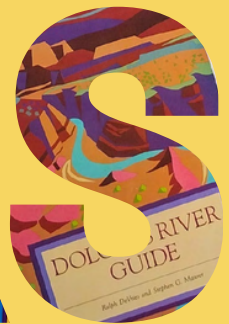
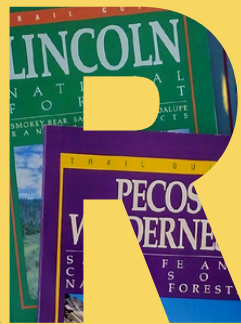
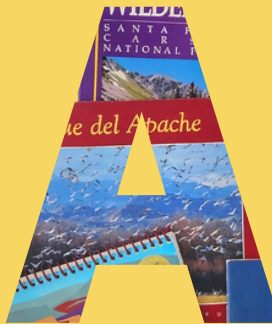
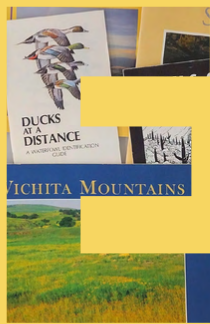




PUBLIC LANDS
INTERPRETIVE
ASSOCIATION

2021 Annual Report



Our Mission

Inspire and educate the public about the natural and cultural heritage resources of America's public lands.

Our Vision

Public Lands: treasured, protected, and explored.

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Outreach Coordinator
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Melissa Urreiztieta
Visitor Information Specialist
Coronado National Forest

Find us Online!



www.publiclands.org



PublicLandsInterpretiveAssociation

Staff and board members as of December 2021.

CONTENTS

The Public Lands Interpretive Association (PLIA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to public lands and the people who own them—you!

In this document you'll find not only our 2021 Annual Report but a reflection on some of our greatest accomplishments in the last 40 years and a sneak peak at some of our programs currently in the works.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As the Executive Director for the Public Lands Interpretive Association (PLIA), I want to say thanks—to you—for caring about this organization and for helping us thrive through trying times.

In reading this Annual Report, you'll learn about our recent accomplishments in 2021 and also about the significant strides we have made over 40 years. This organization has never survived in isolation but instead, has collaborated with multiple partner agencies and has benefited from creative staff, dedicated friends, and passionate volunteers. Together, we have worked to enrich visitor experiences and help protect public lands across the West.

Living in Albuquerque, I am reminded of the harsh, arid conditions of the high-desert environment when I walk out my front door. A whiptail lizard rests in the shade of a thorny cholla, a Maximilian sunflower grows in a crack in the sidewalk, a roadrunner perches on an evaporative cooler, overlooking the neighborhood. Much like PLIA, these desert creatures overcome and adapt, they search for opportunities, and they find ways to survive.

In 2020 and 2021, our organization faced significant wildfires, flooding, and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Despite having to suspend operations at our sites multiple times, we maintained the majority of our staffing and identified federal and state funds to continue our mission.

One of the most exciting aspects to share with you is how the organization has evolved. In the last two years, we've expanded our interpretive services, published Junior Ranger booklets for children, and launched multiple education and outreach programs to help visitors appreciate public lands. The creative nature of this work was born in a time of uncertainty, with limited capacity and resources. In short, the conditions were tough, but we adapted and we grew.

I hope you'll spend time reading about our history and the legacy that Lisa Madsen and Stephen Maurer left for this organization. I also hope you stay up-to-date with our projects and learn how you can help PLIA achieve its mission. As we look to the next 40 years, we will continue to serve as a reliable nonprofit partner. We will evolve and adapt to the needs of our land management agencies. We will find creative ways to enrich the visitor experience and protect public lands—it's what we do.

Thank you for being part of the PLIA community. Here's to another 40 years.



Amanda Keith

Amanda Keith
Executive Director
Public Lands Interpretive Association

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

A look back at our history and achievements.

Where We Started:

Noticing a lack of interpretive material for public lands outside the National Park Service, George Morrison of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Marty Stribling of the U.S. Forest Service founded the **Southwest Natural and Cultural Heritage Association (SNCHA)** in 1981.

Our organization was built from the ground up as a multi-agency partnership, serving various sites under the **Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and Fish & Wildlife Service** with interpretive materials, books, maps, and services.

Making a Name:

From 1983 to 2019, **Executive Director Lisa Madsen** grew the organization and refined its mission. **Publications Director Stephen Maurer** made a name for SNCHA, later called the **Public Lands Interpretive Association (PLIA)** by creating high-quality publications and unique educational products from 1989 to 2019.

"I was the business side," Lisa noted in a recent interview, "Stephen was the soul." Lisa and Stephen would collaborate to operate visitor centers at dozens of public land sites and create publications helping visitors understand them. "You have this blank canvas—people hungry for information about the lands they're visiting," said Lisa, reflecting on their efforts. "There was never enough room in a visitor center."

One key philosophy driving PLIA from its earliest days has been a keen interest in interpreting lands holistically, presenting the land as a unified whole rather than the checkerboard of agency boundaries you see on a map. "The resource is a part of something larger," Stephen mentioned in the interview, "you're putting a site culturally and physically into a larger context." In this vein, Stephen took the helm to produce dozens of informative books, pamphlets, and maps that helped recreationists see the big picture of their public lands. That idea also extended to interpreting the different ways people interact with their public lands: Stephen noted that "people may not agree with a particular use but it's still a valid use."

PLIA would change throughout the years as the needs of public land users shifted, first by incorporating campgrounds into the business. "Everything we did was in response to a need identified by the agencies," Lisa stated. This flexibility has allowed the organization to survive several difficult years, most recently 2020 and 2021. Looking ahead, they both have high hopes for PLIA's future and feel proud of the standard-setting work they have done to make public lands accessible to all.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

1981

Founded as the Southwest Natural and Cultural Heritage Association. Rio Grande Gorge (Wild Rivers) Visitor Center is the site of our first store.

1983

Lisa Madsen was brought on as business manager, helping the young organization find its niche.

1991

Received certificate of Merit from the Department of the Interior's "Take Pride in America" program for excellence in supporting the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

1994

Published Guide to the Wild & Scenic Rio Grande and Anasazi poster series. Both received awards from the National Association of Interpretation (NAI).

1984

We began operating Sabino Canyon Visitor Center in Tucson, AZ. and re-published Ducks at a Distance a waterfowl identification guide, for the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

1990

Publishing program began, providing interpretive materials for sites Also the start of our Kaibab National Forest partnership, with PLIA's Southwest Recreation division operating several campgrounds in Northern Arizona.

1996



We partnered with New Mexico BLM's main office in Santa Fe to open the Public Lands Information Center, a "one-stop shop" for public lands information that operates to this day.

1995

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge guide was published, receiving another award from NAI.

1998

SNCHA rebranded to PLIA, reflecting our mission more directly.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

2007

"Geography of Freedom" exhibit went live at **publiclands.org**. This online experience detailed the development of public lands as a concept, and included a detailed timeline of public lands throughout history.

