 years of research and the application of science-based management practices in the Borderlands region. An intriguing list of talks, covering a wide range of natural and physical science topics, is on the agenda. Further information may be obtained by e-mailing [mbg@vtc.net](mailto:mbg@vtc.net) or calling (520) 558-2470.

#### **FOREST PLAN REVISION MEETING.**

Forest Planner Jennifer Ruyle of the Tucson office and Douglas District Ranger Doug Hardy are coming to Portal the evening of Thursday, January 20, 2005, to tell us all about the upcoming revision of the Coronado National Forest Plan and how the public can play an active part in the revision. Ms. Ruyle has worked on the Coronado Forest since 1990, as a District Ecologist until 1998, and since then in the Tucson office, where she is coordinating the entire revision process. This CRC sponsored meeting will be held at the Portal Fire Station at 7:00 p.m.

