

Public Lands Foundation



2023 Annual Report

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Steve Ellis, National Association of Forest Service Retirees



**Aravaipa Canyon, AZ
(BLM Photo)**

**Front Cover: Vermillion Cliffs, Arizona
Back Cover: Snake River, Idaho**

President's Message

2023 was a year of change for the Public Lands Foundation. Sadly, we lost a valued member, colleague, and former President with the passing of Henri Bisson at the beginning of the year. Henri was leading our fundraising outreach effort when he passed. Our former Executive Director, Courtney Lyons-Garcia, left to pursue new opportunities in the nonprofit sector. Kim Harb stepped down from the Treasurer role and George Stone, who has done an amazing job for PLF, resigned at the end of the calendar year. This is a significant amount of change for our organization in a relatively short time. We were fortunate to be able to recruit Mark Davis as our new Treasurer and Margaret Lliteras to serve as a part-time, paid bookkeeper. They are doing a fantastic job to keep our financial house in order. While there are still a few functions that we have not yet been able to cover, the most pressing of these are someone to lead our fundraising efforts and someone to take over our membership database. If you have those skills, or know someone who does, please contact a member of the Executive Committee.



Scott Florence led a membership drive in 2023 with the help of our State Representatives. They were able to make progress in getting sixty-five lapsed members to renew their memberships and attracted twenty-one new members. We appreciate all that they did, but it is up to all of us to attract new retirees to the organization to keep it growing and viable well into the future. PLF members also stepped up big this year to review and prepare comments on a variety of BLM proposed rules and initiatives. I want to thank everyone involved for their excellent work.

PLF continued its tradition of awarding two \$5,000 scholarships to deserving students who are pursuing degrees in the natural resources and environmental fields. This important initiative cannot succeed without the generosity of our members. Thank you to everyone who donated to the George Lea Founder's Scholarship fund in 2023! Please consider doing so in 2024 so we can continue to help fund the education of future natural resources professionals.

The PLF Board hosted calls with the BLM Director, Tracy Stone-Manning, to get updates on the many BLM proposed rules and initiatives that were rolled out in 2023. PLF was also successful in getting three articles written and published in The BLM Daily. The three articles covered an introduction to PLF, a discussion of the George Lea Founder's Scholarship program, and a review of the Student Congress which PLF sponsors in conjunction with the National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) and the Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University. I also recently had a productive introductory call with I Ling Thompson, the Chief Executive Officer for the new Foundation for America's Public Lands. PLF is eager to work with this new foundation to achieve our mutual goals. We are discussing entering into an MOU and possibly serving on an Advisory Committee to that body. I will provide future updates on these efforts.

We held a very successful Annual Meeting in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 2023 and are looking forward to our 2024 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada on October 8-9. Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us!

A nonprofit organization like the PLF cannot survive without help from our members. I want to acknowledge the amazing contributions of our Executive Committee, our Board of Directors, and our committees. Additionally, I want to thank all our members for continuing to support the PLF and making donations to the many deserving initiatives that are part of PLF's program of work. I am humbled and honored to be your President, but my contributions pale in comparison to those made by many others. Thank you for all you do and talk to you again soon.

2023 PLF Annual Meeting – Cheyenne, Wyoming



The 2023 PLF Annual Meeting was held in Cheyenne, Wyoming on September 25-26, 2023. The theme of the meeting was “Public Land Access”. The panel discussion on “Public Land Access” included a range of local experts on public land access challenges in Wyoming. There was an acknowledgement that there has been a revolution in technology regarding public access to digitized maps and land status, but there is still a lack of digitized road data on travel access. There are efforts underway at the private, State, and Federal levels to standardize GIS data, but improvements are needed to standardize attributes to better educate and inform public land users.