2002



Three years of planning for **American Frontiers: A Public Lands Journey** culminate in a two-month trek across the country. Participants traveled from the Canadian and Mexican borders exclusively on public lands (read more on the next page).

2019

After decades of promoting public lands and exploring their possibilities, Lisa and Stephen retired and the Board of Directors chose Amanda Keith as PLIA's next Executive Director.

"I've never looked back, never second-guessed. I did the best I could to leave something for the next person"

-Lisa

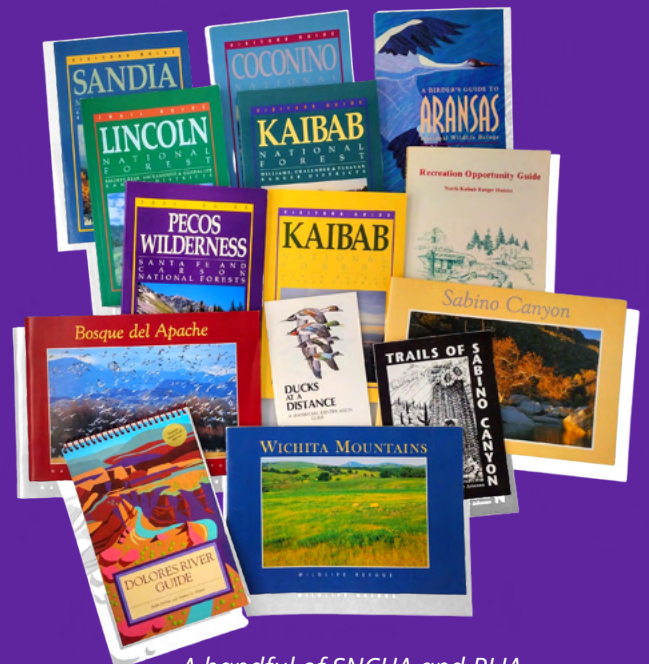
2021

2001

We assisted with logistics for the Valles Caldera's first years as a public space. Providing customer service, transportation, and logistics for hunts and experiences on the preserve, we filled this role for fourteen years before Valles Caldera came under National Park Service jurisdiction.

2000

The **publiclands.org** website launched, offering public lands information and online exhibits discussing the history of public lands in the U.S.



A handful of SNCHA and PLIA publications over the years

AMERICAN FRONTIERS: 20 YEARS LATER

A look back at a historic journey.



An Ambitious Idea

Trekkers, support staff, and PLIA leadership celebrate the end of the trek.

Excited to explore the sheer freedom allowed on our public lands compared to his native Hungary, Publications Director and Special Projects Manager Stephen Maurer had the idea of traversing the US from border to border exclusively on lands in the public domain.

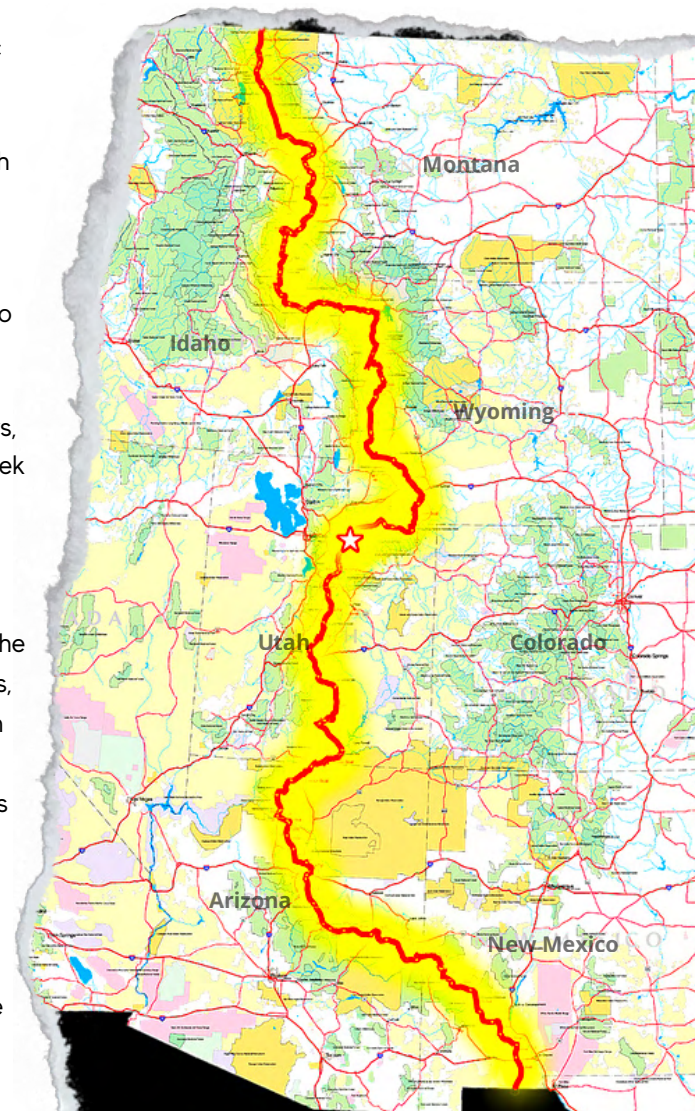
In 1999, PLIA began developing this idea into American Frontiers: A Public Lands Journey, an effort that would thrust our organization onto a national stage. For the next few years, it was all hands on deck as PLIA sought collaborators in the Forest Service, BLM, and National Park agencies. With the help of these agencies, we began planning routes and expanded the original vision of the trek into a nationwide education program. American Frontiers gained momentum and attracted the attention of the National Geographic Society, particularly their Education Foundation, who agreed to take part as a main partner.

By 2002, a wide array of government agencies, nonprofits, private sponsors, and volunteers were associated with the project and excitement for the trek was building.

Two Teams—One Goal

Adventure-minded individuals applied to join the project and experience the challenging cross-country journey. From this nationwide pool of volunteers, we selected eight main trekkers (including four educators associated with National Geographic's Geography Alliance). Leaving families, careers, and students behind, they went through intensive training to develop their skills in wayfinding, survival, and the new GPS technology that would be a vital part of their trek.

Participants were split in two groups: one would start from the Canadian border, one from the Mexican border. Though their surroundings would be vastly different, the teams had over 1500 miles to cover in only 60 days, **travelling by foot, boat, hoof, and more.** Following a small opening ceremony, the unprecedented journey kicked off on July 31st, 2002.



The two trek routes, converging in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Both teams had plenty of support along the way. A team of cooks, a medic, and others followed the trekkers in vehicles and often joined in on the fun when the groups were out of the wilderness. PLIA also enlisted the help of outfitters, who guided the trek teams through some of the most remote wilderness in the country. A special technology team coordinated satellite internet access along the entire route, **allowing trekkers to post live journals and answer fan emails along the way**—a significant feat in 2002.



