

2023 PRIORITY ISSUES

PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION

Support Public Lands Advocacy

The mission of the Public Lands Foundation is to advocate for the retention of America's public lands in public hands, professionally and sustainably managed for the responsible common use and enjoyment. We pursue this advocacy mission by remaining current on public land issues and policies, and communicating our concerns and recommendations to the BLM, Congress, stakeholder interest groups, and the general public. We testify before Congress or submit written testimony on budget, legislation, and policy matters affecting the BLM and the public lands and respond to media requests regarding public land issues.

Our Advocacy efforts are focused on issues that will have the greatest impact on the future management of the public lands and are designed to align with the collective knowledge, skills, experience and mission of the Public Lands Foundation. The generosity of our contributors has a significant impact on our efforts.



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Rebuilding the BLM

The BLM organization has been demoralized and left in disarray as a result of reorganization plans, reduced funding and a significant loss of senior staff in the agency. There are an estimated 20% of full-time positions vacant in the agency, many of them having been vacant for years. The current BLM leadership is working to fill these vacancies and providing critical training for these new employees, many of whom are new to the field of public lands management. Unless this rebuilding effort is successful, it will be impossible for the BLM to carry out the priority work in the long-term management of the public lands. PLF is seeking support for our advocacy with Congress and other stakeholders to ensure BLM has the resources necessary to carry out their multiple use mission and be fully staffed to meet the challenges of the future. Sufficient funding is necessary to regain lost capacity and add required additional capacity to meet new challenges and opportunities. These advocacy efforts are critical to the future health and sustainability of our shared public lands.



In addition to our advocacy efforts, PLF also supports the next generation of public land servants. We provide scholarships each year to students that are in resource management or other BLM focused fields. We also co-host a biennial Student Congress, an opportunity to bring in college students from across the country to focus on one issue critical to the BLM's future.

Our recent 2022 Student Congress was a partnership with the Andrus Center at Boise State University and the National Association of Forest Service Retirees and focused on Wildland Fire.

"It is imperative that the Bureau have the appropriate structure and resources to serve the American public."

DEB HAALAND
SECRETARY OF INTERIOR





Public Land Access

The BLM manages 1 in 10 acres in America. However not all of these acres exist in areas that have easy access for the public. The fragmented public land ownership pattern administered by the BLM in the western states has resulted in the elimination of public access to public lands for recreational opportunities. The resolution of public land access issues is hampered largely by limited funding and staffing.

Recent passage of several pieces of legislation provides additional tools to the BLM to identify priority public land access needs and also digitize public land access information for public use.

The PLF is pursuing advocacy efforts to ensure the BLM develops a comprehensive public land access program, Congress provides sufficient funds to support the costs and staffing of a public land access program, Congress provides sufficient funds to support the costs and staffing of a public land access program, and that an adequate level of oversight of the program is in the place to address implementation issues. PLF is seeking donors to support these advocacy efforts for addressing public land access issues.



Public Land Recreation

With more than 80 million visitors annually, there is no doubt the BLM is a recreation agency. One of the attractions of BLM land is the broad spectrum of recreation activities that these spaces support, both developed recreation sites and dispersed recreation uses. Increasing access naturally means that the BLM will need to create a long term recreation strategy that focuses on how visitors will use the land while not creating negative impacts. Without adequate and sustained increases in funding and staffing, the adverse impacts on public lands from ever-increasing recreation use will continue to be significant and the recreational visitor will not have quality experiences.

PLF is ramping up advocacy efforts to ensure the BLM has the resources necessary to respond to ever-increasing recreation uses on public lands, that Congress provides sufficient funds, that BLM addresses the need for improvements and modernization at developed recreation sites, and that the BLM addresses the need to improve oversight of dispersed recreation uses on public lands. PLF is seeking donors to support these advocacy efforts for addressing the management challenges of increased recreation use on public lands.



Special Areas Management

The BLM's National Monuments and National Conservation Areas program encompasses over 13 million acres of public land. These special management areas are managed to conserve, protect, restore and enhance America's natural and cultural heritage while also providing for compatible multiple uses. These lands are some of BLM's most popular and heavily visited sites on public land. PLF is seeking support to advocate for increased funding and staffing resources to strengthen management and operational capacity at these areas to better ensure the protection and conservation of these special places as they are impacted by increased use, unauthorized uses, invasive species and climate change. PLF is advocating for increased resources, sufficient funds and adequate oversight of the program.



Renewable Energy for the Future

Public lands are an important source of the Nation's energy needs. Geothermal, solar and wind energy development has become a major contributor to a diverse and sustainable national energy portfolio. Through upfront land use planning and appropriate levels of environmental review, the BLM can ensure the responsible development of geothermal, solar and wind energy resources on public lands while protecting other resources for current and future generations. The new Renewable Energy Coordination Office will streamline the permitting process for projects that will address the BLM's goal of approving 25 gigawatts of renewable energy projects on public land by 2025. PLF is seeking support to ensure BLM has adequate funding and staffing to support responsible renewable energy development through land use planning, proper siting reviews and permitting.

"The BLM is proud to support responsible development of renewable energy projects as part of our mission to sustainably manage public lands."

TRACY STONE-MANNING
BLM DIRECTOR