A PLF Board Meeting was held during the Annual Meeting and included discussions of Goals and Objectives for 2024, membership and recruitment efforts, process improvements for providing PLF comments on proposed BLM regulations and policies, and the need to identify PLF leads to participate in BLM public roundtable meetings on major public land initiatives such as the BLM Recreation Blueprint Strategic Plan. Updates were provided on plans for the Student Congress to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada in October 2024. The theme for the Student Congress in 2024 is “Navigating the Global Energy Transition”. Plans are currently underway for the 2024 PLF Annual Meeting to be held in Las Vegas in October 2024 to overlap with the Student Congress. An update was also provided by the National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) on advocacy efforts in support of the Forest Service and Forest Service employees. The NAFSR collaborates with the PLF on a variety of public land and National Forest issues and is a cosponsor with the PLF on the Student Congress. The Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University is also a cosponsor of the Student Congress.

A major action item from the PLF Board Meeting was approval of an update to the PLF Goals to reflect the importance and value of the BLM National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) of public lands. The PLF Goals were updated to read: “We aim to support the long-term protection, conservation, and restoration of units of the NLCS as distinctly unique among the public lands managed by the BLM.”

Advocacy

The PLF works year-round on advocacy outreach activities. We pursue this advocacy mission by remaining current on public land issues and policies, preparing Position Statements, and communicating our concerns and recommendations to the BLM, Congress, stakeholder interest groups and the general public, and responding to media inquiries. We testify before Congress and submit written testimony on budget, legislation, and policy matters affecting the BLM and the public lands. Our Priority Advocacy issues include Rebuilding the BLM, Public Land Access, Public Land Recreation, Special Areas Management, and Renewable Energy.

FY 2024 Budget Testimony

The PLF provided written testimony on the BLM Fiscal Year 2024 proposed budget to both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Our greatest concern for the BLM is the large number of vacancies across the Bureau that is impacting the BLM at all levels of the organization. This loss of capacity is limiting the ability of the BLM to efficiently carry out its multiple use and sustained yield mission. The PLF believes the budget should prioritize programs that provide for healthy and resilient landscapes and support funding to manage the sustainable and balanced development of both traditional and renewable energy resources on the public lands. The PLF recommended significant funding for the BLM to coordinate activities to improve and restore sagebrush habitats and increased funding in the wild horse and burro program. Funding needs were identified for wildland fire suppression and healthy landscape and resiliency projects, rangeland management and the administration of grazing permit renewals, and increases in the recreation program budget to address the ever-increasing recreation use of the public lands.

Mining Law Reform

The PLF continued to track mining law reform initiatives by the Department of the Interior and the BLM. The PLF signed onto a joint letter with several other organizations to both Senate and House Appropriations Committees to provide funding for the abandoned hardrock mine reclamation program. The PLF also provided additional comments and a letter to the Department and BLM requesting that the BLM proceed ahead with regulations to eliminate the discretionary Small Miners waiver program.



Bald Mountain Mine - Nevada

Solar and Wind Energy Regulations

The PLF provided comments to the BLM on a Proposed Rule for solar and wind energy right-of-way authorizations on the public lands under the 43 CFR 2800 regulations. Those comments are posted on the PLF website and the PLF will continue to track development of those regulations.



Silver State Solar project - Nevada

Advocacy *(continued)*

Conservation Regulations

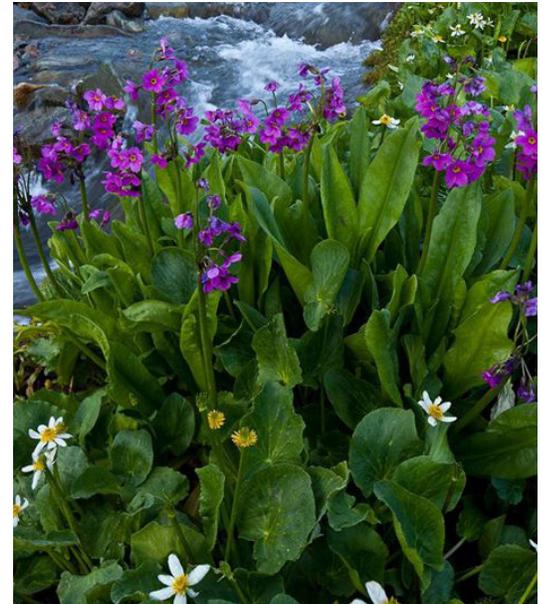
The PLF provided comments to the BLM on a Proposed Rule on Conservation and Landscape Health under the 43 CFR 1600 and 6100 regulations. Those comments are posted on the PLF website and the PLF will continue to track development of those regulations.