A precarious crossing in Montana's Bob Marshall wilderness.



Members of the South Team speed through Southern Utah

Education and Inspiration on the Trail

Events across the country, organized by a variety of land management agencies, helped the teams educate themselves and the public about the lands they were traversing. From a California condor reintroduction to panel discussions with land managers and users including ATV clubs, ranchers, hunters, and others, the teams experienced a spectrum of perspectives on public land. After one event in Silver City, New Mexico, Media and Events Coordinator for the South Team Jessica Terrel wrote in an online journal: "I used to think of public lands as a collection of national parks and monuments where the general public went for strictly recreational purposes. **Today I realized that not only are there dozens of ways to utilize these public treasures, but that each one had and still has a place in society today.**"

Journey's End and Beyond

The trek concluded in Salt Lake City, where the weary participants and America's lands were celebrated by agency representatives and the public at This is the Place Heritage Park. With the nation watching and learning for two months, the project's goal to raise awareness for public lands and their uses was a rousing success. **"It is that vast majority who don't know that public lands even exist that we tried to reach with American Frontiers,"** said Stephen Maurer at the journey's end.

The effects of American Frontiers would echo long after the trek ended: through collaboration with National Geographic, school curricula and educational videos were created to spread the word about public lands in America's schools. Many of the trekkers also came away from the experience as dedicated advocates for public lands, speaking at local and national events about their journey.

PLIA's online Public Lands Museum and the American Frontiers website kept the spirit of the project alive for many years in the digital space. Perhaps the most important legacy of the project is the once-in-a-lifetime experience the trekkers got to live out; an opportunity for challenge and personal growth on a continental scale. "I am not the same person, in some sense, who left on the American Frontiers Journey," said Cathy Kiffe of the South Team. **"I have not only a heightened awareness of the diversity of public lands... but a heightened awareness of who I am in relationship to the land."**



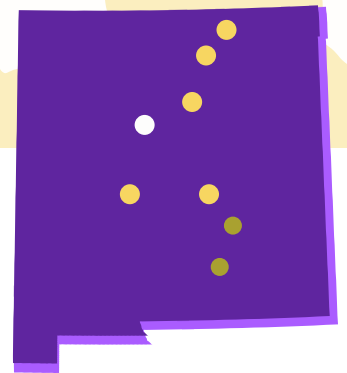
The North Team on Montana's Clark Canyon Reservoir

PLIA TODAY—WHERE WE WORK

Sites where PLIA has a presence today.

In our partnerships with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, PLIA continues to operate shops and campgrounds at public land sites across New Mexico and Arizona, as well as the NM Public Lands Information Center. In this section, we'll guide you through each of these sites and the ways we assist our partner agencies.

New Mexico



Zimmerman Visitor Center–Wild Rivers Recreation Area

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1981

Partner Agency: NM Bureau of Land Management

Location: 1120 Cerro Road Cerro, NM

Designated part of the Río Grande National Monument in 2013, the Wild Rivers Recreation Area sits at the confluence of the Wild and Scenic Rio Grande and Red Rivers. Though the rivers have been a focus of human activity for many hundreds of years, the Rio Grande gained significant attention from the federal government when it became the first National Wild and Scenic River in 1968.

Administered by the BLM, the area's Zimmerman Visitor Center is the hub for activity in the upper gorge today. The recreation area is crossed by a network of trails leading to nearby Guadalupe Mountain and descending into the Rio Grande Gorge. Along these trails, several developed and primitive campsites and the spectacular overlook at La Junta Point have a lot to offer for many types of recreation. PLIA supports the BLM by promoting guided hikes and other recreation opportunities and offering books and maps to help visitors understand the history and geography of the landscape.



The Rio Grande, South of its confluence with the Red River.

Through 2021, the site was a valuable escape for those seeking solace outdoors. Though it sees less traffic than the other Rio Grande visitor center in Pilar, camping and recreation opportunities (as well as the incredible scenery) still attracted a steady stream visitors through the summer months.

Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center–Orilla Verde Recreation Area



Rafters on the Rio Grande near Pilar.

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1982

Partner Agency: NM Bureau of Land Management

Location: 2873 SR 68 Pilar, NM

Downriver from the Wild Rivers area, this visitor center is the access point for the Orilla Verde Recreation Area, popular for its recreation opportunities and a regular starting point for floating expeditions on the Rio Grande. Partway along the road to Taos, recreationists looking to explore the Rio Grande Gorge will pass through Pilar to enter the steep canyon or continue on to Taos to view the bridge or Wild Rivers area. Plenty of hiking trails, campsites, and fishing spots along the Rio Grande make this one of Northern New Mexico's best spots for water recreation, wildlife viewing, and sightseeing.

PLIA's outlet here offers maps, books, and other products to help river recreationists and Northern New Mexico travelers navigate this unique part of the state by land and water. Though visitation had dipped in 2020 due to the pandemic's effect on travel and recreation on the river, 2021 saw the area come to life again as the summer heat brought visitors North.

Sacramento Ranger Station–Lincoln National Forest

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1989

Partner Agency: US Forest Service

Location: 4 Lost Lodge Rd Cloudcroft, NM

This area of Southern New Mexico is renowned for its year-round beauty. An "island" of alpine greenery in the desert, New Mexicans and tourists from around the country find opportunities for hiking, biking, paddling, hunting and more in this vast protected area.

The forest is crossed by a network of forest roads and trails, so visitors to the ranger station in Cloudcroft will find a wide selection of maps covering the ranger district in detail. Featuring detailed topographic maps and our very own Trail Guide to the Lincoln National Forest, Sacramento Ranger District, anyone planning to recreate on forest lands will have an abundance of information to plan their outing. Through 2021, this location has maintained a small but steady stream of visitation as through previous years.



*Sunspot Scenic Byway, Sacramento Ranger District.
Photo Credit: Lincoln NF.*

New Mexico Public Lands Information Center

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1992

Partner Agency: NM Bureau of Land Management

Location: 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87508

Housed within BLM New Mexico's main office, the PLIC continues to fulfill its mission as a "one-stop shop" for answers and info on New Mexico's public lands. Fielding all questions about lands in the state, regardless of administrative agency, has made this site a valuable resource for recreationists planning to venture off the beaten path.



BLM New Mexico office and PLIC. Photo Credit: BLM New Mexico.

Carrying a wide array of New Mexico maps, books, and atlases, our Santa Fe outlet is run with the needs of New Mexico's recreationists in mind. Since 1992, this location has been one of our links to the BLM's everyday operations and often hosts authors, guest speakers, and a variety of events open to the public.

Valley of Fires Recreation Area

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1994

Partner Agency: NM Bureau of Land Management

Location: US-380, 4 Miles West of Carrizozo, NM

One of the youngest volcanic features on the continent, the Malpais Lava Flow is a forty-four mile long slab of cooled lava that covers a significant chunk of the Tularosa Basin. The unique landscape has become a haven for desert wildlife of all kinds: from lizards and sheep to golden eagles and owls. Since the rocky terrain can be a hindrance to hikers or bikers, observational forms of recreation are the main attraction; geology and wildlife enthusiasts will find a second home in this alien landscape.



