

## **View from the Locked Gate**

### **A bit of sarcasm about an access lesson**

**By Del & Stacie Albright, BlueRibbon Coalition**

The gal in uniform with the big gun on her hip smiled and waved as she installed the recessed pad lock on the gate. I guess she thought we were happy about the road being closed. Her rugged 4x4 government-bought pickup truck that was kinda parked in our view had all sorts of signs and decals declaring she was a public servant. We figured it must be true.

She had sent us an official-looking letter a while back asking for comments, but the fish were a'bitin' so we missed out on the letter-writin'. We figured someone else would write those darn letters. We figured wrong on all accounts.

It was a heck of a view we had – trees, rocks, trails, roads, wildlife, mountains, creeks, and vast open areas beckoning to the adventurer in all of us. It's easy to recall my Dad, Elmer, telling stories of roaming this kind of back country area 40 years ago with the freedom of a jack rabbit in the Mojave Desert. He always told us to get outdoors and have fun while taking care of the land. He figured we would all have the same freedom. He figured wrong.

The ability, and most importantly the opportunity that my dad had to take his kids out and teach us how to fish, hunt, hike, play and breathe in the fresh air is all but gone now. My mind wanders off and I think of what can happen if we continue down this dangerous path of management by closure.

Soon it will be just a happy memory of our nine year old when she was able to see nature, hike, take pictures and jump in and out of our 4 wheel drive while we were on the hunt for a new camp spot. Soon she will not have the opportunity to teach them the same lessons and family traditions that came naturally and innocently in her youth to her tots.

Our view now is tainted, to say the least. Padlocks, iron pipe, closed signs, reinforced hinges, and small-print letting us know under no uncertain circumstances that the land beyond the gate is CLOSED to access – unless of course you want to haul your buns in there via boot rubber.

Now, as I stand here watching that same gal in uniform jump back into her four wheel drive (that I paid for) and drive on down my old favorite trail I get a lump in my throat and I get a little teary eyed just thinking about the view our kids are going to have from this same locked gate that's in my backyard. I don't think I'm figuring wrong anymore.

Back to the future: in reality, there are things we can all do to prevent this (sarcastic) scenario from happening. You've read tons of articles on getting involved, joining groups like BlueRibbon Coalition, and ensuring your family and friends have a place to ride. **Just do it.** Visit [www.delalbright.com](http://www.delalbright.com) and [www.sharetrails.org](http://www.sharetrails.org) for more things you can do right now. Make a difference and help prevent closures from blocking our "view" any more. Join up, donate and get in the game. Please, before we have nothing left to figure on...

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*The BlueRibbon Coalition is a national recreation group that champions responsible use of public lands and waters, and encourages individual environmental stewardship. It represents over 10,000 individual members and 1,200 organization and business members, for a combined total of over 600,000 recreationists nationwide. 1-800-258-3742. <http://www.sharetrails.org>*