Grazing Regulations

The PLF updated a Position Statement on Livestock Grazing on the public lands and posted the Position Statement on the PLF website. The BLM in August 2023 suspended work on the grazing regulations. However, the PLF will continue to track the development of updated BLM grazing program policies and guidance.

Recreation Blueprint

The PLF updated a Position Statement on Recreation Use on Public Lands which includes several recommendations to enhance the recreation program on the public lands. The PLF also submitted comments to the BLM on the “Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation” which was released in 2023. The PLF has been added to the list of interested parties for future outreach efforts on this initiative.



American Basin ACEC - Colorado



Recreation on the Public Lands

Oil and Gas Regulations

The PLF provided comments to the BLM on a Proposed Rule to revise the oil and gas leasing regulations to reflect provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 to increase royalty rates, minimum lease bids, rental fees, and lease bonds for oil and gas leasing on the public lands. Those comments are posted on the PLF website and the PLF will continue to track development of the regulations.



Oil and Gas Drill Rig - Wyoming

Awards

The PLF is proud to acknowledge and recognize the significant contributions to public lands management by individuals, groups and organizations. We do this by issuing several kinds of awards. Most are awarded annually, but some are presented on special occasions.

Beau McClure – Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award

Beau McClure was presented the first ever Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award at the Annual Meeting in Cheyenne, WY in 2023. This Award was established by the PLF in memory of Henri R. Bisson, past PLF President, and in recognition of his 14 years of dedication to the PLF. Beau McClure was recognized for his unselfish dedication of time and energy in support of the goals and objectives of the PLF.

Tom Lahti – Lifetime Service Award

Tom Lahti was presented a Lifetime Service Award at the Annual Meeting in 2023. Tom was generous with his time during his BLM career and mentored numerous other employees dealing with visual resource impacts on the public lands. He ended his career as the Renewable Energy Chief for the BLM Western States where he dealt with controversial projects such as large wind farms and multi-state transmission lines.

Fran Cherry – Lifetime Service Award

Fran Cherry was presented a Lifetime Service Award at the Annual Meeting in 2023. Fran's 40-year career with the BLM began as a Natural Resources Specialist and included positions as Area Manager, District Manager, Associate State Director, State Director, and BLM Deputy Director for Operations. Fran was a valued mentor to many and was described as "great at recognizing potential and helping people reach their full potential."

Scott Florence – 2023 Volunteer of the Year Award

Scott Florence, PLF Utah, was presented this Award for his dedicated support and assistance to the PLF during 2023.

Lance Porter – 2023 Outstanding Managerial Public Lands Professional Award

Lance Porter, BLM Green River District Manager, was presented this Award, as an exceptional BLM leader for more than thirty years. He has championed the BLM mission of sustainable multiple-use management throughout the Canyon Country of Utah and the Green River District as District Manager for some 10.2 million acres of public land.

Gus Warr – 2023 Outstanding Technical/Operational Public Lands Professional Award

Gus Warr, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist in the BLM Utah State Office, was presented this Award, in recognition of his leadership in the WH&B Program in the state of Utah. His experience and technical expertise have shaped a daily program of compassion for the animals and a deep commitment to the conservation and management of healthy public rangelands.

Colorado Canyons Association – 2023 Landscape Stewardship Award

The Colorado Canyons Association (CCA) was presented this Award in recognition for its work in three National Conservation Areas (NCAs) managed by the BLM in western Colorado (McInnis Canyons, Dominguez-Escalante, and Gunnison Gorge). The CCA has contributed significantly to BLM's youth education, volunteer, and river restoration programs in the NCAs.

Scholarships

The PLF each year awards two \$5,000 scholarships to deserving junior, senior, or masters-level college students pursuing degrees in natural resources management or public land policy related fields. These scholarships assist the students in successfully completing their studies and encourage them to seriously consider future employment with the BLM or other federal land management agencies. The awards also include paid attendance to the PLF Annual Meeting and a “shadow” opportunity with a BLM Manager. The PLF received thirty-five applications from eighteen colleges and universities for the 2023 George Lea Founder’s Scholarships and awarded scholarships to Amaris Shammaa from Texas Tech University and Tiffany Mar from the University of California, Berkeley.

