



PUBLIC LANDS 2022  

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INTERPRETIVE ANNUAL  

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ASSOCIATION REPORT

# Staff

**Amanda Keith**  
Executive Director

**Kara Livingston**  
Retail Manager

**Sean Foster**  
Digital Sales Manager

**Roberta Archuleta**  
Program Manager

**Camisha Cordova**  
Outreach Coordinator

**Amber Price**  
Office Coordinator

**Marcos Montoya**  
Marketing Coordinator

**Sharlene Magana**  
Bookstore Manager  
Southern AZ Stores

**Julia Ives**  
Bookstore Manager  
Rio Grande Gorge

**Joan MacDonald**  
Information Specialist  
Wild Rivers

**Bill Tefft**  
Manager  
N.M. Public Lands Info. Center

**Steve and Shelley Ohab**  
Campground Managers  
Southwest Recreation

**Deb Noel**  
Lead Interpreter  
Southwest Recreation

**Reyna Butler**  
Outreach Coordinator  
Southwest Recreation

**Melissa Urreiztieta**  
Visitor Information Specialist  
Coronado National Forest

**Megan Lemcke**  
Visitor Information Specialist  
Cibola National Forest

# Board of Directors

**Elizabeth Foster**  
Board Chair

**Diane Souder**  
Vice Chair

**Matthew Humphries**  
Secretary

**Kaline Carter**  
Treasurer

**Rochelle Larson**  
Board Member

**Bob St. John**  
Board Member

**Jerold G. Widdison**  
Board Member

**Colin Deeds**  
Board Member

Current staff and  
board members as of  
December 2022.

## Our Mission

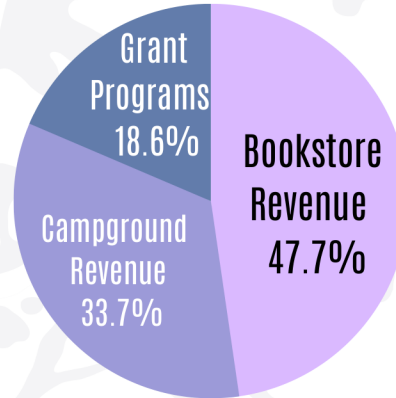
Inspire and educate the public about the natural and cultural heritage resources of America's public lands.

## Our Vision

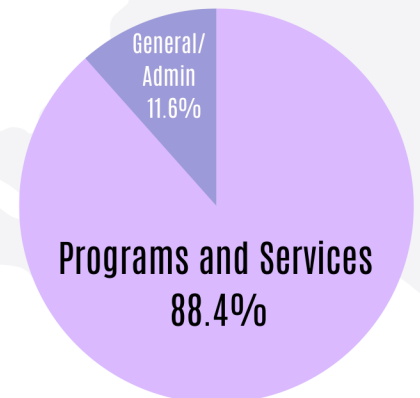
Public Lands:  
treasured, protected,  
and explored.

## Fiscal Year 2022: Financial Overview

### Income



### Expenses



## Revenue

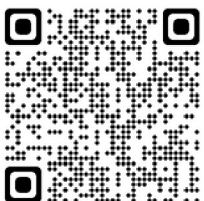
	FY2022	FY2021
Contributions & Grants	\$300,123	\$61,261
Program Service Revenue	\$1,347,462	\$1,074,706
Investments & Other Revenue	\$118,084	\$189,035
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,765,669</b>	<b>\$1,325,002</b>

## Expenses

	FY2022	FY2021
Salaries, Benefits & Other Compensation	\$566,572	\$570,714
Other Expenses	\$1,222,055	\$771,195
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,788,627</b>	<b>\$1,341,909</b>

## Net Assets or Fund Balances

	FY2022	FY2021
Revenue Less Expenses	-\$22,958	-\$16,907
Total Assets at Year End	\$553,737	\$567,779
Total Liabilities at Year End	\$295,832	\$286,916
<b>Net Assets/Fund Balances at Year End</b>	<b>\$257,905</b>	<b>\$280,863</b>



Shop for maps and books, find helpful information, and explore your public lands at our website!

[www.publiclands.org](http://www.publiclands.org)

# 2022 in Review: Bookstores, Campgrounds, and Visitor Centers

## 1 KAIBAB PLATEAU VISITOR CENTER (KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST)

After more than 25 years, PLIA is once again on the Kaibab Plateau! In summer of 2022, PLIA assumed operations and began the process of curating books, maps, apparel, and gifts that get visitors in touch with the unique characteristics of this northern Arizona landscape. We look forward to a fantastic 2023 season in Jacob Lake, AZ!



