



For America's Heritage

THE PUBLIC LANDS Monitor

P.O. Box 7226, Arlington, VA 22207
703-935-0916

www.publicland.org
info@publicland.org

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2024 PLF ANNUAL MEETING LAS VEGAS, NEVADA OCTOBER 8 – 9, 2024

Editors

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Margaret Lliteras

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This year's Annual Meeting was held at The Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada on October 8 and 9, 2024. The Annual Meeting included a Board of Directors meeting on October 8 and a barbeque in the evening at the Red Rock Canyon NCA outside of Las Vegas. On October 9, there was a general meeting open to the public. The theme for the general meeting this year was "Recreation and National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) Management." Jon Raby, BLM Nevada State Director, and I Ling Thompson, CEO, Foundation for America's Public Lands, opened the general session for the public meeting. A panel session on Recreation, Partnerships and Permits was moderated by Bob Ratcliffe (PLF) and a panel session on NLCS Management was moderated by Tom Heinlein (BLM). The PLF Board and Member meeting continued on Wednesday afternoon and was followed by a dinner banquet in the evening. After dinner, there was a Remembering BLM speaker (Don Simpson), awards presentations, and a silent auction and raffle.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Mary Jo Rugwell, President, opened the PLF Board of Directors meeting on October 8th. There were 21 Board members attending the meeting and Mary Jo welcomed



2024 Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV (PLF photo)

The Public Lands Foundation advocates and works for the retention of America's Public Lands in public hands professionally and sustainably managed for responsible common use and enjoyment.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Mary Jo Rugwell

It is hard to fathom that we are in the last quarter of 2024. The adage that time seems to move faster as we age must be true.

The Public Lands Foundation's Annual Meeting was held in Las Vegas from October 8-9. As is customary, the first day of the meeting was dedicated to our Board of Directors

meeting where we covered a variety of topics including updates on new and existing initiatives, introduced five new Board members, and approved our 2025 budget. The Board had the opportunity to meet both of the George Lea Founder's Scholarship winners, Nicole Dickan and Morgan Nystuen. We also identified a program of work for next year. After hours, we enjoyed a barbeque at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Our General Meeting, which focused on Recreation and National Landscape Conservation System Management, was held on the second day. We had an excellent introduction from Jon Raby, BLM Nevada State Director, and Kim Prill, BLM Nevada Associate State Director, and were privileged to receive a presentation from I Ling Thompson, CEO of the Foundation for America's Public Lands. We were then treated to two panels. The first on Recreation, Partnerships and Permits was moderated by Bob Ratcliffe. The second on National Conservation Lands was moderated by Tom Heinlein. In the afternoon, we discussed the need to update our Issue Papers and write a Transition Paper for the administration that will take office in 2025. We also discussed BLM's Oral History Project with Dave Howell of the BLM Washington Office, Communications Directorate. Our evening banquet included an excellent speech by Don Simpson and the presentation of two Lifetime Service Awards, one to Don Simpson and the other to John Ruhs. Additional details about the meeting can be found in the article in this edition of the newsletter.

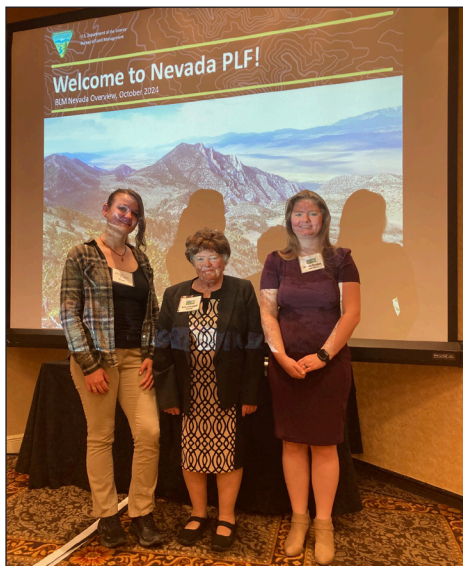
I would be remiss if I did not thank everyone who helped plan this year's Annual Meeting and made it such a success. BLM Nevada, led by State Director Jon Raby and Associate State Director Kim Prill, and the BLM's Southern Nevada District, led by Theresa Coleman, provided tremendous support. Board member Jack Placchi worked very closely with BLM and our presenters to craft a wonderful agenda for the second day. Tim and Phyllis O'Brien were instrumental in identifying the venues for the meeting and hosted Board members at their lovely home on Monday evening. The O'Briens, with help from Dwight and Judi Hempel, put together a wonderful barbeque at Red Rock Canyon, helped with meeting registration and conducted the all-important silent auction and raffle. And last but not least, Beau McClure did his usual amazing job of putting it all together and making it look easy (which we all know is one of Beau's superpowers!).

On Thursday morning, several members attended the closeout presentation of the 2024 Student Congress. The theme for this year's Congress was "Transition to Renewable Energy on Public Lands." It was incredible to see the quality of recommendations that the students produced after working together for only a few short days. Their recommendations will be shared with the leadership at BLM and the U.S. Forest Service early next year.

One of the most pressing issues facing our organization is the recruitment of new members. While we have verified that new retirees are receiving our membership brochure from BLM, it does not seem to be making much of a difference in terms of getting new members for the PLF. The PLF has entered into a Marketing and Membership Recruitment Agreement with the Department of the Interior's Federal Credit Union as one means to address the membership issue. If you have any questions about this effort, please contact Ray Brady. The Board will also be working over the next few weeks to try to do outreach to BLM "Friends" groups to see if they could assist us in getting our membership brochure out to their members. In addition, I plan to meet with several Student Congress alumni to see if we can formulate a plan to reach out to youth to increase our membership. Please stay tuned.

2024 PLF ANNUAL MEETING *(continued)*

Jack Placchi (CO), Paul Summers (CO), Mike Haske (OR), John Ruhs (ID) and Scott MacPherson (CO) as new Board members. The two George Lea Founders Scholarship students for 2024, Morgan Nystuen (South Dakota School of Mines) and Nichole Dickan (Sul Ross State University) also attended the Annual Meeting this year. Beau McClure reported that there were also 23 college students attending the Student Congress program in Las Vegas this week as well. Several Board members attended the closeout session of the Student Congress on October 10th.



l to r: Nichole Dickan and Morgan Nystuen with Mary Jo Rugwell, President (PLF photo)

Beau McClure, Vice President, reported on the status of the PLF Archives project with BLM at the BLM National Training Center in Phoenix. Work continues on the review and refileing of the digitized records. Ray Brady will work with Connie Stone (PLF, Arizona) to include an article in a future edition of the PLF newsletter that highlights the value of the PLF Archives project and identifies the types of documents, photos, and records that are appropriate for donation. Dave Howell (BLM, Office of Communications) also reflected on the value of the PLF Archives project and the relationship to the ongoing BLM History project. Dave is engaged in an Oral History effort related to the BLM History project and has reached out to PLF members who are interested in participating in Oral History interviews.

Mary Jo Rugwell, President, led a discussion with the Board on the possible interest in scheduling a future All-Member Zoom call to facilitate broader member engagement with the Board. The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) has held similar All-Member Zoom calls that have been well received. **The Board recommended that we send a survey to PLF members on interest in an All-Member Zoom call, potential topics of interest, and recommended that a Facilitator be used to assist with any call that is held.** One possible topic of interest would be a discussion of ideas and



suggestions for increasing membership in the PLF. This led to a presentation by Ray Brady on a new PLF Membership Recruitment Agreement with the Interior Federal Credit Union that allows new Credit Union members to join the PLF for a one-

year complimentary membership and the Credit Union will provide a monetary donation to the PLF.