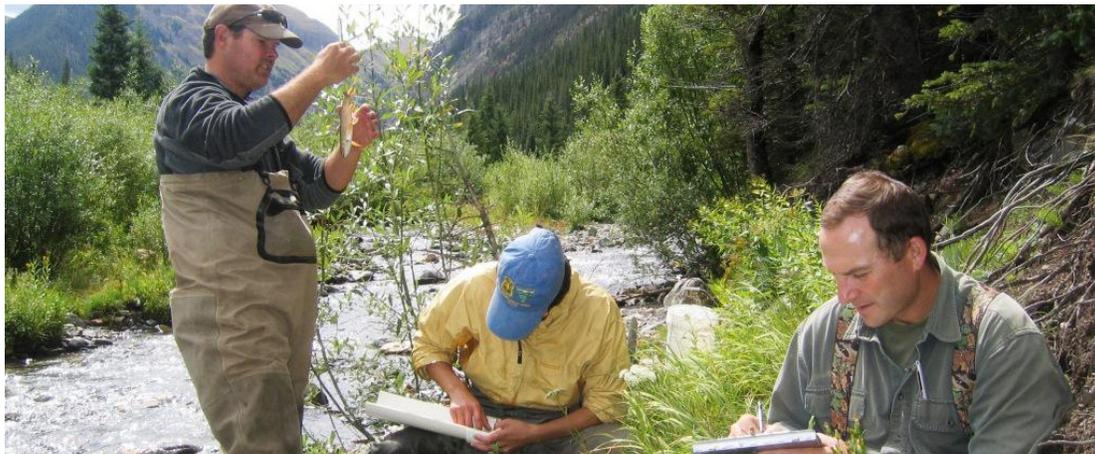
Amaris is entering a masters-level program in Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlands Science Management at Texas Tech. Tiffany is currently a full-time undergraduate student at the University of California pursuing a degree in Society and Environment (Environmental Studies).



Amaris Shammaa



Tiffany Mar



**Cunningham Creek Fish Survey, Colorado
(BLM Photo)**

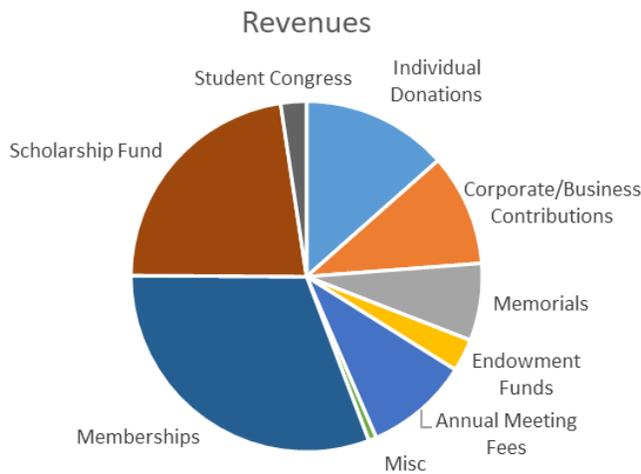
Financials

The Public Lands Foundation is financially sound with total assets of over \$414,000 as of the end of calendar year 2023. Prior to the 2022 major dip in the market and other contributing factors, assets exceeded \$571,000.