## 2 SOUTHWEST RECREATION CAMPGROUNDS (KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST)

Our campgrounds at **Kaibab Lake, Dogtown Lake, and White Horse Lake** attracted a great many visitors over the course of the summer season.

Campgrounds accounted for \$521,919 in revenue in FY 2022, and we foresee visitation remaining steady in the 2023 season as melting snow feeds Northern Arizona's lakes and filling them to the highest levels seen in recent years.

## 3 CLIFTON RANGER DISTRICT (APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FOREST)

Nestled on the approach to the Mogollon Rim, this small ranger station is the gateway to Arizona's "ghost town country." Our outlet provides detailed maps of this rugged area and PLIA recently introduced a selection of books covering the extensive histories of Indigenous peoples and mining activity in the region.

## 4 PALISADES VISITOR CENTER (CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST)

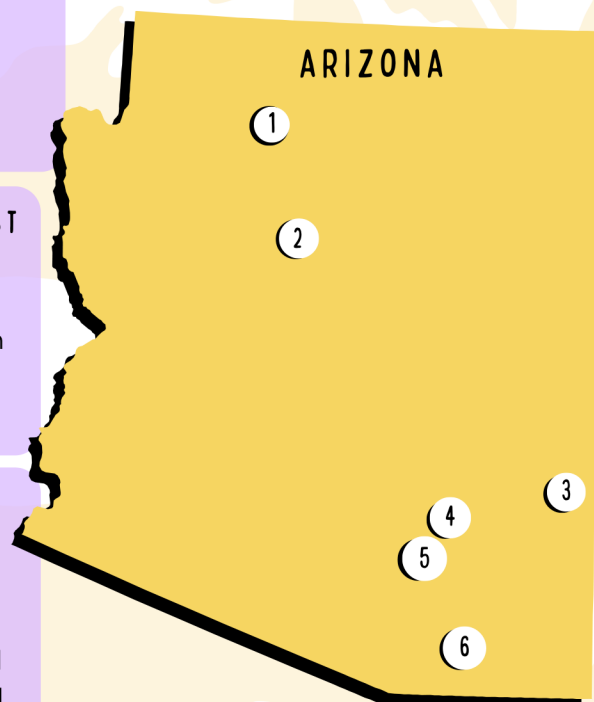
The mountaintop counterpart to Sabino Canyon, this site experienced a steady stream of visitation. While the nearby Pusch Ridge Wilderness attracts some interest from backpackers, this location mainly serves the tourists who make their way up to Mount Lemmon by providing apparel and interpretive products centered on the "sky islands." Thanks to our dedicated staff for tackling the Catalina Highway to keep this site open year-round.

## 5 SABINO CANYON VISITOR CENTER (CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST)

Many thousands of people came to enjoy this natural wonder throughout the year. A decent monsoon season brought plenty of water through the canyon, and even flooding in some areas in late summer. In 2022, PLIA staff coordinated with a variety of partners for events like the inaugural "Stars over Sabino" annual star party. We also introduced a selection of new products to this location, catering especially to young visitors with interpretive toys. Our dedicated team in Tucson work together with Coronado National Forest staff to answer a wide range of questions and create a welcoming environment for all visitors.

## 6 SIERRA VISTA RANGER DISTRICT (CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST)

Serving a relatively untamed portion of the Coronado National Forest, this ranger station sees less traffic than other PLIA stores nearby, but the services provided are essential to recreationists. Detailed trail and wilderness maps are necessary at times for exploring the southern reaches of the National Forest system, and our location provides these to customers. Thanks to our dedicated interpretive staff creating guides to recreation destinations (see programs) and the support provided by PLIA retail, these National Forest Areas are as accessible as ever to those seeking solitude.





### 1 WILD RIVERS VISITOR CENTER (NM BLM)

Excellent recreation opportunities drew visitors here throughout the spring and summer months. PLIA also premiered its Jr. Ranger booklet for the Río Grande del Norte National Monument at this location, inviting local elementary students for a day of fun activities. Regular guided hikes and other activities from our Bureau of Land Management partners helped draw traffic as well.

### 2 RIO GRANDE GORGE VISITOR CENTER (NM BLM)

Low flows in the Rio Grande during the summer may have extended the lesser visitation of the spring months. Construction on the John Dunn Bridge and other closures also may have contributed. Our future plans aim to promote this store and Wild Rivers to Taos locals and tourists alike through advertising and expanding our selection of locally-sourced products.