Scott MacPherson (PLF, Colorado) led a discussion of the PLF Membership database. Several Board members requested copies of an updated membership directory, but concerns were raised regarding the sharing of personal data from the membership database. It was decided to limit the distribution of the membership database and not post the database on the PLF website. However, Scott can respond to individual requests on a need to know basis and to assist in outreach efforts to contact members who may have let their memberships lapse. There was also a discussion on the need to increase the PLF membership, as the PLF has seen a significant decrease in membership over the past few years. Several efforts are underway in an attempt to address this issue, including an update of the PLF Membership brochure, PLF information included in BLM employee retirement packages, updates to the PLF website, establishment of the Interior Federal Credit Union Membership Recruitment Agreement, and outreach with external groups. The PLF has initiated an outreach effort with BLM "Friends" groups that may be interested in the public land advocacy

2024 PLF ANNUAL MEETING *(continued)*

work of the PLF. Ray Brady followed up with Tom Heinlein (BLM, Assistant Director for NLCS) to develop a list of contacts for BLM “Friends” groups and to share information on the PLF mission.

Mark Davis (PLF Treasurer) prepared a Treasurer’s Report and proposed 2025 Budget for presentation at the Board meeting. The Treasurer’s Report indicates the PLF is financially sound, with total assets of \$444,889 as of the end of August 2024, including \$385,363 in a long-term investment account. This is an increase of over \$29,000 from last year. However, actual revenues are down almost \$48,000 from our 2024 planned revenues and it is expected that our future fund-raising strategies will need to change to meet our revenue goals for 2025. It was necessary to temporarily transfer \$30,000 from our long-term investment account to cover current expenses. The proposed 2025 Budget includes a planned operating budget of \$64,750. The proposed 2025 Budget was reviewed and approved by the Board, with a commitment by Mark Davis, Ray Brady, and Beau McClure to look at some possible options to reduce Accounting and Audit expenses.

Beau McClure, Vice President, reviewed the current PLF By-Laws with the Board and several amendments to the By-Laws were approved by the Board. Beau also reviewed a list of current PLF standing Committees and it was decided that the BLM 75th Anniversary Committee and the Modernization Committee would be eliminated. Several changes were made to the members of the remaining Committees. Discussions continued from the Award Committee chairs on whether any changes were needed in the application process and review process for the various PLF awards. Maggie Wyatt (Chair, Lifetime Service Award) recommended that the Board consider establishing separate criteria for a Managerial Lifetime Service Award and a Technical/ Administrative Lifetime Service Award, similar to the BLM Professional Employee Awards.

Mary Jo Rugwell closed out the Board meeting on October 8th with a discussion of Goals and Objectives for 2025. It was recommended that the PLF focus on the preparation of Transition Papers for whatever administration begins after the 2024 election and update current Position Statements to support those Transition Papers. In addition, the PLF will

need to prepare Congressional Testimony as part of the Annual Appropriations process. The PLF will complete a 2024 Annual Report and continue outreach efforts with BLM and the Foundation for America’s Public Lands. It will be important to monitor the State of Utah petition to the Supreme Court on the constitutionality of retaining unappropriated public lands in Utah in Federal ownership and continue to track Congressional legislative initiatives that affect public lands or the BLM.

GENERAL MEETING

Jon Raby (State Director, BLM Nevada) and Kim Prill (Associate State Director, BLM Nevada) opened the General Meeting session of the Annual Meeting on October 9th. Jon and Kim provided an overview of BLM Nevada resource programs and priorities. The BLM Nevada manages some 48 million acres of public lands in Nevada (68 percent of the State) and some 59 million acres of Federal mineral estate, some 38,000 wild horse and burros in 83 Herd Management Areas (over ½ the BLM total) and three holding facilities, the largest Special Recreation Permit in the agency (Burning Man), six National Conservation Areas and National Monuments, some 281,000 active mining claims (½ of all mining claims), is a leader in renewable energy permitting, and has the Bureau’s largest wildland fire and law enforcement programs. The BLM Nevada also manages two major Restoration Landscape projects – the 4.3 million acre Montana Mountains project in the Winnemucca District that surrounds the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge and the 3.8 million acre Humboldt O’Neil Basin project in the Elko District that hosts the highest densities of breeding sage-grouse.



Jon Raby, BLM Nevada State Director and Kim Prill, BLM Nevada Associate State Director (PLF photo)

2024 PLF ANNUAL MEETING *(continued)*

I Ling Thompson, CEO, Foundation for America's Public Lands, provided an overview of the Mission and Vision for the new charitable partner organization that will provide financial support to BLM and the management of public lands for the future. *(A separate article on the Foundation for America's Public Lands is included in this edition of the Monitor.)*



I Ling Thompson, Foundation for America's Public Lands
(PLF photo)

The Foundation's Priorities include:

- **Awareness** – Increase awareness of the value of public lands and waters and inspire all to value them.
- **Access** – Ensure the public has access to public lands and waters, providing opportunities for all to connect, learn, and experience what they have to offer.
- **Stewardship** – Mobilize an ethos of shared stewardship for BLM's multi-use, sustained yield mission and unlock resources to support the health and resiliency of public lands and waters.

I Ling Thompson announced the launch of a new public awareness campaign, "Lands to Love", that is designed to increase public awareness and highlight opportunities to support America's public lands and waters. The Foundation will provide "Lands to Love" grants and financial support to partners working collaboratively on solutions that advance the awareness, access and stewardship of BLM lands and waters. The Foundation's first initiative will focus on a Restoration Program in the Colorado River Basin to improve the drought resilience of public lands. An initial \$10.6 million cooperative agreement with BLM will seed this work. The Foundation will also be working with BLM to accelerate the Wild Horse and Burro Adoption program and

reduce the long-term costs to taxpayers and BLM on off-range care and feeding of wild horses and burros. The Foundation recently hired a Wild Horse and Burro Advisor to support this initiative. The Foundation will continue to develop connections and networks, recruit additional support, share success stories, and grow the pipeline of additional projects. I Ling Thompson also mentioned plans to establish an Advisory Council of interested parties to provide feedback on the activities of the Foundation and suggested a potential role for the Public Lands Foundation.

The Annual Meeting continued with two Panel discussions focused on "Recreation and NLCS Management". A **Recreation, Partnerships and Permits Panel** was chaired by Bob Ratcliffe, former BLM and NPS Recreation lead. Other panel members included Elisabeth Johnson (Deputy Administrator, NV Division of Outdoor Recreation), Miles Gurtler (BLM Nevada Recreation and National Conservation Lands Program Lead), and Dave Spicer (Executive Director, Southern Nevada Mountain Bike Association). The general message from the Panel was the importance of developing Partnership efforts between BLM, State Recreation agencies, Recreation stakeholder interest groups, and public land users to address the ever increasing recreation demands on the public lands.



Recreation, Partnerships and Permits Panel *(PLF photo)*

A **National Conservation Lands Panel** was chaired by Tom Heinlein, BLM Assistant Director, National Landscape Conservation System. Other panel members included Jenna Giddens (BLM Sloan Canyon NCA Manager, Nevada), Christina Bishop (Assistant Director Operations and Outreach, Friends of Red Rock Canyon NCA, Nevada), and Jose Witt (Nevada State Director, Wilderness Society). The general message from the Panel was the importance of developing strong relationships with local

2024 PLF ANNUAL MEETING *(continued)*

communities and the value of “Friends” organizations to support the work of BLM in management of National Conservation Areas and Monuments. Tom Heinlein also shared a list of BLM “Friends” organizations with the PLF to assist in our outreach and advocacy efforts for the public lands.