Visible remnants of the Malpais Lava Flow's active past.

Administered by the BLM, Valley of Fires Recreation Area offers the unique chance to camp and hike at the edge of this geologic attraction. With nineteen campsites and a one-mile interpretive trail to guide visitors through the lava flow, this roadside recreation spot has plenty of opportunities for unique experiences in all seasons. Our visitor center store at Valley of Fires embraces the unique character of the land, offering a variety of books, maps, and guides to better understand the area and its animal inhabitants.

Smokey Bear Ranger Station–Lincoln National Forest

Affiliated with PLIA since: 2014

Partner Agency: US Forest Service

Location: 901 Mechem Dr., Ruidoso, NM 88345

This district of the Lincoln National Forest, named for the iconic agency mascot, is one of New Mexico's gateways to alpine wilderness. Both the Capitan Mountains and White Mountain Wildernesses are part of this vast stretch of protected forest. Backpackers, hunters, and wildlife enthusiasts will find pristine pine forests left undisturbed by roads or human infrastructure in these wilderness areas.

Plenty of trails outside the wilderness offer more accessible opportunities for hikers, bikers, and campers, though even these areas are prime spots to see wildlife and unique landscapes.

Monjeau Lookout. Photo Credit: Lincoln NF.

The district office in Ruidoso is the best spot to start any expedition into the Lincoln. Since 2014, we have supplied our outlet here with plenty of maps and guides for the surrounding areas—and a variety of Smokey Bear memorabilia. Situated along Ruidoso's main drag, New Mexicans and visitors from around the country will find helpful information and useful publications to guide them as they seek fun in winter snow or a chance to beat the summer heat.

Fort Craig Historic Site

Affiliated with PLIA since: 2014

Partner Agency: NM Bureau of Land Management

Location: 457 Ft. Craig Rd., San Antonio, NM 87832

Once the site of a crucial military stronghold, the ruins of Fort Craig are a dramatic piece of New Mexico's history. Its strategic location along the Rio Grande and El Camino Real set the stage for the Civil War Battle of Valverde. Just a few miles south of San Antonio, NM, the fort was built in 1854 to take advantage of the area's unobstructed views of the Jornada del Muerto (or dead man's journey), the desert basin that makes up much of South/Central New Mexico. The fort remained an active military installation for several years until its abandonment in 1885.



The ruins of Fort Craig.

PLIA's involvement with the Fort Craig site began in 2004, where our organization planned the 150th anniversary celebration for the site; the success of that event eventually led to the current agreement with the BLM's Socorro Field Office. Our efforts at Fort Craig are a perfect example of our range of interpretive work: Interpretive panels following a trail through the site tell the stories of the soldiers, civilians, and officers that lived and worked there; products at the bookstore are chosen to highlight the importance of this site to the Civil War and bring the history of this unique place to life for visitors. We will further enhance the interpretive exhibits at this site in the near future by installing a virtual reconstruction of the fort within the visitor center.

Main Office-Wide Open Spaces

Location: 6501 4th St. NW Suite I Albuquerque, NM 87107

In its early days, PLIA was quite the light operation. In past annual reports Lisa Madsen reflects on that time, saying, "In 1983 when I was hired as the business manager for SNCHA I remember picking up all the existing files and 'furniture' which at the time consisted of two filing cabinets and a calculator. The entire Association fit in to the back seat and trunk of my car and took an hour to put into place on a desk in my home."

In 1993, the need to expand our staff and storage space led the organization to its current home on bustling 4th Street in Los Ranchos de Albuquerque. This brick-floored building has been the center of operations for the entire organization ever since, currently serving as the workspace for half a dozen employees as well as the Wide Open Spaces bookstore.

Our office is as a warehouse and distribution center for many of the unique items sold at other sites. One key feature that can't be found elsewhere is our extensive map center, offering Forest Service and BLM maps for eleven Western states.

The heavy focus on maps in this location has served us well, supporting our online and local presence through word of mouth and social media promotion. PLIA has come to be the map store in Albuquerque and a go-to spot for those calling to connect with public lands agencies.

Coming out of a period of decreased activity in 2020 and 2021, there are plans in place to increase in-person traffic through book talks and events, new programs, and a refresh of our store inventory.



Public lands books, maps, and trail guides for sale in the office store.



PLIA's Albuquerque office.

Online Store: www.publiclands.org

Operating Since: 2003

As the SNCHA, our organization offered customers a chance to purchase our guides and books from home in the 1980s through a mail-order catalog. With the help of a collaborative grant from the BLM and Forest Service, PLIA brought this model online in 2003, creating the centerpiece of our online store to this day: the map center.



Offering a comprehensive collection of BLM and Forest Service maps, the online shop remains one of the easiest ways to purchase official BLM and Forest Service maps online to this day. Our partnership with agency offices allows us to keep a rich and comprehensive stock of maps that meets the needs of hunters, hikers, backpackers, and other recreationists.

Supplemented with atlases, guides, books, and other interpretive items like hats and toys, the online store remains one of PLIA's best-performing outlets and regularly receives orders from around the country.

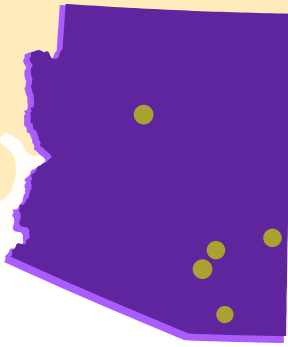


Our online store and Wide Open Spaces offer a selection of educational kids' toys, apparel, public lands maps, and books.

Want to keep up with PLIA?

Scroll to the bottom of our website at www.publiclands.org and sign up for our email newsletter today!

You'll get a monthly update on PLIA, invitations to events, exclusive coupons and more!



Arizona

Sabino Canyon Visitor Center–Coronado National Forest

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1984

Partner Agency: U.S. Forest Service

Location: 5700 N Sabino Canyon Rd., Tucson, AZ 85750



Seasonal streams in Sabino Canyon. Credit: US Forest Service.



A Steller's Jay at Sabino Canyon, days after the Bighorn Fire.

One of Tucson's most iconic natural areas, Arizonans and tourists alike have flocked to this oasis for hundreds of years, drawn to the cooling waters and unique landscape. Now administered by the Coronado National Forest, Sabino Canyon has become a hotspot for hiking, biking, running, and wildlife watching. Winding through streams and saguaro cacti, the shuttle through the canyon is a highlight, taking visitors up and down the Santa Catalina foothills while offering a guided tour.