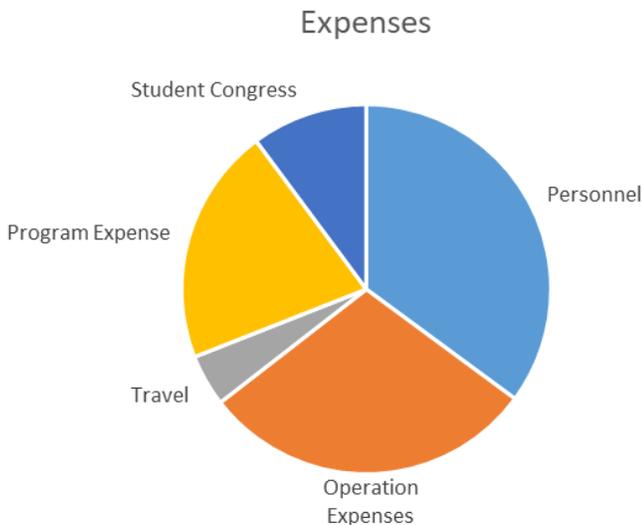
The PLF has historically relied primarily on individual membership dues and directed program contributions for income. In 2023, dues, contributions, and program income were significantly lower than planned, due in part to lower than expected revenues from our fundraising campaign. Membership has also declined. As a result, it was necessary to transfer over \$18,000 from our investment accounts into the operations account in 2023. With the departure of the PLF Executive Director in 2023, the Board of Directors decided not to refill the position, but rather split the financial responsibilities with a paid bookkeeper and a volunteer Treasurer. The PLF also decided to hire an individual to assist with web site management. Other responsibilities are being taken up by other volunteers.

In 2023, the PLF awarded two George Lea Founder’s scholarships of \$5,000 each. An audit of prior year financials was also completed. Considerable time and effort have gone into planning for the 2024 Annual Meeting and the Student Congress, which will both be held in Las Vegas, Nevada in October 2024. We will continue to raise funds to support our advocacy outreach efforts, the 2024 Student Congress, the George Lea Founder’s Scholarship, and the BLM History Program.

Mark Davis, Treasurer



REVENUES	
Individual Donations	\$ 6,718
Corporate Contributions	\$ 365
Business Contributions	\$ 4,783
Memorials	\$ 3,552
Endowment Funds	\$ 1,500
Annual Meeting Fees	\$ 4,785
Memberships	\$ 15,388
Scholarship Fund	\$ 11,240
Student Congress	\$ 1,183
Misc	\$ 366
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 49,880



EXPENSES	
Personnel	\$ 37,258
Operation Expenses	\$ 31,221
Travel	\$ 4,807
Program Expense	\$ 22,076
Student Congress	\$ 10,798
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 106,160

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	
Beginning Assets	\$411,883
Ending Equity	\$413,853
Current Liabilities	\$ 365
TOTAL ASSETS	\$414,218

Thank You for Your Support !

Appreciation for PLF Financial Supporters:

Contributing Members \$100

Robert Archibald	Michael Blymyer	Ray Brady	Bill Civish
Pete Culp	Levi Deike	Harold Draper	Jill Draper
Scott Florence	Mike Gardner	Nancy Haug	Howard Hedrick
Gregory Hill	Earl Hindley	Ted Hudson	John Husband
Ann Hutchinson	Abbie Jossie	John Key	Karl Kipping
John Likins	David Little	Bob Moore	Lonna O'Neal
John Radosta	James Ramakka	Teresa Raml	William Ruddick
Linda Rundell	Lois Sands	Renee Snyder	David Stout
Jenna Whitlock	Terry Woosley	Carl Zulick	

Sponsoring Members \$200

Denelle Balach	Johanna Munson
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Patron Members \$500

Barron Bail	Nicholas Brokaw	Scott MacPherson	Thomas Zale
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George Lea Founders Scholarship

Bob Abbey	George Alderson	Tom Allen	Barron Bail
Mary Bellesi	Dean Bibles	John Case	Ben Collins
Jon Cherry	Larry Claypool	Carolyn Droscher	Carol Dye
Kathy Eaton	Scott Florence	Mike Ford	Pat Harvey
Dwight Hempel	James Hickerson	Linda Hofman	Eric Jansen
David Jones	David Kathman	John Kwiatkowski	Tom Lahti
William LeBarron	David Mari	Gary Marsh	Beau McClure
Bob Moore	Tim O'Brien	Fearl Parker	Felicia Probert
Teresa Raml	Skip Renschler	Mary Jo Rugwell	John Ruhs
Mona Schermerhorn	Rodger Schmitt	Ed Shepard	Gregg and Mary Simmons
Don Simpson	David Stout	Sharon Wilson	Wayne Winterton
Margaret Wyatt	Elaine Zielinski		

Memorial Contributions

Bob Abbey in memory of Mike Taylor
Tom Allen in memory of Ed Bygland
Tom Allen in memory of Jesse Lowe
Tom Allen in memory of Charlie Houser
Tom Allen in memory of Val Richman
Dean Bibles in memory of Henri Bisson
Celia Boddington in memory of Henri Bisson
Celia Boddington in memory of Lee Delaneyr
Celia Boddington in memory of Linda Smith

Memorial Contributions *(continued)*

Celia Boddington in memory of Randy Eardley
Celia Boddington in memory of Tyrone Weaver
John Case in memory of Henri Bisson
Sonya Cox in memory of Ed Haste
Levi Deike in memory of Henri Bisson
Levi Deike in memory of Les Rosenkrance
Levi Deike in memory of Mike Taylor
Diane Drobka in memory of Henri Bisson
Carol Dye in memory of Henri Bisson
John Fend in memory of Henri Bisson
Mike Green in memory of Les Rosenkrance
Mike Green in memory of Don Sweep
Kim Harb in memory of Henri Bisson
Linda Hofman in memory of Bob Jones
Linda Hofman in memory of Jennie Senzel
Karl Kipping in memory of Rodney Harris
Karl Kipping in memory of Butch Hayes
Bill LeBarron in memory of Henri Bisson
Courtney Lyons-Garcia in memory of Henri Bisson
David Mari in memory of Mike Taylor
Gary Marsh in memory of Jim Stone
Beau McClure in memory of Henri Bisson
Beau McClure in memory of Robert Faithful
Shela McFarlin in memory of Henri Bisson
Shela McFarlin in memory of Mike Taylor
Tim O'Brien in memory of Henri Bisson
L J Porter in memory of Duane Tabb
Felicia Probert in memory of Henri Bisson
Skip Renschler & Terry Keim in memory of Mike Taylor
Mary Jo Rugwell in memory of Henri Bisson
Rodger Schmitt in memory of David Brunner
Robert Schneider in memory of Henri Bisson
Louise Senzel in memory of Irving and Jennie Senzel
Ed Shepard in memory of Les Rosenkrance
Ed Shepard in memory of Henri Bisson
George Stone in memory of Henri Bisson
Terry Woosley in memory of Henri Bisson
Al Wright in memory of Henri Bisson
Elaine Zielinski in memory of Mike Taylor

