



For America's Heritage

Public Lands Foundation

P.O. Box 7226 Arlington, Virginia 22207

May 29, 2014

Dear BLM Employees:

On behalf of the Public Lands Foundation, I want to take this opportunity to express the full support of the Public Lands Foundation for the work you are doing for the citizens of the United States, the National System of Public Lands, and the communities where you live and work. As former employees of the BLM, we know of and appreciate the dedication and work ethic that you bring to the job every morning when you report for work. We also know it is not easy in these times.

Recent events involving the BLM have challenged you and made your work more stressful. This is unfortunate. People dissatisfied with decisions made by the BLM, the Department of the Interior, or the Federal government in general are using these recent events to “gang up” on you, the people who are out on the front lines implementing the laws passed by the U.S. Congress and working to improve and restore our public lands. It is not right, morally, ethically, or legally to threaten you or your loved ones with violence for doing your job implementing laws and regulations. We have been assured by BLM’s leadership that these threats and illegal actions are being investigated by appropriate law enforcement agencies. If criminal violations have occurred, these people should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Lawlessness has no place in civil discourse and no place on the people’s land. Experience has taught us that investigations and the judicial system often work slowly. You might not see the results of any actions for some time, but the wheels are turning.

Most of the recent events are being escalated by those who question the role of the Federal government in managing the public lands. This is not new. The ownership of these lands legally rests with the people of the United States. This has been determined in law and upheld by the courts for decades. The question has been resolved. Yet, there are people out there, including local, state, and National-level politicians who continue to push that agenda; not by appropriate legislative or judicial channels, but by attacking the people charged with carrying out the purpose of the laws.

Despite the negative stories in the press, there are stories supporting you. I believe that the vast majority of Americans recognize each of you for your dedicated work. They recognize you for making their visits to public lands safe, for producing the commodities off the lands, for clean water, abundant wildlife habitat, and ample recreational opportunities; for maintaining the forests and rangelands, for fighting the wildfires, and for creating jobs in the communities. You do all this with the smallest budget of any of the Federal land management agencies, and yet you produce more return to the American taxpayer than any of the other agencies. You do this despite sequestration of funds, furloughs, and pay freezes. You do this because you are dedicated public servants.

The public also recognizes you as upstanding citizens in your community, as their neighbor, as the coach of their kids' sports team, as the community planner or school board representative, and as the volunteer EMT that comes to their aid in a medical emergency. You add a lot to the fabric of the local communities and you should be justifiably proud of what you do; on the job and at home.

Times may be a little tough at the moment. The BLM has been through this before and will get through this – because of you and your fellow workers. Be proud of what you do and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward W. Shepard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Edward W. Shepard, President
Public Lands Foundation