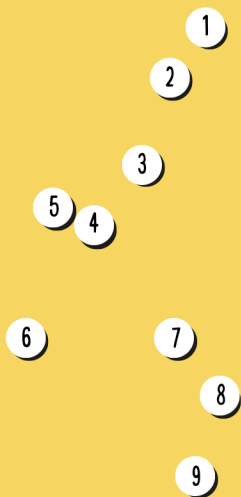
### 3 N.M. PUBLIC LANDS INFORMATION CENTER (NM BLM)

The NMPLIC served New Mexicans through several wildfires in the spring, issuing much-needed updates and guidance as the situation rapidly changed. Thankfully, the PLIC was able to successfully direct recreationists away from the affected areas to lesser-used public lands. We're looking to raise the profile of this location in the BLM State Office going forward and continue offering unique books and products that can't be found elsewhere in Santa Fe.

### 4 SANDIA RANGER DISTRICT (CIBOLA NATIONAL FOREST)

Joining the Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center, this outlet is the second new PLIA location in 2022. Surrounding Tijeras where the store is located, the Sandia Ranger District is among one of the busiest National Forest areas in New Mexico. So far, things have been promising with a steady stream of visitors and partnerships with the Cibola National Forest developing as we gear up for upcoming programs.

NEW MEXICO



### 5 PLIA MAP & BOOKSTORE (HOME OFFICE)

Our base of operations for over 40 years, our Albuquerque location provides administrative support to all stores while also offering books and maps in-person and online. 2022 saw the introduction of a wider selection of hats, plush, and some new books to this location and the online store. Heavier emphasis on local events and marketing will help to raise PLIA's profile among locals and as an online destination.

### 6 FORT CRAIG HISTORIC SITE (NM BLM)

Situated strategically along El Camino Real, this former military installation saw steady visitation in 2022, peaking in April. Civil War history buffs and Camino Real travelers are the primary visitors, and our offerings cater to this crowd. Thanks to BLM volunteer Mark Grinstead for his commitment to operating the visitor center.

### 7 VALLEY OF FIRES RECREATION AREA (NM BLM)

Located in Carrizozo, this store saw steady visitation through 2022, peaking in the cooler spring months. Dedicated BLM volunteer Thom Kerr has much to do with the continued success of this location. His hard work providing helpful information and a welcoming atmosphere attracts many repeat visitors, even from abroad.

### 8 SMOKEY BEAR RANGER DISTRICT (LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST)

In the mountain town of Ruidoso, this location is a helpful information center for the many tourists attracted to the temperate climate. While other stores see a downturn in summer, activity at this location peaked in July. Our expanded selection of diverse gifts—and of course Smokey Bear merchandise—made this a great stop for shoppers in 2022.

### 9 SACRAMENTO RANGER DISTRICT (LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST)

South of Ruidoso, Cloudcroft is a smaller community with a similar landscape and recreation opportunities. Many hikers and sight-seers come looking to explore the Sacramento Mountains; naturally trail guides and maps sold well here in 2022, as did practical items like hats. We plan to expand our selection, making additions to set it apart from other sites nearby.



# 2022 in Review: Education and Outreach Programs

## EL MALPAIS COMMUNITY ART PROGRAM

In the first cycle of this new program, PLIA focused on outreach to art communities around New Mexico, specifically focused around El Malpais. Many hopeful artists began submitting proposals to the burgeoning program, to great success. A panel of judges chose three of these artists to develop their proposals into full-scale works. PLIA provided stipends for their time and work and in turn, they provided outstanding examples of painting, beadwork, and sculpture for display at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ranger station at El Malpais National Conservation Area.



*Artist Christian Bigwater's El Malpais Triptych on display at the ranger station.*

At our winter celebration for these artists, the BLM unveiled the pieces at a well-attended event featuring a storyteller from Acoma Pueblo.

The large-scale sculpture "TriboElectricity" by Acoma artist Walt Torres will be formally unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony once the sculpture is in place. **PLIA and the BLM are already gearing up for year two, having issued another call for artists to participate in the next cycle**, with the theme of Culture & History. There will be several more community art shows throughout the year as a new crop of artists send in proposals.