Since 1984, PLIA has partnered with the Coronado National Forest to offer guides, maps, and concessions to visitors braving the Arizona heat. Today, the area is the most visited of PLIA's partner sites. In 2020, the recreation area was closed after the Bighorn Fire devastated a large area of the Coronado; alongside the universal challenges of a pandemic, Sabino faced an uphill battle just resuming operations. Bookstore Manager Sharlene Magana noted: "Circumstances required some creative thinking, and to start 2021, the bookstore had moved operations outdoors... As restrictions eased in spring, the visitor center opened back up once again with a warm welcome from the public."

Throughout 2021, the visitor center was able to resume normal operations and site visitation has finally rebounded, nearing pre-2019 levels. In October, the bookstore was able to hold its first outdoor event after many months: a star party in partnership with the Mount Lemmon Skylab that drew hundreds of visitors after normal operating hours. Moving forward into 2022, staff and locals are excited to host similar outdoor events and fully welcome the community back into the amazing spaces at Sabino.

Palisades Visitor Center–Coronado National Forest

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1989

Partner Agency: U.S. Forest Service

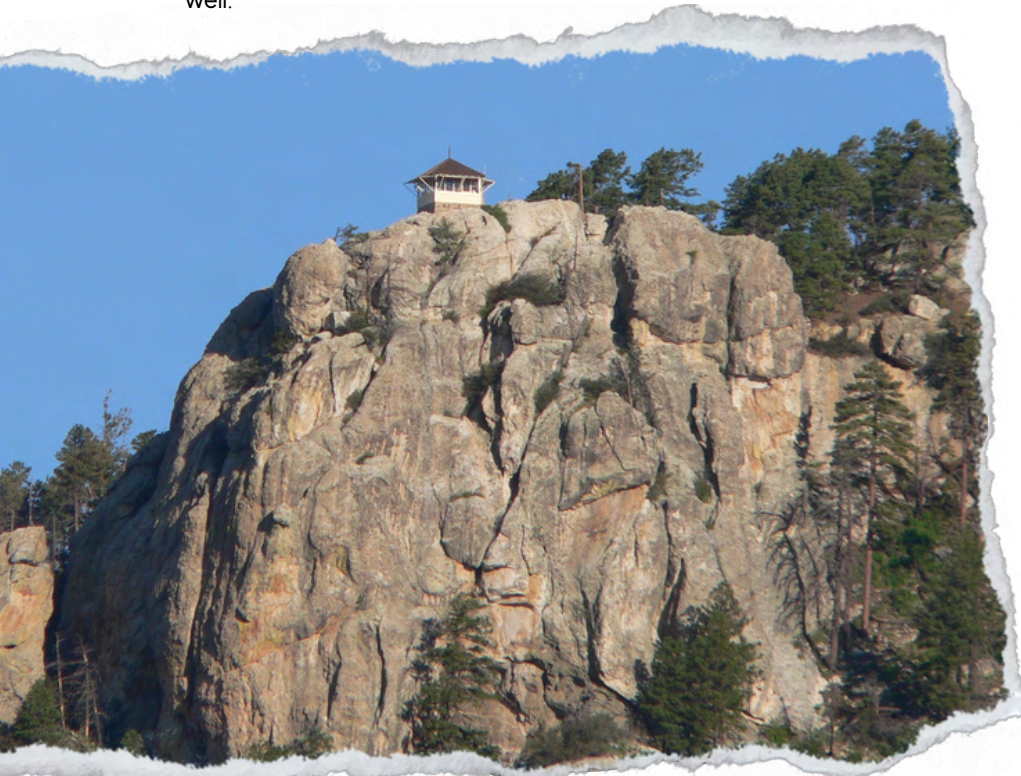
Location: Catalina Highway, Mile 20 - Mt. Lemmon, AZ

Rising from the saguaro-laden landscape of Tucson, Mount Lemmon and the surrounding Catalina Mountains comprise a "sky island" of isolated forest amid the extreme deserts of Southern Arizona. From Sonoran Desert to Subalpine Forest, the varied climates and ecosystems of this area make it one of Tucson's best spots for outdoor activity. The Catalina Highway attracts scenic drivers with its winding path through unique geological features, while the Pusch Ridge Wilderness presents a challenge to hikers and backpackers.

Recreationists of all kinds can stop partway up the mountain at the Palisades Visitor Center for information, guides, maps, and souvenirs that enhance understanding of the Catalina Mountains and its unique ecosystem. Hikers seeking to push on to the peak of Mt. Lemmon or descend into the Pusch Ridge wilderness can find official maps to explore the web of trails throughout the forest; birdwatchers can find a variety of guides to help identify the unique birds that make this area their home. Access to Forest Rangers and staff for questions and tips are a help to any recreationists looking to explore the area as well.



The Catalina Highway, ascending Mt. Lemmon.



The Lemmon Rock fire lookout, seen from the Aspen Trail.

Tourists and locals alike seek refuge from summer heat in the Catalinas, though much of the mountain was inaccessible in 2020. Manager Sharlene Magana notes that "after an incredibly unpredictable year that included the massive 120,000-acre Bighorn Fire, visitors returned to the mountain full of questions and seeking advice." To keep up with this demand, "bookstore staff kept on top of trail closures, updates, and information to ensure the safety of everyone that stopped by." Thanks to PLIA's bookstore staff and the Forest Service employees, 2021 was a triumphant return for one of Southern Arizona's most popular natural areas.

Sierra Vista Ranger Station–Coronado National Forest

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1992

Partner Agency: U.S. Forest Service

Location: 4070 S Avenida Saracino, Hereford, AZ 85615

Southeast of Tucson, the Sierra Vista Ranger District brushes the U.S.–Mexico border as it follows the path of the Huachuca, Patagonia, and Whetstone Mountains. Paths through the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills offer a unique perspective of the desert scrubland to hikers while more strenuous trails to the namesake of the Miller Peak Wilderness culminate in a view that spans across the international border. Parker Canyon Lake features a hiking loop and an ample stock of rainbow trout, catfish, and other warm and cold water species.

Those wishing to explore the lush canyons and desert hills of the area should be well-equipped for conditions from intense heat to snow throughout the year. Our outlet in the Sierra Vista Ranger Station offers the detailed maps that make expeditions like these possible. Located in Hereford, this ranger station is just minutes away from the Miller Peak wilderness, historic petroglyph and ranch sites, and even waterfalls.



The Huachuca Mountains, seen from Hunter Canyon.

Clifton Ranger Station–Apache–Sitgreaves National Forest

Affiliated with PLIA since: 2000

Partner Agency: U.S. Forest Service

Location: 397240 Highway 75, Duncan, AZ 85534



The Coronado Trail Scenic Byway and the Chase Creek Overlook.

Administered as one forest, the Apache and Sitgreaves National Forests reach from the New Mexico border to central Arizona. In the Clifton Ranger District, the mountains of the Mogollon Rim funnel streams Southward to the Gila River. The area has over 132 miles of streams and wetlands that support a range of wildlife, including several species of fish. The Blue Range Primitive Area is another feature that attracts visitors for its high desert Piñon–Juniper and Ponderosa landscape and mild temperature.