National Conservation Lands Panel *(PLF Photo)*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The PLF Board meeting concluded on the afternoon of October 9th with an update from Ranotta McNair, National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR). The NAFSR has also faced challenges similar to the PLF on membership issues.



Mary Jo Rugwell, PLF and Ranotta McNair, NAFSR
(PLF photo)

Don Simpson, PLF Vice President, led a discussion with the Board on a list of current PLF Position

Statements and identified those Position Statements that need to be updated, removed, or added and the lead for each Position Statement. The meeting concluded with a discussion of options for the location of the Annual Meeting in 2025 and a summary of those action items and assignments to individual Board members for follow-up. The preferred location for the 2025 Annual Meeting was identified as Idaho. The PLF Banquet was held on the evening of October 9th and Don Simpson provided the keynote “Remembering BLM” address to the gathered PLF members, spouses, and invited guests. The speech by Don Simpson was well received and focused on lessons learned from his experiences in Wyoming on the development of oil and gas on the public lands.

Mary Jo Rugwell presented two PLF Lifetime Service Awards to Don Simpson and John Ruhs during the evening banquet. Those award citations are included in this edition of the Monitor. The other PLF awards were announced during the evening banquet, but will be presented to the individual awardees at future presentation ceremonies. Those awards include the Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award, the Landscape Stewardship Award, the BLM Professional Employee Awards, and the PLF Volunteer of the Year Award. The evening banquet ended with the silent auction and raffle which raised a total of \$1,469 to support the George Lea Founder’s Scholarship Fund.



Raffle Winner – Rodger Schmitt, PLF California
(PLF photo)

LIFETIME SERVICE AWARDS DON SIMPSON AND JOHN RUHS

The Public Lands Foundation is pleased to present both Don Simpson and John Ruhs with its Lifetime Service Award for excellence in public land management. The Foundation provides this award to deserving BLM employees who have perpetuated and enhanced the proud tradition of public service.

Don Simpson's long career with BLM began after graduation from the University of Colorado with a degree in Forestry. He subsequently worked in Idaho, the Washington Office, Colorado, and Wyoming, across varied programs such as fire, forestry, and realty.



Don Simpson, 2024 Annual Meeting
(PLF photo)

Don served in several management capacities such as Deputy State Director for Resources, Associate State Director in Wyoming, and ultimately State Director in Wyoming, from which he retired in 2015.

Don also completed a Congressional Fellowship where he helped to write the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. In his service as the Acting Director of the National Operations Center in Denver, he was responsible for restructuring that entire organization. Don's other accomplishments include leading a Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation planning effort, addressing critical energy priorities, and providing exceptional leadership for the wild horse and burro program. Throughout his career, Don was known for his ability to build consensus and maintain open communication through all levels of the organization.

Don was well respected in the public, Bureau, and local, state and national political arenas. He had the ability to view issues through both pragmatic

and political lenses. Don was also respected for his active support and mentoring of fellow employees.

John Ruhs began his approximately 33-year career with BLM as a GS-3 Range Rider for the Vale District in Oregon and retired as Idaho State Director in 2021. Prior to joining BLM, John served for four years in the U.S. Marine Corps and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from the University of Idaho.

Over his career, John worked in at least 13 staff and line positions in numerous locations and across several programs. He played key roles in developing Rangeland Fire Protection Associations, sage grouse habitat conservation plans, and the National Seed Strategy. He also guided participation in the Owl Mountain Partnership, the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, and other conservation initiatives.



John Ruhs, 2024 Annual Meeting
(PLF photo)

John exemplified loyalty to his employees and the agency while demonstrating exceptional professionalism and a commitment to collaboration with other governmental agencies and interest groups. He was frequently asked to speak to local, regional, national, and international organizations, including the Society for Range Management and the National Association of Conservation Districts.

The Public Lands Foundation is honored to recognize both Don Simpson and John Ruhs with the Lifetime Service Award presented October 9, 2024, at the PLF's Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

STUDENT CONGRESS – LAS VEGAS, NEVADA OCTOBER 7 – 10, 2024



Student Congress 2024, Nevada (PLF photo)

The sixth biennial Student Congress was held October 7 – 10, 2024 in Las Vegas, Nevada and focused on the “Transition to Renewable Energy on Public Lands”. Once again, the PLF partnered with the Andrus Center for Public Policy at Boise State University and the National Association of Forest Service Retirees to host the forum. The Student Congress is an opportunity for college students who might not otherwise be exposed to public land management and provides the Federal agencies with a valuable youth perspective on public land issues. The PLF received 58 student applications from 37 colleges and universities to participate in this year’s session of the Student Congress. There were 25 students selected for the session and 23 students attended. Several PLF Board members attended the close-out session on October 10th to hear the presentations on “Policy Recommendations for a Just Energy Transition”.

The students identified an over-arching Vision for their policy recommendations to “foster a resilient, adaptive, and energy future where renewable energy systems can coexist harmoniously with natural ecosystems, ensuring sustainable development that benefits all communities and supports the preservation of public lands for future generations.” Their policy recommendations included proposals to engage local communities in the review and approval

process for renewable energy projects, including financial benefits and incentives to allocate a share of electricity generation to affected communities. Local community engagement should include educational outreach and community action plans to support community pride, ecotourism opportunities, and general public literacy on the energy transition future. Policy recommendations also included proposals for legislative initiatives for long-lasting reforms, new and improved bonding procedures, Federal agency employee recruitment and career ladder opportunities, and improved Federal interagency collaboration, including establishment of a Federal Renewable Energy Advisory Commission focused on interagency communications and innovation. It was also recommended that the Federal agencies pursue efforts to increase the visibility of the use of renewable energy installations at Federal buildings and facilities, and the expansion of the transition to electric vehicles by the Federal government.

The Student Congress is free for participants. PLF member support is critical to the Student Congress program! If you would like to support the Student Congress program you can donate on the PLF website. For further information on the Student Congress feel free to contact Jenna Whitlock at jwhitlock@publicland.org or Mike Ferguson at mferguson@publicland.org.

BIRDS OF PREY NCA PARTNERSHIP CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN 2025

by Steve Alsup, President – Birds of Prey NCA Partnership

Editor: There are over 80 local place-based “Friends” organizations that support the work of BLM on the public lands. This concept, like the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) was part of Bruce Babbitt’s vision in 1996 for a successful system of protected BLM lands for the next century. We are highlighting the Birds of Prey NCA Partnership in this edition of the Monitor since this organization supports BLM in the management of the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in Idaho. The Snake River Birds of Prey NCA was designated by Congress in 1993. More than 150,000 people visit the 484,873 acre NCA each year and the Birds of Prey NCA Partnership make these visitor experiences better.

Established in 1993, the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area protects some 485,000 acres of public land along 81 miles of the Snake River Canyon in southwestern Idaho. This area, which was originally noted for its importance to several iconic raptor species in the late 1940’s, has since been found to be one of the densest breeding areas for raptors in North America, if not the world. The NCA is home to over 800 pairs of birds of prey during the breeding season, and the vast bench lands above the canyon rim provide crucial wintering habitat for numerous species of falcons, hawks, eagles, owls, and other raptor species.