## WHIPTAIL TRAILS CLUB

The Whiptail Trails Club program had a successful first year, providing educational programming experiences for middle school students in southern New Mexico. **We were able to provide in-class presentations and field trips to over 250 students, including a special week-long camping trip for ten seventh-grade girls.** Thanks to the Outdoor Equity Fund, we can continue this program in southern New Mexico through 2023, while our partnership with the Cibola National Forest allows us to offer these programs near Albuquerque for the first time.

Our goal for this second year is to introduce stewardship and STEM-based educational opportunities to over 400 students from underserved communities throughout New Mexico. **At the time of writing, our team has already provided educational programming and field trips to over 100 students in the Albuquerque metro area.** Another week-long camp for girls is planned for this summer and programming and outreach will resume for southern New Mexico schools in the fall.



*Photos from the Whiptail Trails Club Girls Camp and classroom sessions. Participants travelled through a variety of public lands in southern New Mexico and gained experience with outdoor skills.*



## CAVER QUEST ACADEMY

The Caver Quest Academy Program was a great success in its first year! Our team was able to provide educational opportunities to over 150 students from Title I schools in New Mexico's Lincoln County School District.

Students had positive feedback about the educational video game developed for this experience and how it helped them feel prepared for the fieldtrip to the cave. Of the 150 students in our classroom outreach, 70 students were selected for the specialized fieldtrip into Fort Stanton cave, as well as 15 teachers, 2 PLIA staff, and 7 BLM staff for **a total of 94 entries into the cave for 2022.**

In the fall of 2023 our goal is to increase the number of cave entries so that more students have the opportunity to participate in this unique educational experience.

In February 2023, the Public Lands Alliance (PLA) asked PLIA to create an educational panel presentation for Caver Quest Academy at the PLA conference in Portland, Oregon. Recently, PLA also recognized the impact of Caver Quest Academy on a national level, naming the program as the **winner of the Outstanding Public Engagement award** for services on public lands.

## SANDIA RANGER DISTRICT YOUTH BOOKLET

The Sandia Youth booklet is a program still in progress, developed in partnership between PLIA Visitor Information Specialist Megan Lemcke and the Sandia Ranger District of Cibola National Forest. The booklet is geared towards kids in elementary school and will focus on the Sandia Mountains, wildlife, history and culture, and how to recreate responsibly using Leave No Trace principles. The booklet will include many illustrations from a local artist and fun activities to be enjoyed by kids of all ages. It is our goal to have the booklet completed and ready for distribution in 2023.



*Photos from our field trips into Fort Stanton Cave, and the program mascot, Townsend the Bat.*

## ADVENTURE SAFETY VIDEO PROJECT

In the first year of this project, PLIA staff, the BLM, and the University of New Mexico-Taos film program collaborated to write scripts, film scenes, and begin the process of editing (which is now in its final stages) for the first three videos of this series. The videos center on the Río Grande del Norte National Monument and discuss recreation topics like river safety, Leave No Trace principles, and wildlife safety. **Our goal is to have a screening event for the first completed videos in the summer of 2023 with our BLM partners.** Production and filming of the second set of videos will take place in the fall of 2023, in the hopes of having **a launch party for the entire series in 2024!**



*The Río Grande del Norte National Monument centers on the river that shares its name. Opportunities for water-based and other outdoor recreation abound.*



# FORT CRAIG VIRTUAL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

This project aims to recreate Fort Craig (a former military installation, now a ruin in the desert of south-central New Mexico) during its active years via a 3-D model. **The digital model will be the centerpiece of a multi-media kiosk at the Fort Craig Historic Site.**



*Fort Craig was only active for around 30 years in the mid-1800s. Its ruins contain a wealth of insight into life on the American frontier during this time.*

Our program staff continue to make progress on the video documentaries that feature pre- and post-Civil War periods at Fort Craig and the surrounding area. To further the project, PLIA staff have also reached out to several archives, military museums, local Tribes, and archeologists around Fort Craig in an effort to represent a well-rounded perspective of the time period and the location's relationship to Indigenous people.

## CAMPGROUND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

In spring of 2022, the Southwest Recreation interpretive staff organized our first field trips to the Kaibab Lake Campground. **The team was successfully able to bring more than 190 local students to Kaibab Lake to help further their education about forests and to deepen their connection to nature.** One of the schools had the exciting opportunity to watch an osprey dive into the lake and catch a fish then see a bald eagle come swoop at the osprey, making it drop its meal. The bald eagle then grabbed the fish and began to eat it as all of the students were cheering it on.



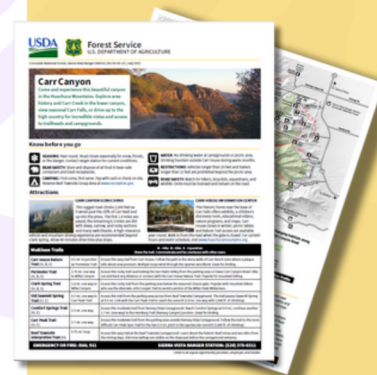
*Local students on a field trip to Kaibab Lake.*

**Interpretive staff also delivered 47 programs to campground guests in 2022, with a total of 720 program participants.** Our top programs in terms of participant numbers were the star party with our partners at Flagstaff's Lowell Observatory, Smokey Bear birthday parties, and the "Art of Birds" program. Staff also developed multiple self-guided programs that were posted around the campgrounds for campers to take. These included flora and fauna identification, Leave No Trace ethics, and scavenger hunts. We also hosted two cleanup events, which were able to remove a substantial amount of garbage from the campground lakes. These programs and events are a great way for campers, families, and locals to learn about nature, create memories, and feel a stronger connection to the natural world.

Thanks to our Southwest Recreation interpretive team; Deb Noel and Reyna Butler, who have gone above and beyond to provide these incredible experiences to guests on public lands.

## CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST PUBLICATIONS

In 2022, PLIA Visitor Information Specialist Melissa Urreiztieta developed a series of seven brand-new visitor guides for sites across southern Arizona's Coronado National Forest. These handy, concise guides provide essential information for visitors to have a safe and enjoyable trip and also highlight recreation opportunities and the natural and cultural history of the area. Melissa developed these guides in close collaboration with US Forest Service staff, as well as other partner organizations and volunteers.



*The visitor guide for Carr Canyon in the Sierra Vista Ranger District condenses helpful information into a single page.*

The guides include color photographs, maps, and illustrations. **They are available to download from the Coronado National Forest website ([fs.usda.gov/coronado](https://fs.usda.gov/coronado)) and are currently being translated into Spanish.** This work continues in 2023 with new guides being developed for additional sites.



# From the Executive Director

Dear PLIA Community,

Thank you for reading the 2022 Public Lands Interpretive Association Annual Report. 2022 was a critical year for us and our ability to regain momentum following the Covid-19 pandemic. Not only did we fully resume bookstore operations across our locations, we welcomed two additional stores, in the Kaibab National Forest: North Kaibab Plateau and in the Cibola National Forest: Sandia Ranger District. Both of these forests hold special meaning to us; we have worked with the Kaibab as a campgrounds partner for more than thirty years and this store further establishes our presence on the Colorado Plateau. As an organization based in the Albuquerque area, the Sandia Mountains play an important role in this area's geographic identity; looking out on these mountains from my office window, I'm proud to say that we are now partnering with the Forest Service to help this truly special place.

This past year, we also grew our grant-funded programs and provided education opportunities to nearly 600 students. One of the highlights of the year was our newly-launched Whiptail Trails Club in partnership with the BLM and Conservation Corps New Mexico. Through this program, we provided in-class presentations and field trips to middle school students in Las Cruces. In July, we also led a weeklong camping trip for ten seventh-grade girls and showed them the diverse range of BLM, National Park Service, and Forest Service lands in southern New Mexico. It was an unforgettable experience for them, and for me, and I look forward to seeing us grow the Whiptail Trails Club in years to come.

If you read our 40th year annual report last year (and if you haven't yet, please do!), you'll notice that this year's report is much abbreviated. While we are as active as ever, we wanted to provide a more concise view of our organization's activities for you to stay up-to-date. Through our bookstores, campgrounds, and education programs, you'll find that PLIA staff are engaging in new and exciting projects and that we are working diligently to support visitors to public lands across the Southwest. This report can't possibly capture all of the hard work and dedication of our staff and I want to take a moment to say thank you to them for continuing to lead forward.

Our organization is grateful to our agency partners for believing in us and for providing opportunities for us to engage in meaningful work on public lands. Our mission to inspire and educate would be impossible without the people who work for and with PLIA. I'm constantly inspired by the people in this community and I look forward to the great things we can accomplish together this year.

Sincerely,

  
**AMANDA KEITH**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



*Amanda accepts our award for  
Extraordinary Education and  
Interpretive Services from  
Secretary of the Interior Deb  
Haaland, September 2022.*