Visitors to the forest coming from the South will pass through Duncan to reach this area and the Clifton Ranger Station based there provides a selection of maps, guides, and books tailored to different types of recreation. Hunters, fishermen, and hikers will find a selection of maps to make exploration safer. A selection of books focused on the region's history of mining appeal to rockhounds, while insight into Indigenous communities appeals to those with cultural and historical interests.

Kaibab National Forest Campgrounds

Affiliated with PLIA since: 1990

Partner Agency: U.S. Forest Service

Location: Williams, AZ

Since 1990, PLIA has had a presence in the Kaibab National Forest as a partner in campground management through our Southwest Recreation division. The campgrounds at Kaibab Lake, Dogtown Lake, and White Horse Lake are within fifteen miles of Williams, AZ and offer an amazing opportunity to stay in the uniquely cool climate of the Kaibab National Forest. Visitors will find plenty of camping spots for tents and RVs as well as picnic areas, trails to hike, fishing and boating areas, and much more.



Kaibab Lake in 2020. Photo Credit: USFS Kaibab National Forest

Late spring and its amazing wildflower blooms mark the start of the Kaibab camping season, and hundreds of visitors find their way to these lakes to relax and recreate. To help enhance the visitor experience, PLIA's Southwest Recreation division, managed by Steve and Shelley Ohab, provides amenities like ice and firewood to campers at all three sites while assisting our Forest Service partners in collecting fees and maintaining campgrounds.



White Horse Lake in 2019. Photo Credit: USFS Kaibab National Forest

Southwest Recreation provides interpretive events and services as well. Lead Interpreter Deb Noel schedules a wide range of educational and celebratory events at the campgrounds, ranging from talks given by experts on wildlife in the Kaibab to the annual celebration of Smokey Bear's birthday (complete with cake). Read more about our outstanding campground programs in the section on education programs!

While many of PLIA's on-site operations at BLM and Forest Service sites were hit hard in 2020 and 2021 by COVID restrictions, Southwest Recreation was able to continue offering amazing experiences that allowed Arizona residents and tourists a welcome opportunity to get outdoors and engage with their public lands.



Dogtown Lake in 2021. Photo Credit: USFS Kaibab National Forest



S O U T H W E S T
R E C R E A T I O N

PLIA TODAY—EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Special projects to educate and inspire.

Our partnership with land agencies extends beyond our visitor services. Under specific grant programs with the BLM, Forest Service, and other funding partners, PLIA also undertakes specific education and outreach projects to bolster the activities of our partners.

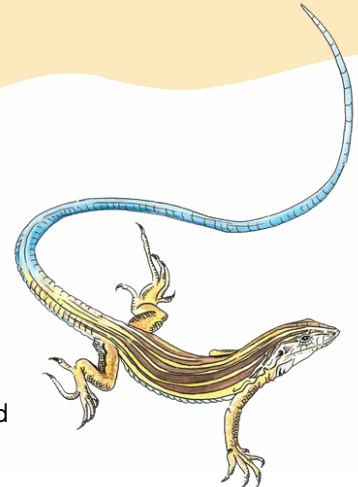
Whether we're planning events or finding new, engaging ways of interpreting lands, we aim to make public lands more accessible to all. In this section, you'll get to see some of our programs in progress!

Education

Whiptail Trails Club

Goals:

Educate 7th grade students from underserved areas of New Mexico about safe and responsible recreation on public lands.



Activities:

Supported by the NM Outdoor Equity Fund, this multi-faceted program provides in-class educational speakers, field trip opportunities, and classroom activities, all centered on nearby public lands, to over 300 students. A group of seventh-grade girls also get to take part in a camping experience designed to build outdoor and leadership skills.

This project aims to inspire young people to see the variety of opportunities available on public lands while also giving them the skillset necessary to enjoy them safely and responsibly. In partnership with the BLM and other land management agencies, this program introduces students to areas of historical and natural interest around New Mexico and encourages discussion of land use and administration through educational presentations.



Whiptail Trail participants in the Organ Mountains, March 2022.

Coronado National Forest–Visitor Information and Publications

Goals:

Enhance educational and interpretive opportunities at specific areas in the Coronado National Forest

Activities:

This agreement with the Coronado National Forest, will help us create two brand-new visitor guides, in print and digital formats, for areas such as Mt. Lemmon and the Catalina Highway in the Santa Catalina Ranger District, and Carr Canyon in the Sierra Vista Ranger District.

We will also support the Forest Service by producing interpretive panels to be placed at the Dragoon Springs in the Douglas Ranger District, providing background information as well as engaging historical and ecological narratives for visitors to this area.



Carr Canyon and the Huachuca Mountains.

Fort Stanton-Snowy River NCA–Caver Quest Academy

Goals:

Educate middle-school students in Lincoln County schools about the caves in the Fort Stanton-Snowy River National Conservation Area and how they can be preserved in the future.

Activities:

Partnering with the BLM Roswell Field Office, Lincoln County and Mescalero-Apache Schools, the Fort Stanton Cave Study Program, and a game development specialist, PLIA will assist in updating the Caver Quest computer game and distribute it to several classrooms. Several field trips will supplement the game experience, allowing students to see the lessons of the game come to life. In the second and third year of this program, the scope will expand to engage larger numbers of students.

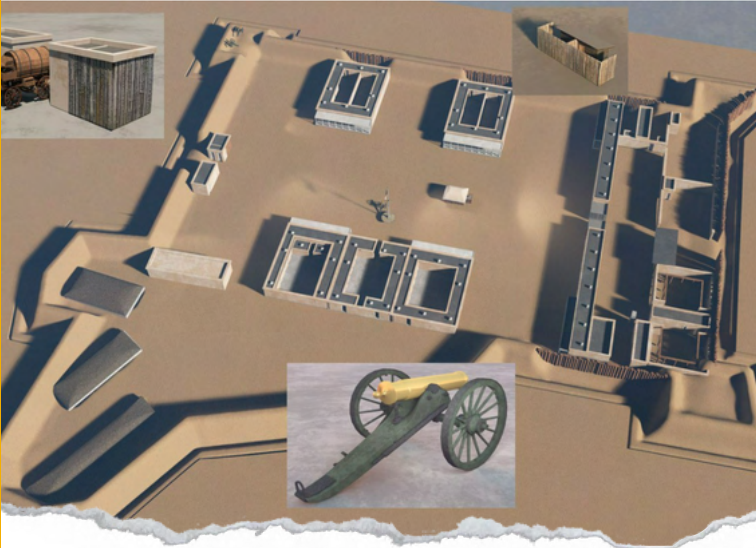


The Caver Quest game in development, with a fully modeled version of the caves.

Fort Craig National Historic Site–Virtual Fort Reconstruction and Experience

Goals:

Enhance visitor awareness and understanding of Fort Craig's history through engaging digital interpretive content.