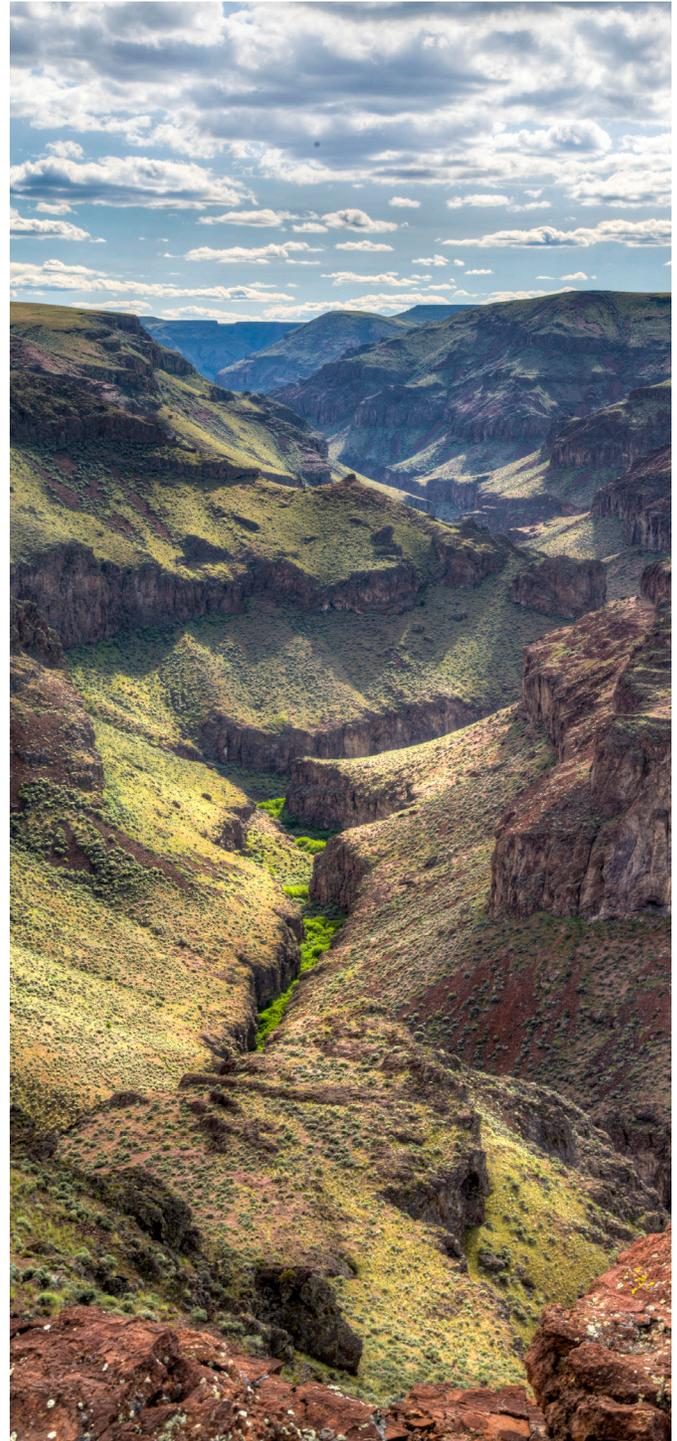
Student Congress

Gary Marsh Beau McClure Ed Shepard
Don Simpson Elaine Zielinski

Endowment Fund

Eric Janes L J Porter

Public Lands Foundation



Big Jacks Creek ID - Bob Wick

General Fund and Advocacy

Tom Allen	Barron Bail	Henri Bisson	Celia Boddington
John Case	Sonya Cox	Levi Deike	Diane Drobka
Carolyn Droscher	John Fend	Patricia Fornes	Michael Green
Thomas Hansen	Kim Harb	Charles Head	Benjamin James
Bruce Keating	Karl Kipping	Neil Kornze	Mike Leake
Courtney Lyons-Garcia	Kim Harb	Ted Hudson	Bill LeBarron
Van Manning	David Mari	Jim May	Gary Marsh
Shela McFarlin	Mat Millenbach	Kit Muller	Tim O'Brien
L J Porter	Mary Jo Rugwell	Robert Schneider	Louise Senzel
Gregg and Mary Simmons	Don Simpson	George Stone	Karen Steenhof
Lawrence Sullivan	Joshua Tripp	Cody Webb	Terry Woosley
Al Wright			

Appreciation for Partners

The PLF expresses its appreciation to partners whose collaboration and support during 2023 contributed significantly to our accomplishments. These include:

American Wildlife Conservation Partners
Andrus Center for Public Policy
Conservation Lands Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

You Can Help

The PLF also appreciates the support from many individuals who were not members of the PLF but who nonetheless took time to support the advocacy efforts for the public lands managed by the BLM. YOU can continue to help by:

- Join the Public Lands Foundation or make a gift or donation to the PLF
- Be a BLM volunteer
- Attend a BLM public meeting or BLM Resource Advisory Committee meeting
- Comment on a BLM resource management plan or BLM proposed regulations
- Alert the PLF or BLM to public land issues



Bear Trap Canyon, Montana (BLM Photo)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about the PLF visit www.publicland.org, follow us on social media, email us at info@publicland.org, or contact us at P.O. Box 7226, Arlington, VA 22207.

PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION GOALS

- Keep lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in public ownership and open to use by the public.
- Support the long-term protection, conservation, and restoration of units of the National Landscape Conservation System, as distinctly unique among the public lands managed by the BLM.
- Support multiple-use management under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
- Encourage professionalism by BLM employees.
- Increase the public's understanding of and support for the proper management of public lands.

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publicland.org