Snake River Birds of Prey NCA, Idaho (BOPP photo)

During the most recent study of prairie falcons nesting in the NCA in 2021, over 260 nesting pairs of falcons were documented, which is thought to represent over five percent of the species’ population. The NCA is also known throughout the



scientific community for having one of the longest running studies of golden eagle breeding ecology in the world—over 50 years of continuous data documenting territory occupancy and nesting success for over 40 breeding territories in and around the NCA.

Located only a few miles south of Boise and within southwestern Idaho’s Treasure Valley—one of the fastest growing areas in the country—the NCA is appealing for a wide variety of recreationalists. Hikers, birders, and photographers as well as off-road vehicle enthusiasts and recreational shooters all take advantage of the opportunities that these public lands provide. This increase in usage does, however, create challenges for managing these lands. Climate change, habitat disturbance, and altered wildfire regimes pose additional threats that continue to challenge the capacity of land management agencies.

The Birds of Prey NCA Partnership (BOPP) was established in 2015 with a mission to support BLM and the conservation of the NCA through science, education, outreach, and partnerships. The BOPP envisions a community supported NCA that sustains resilient ecological communities, protects cultural resources, and provides diverse, responsible recreation opportunities. Started by a small group of concerned members of the local research community, the organization has steadily increased its capacity, and partners with organizations from across the Treasure Valley.

In 2018, in celebration of the NCA's 25th anniversary, the BOPP initiated a family-friendly celebration of the NCA called the Snake River Raptor Fest. The BOPP (along with help from several partner organizations and festival sponsors) has continued to host the Raptor Fest each year in Kuna, Idaho – one of the NCA's gateway communities along the northern boundary of the conservation area. The BOPP has also hosted numerous trash cleanups, as well as habitat improvement events like noxious weed removals, native plantings, and seed collection events. In 2023, the BOPP initiated a native plant propagation program and produced over 3,500 native shrubs and forbs in the program's pilot year.

The BOPP has partnered with local high schools to create STEM-based learning opportunities in the NCA. One of the most successful education and research-based projects of the BOPP is their long-term ferruginous hawk nest monitoring program. This program creates internship opportunities for undergraduate students at local colleges and universities, providing professional development skills for the students while allowing the BOPP to collect important demographic data on a BLM Type 2 Sensitive Species. Data collected through projects like this help to inform BLM when making important land management decisions in and around the NCA.



Interns with Ferruginous Hawk nestlings
(BOPP photo)

Almost everything that the BOPP has accomplished has been the product of volunteer efforts. The organization has no full-time staff and an all-volunteer Board of Directors. That is about to change, with support from BLM Idaho and the Foundation for America's Public Lands. The BOPP has formalized two new long-term cooperative agreements with BLM that will allow the organization to significantly expand both its habitat improvement and native plant propagation program, as well as its

education and outreach initiatives. The agreements will increase the capacity for the BOPP and the BLM to continue ongoing habitat restoration efforts and deliver outstanding STEM education programs in the NCA.



STEM Class (BOPP photo)

The BOPP has also established a new partnership with the Foundation for America's Public Lands. During a visit to the NCA earlier this year from the Foundation's CEO, I Ling Thompson, and Board member Laurel Sayer from Boise, BOPP representatives had an opportunity to highlight the issues impacting NCA and the important work the BOPP hopes to implement in the near future in collaboration with BLM. This led to a three-year, \$350,000 grant to launch the BOPP's new Outdoor Classroom Program in the NCA. This new program will create opportunities for students ranging from middle school through college to engage in educational programs, stewardship, and monitoring activities in the NCA, with undergraduate students participating in a more in-depth semester long curriculum. The BOPP has targeted four undergraduate students and another 150 middle school and high school students to enter the program the first year, and together with the Foundation, will be seeking additional partners to grow the program over time.

These partnerships and funding opportunities represent a big step forward for the BOPP, allowing the organization to dramatically expand its reach and capacity. The BOPP is energized by this chance to bring more positive attention to the NCA, to continue promoting strong public land stewardship principles, and to help restore the area's struggling ecosystems. As the organization approaches its 10-year anniversary, the BOPP looks forward to continuing to support BLM in managing the NCA to protect raptors, their prey species, and the habitat they depend on for years to come.

FOUNDATION FOR AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS

The Foundation for America's Public Lands was established by Congress in 2017, but was not formally launched by Interior Secretary Deb Haaland until January 2022. Until 2022, BLM was the only major Federal land management agency without an affiliated Foundation support organization. The Foundation's mission includes raising private funding that can be matched by Federal appropriations to help the Bureau address public land management issues across the 245 million acres of public land managed by BLM. The Public Lands Foundation (PLF) will collaborate with the Foundation for America's Public Lands where we have mutual interests and continue our advocacy efforts for BLM and the sustainable management of the public lands.

The Foundation for America's Public Lands on August 6, 2024, announced the appointment by the Secretary of the Interior of four new members to the Board of Directors of the Foundation. The four new Board members include Val Cole, Scott Gwilliam, Laurel Sayer, and Paul Vigano. Val Cole is a recently retired Apple executive, now working as a sales and marketing consultant. He is also currently the co-chair of the Trust for Public Land's California Advisory Board. Scott Gwilliam is the Managing Partner of Keystone Capital and is also involved in various philanthropic endeavors and educational institutions. Laurel Sayer has had a lifelong interest in conservation and Federal natural resources policy, including over two decades of work on national resource issues with Congressman Mike Simpson and Senator Mike Crapo. She helped build the Idaho Coalition of Land Trusts and served as their first Executive Director. Paul Vigano is an avid outdoor enthusiast and served as CEO of Pure Fishing and served for nine years on the Board of Directors of The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.



These new Board members join I Ling Thompson as CEO of the Foundation, Governor Steve Bullock (Montana), Maite Arce (Hispanic Access Foundation), Stacy Leeds (Dean Emeritus, University of Arkansas School of Law), Jessica Turner (Outdoor Recreation Roundtable), and J. "Kirk" Dupps (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation). Tracy Stone Manning, BLM Director, serves as an Ex-Officio member of the Board of the Foundation.

The Foundation also on August 15, 2024, announced the hire of Taldi Harrison as Chief Program Officer to oversee State and Federal government relations, build community partnerships, develop strategic initiatives, and implement a new grant program for the Foundation. Harrison is a former Executive of REI outdoor recreation company and is currently a member of the Boards of Directors of Eastrail Partners, the Conservation Alliance, American Forests, and the Recreate Responsibly Steering Committee. Harrison joins David Zhang who was recently appointed as the Chief Development Officer for the Foundation, responsible for developing fund raising strategies and cultivating a network of philanthropic donors. The Foundation also hired Tomer Hasson as the Senior Program Officer for Restoration and Theo Change as an Advisor for Wild Horses and Burros.

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Message us at info@publicland.org

FOUNDATION FOR AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

by Jen Sissler, Foundation for America's Public Land

The Foundation for America's Public Lands has a big vision for the future. A future where all public lands and waters have long-term stewardship. Where access isn't an issue. Where shared responsibility is automatic. Where all members of the community are at the table making decisions for their lands, their waters. Where recreation is driving big economic wins. Where working lands are profitable and sustainable. And, where people and wildlife can coexist.