The digital Fort Craig in progress.

Activities:

With funding from the BLM, this project aims to digitally reconstruct Fort Craig in its original condition with several educational modules covering the history of the site, important figures in its history such as Geronimo, Kit Carson, and the Buffalo Soldiers, and the strategic importance of the site. The digital program will be displayed in the Fort Craig Visitor Center on touchscreen panels, allowing for a multi-media experience.

Río Grande del Norte National Monument–"Adventure Safely" Videos

Goals:

Encourage safe recreation on the monument with a series of educational videos based around hiking, biking, rafting, fishing, and more.



Fishing and biking are popular pastimes at the monument

Activities:

In tandem with the Digital Media Arts program at the University of New Mexico –Taos, we are developing six two to three-minute videos focused on a variety of recreation opportunities in the Río Grande del Norte National Monument. The videos focus on specific safety tips for activities like safety while whitewater rafting, considerations while hiking near cliffs, viewing wildlife from a safe distance, and recreating on the monument with minimal disturbance to its ecological and cultural resources.

Currently in its scripting phase, this project will be a useful resource for BLM staff to educate visitors on the unique challenges of recreating on the monument.

Kaibab National Forest— Interpretive Programs

Goals:

Present engaging programs to communities near the Dogtown Lake, White Horse Lake, and Kaibab Lake campgrounds, encouraging learning about the forest's wildlife, geology, and more.

Activities:

For 16 years, PLIA's agreement with the Kaibab National Forest has allowed us to present unique interpretive programs at our Northern Arizona campground sites managed by Southwest Recreation. At campgrounds, morning and evening programs in the summer months range in topic from plant identification and activities based on the sciences to arts and crafts activities and a birthday party for Smokey Bear. Guided walks are another key component of the program. Campground visitors are welcome to engage with our interpreters Deb Noel, Reyna Butler, and their guest speakers as they guide them through these topics during their stay; there is always something new to learn from our interpreters about the forest!

Special events such as cleanup days at the lakes or removing invasive species from the campgrounds are another activity which brings locals to these sites for a common goal.



Deb Noel speaking at the National Public Lands Day Cleanup event at Kaibab Lake. September 25, 2021.



Reyna Butler holding a Horned Lizard at an interpretive hike at Keyhole Sink. July 24, 2021.

Several off-site programs help educate the public by providing information tables and handing out educational materials at farmers' markets, or holding talks and interpretive hikes at different locations in the Kaibab to illustrate subjects like climate change. In collaboration with the Williams Public Library, Southwest Recreation recently began the "Boots and Books Club," which meets monthly to discuss books related to forestry and wildlife while walking the campground trails.

The amazing interpretive staff at Southwest Recreation have brought some amazing programs to visitors and the surrounding community, encouraging all who visit these spectacular lakes to recreate in a safe and responsible way and learn more about the ecological and cultural components of their public lands.

Outreach

New Mexico Public Lands Information Center

Goals:

Provide useful interpretive services to those wishing to explore New Mexico's public lands, regardless of agency boundaries.

Activities:

In partnership with the BLM, we employ several individuals at the New Mexico BLM office to offer interpretive services in-person, over the phone, and via the chat feature at publiclands.org. Our knowledgeable PLIC staff help answer questions about public lands under the jurisdiction of all agencies and aim to provide the most up-to-date information available.

El Malpais National Conservation Area—Art Installation and Community Art Project

Goals:

Highlight land stewardship, history, culture, and land conservation in El Malpais National Conservation Area through art and outreach to local communities.

Activities:

PLIA and the BLM Rio Puerco Field Office are collaborating to bring an art installation to El Malpais National Conservation Area (NCA). We've hired Camisha Cordova as our outreach coordinator to connect us with local artists and facilitate communication between PLIA, BLM, and communities near El Malpais throughout the process. The project offers funding for time and materials for an artist to create a sculptural work celebrating the rich history and culture of the area, as well as the land stewardship and conservation efforts at the NCA today. The artist will also cooperate with communities around El Malpais to design and implement a community art project, drawing from voices in the community to characterize its importance and impact.



La Ventana Natural Arch (New Mexico's only free-standing arch), at El Malpais NCA.



Publishing—Junior Ranger Booklets and Newspapers

Goals:

Collaborate with the BLM and local artists to offer free site-specific publications that enhance the visitor experience for adults and children as they explore public lands.

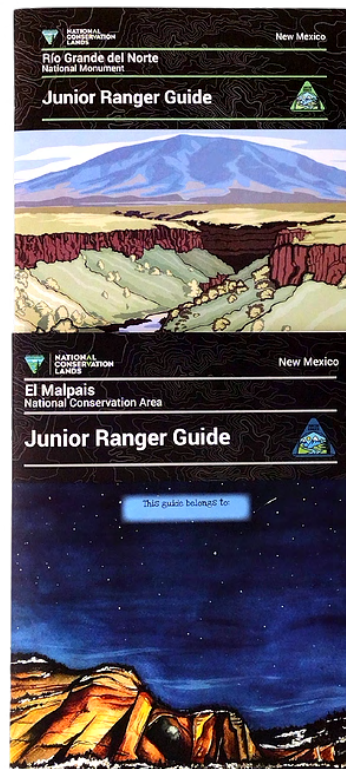
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: ALTITUDE SICKNESS

Visitors traveling from sea level or lower altitudes can be affected by the change in altitude when attempting strenuous activity. Signs of altitude sickness include fatigue, headache, dizziness, or upset stomach. Drink plenty of water and allow time for your body to acclimate before attempting strenuous activities.

Activities:

In our work with the BLM, our interpretive activities at certain sites are often project or event-based. Recently, the BLM Taos and Rio Puerco field offices have partnered with us to create a series of booklets and newspapers to help visitors of all ages understand responsible recreation principles and the history of specific sites. These colorful publications are a collaboration between PLIA and BLM staff, with the help of local artists for illustrations.

At Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and El Malpais National Conservation Area, our Junior Ranger booklets are offered for free to all visitors. Filled with fun activities and essential knowledge about these areas, the booklets are an age-appropriate guide to understanding the public lands system, ecology, geology, and the conservation efforts that BLM staff are responsible for. By completing the activities while they explore the area with their families, kids will develop a new understanding of public lands and the effort required to keep them protected.



Product Development—Souvenirs and T-Shirts

Goals:

Design and produce a variety of interpretive items in-house, supporting local manufacturers and talent.

Activities:

In the past, the SNCHA/PLIA was a prolific producer of interpretive books, pins, postcards, and many more items that would be right at home in a visitor center. Taking inspiration from the in-house publishing done in the past, and motivated by supply chain interruptions in 2021, we've recently resumed our in-house product development program after several years of inactivity.

Seeking to foster local talents and support local vendors that could collaborate with us, PLIA has encouraged Program Manager Roberta Archuleta as she's learned the process of laser-cutting and jewelry making using the resources of the FUSE Makerspace at Central New Mexico Community College.

