PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Student Congress at the GLO Bicentennial Conference (2012) in Boulder, Colorado, representing the next generation of public lands supporters and hailing from diverse regions and backgrounds, will bring innovative ideas, new perspectives, and optimistic energy to discussions about the future of public lands.

We hold in common a love of land. Nature is dynamic and ever-changing, and people are intimately a part of it. Collaboration and community are part of our social fabric. In that context, working together on land management issues can help heal rifts in our communities and overcome adversarial relationships. The challenge of public land management is not simply about outcomes, but about who is involved in the decision making process.

Public lands management is an opportunity for the expression of public values - past, present and future. Science alone should not determine what is right or wrong. Public values should be identified and fundamental to land management.

In hopes of learning important lessons from the past and in the spirit of stewardship for the next generation, we make the following recommendations to guide the next fifty years of the Bureau of Land Management:

SECTION A: The BLM should strengthen its commitment to partnering with public lands stakeholders.

1. Increased funding should be allocated to field offices to implement Best Management Practices for collaboration so that everyone can provide input into plans and decisions. Inclusion is a top priority and encompasses traditional public land users as well as many newer and previously marginalized communities.

2. The BLM should invest in legal and policy changes (e.g. NEPA, ESA, FLPMA) so that collaborative processes using best practices provide fundamental input into decisions and plans.

3. The BLM should build capacity for early outreach using multiple venues including new social media to incorporate stakeholders and the public in all stages of decision making. The BLM should aim to engage responsibly, working to provide structure, transparency, and leadership in an adaptive management framework.

SECTION B: The BLM should adopt a land ethic which ensures resiliency of its lands.

1. The policy of maximum sustained yield needs to take into account climate uncertainty and shifting baselines.

2. In the words of Aldo Leopold, we define that a land ethic is an "ethic dealing with man's [people's] relation to land and the animals and plants which grow upon it."

3. Resiliency is the capacity of a social-ecological system to respond to a disturbance by resisting damage and recovering quickly.

4. As public lands are the national inheritance of the people, land users should abate their impact, through mitigation, reclamation, and/or restoration.

5. Laws and policies must be established that will empower land managers to guarantee land resiliency.

SECTION C: The BLM should focus its use of new social media and technology towards four goals to:

1. Increase public awareness of the BLM's contributions to public health, safety, and sustainability across local, state, federal and even international boundaries.

2. Build community and stronger bonds between people and the public lands to support cooperative stewardship.

3. Foster public discourse, including gathering input on decisions and plans, collecting data (e.g. mobile apps for citizen science), and developing participation incentives.

4. Enhance training and collaboration opportunities within the BLM and other federal agencies.

We suggest investing in the following methods and tools to achieve these goals, in addition to traditional media:

- Forums (both internal and external)
- Factsheets
- Blogs
- Frequently updated photos and video
- Apps for activities/navigation/interpretation
- Primary webpages for mobile browsers
- Field guides
- Data collection applications
- Surveys and polls
- Games (e.g. SIM-Resource Manager)
- Contests
- Creation of a BLM office to manage social media use (e.g. combination of Offices of Information Resource Management, Communication, and NLCS/Community Program)

SECTION D: Our time as members of the Student Congress has been short and there are many other vital issues and opportunities that we believe should be addressed in future discussions by the BLM and public lands stakeholders (including other students and young people).

- Native American and Alaska Native cultures, lifeways, and traditional lands
- Renewable energy development
- Role of managers in shaping public values

- Slogans and branding (e.g. Public Lands, Public Problems, Public Solutions)
- Diversity in the BLM workforce
- Skills, training, and institutional knowledge-sharing for the BLM workforce
- More opportunities for young people
- Interconnections with urban areas
- Dichotomy of fossil fuel extraction from public lands and land management challenges presented by climate change
- New opportunities presented by climate change
- Policy of Maximum Sustained Yield

SECTION E: We have come to this list of recommendations, issues, and opportunities through several days of intense dialogue and with the generous support and encouragement of many coaches and advisors (Patricia Limerick, Lynn Scarlett, Bob Abbey, Dale Bosworth, Jamie Skillen, John Freemuth, Members of the Public Lands Foundation, the Center of the American West, and the Bureau of Land Management). We wish to thank them for providing opportunities for youth to engage in these important national conversations. Working together, we can ensure that the public lands will continue to be a source of shared prosperity for the next 50 years and beyond.

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