As the official charitable partner of BLM, the Foundation is charged with helping to raise awareness, unlock new avenues of funding, and inspire more people to fall in love with public lands and waters. Other public land agencies – like the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service – have benefitted from having a foundation partner for decades, and BLM has not had the same support – until now.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & INAUGURAL PROGRAMS

The Foundation focuses on three strategic priorities to guide its inaugural programs. These priorities include: **Awareness, Access, and Stewardship**. They reflect input from partners, communities, BLM leaders, and other stakeholders who have a deep understanding and connection to our public lands and waters. Our inaugural programs reflect the specific areas where the Foundation can play a unique role in advancing the multi-use mission of BLM. Whether it's unlocking new opportunities for funding and support, brokering new partnerships that can boost local economies, or helping to advance planning and management strategies, we play a centrist role that enables new approaches and innovations to take root – for the benefit of public lands and waters, and BLM at large.

ENGAGING PARTNERS ON THE GROUND THROUGH FUNDING & SUPPORT

The Foundation has visited projects across the country and met with countless BLM experts and community partners to understand the challenges and opportunities facing our public lands and waters. The outcomes of that important counsel

yielded an inaugural funding strategy that enables the Foundation to quickly and strategically get funds out the door and to on-the-ground projects. Nothing is better than seeing good work get done.

In September the Foundation distributed \$2.4 million through a first-of-its-kind grant program to help combat the challenges of severe drought facing public lands and Western communities. The Drought Resilience Fund is currently supporting two projects in the Colorado River Basin, including:

- A three-year grant of nearly \$1 million to the Eagle County Conservation District to expand virtual fencing for cattle grazing on BLM lands in Colorado.
- A three-year grant of \$1.5 million to the City of Sierra Vista, the Friends of the San Pedro River, and the Borderland Restoration Network to advance the restoration of BLM's San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.
- In October, the Foundation will launch the *Lands to Love Catalyst Fund*, an innovative new grant program to help boost the work of community partners working alongside BLM. The Fund will focus on efforts to increase educational opportunities, improve visitor access and experiences, and support restoration and stewardship efforts. Stay tuned for grantee announcements coming soon, and more information about the 2025 application process early next year.

SHOWING OUR LANDS AND WATERS SOME LOVE

In honor of Public Lands Day, the Foundation launched its new public awareness campaign, "**Lands to Love**", to help spotlight the amazing people, places, and cultures that make our public lands and waters so unique. Over the next 12 months, the "**Lands to Love**" campaign will feature 20 inaugural BLM-managed locations – including photos and videos to drive engagement, personal stories to create heart-felt connections, and behind-the-scenes places not to miss. This is our chance to



GEORGE LEA FOUNDERS SCHOLARSHIP

One of the most important advocacy programs the PLF engages in each year is the awarding of two \$5,000 scholarships to students who are pursuing a course of study in the natural resources field. The PLF was pleased to host the two scholarship student awardees for 2024, Nicole Dickan (Sul Ross State University) and Morgan Nystuen (South Dakota School of Mines), at the PLF Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, NV, this year. The PLF continues to request donations to support the George Lea Founder's Scholarship Fund. We hope our members and other supporters of the PLF will respond to the call for donations to help the PLF continue this important program. Donations in any amount would be greatly appreciated and can be made either online or by check. Please ensure that you earmark your donation for the Scholarship Fund and thank you in advance for your consideration!

shine the spotlight on the diversity of our public lands and waters, and the BLM caretakers watching over them each day.

The Campaign will also feature a grant program, the *Lands to Love Catalyst Fund*, designed to help community partners working with the BLM leverage existing funds, and expand their work through a capital boost from the Foundation. We are working together with BLM to identify the right partners, and will also encourage local communities to nominate the public lands and waters they love that could benefit from, or be improved, with additional financial support. Follow us across social media [@americaslands](#) to learn more, and tag your favorite public lands and waters #LandsToLove.



ELECTRONIC MAILING ONLY

The PLF has gone to an all digital distribution of the quarterly *Monitor* newsletter to save on printing and mailing costs of our newsletter. All editions of the *Monitor* are distributed electronically to PLF members and are available on the PLF website.

UTAH PUBLIC LANDS STATE OF UTAH PETITION TO THE SUPREME COURT

The State of Utah on August 20, 2024 filed a petition with the Supreme Court of the United States asserting that the perpetual Federal retention of 18.5 million acres of “unappropriated” public land in Utah is unconstitutional. The State of Utah is seeking a judgment from the Supreme Court that would order the United States to begin the process of complying with the asserted obligation to dispose of these lands. The BLM manages some 23 million acres of public land in the State. The State has identified 18.5 million acres of “unappropriated” public lands that include lands that have not been “formally reserved for any specific purpose, such as a National Park or National Conservation Area, or being used to execute any of the BLM’s constitutionally enumerated powers”. On October 22, 2024, several other States, including the states of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Mississippi, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, and Wyoming filed briefs with the Supreme Court urging the court not only to agree to hear the case but to ultimately side with the State of Utah.



Public Lands, Utah (BLM photo)

It is uncertain as to whether the Supreme Court will even hear this case. Although the State is attempting to invoke the court’s jurisdiction over disputes between the states, the justices could decline to take up the case. The States assert that Article I of the Constitution limits the United States’ power to hold land and that the Property Clause of Article IV of the Constitution authorizes the Federal government only to regulate and “dispose of” public lands, not to indefinitely retain lands within a State. The State

of Utah was granted some six million acres of public land at the time of statehood in 1896 and another 1.5 million acres for public institutions. The State was granted four sections per township (Sections 2, 16, 32 and 36). However, when Utah became a State, the Utah Constitution “forever disclaimed all right and title to the unappropriated public lands”. Other legal scholars also assert that the Property Clause makes it clear that Congress, and not the states, determine the use or transfer of public lands, whether for conservation, military purposes, transfer to private or state ownership, or for economic purposes. Although some six million acres of public land were granted to the State of Utah at the time of Statehood in 1896, it is interesting to note that the State has still failed to complete their in lieu selections for some 223,000 acres (1/4 million acres) of public land in the State that were not available for transfer at the time of Statehood.

Section 102 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) specifically states that “Congress declares that it is the policy of the United States that the public lands be retained in Federal ownership, unless as a result of the land use planning procedure provided for in the Act, it is determined that disposal of a particular parcel will serve the national interest”. It should also be noted that the State of Utah receives Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments from the Federal government each year for those Federal lands that are retained in Federal ownership for all Americans. Those PILT payments to Utah were \$43,452,462 in FY 2022, \$46,208,003 in FY 2023, and \$49,485,303 in FY 2024. The State of Utah also receives half of the royalty revenues from Federal oil and gas leases in the State. The State received some \$1.4 billion in royalty revenues from 2013 to 2022. These revenues are expected to increase in the future as Federal oil and gas production increases and as the Federal royalty rate has increased from 12.5 percent to 16.67 percent.

John Leshy, former Department of the Interior Solicitor, authored an article in 2018 in the *Hastings Law Journal* titled “Are U.S. Public Lands Unconstitutional”. This article has been posted on the PLF website. The article clearly shows that the arguments for unconstitutionality reflect an incomplete and defective understanding of U.S. legal and political history, a selective and skewed reading of numerous Supreme Court decisions and Federal statutes, a misleading assertion that the states have very limited governing authority over activities taking place on the public lands, and even a misuse of the term

UTAH (continued)

to “dispose of” the public lands. For the Supreme Court to determine how much land the U.S. may own in any state would be a breathtaking departure from more than 230 years of practice during which Congress has made that determination through the political process and from a century and a half of Supreme Court precedent deferring to Congress.