With the ability to use equipment at the Makerspace, Roberta has designed and created keychains, using various wood and acrylic techniques to laser cut, etch, and burn designs to create a design inspired by a specific location like Valley of Fires and Sabino Canyon. Produced entirely in-house, these early attempts at product development mark an exciting step in PLIA's increased focus on locally-made products.

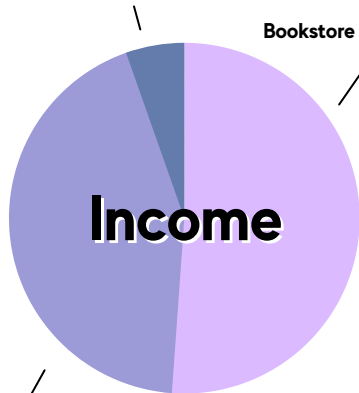
The success of the keychain manufacturing has inspired a number of other products such as t-shirts, which are currently in development.



2021 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Fiscal Year 2021 presented challenges and opportunities for the financial stability of the Public Lands Interpretive Association. Despite limited bookstore operations caused by COVID-19 and the Rafael Fire, which closed campground operations in Arizona over July 4th weekend, we made significant strides in diversifying revenue streams and identifying federal and state funds to achieve our mission.

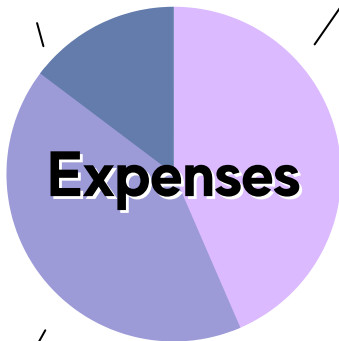
Grant Programs - 5.4%



Bookstore Revenue - 51.1%

Campground Revenue - 43.5%

General / Admin - 14.7%



Bookstore Expenses - 43.5%

Campground Expenses - 41.8%

Revenue

	FY2021	FY2020
Contributions and Grants	\$61,261	\$46,802
Program Service Revenue	\$1,074,706	\$1,189,897
Investments and Other Revenue	\$189,035	\$19,555
Total Revenue	\$1,325,002	\$1,256,254

Expenses

	FY2021	FY2020
Salaries, Benefits, & Other Compensation	\$570,714	\$539,648
Other Expenses	\$771,195	\$719,131
Total Expenses	\$1,341,909	\$1,258,779

Net Assets or Fund Balances

	FY2021	FY2020
Revenue Less Expenses	-\$16,907	-\$2,525
Total Assets at Year End	\$567,779	\$510,946
Total Liabilities at Year End	\$286,916	\$213,176
Net Assets/Fund Balances at Year End	\$280,863	\$297,770

HOW TO SUPPORT US:

Volunteer!

Do you love books? Have a desire to help others explore public lands? Want to take on a project in the outdoors or host a campground? We love having the help of volunteers in any project area. Keep up with us on our website or on Facebook to find out when the right opportunity might come your way! From library maintenance and shipping maps to helping us outdoors, we can find or make a place for you!

Join our Membership Program!

For a yearly contribution, we offer a membership program with multiple benefits! Depending on your level of contribution, you can join the Agave, Javelina Squadron, Roadrunner Race, or Saguaro Family to get 10% to 20% off at our locations (and online store), a reciprocal discount at more than 400 other stores in the Public Lands Alliance, our newsletter and more! Join us in person or online by clicking the **Join** button at publiclands.org.



Shop our Online Store!

Our website at publiclands.org is the landing page for our organization and our well-stocked online store! Shop for books, toys, and apparel, or browse our online map center for topographic, forest, and recreation maps for eleven different states. Shipping is free on all orders over \$75.



Follow us on Facebook!

Visit our Facebook page to stay up to date with PLIA events and announcements as well as useful information and history about public lands in the Southwest.





Contact Us!

PLIA

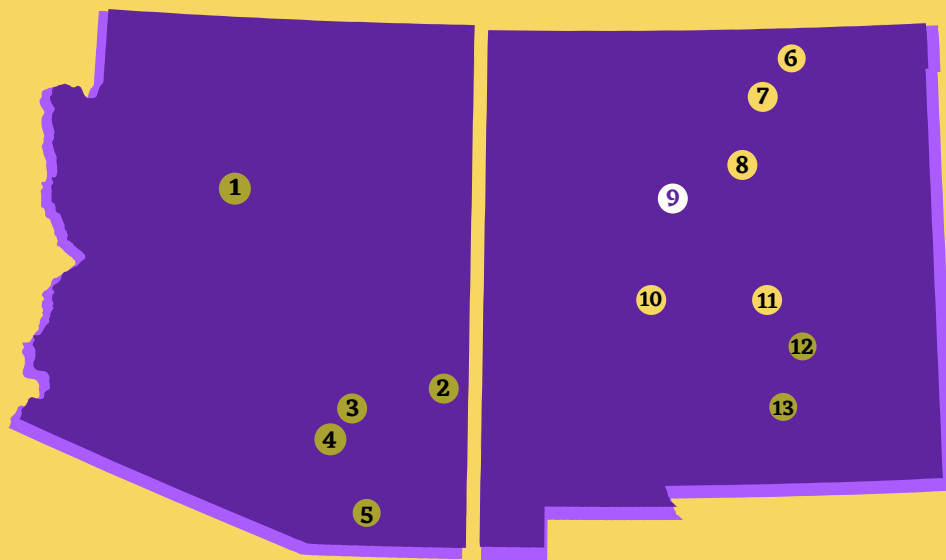
**6501 4th St. NW
Suite I
Albuquerque, NM 87107**

(505)345-9498

www.publiclands.org

Visit Us!

Come and see us at one of our locations! There are countless opportunities for recreation like rafting, climbing, hiking and much more. Our staff, volunteers, and agency partners are here to help you find the perfect spot for your preferred activity!



- 1) **Southwest Recreation Campgrounds**
Williams, AZ
- 2) **Clifton Ranger District**
Duncan, AZ
- 3) **Palisades Ranger Station**
Mt. Lemmon, AZ
- 4) **Sabino Canyon Visitor Center**
Tucson, AZ
- 5) **Sierra Vista Ranger District**
Hereford, AZ
- 6) **Wild Rivers Recreation Area**
Cerro, NM
- 7) **Rio Grande Gorge Visitor Center**
Pilar, NM
- 8) **NM Public Lands Information Center**
Santa Fe, NM
- 9) **PLIA Main Office–Wide Open Spaces**
Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, NM
- 10) **Fort Craig Historic Site**
San Antonio, NM
- 11) **Valley of Fires Recreation Area**
Carrizozo, NM
- 12) **Smokey Bear Ranger District**
Ruidoso, NM
- 13) **Sacramento Ranger District**
Cloudcroft, NM