In the views of the PLF, any departure from the legal precedents and history regarding the ownership of public lands would have a significant impact on the future management of some 245 million acres of public lands managed by BLM for all Americans. These impacts would include the management of not only the 18.5 million acres of “unappropriated” public lands in Utah, but also an estimated 144 million acres of “unappropriated” public lands throughout the west and an additional 66 million acres of “unappropriated” public land in Alaska. The PLF, therefore, will be closely monitoring the progress of this petition to the Supreme Court. The PLF has also posted a Position Statement on the PLF website, disputing the assertions of the State regarding the ownership of “unappropriated” public lands.

BLM LEADERSHIP

The BLM on July 18, 2024 announced the selection of Joe Stout as the new BLM California State Director. He replaces



Joe Stout, CA State Director
(BLM photo)

Karen Mouritsen, who had served as State Director since early 2020 and retired in December 2023. Stout returns to BLM California where he previously served for over seven years as the As-

sociate State Director and the Acting State Director. Most recently, he served with the U.S. Forest Service

as the Forest Supervisor of the Eldorado National Forest in California. He has worked at all levels of BLM, including Acting Chief of Staff for the Director’s Office in Washington, D.C. and Division Chief for the Decision Support, Planning and NEPA programs. He had previously served as the Acting Associate State Director for BLM Colorado. He has worked at the BLM Field Office level for land use planning efforts in the Kremmling and Glenwood Springs Field Offices in Colorado.

Stout holds a Master’s degree in Environmental Policy, Management and Law from the University of Colorado and a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Environmental Studies from the State University of New York.

With the continued changes in the leadership positions of the BLM, we would like to provide an update on the current Leadership of BLM, including the State Directors that provide the day-to-day on-the-ground management for the public lands. The following are the current Deputy Directors and the State Directors for each of the BLM State Offices:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Director | Tracy Stone-Manning |
| Principle Deputy Director | Nada Culver |
| Deputy Director, Programs & Admin | Michael Nedd |
| Deputy Director, State Operations | Karen Kelleher |
| Alaska State Office | Steven Cohn |
| Arizona State Office | Raymond Suazo |
| California State Office | Joe Stout |
| Colorado State Office | Doug Vilsack |
| Eastern States Office | Mitchell Leverette |
| Idaho State Office | Peter Ditton (<i>Acting</i>) |
| Montana State Office | Sonya Germann |
| Nevada State Office | Jon Raby |
| New Mexico State Office | Melanie Barnes |
| OR/WA State Office | Barry Bushue |
| Utah State Office | Joe Mendez (<i>Acting</i>) |
| Wyoming State Office | Andrew Archuleta |

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATE



Photo by Ray Brady

The PLF continues to monitor Congressional legislation, rulemaking activities, and Executive Orders pertaining to the Department of the Interior, BLM, and public lands management. The PLF, as an advocacy organization for the public lands, is actively engaged in providing our perspectives on a wide range of issues including the annual BLM appropriations, any program oversight hearings, proposed amendments to FLPMA and other major statutes affecting public lands management, and proposed regulations regarding BLM resource programs. Reviewing legislation and proposed rules and preparing comments and testimony, when appropriate, is an important part of our advocacy work. We update our Position Statements and Letters and Testimony webpages on our website under the “Advocacy” link and provide legislative and regulatory updates in the *Monitor* on significant actions.

GRAZING REGULATIONS/LEGISLATION

STATUS: The BLM in August 2023 announced the suspension of work on the update of grazing regulations (43 CFR Part 4100) and instead focus efforts on implementing management changes to the grazing program through policy updates and internal guidance to BLM Field Offices. That work is still pending. *Congressman John Curtis (UT) on July 18, 2024 introduced the Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program Act (H.R. 9062) that is aimed to provide ranchers greater flexibility in managing grazing operations on the public lands. A Senate version of the legislation has also been introduced by Senator John Barrasso (WY) and Senator Ron Wyden (OR) which is under review by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.*

SUMMARY: *Key features of H.R. 9062 include expanding and formalizing the 2018 BLM Pilot Program to offer increased flexibility to grazing permittees on the public lands. The Bill would mandate that BLM provide at least one alternative flexible grazing option at the request of the permittee or lessee, developed in collaboration with state and federal agencies, Indian Tribes, and other affected parties. The Bill would also allow permittees and lessees to adjust pasture rotation dates up to 14 days before and after grazing periods and also require BLM to establish cooperative monitoring plans and rangeland health objectives.*

PLF POSITION: *The PLF on June 18, 2020 co-signed a collaborative letter with other organizations to BLM providing comments on proposed revisions to the grazing regulations and in May 2023 updated a Livestock*

Grazing Position Statement which is posted on the PLF website. The PLF will continue to track the development of updated grazing program policies and guidance and provide comments as appropriate on legislative initiatives.



Livestock grazing on the public lands (BLM photo)

OUTDOOR RECREATION ACT

STATUS: The U.S. House on April 9, 2024 approved the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act (H.R.6492). The Senate companion bill, America’s Outdoor Recreation Act (S.873), was passed out of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on July 26, 2023 and awaits consideration by the full Senate.

SUMMARY: The EXPLORE Act is a comprehensive piece of legislation that aims to enhance recreation access and revamp outdoor recreation opportunities on the public lands. Key provisions of the Act support gateway communities, modernizes technology at

recreation facilities, streamlines the permitting process, provides resources to combat park overcrowding, enhances accessibility for individuals with disabilities, promotes recreation for service members and veterans, protects rock-climbing areas and encourages the creation of long-distance bike trails, enhances access, and modernizes and restores campgrounds.

PLF POSITION: The PLF has not taken a position on the bill but will track progress on final Senate action on the bill.



Greater Sage-Grouse (BLM photo)

GREATER SAGE-GROUSE EIS

STATUS: The BLM on March 15, 2024 released a Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and EIS for management of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat on the public lands. The 90-day public comment period on the Draft EIS and Plan Amendment ended on June 13, 2024.

SUMMARY: The Draft EIS considers amendments to 76 BLM Resource Management Plans across the range of Greater sage-grouse and analyzes six alternatives for adjusting specific habitat management actions on BLM-managed public lands. Alternative 1 is a continuation of current management actions under RMPs as amended in 2015. Alternative 2 is a continuation of management actions under RMPs as amended in 2019. Alternative 3 represents the most restrictions on resource uses to preserve Greater sage-grouse habitat on some 69.2 million acres of Priority Habitat Management Areas on BLM administered surface lands. Alternative 4 updates habitat management area boundaries and management actions based on updated information and science that has become available since 2015 and 2019. Alternative 5 (the BLM preferred alternative) considers other potential alignments of habitat management areas and associated management actions to try and balance Greater sage-grouse conservation with other

public land uses. Alternative 5 identifies 34.8 million acres of Priority Habitat Management Areas and 23.7 million acres of General Habitat Management Areas for range-wide management actions on BLM administered surface lands. Alternative 6 is the same as Alternative 5, but with the addition of ACECs.

PLF POSITION: The PLF submitted comments on the Draft Greater Sage-Grouse EIS and Plan Amendment on June 10, 2024. Those comments are posted on the PLF website.

SOLAR ENERGY EIS

STATUS: The BLM on April 11, 2024 announced the release of the Final Rule for solar and wind energy right-of-way authorizations on the public lands under the 43 CFR 2800 regulations. *The BLM on August 29, 2024 announced the release of the Final Utility-Scale Solar Energy Programmatic EIS and Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments (updated Western Solar Plan) to help streamline solar energy development on public lands in the 11 Western States. This Final EIS and Plan Amendment replaces the existing 2012 Western Solar Plan which only covered six Western States.*

SUMMARY: The Final Rule adjusts rental fees for solar and wind energy authorizations, provides BLM with more flexibility in processing applications for solar and wind energy development in designated leasing areas, and updates criteria on prioritizing solar and wind energy right-of-way applications. *The Final EIS would make over 31 million acres of public lands across the 11 Western States available for potential solar development and identifies some 130.3 million acres of exclusion lands, with a Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenario of about 700,000 acres.*

PLF POSITION: The PLF submitted comments on the Proposed Rule to BLM on August 9, 2023. Those comments are posted on the PLF website. The PLF participated in virtual public meetings during the



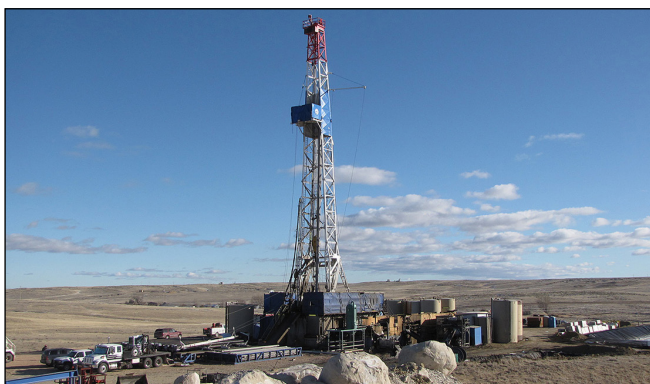
Silver State Solar project, NV

public comment period on the Draft EIS. The PLF also signed onto a joint letter on April 18, 2024 with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and other organizations providing comments on the Draft Solar Energy EIS and concerns over potential conflicts with crucial big game habitats in the preferred alternative of the Draft EIS.

OIL AND GAS REGULATIONS 43 CFR PART 3100

STATUS: The BLM on March 27, 2024 announced the release of the Final Methane Rule, or Oil and Gas Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation Rule (43 CFR Parts 3160 and 3170). On April 24, 2024, the States of North Dakota, Montana, Texas, and Wyoming filed a Complaint in U.S. District Court to vacate the Final Rule and seek a decision that the Final Rule is unlawful. *On May 10, 2024, the State of Utah joined the Complaint. The States assert that the Rule violates the Clean Air Act, which reserves the control of air emissions to the EPA and the States, and exceeds BLM's authority under the Mineral Leasing Act and the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act. The U.S. District Court of North Dakota on September 12, 2024 issued a decision to grant a Preliminary Injunction in the case and halted implementation of the Final Methane Rule in North Dakota, Texas, Utah, Montana and Wyoming. The Court ruled that the regulation represents a significant impingement of states' rights and targets an area that is already regulated by the Clean Air Act and state laws.*

The BLM on April 12, 2024 announced release of the Final Oil and Gas Leasing Rule to reflect provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. On May 14, 2024, Senator Daines (MT) introduced a Congressional Review resolution (S.J. Res. 78) to overturn the Leasing Rule provisions under the authority of the Congressional Review Act. That action is pending.



Oil and Gas Drill Rig – WY (BLM photo)

SUMMARY: The Final Methane or Waste Prevention Rule aims to reduce the waste of natural gas from venting, flaring, and leaks during oil and gas production activities on both Federal and Indian leases. The Final Oil and Gas Leasing Rule updates the BLM onshore oil and gas leasing regulations to codify new provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and implement reforms from the Interior Report on the Federal Oil and Gas Leasing Program (November 2021). The Final Leasing Rule increases royalty rates to 16.67 percent, increases rental rates to \$15 per acre, increases minimum lease bids to \$10 per acre, eliminates non-competitive leasing, reduces the nonoperational period for idle wells to four years, increases minimum lease bonds to \$150,000, increases minimum statewide bonds to \$500,000, eliminates nationwide bonds, and includes other provisions to ensure responsible oil and gas leasing and development on the public lands.

PLF POSITION: The PLF submitted comments on the Proposed Leasing Rule to BLM on September 8, 2023. Those comments are posted on the PLF website.

CONSERVATION REGULATIONS – 43 CFR 1600 (PLANNING) AND 6100 (ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE)

STATUS: The BLM on April 18, 2024 announced the release of the Final Public Lands (Conservation and Landscape Health) Rule under the 43 CFR 1600 and 6100 regulations. *The BLM Director on August 8, 2024, announced that a Federal Advisory Committee will be established to engage the public in implementation of the Public Lands Rule and that BLM has released a set of initial guidance documents to support consistent implementation of the Rule across the BLM State and Field Offices. The BLM on October 18 announced a call for nominations for the 15-member Advisory Committee. The initial guidance documents released on August 8 include a Restoration Prioritization and Planning IM, Watershed Condition Assessment IM, Land Health Standards IM, Restoration and Mitigation Leasing IM, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern Manual, Inventory and Monitoring of Ecological Resources Manual, and Land Use Planning Requirements IB.*

Considerable controversy has surrounded the intent of this Rule. Congressman John Curtis (R-Utah) introduced H.R.3397, which passed the House on April 30, 2024, that would rescind the Rule. *Congressman Curtis also filed a Resolution on July 18, 2024 pursuant to the Congressional Review Act to void the Rule.* Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyoming) also introduced S.1435,

as a companion bill to H.R.3397, and announced his intent to use the Congressional Review Act to void the Rule. Congressman Ryan Zinke (R-Montana) has also proposed adding a rider to the Interior FY 2025 appropriations bill to suspend the Rule. The States of Utah and Wyoming on June 18, 2024 filed suit in U.S. District Court of Utah challenging the adequacy of NEPA review in issuance of the Final Rule. *The States of North Dakota, Idaho, and Montana filed a suit on June 21, 2024. A coalition of energy, mining, ranching, and farming groups on July 12, 2024 filed a suit in U.S. District Court of Wyoming asserting that the Final Rule exceeds the authority of FLPMA. On July 25, 2024, the Conservation Lands Foundation, The Wilderness Society, and the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance filed a Motion to Intervene in the U.S. District Court of Utah to defend BLM in the lawsuit against the Rule. These conservation groups also on September 19, 2024, filed a Motion to Intervene in the U.S. District*



Upper Salmon River Restoration, ID (BLM photo)

Court of North Dakota. The Department of Justice on August 1 and September 6, 2024 filed motions with the Courts to dismiss the claims by the States for a preliminary injunction in the case.

SUMMARY: The Final Rule supports the principles of multiple use and sustained yield in the management of the public lands, restoration of degraded habitat, and applies land health standards to all BLM-managed public lands. This rule incorporates climate resiliency and restoration through conservation and preservation in the management of the public lands pursuant to FLPMA and other relevant authorities. This rule within 43 CFR 6000, which includes Conservation and Preservation, revises existing regulations to prioritize designating and protecting Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and provides an over-arching framework for multiple BLM programs to promote ecosystem resiliency on the public lands. *The Final Rule also includes provisions that allow a BLM State Director to place temporary management restrictions on “nominated” ACECs until land use management plans are completed for ACEC areas. The Rule also provides for the use of “restoration and mitigation leases” to support mitigation efforts and promote the protection and restoration of public lands.*

PLF POSITION: The PLF submitted comments on the Proposed Rule to the BLM on June 15, 2023 and those comments are posted on the PLF website.

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 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 the public lands.

IN MEMORIAM

Roger Ray Brubaker on August 5, 2024, in Billings, MT. Ray was a U.S. Army veteran and after graduating from college began working for BLM in the early 60s. He retired in 1994. He had a long career with BLM in Oregon, California, Nevada, Montana, Alaska, and Wyoming. He was the Wyoming State Director at the time of his retirement.

Donna Mae Cady on February 26, 2024, in San Bernardino, CA. Donna attended business school in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She worked as a Secretary at the Naval Weapons Center in Norco, CA and the GSAMotor Pool in Riverside, CA before joining BLM in Riverside as Secretary to the District Manager in the California Desert District Office.

Larry Kevin Claypool on September 30, 2024, in Cheyenne, WY. Larry graduated from the University of Wyoming and worked for BLM for 34 years, starting as a Petroleum Engineer and retiring in 2018 as the Associate State Director in Wyoming.

Dean Crabbs on March 15, 2024, in Etna, WY. Dean worked with the FBI for about 12 years before becoming the first Special Agent-in-Charge for BLM in Alaska in October 1982. He retired in 1994 and moved to Vale, OR and then to Etna, WY after dealing with the effects of Parkinson's disease.

Keith Dorsey on February 13, 2024, in Yuma, AZ. Keith served as the Field Staff Ranger in the BLM Yuma Field Office from 1990 until his retirement in 2010. In addition to his leadership of the Ranger program in the Yuma Field Office, he served as a Bureauwide firearms instructor.

Billy (Bill) Gardner McIlvain on November 10, 2023, in Huntley, MT. Bill received a Bachelor of Science degree in Soils and Crops Management from Texas Tech University and a Master's degree in Rangeland Management from the University of Idaho. He worked for 45 years with BLM, including positions as Area Manager in Belle Fourche, SD and Billings, MT. He retired in 2008 as Rangeland Program Leader in the Montana State Office. He was recognized as "one of the most respected range program leaders" and received a lifetime achievement award.

Charles "Chuck" Preston Pope on September 19, 2024, Carson City, NV. Chuck retired in 2006 after

more than 30 years of service with BLM. His conservation work continued after retirement through his work with the Nevada Land Trust.

Donald F. Ryan on August 16, 2024, in Riverton, WY. Don was a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and served in the Korean War. He was decorated with a Purple Heart and a Silver Star for his service. Don earned a Bachelors degree in Agriculture and worked for BLM in Wyoming, Utah and Montana. He began his career with BLM on a fire crew and eventually as an Area Manager in Havre, Montana. He retired in 1988.

Jean Elizabeth Sonneman on August 3, 2024, in Washington, D.C. Jean earned a Bachelors degree in English from Carleton College, a Masters degree in Biology from the University of South Dakota and a Justice degree from George Washington University. She was admitted to the District of Columbia Bar in 1987. Jean started her career with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and later was an attorney for the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America. She worked for the Department of the Interior, first as an attorney for the Office of the Solicitor and then as a senior regulatory analyst for BLM in Washington, D.C. Jean returned to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in January 2020 as a regulatory analyst. Her career accomplishments included the successful defense of the 1995 BLM grazing regulations in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit and in the U.S. Supreme Court.

The PLF is committed to never forgetting the dedicated employees of BLM who have left us. We do so on our website's Memorial Wall and by publishing names of those who passed away in the Monitor. If you have a death to report, please e-mail us at obits@publicland.org, preferably with a link to or copy of an obituary. You can rely on the PLF to keep you informed of topical news on the public PLF Facebook page, our website, other social media sites, and the Monitor newsletter.

Note: Putting together the Memoriam list in the Monitor and maintaining the Memorial Wall on the PLF website takes a lot of work by PLF volunteers. If you find errors, or if you know of something we may have missed, we apologize, and will correct the record. If you have concerns, please let Ray Brady know at rbrady@publicland.org.

DONATIONS*

| MEMORIAL DONATIONS | | SCHOLARSHIP FUND | |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| RECEIVED FROM | IN MEMORY OF | | |
| Tom Allen | Jim Ruch | Dean Bibles | Celia Boddington |
| Dean Bibles | Henri Bisson | Eric Janes | William Le Barron |
| Celia Boddington | Jean Sonneman | | Scott Florencey |
| | | | Don Simpson |
| | | | Smith J. Williams |
| | | | Gregg and Mary Simmons |
| GENERAL FUND | | STUDENT CONGRESS | |
| Tom Allen | Mark Davis | | Don Simpson |
| | Don Simpson | | |
| | Gregg and Mary Simmons | | |

* This list reflects donations received during the period of July 1 through September 30, 2024. Donations received after this period will be reported in the next edition of the Monitor.

You can make a designated donation by credit card on our website at www.publicland.org, or by check sent to the Public Lands Foundation, P.O. Box 7226, Arlington, VA 22207. In your transmittal, please make sure to mention if your donation is for the **PLF general fund**, the **George Lea Founder’s Scholarship**, or the **Student Congress fund**. Remember, if you are making a donation in memory of someone who has passed away, you can designate your donation to go to one of these funds. The PLF has also established a “PLF Endowment Fund” to support the long-term purposes and mission of the organization. The PLF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Your donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent permitted under the law.

PLF MEMBERSHIP

| PLF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION |
|----------------------------|
| Name _____ |
| Address _____ |
| City/State/Zip _____ |
| Phone _____ |
| E-mail _____ |
| Date _____ |
| Amount Enclosed _____ |

| PLF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Regular | \$50 |
| Contributing | \$100 |
| Sponsoring | \$200 |
| Patron..... | \$500 |

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wilderness Act Amendment

Utah Senator Mike Lee is proposing to amend the 1964 Wilderness Act by introducing S.4561, that would allow mountain bikes, strollers, and game carts on every piece of land protected by the National Wilderness Preservation System. I was not aware of the legislation until I read an editorial in the August 9, 2024 edition of the Mountain Express newspaper that serves the Wood River valley, Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley areas of Idaho. The author of the editorial eloquently sums up the effects of the proposed legislation. This is a heads up for the PLF to vehemently go on record to oppose the legislation.

Ben Collins, Idaho

The *Monitor* is what we make it and we encourage you to provide Letters to the Editor or provide other reviews and comments on articles included in your newsletter. It is important to hear from our membership, and if you like something or don't like something, let us know. If you do send an e-mail to the Editor, don't be surprised if it winds up as a Letter to the Editor in the next edition of the *Monitor*. Please provide your comments to rbrady@publicland.org. Comments should be limited to no more than 500 words in length. In addition, members are encouraged to use the bod@publicland.org e-mail address to communicate with the PLF Board.

The *Monitor* generally reflects ongoing PLF activities, events, updates, awards, and information on former BLM employees. We encourage articles and discussions of issues by posting quality content that also provides a positive exposure of the goals, objectives, and mission of the PLF. However, we need to take some precautions when posting information to the newsletter and other forms of social media to ensure appropriate rules of behavior. In keeping a positive experience for our members, we reserve the right to publish only comments, photos, and other material deemed appropriate by the PLF. We intend on maintaining a friendly and professional tone in the articles in the *Monitor* and any Letters to the Editor.

ELECTION 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our annual election for Officers and Board Members of the PLF is underway. You should receive a notice by e-mail for a Survey Monkey link that contains an online PLF ballot for the election. The online ballot should take only a minute or two to complete. There will be no paper ballots provided to members this year. You may vote for any or all of the National Representatives and for your individual State Representative. It should be noted that we currently have vacant State Representative positions for Nevada and New Mexico and are looking for volunteers to fill these positions.

Please be sure to vote before December 15, 2024. Please also consider paying your 2025 dues when you complete your online ballot.



THE PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION IS A TAX EXEMPT 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION