

An aerial photograph of a desert canyon. The landscape is dominated by layered, reddish-brown rock formations with distinct horizontal strata. Sparse green shrubs and small trees are scattered across the rocky terrain. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day, casting soft shadows that emphasize the ruggedness of the canyon walls and the texture of the rock.

Public Lands Foundation

2024 Annual Report

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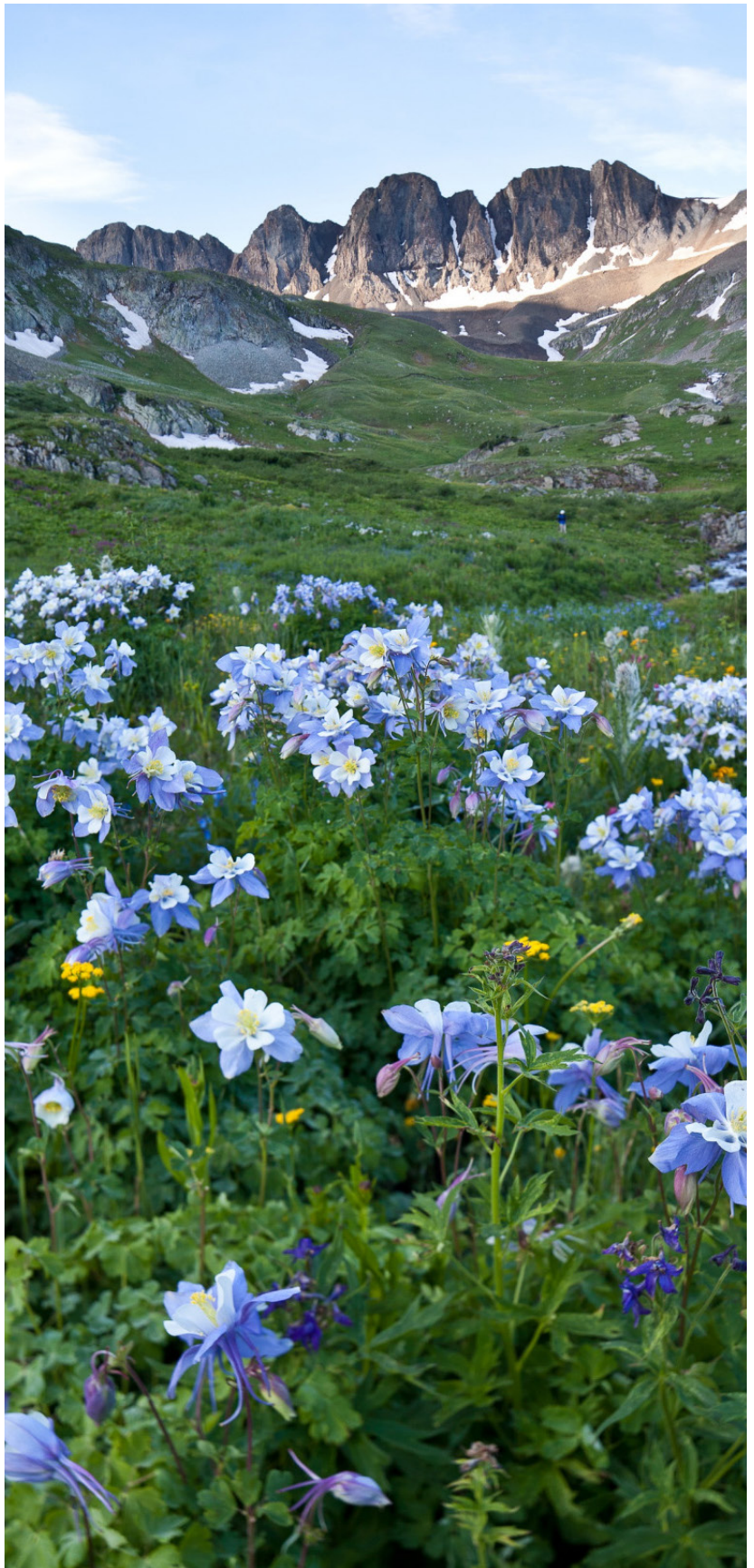
Bill Lamb, Utah

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EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVE

Steve Ellis, National Association of
Forest Service Retirees



Bob Wick - Alpine Loop, CO

Front Cover: Grand Staircase - Escalante NM, UT

President's Message

This year, 2024, marked the end of my third year as President of the PLF. I am convinced that the need for our organization has only increased over time. I hope you will join me in recommitting to our mission by maintaining your membership and helping in whatever way you can to keep the PLF viable. We are planning an "All Member" call during the first quarter of 2025 to explore innovative ideas to increase our membership rolls for the future.

PLF Board members Johanna Munson and Bob Moore stepped down this year. In December, we welcomed Chuck Hunt as a new Director-at-Large. We still have State Representative vacancies in Nevada and New Mexico and are seeking any members who may be interested in these roles.



Mary Jo Rugwell

After a couple of years of effort, we finally garnered some interest in the PLF Mentoring Program from career BLM employees. We now have six BLM employees actively working with PLF mentors. We are also continuing to engage with the BLM on the BLM History Program, assisting in scheduling interviews for the Oral Histories project, and working to reorganize and digitize the Glendon E. Collins Archives at the NTC. We hope to continue this partnership into the future.

With the arrival of a new administration in 2025, the PLF is busy updating our Issue papers and has prepared a Transition paper as well, which has been provided to the BLM to share with President Trump's landing team. I want to thank Don Simpson, Ed Roberson, and their talented team for all the challenging work they are doing to make this effort a success.

The PLF's Annual Meeting was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, on October 8-9, 2024. It was scheduled a bit later than usual so that we would have the opportunity to interact with the John Freemuth Student Congress, held in Las Vegas during the same timeframe. A good summary of the Annual Meeting was included in the Fall edition of the Monitor newsletter. I was honored to be able to present Lifetime Service Awards to Don Simpson and John Ruhs during the meeting and we also announced the Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award, the Landscape Stewardship Award, the BLM Professional Employee Awards, and the PLF Volunteer of the Year Award.

One of the biggest issues we focused on this year was a Petition to the Supreme Court that the State of Utah filed to transfer millions of acres of "unappropriated" public lands managed by the BLM to the State of Utah. Fortunately, the Supreme Court denied the State's petition by issuing a decision that "the motion for leave to file a bill of complaint is denied." While this was welcome news, this is not the end of the story, and we will continue to monitor any efforts to remove public lands from public hands.

A nonprofit organization like the PLF cannot survive without the engagement of our Executive Committee, our Board of Directors, and our members. I want to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices that our members and others make for the good of the PLF and our crucial advocacy mission. I am humbled and honored to be your President, and I am in awe of the work done by so many to keep the PLF moving forward.



Annual Meeting 2024

2024 PLF Annual Meeting – Las Vegas, Nevada

The 2024 PLF Annual Meeting was held in Las Vegas, Nevada on October 8 and 9, 2024. The theme of the meeting was “Recreation and National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) Management”. Panel discussions on “Recreation, Partnerships and Permits” and “NLCS Management” included a range of local experts on ever-increasing recreation demands on the public lands. There was a general message from the panel discussions on the importance of developing Partnership efforts between the BLM, State Recreation agencies, Recreation stakeholder interest groups, and public land users to address these demands; and the importance of developing strong relationships with local communities and “Friends” organizations to support the work of the BLM in the management of NLCS units.

A PLF Board Meeting was held during the Annual Meeting and included discussions of Goals and Objectives for 2025, membership and recruitment efforts, including an update on the membership partnership with the Department Federal Credit Union, preparation of Transition Papers for the new administration after the election and the update of current PLF Position Statements to support the Transition Papers, completion of the 2024 Annual Report, and interest in an all-member virtual meeting during 2025 to facilitate broader member engagement with the PLF Board. The PLF Board also highlighted the importance of closely monitoring the State of Utah petition to the Supreme Court on the constitutionality of retaining unappropriated public lands in federal ownership and the need to continue to track Congressional legislative initiatives that affect public lands or the BLM. 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. 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 the BLM in the management of public lands for the future. She also 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.

A major action item from the PLF Board Meeting was a decision to initiate an outreach effort with BLM “Friends” groups that may be interested in the public land advocacy work of the PLF, develop a list of contacts for BLM “Friends” groups, and share information on the PLF mission.

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 2025 Budget Testimony

The PLF provided written testimony in March 2024 on the BLM Fiscal Year 2025 proposed budget to both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Our greatest concern for the BLM is the continued 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 health 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. The PLF also signed onto a joint letter, with other outdoor organizations, to Congress requesting not only additional funding but also new authorities for addressing the wild horse and burro problem on the public lands.

Public Lands Ownership

The State of Utah in August 2024 filed a petition with the Supreme Court of the U.S. asserting that the federal retention of “unappropriated” public lands in Utah was unconstitutional. Several other States also filed briefs with the Court supporting the petition. Although the Supreme Court in January 2025 declined to hear the case, the PLF continues to advocate for the retention of public lands in public hands. The public lands managed by the BLM are a national asset, part of our natural and cultural heritage, and should remain in national public ownership for current and future generations. The PLF posted a “Protect Our Public Lands” notice on the PLF website and updated a Position Statement on the Utah public lands case that has been widely circulated.



Public Land in Utah

Transition Advice

In November 2024, a new administration was elected into office. As the incoming administration prepares for the job of managing the public lands and our natural resource heritage for the future, the PLF prepared a Transition paper to provide advice regarding the BLM and the management of public lands. The Transition paper highlighted the importance of supporting the BLM organization; improving and streamlining procedures to assist in efficient management; maintaining and enhancing the delegations of authority to BLM State and field offices; managing public lands for resiliency to wildfire, invasive species and disease; and supporting the BLM in managing the exploding recreation use on 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 provided additional comments and letters to both the Department and BLM requesting that the BLM proceed ahead with regulations to eliminate the discretionary Small Miner Maintenance Fee Waiver program. The 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act provided the Secretary the discretion to eliminate the program, as it appears that the program has resulted in potential waste, fraud and abuse. The PLF also updated a Position Statement on Mining Law Reform and Critical and Strategic Minerals on the Public Lands.

Solar Energy EIS

The BLM released the Final solar and wind energy right-of-way regulations in April 2024 and a Final Solar Energy Programmatic EIS for the 11 western states in August 2024. The PLF had provided comments to the BLM on the draft regulations in 2023 and signed onto a joint letter with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and other organizations providing comments on the Draft Solar Energy EIS in April 2024. Those comments are posted on the PLF website and the PLF is updating a Position Statement on Solar and Wind Energy Development on the Public Lands.

Conservation Regulations

The BLM in April 2024 released the Final Public Lands (Conservation and Landscape Health) Rule. The PLF had provided comments on the proposed regulations in 2023 and continued to track implementation of these regulations during 2024. A series of initial guidance documents were released by the BLM in August 2024 and a 15-member public Advisory Committee was established to provide advice and recommendations to the BLM on implementation of the regulations. However, the new administration in January 2025 suspended the Advisory Committee and the future of the Public Lands Rule is uncertain. The PLF continues to advocate for the sustainable multiple-use management of the public lands and conservation of public land resources.

Greater Sage-Grouse Management

The BLM in November 2024 released a Final Resource Management Plan Amendment and EIS for management of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat on public lands across the west. The PLF submitted comments on the Draft EIS and Plan Amendment in June 2024 and will continue to track the issuance of Records of Decision for each of the States and implementation actions.

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.

George Stone – Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award

George Stone was presented the Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award for his dedication and contributions to the PLF in leading its Information Technology (IT) activities and tireless efforts at modernizing the PLF's communication strategies and improving the PLF's website and social media presence.

Don Simpson – Lifetime Service Award

Don Simpson was presented a Lifetime Service Award at the Annual Meeting in 2024. Don had a long career with the BLM in Idaho, the Washington Office, Colorado, and Wyoming across varied programs such as fire, forestry, and lands and realty. He served in several management capacities including Deputy State Director for Resources, Associate State Director and ultimately State Director in Wyoming. Throughout his career he was known for his ability to build consensus on difficult public land issues.

John Ruhs – Lifetime Service Award

John Ruhs was presented a Lifetime Service Award at the Annual Meeting in 2024. John's 33-year career began as Range Rider in Oregon and he retired as the Idaho State Director. He worked in at least 13 different staff and line positions in numerous locations and across several program areas. He played key roles in developing Rangeland Fire Protection Associations, sage grouse habitat conservation plans, the National Seed Strategy, and the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative.

Mark Davis – 2024 Volunteer of the Year Award

Mark Davis, PLF Treasurer, was presented this Award for his dedicated support and assistance to the PLF during 2024. He was recognized for his tireless effort to continue to track the organization's expenditures, preparation of Treasurer Reports, and the preparation of the Proposed Budget for PLF Board review.

Greg Miller – 2024 Outstanding Managerial Public Lands Professional Award

Greg Miller, BLM California Desert Associate District Manager, was presented this Award, as an exceptional BLM leader for over 37 years. The last 15 years has been with the California Desert District managing nearly 11 million acres of public lands near one of the largest population centers in the nation and serving over 23 million people who use the public lands, often with competing demands. He stood up the original BLM California Renewable Energy Coordination Office and guided the development of renewable energy on the public lands.

Lance Okeson – 2024 Outstanding Technical/Operational Public Lands Professional Award

Lance Okeson, Assistant Fire Management Officer in the BLM Boise District Office, was presented this Award, in recognition of his leadership and advocacy for the role of fuel breaks in addressing the challenge of altered fuel regimes throughout the western U.S. His career has served as an example to younger BLM employees and his vision embodies the concepts of public land stewardship.

Jaksick Family and Jackrabbit Properties – 2024 Landscape Stewardship Award

The Jaksick Family and Jackrabbit Properties was presented this Award in recognition for its visionary leadership in land stewardship and land transfers spanning an area along the California and Nevada border with crucial water rights. Their efforts have inspired other landowners and stakeholders in collaborative conservation efforts.

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 47 applications from 23 colleges and universities for the 2024 George Lea Founder’s Scholarships and awarded scholarships to Nicole Dickan from Sul Ross State University in Texas and Morgan Nystuen from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Nicole is a Masters-level graduate student in Range and Wildlife Management. Morgan is a Senior studying Geology and is in an accelerated Master’s degree program in Paleontology.



Nicole Dickan



Morgan Nystuen

John Freemuth Student Congress

The sixth biennial Student Congress was held on October 7-10, 2024 in Las Vegas, Nevada and focused on the “Transition to Renewable Energy on Public Lands”. 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 PLF received 58 student applications from 37 colleges and universities to participate in this year’s session and 25 students were selected to attend. The students identified an overarching 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”. There are plans to present the recommendations from the Student Congress to the Department and BLM.



Student Congress 2024

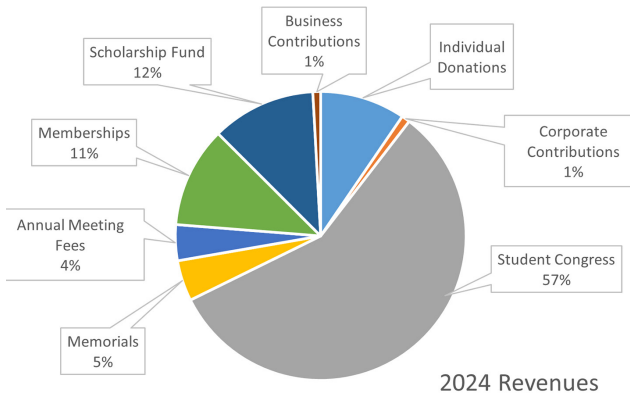
Financials

The Public Lands Foundation is financially sound with total assets of over \$435,000 as of the end of calendar year 2024. The PLF has historically relied primarily on individual membership dues and donations for income. Donations in 2024 fell far short of planned amounts, and membership income was basically the same as in 2023. During 2024, \$30,000 was liquidated and transferred from an investment account into the operating account. However, due to the robust performance of the stock market, at the end of the year total assets had increased by over \$21,500.

In 2024, the PLF awarded two George Lea Founder’s scholarships of \$5,000 each. Considerable time and effort were spent in planning and holding the 2024 Annual Meeting and the Student Congress, which were both held in Las Vegas, Nevada in October 2024. The cost of the Student Congress was fully funded (\$73,436) with grants from the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service, the Andrus Foundation, and with other donations and carryover funds. However, the Annual Meeting costs exceeded fees collected by over \$2,500.

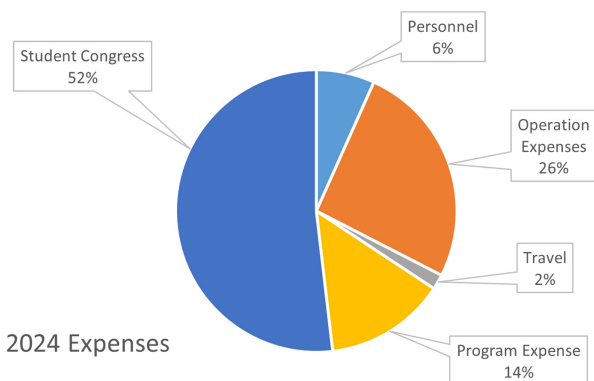
The PLF operates as a volunteer organization, with the exception of a paid bookkeeper and a website manager, with personnel costs of only \$9,507 in 2024. Other major expenses include upkeep of the website (\$7,590) and audit and accounting fees (\$17,725), which are a necessary component of government grant requests. The Board of Directors is exploring options to reduce audit costs in the future. The PLF will continue to raise funds to support our advocacy outreach efforts, the Student Congress, the Scholarship fund, and the BLM History Program.

Mark Davis, Treasurer



REVENUES

Individual Donations	\$ 12,361
Corporate Contributions	\$ 1,220
Business Contributions	\$ 1,134
Memorials	\$ 5,950
Endowment Funds	\$ 0
Annual Meeting Fees	\$ 5,234
Memberships	\$ 14,697
Scholarship Fund	\$ 15,112
Student Congress	\$ 74,639
Misc	\$ 0
TOTAL REVENUES	\$130,347



EXPENSES

Personnel	\$ 9,507
Operation Expenses	\$ 36,555
Travel	\$ 2,446
Program Expense	\$ 19,663
Student Congress	\$ 73,436
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$141,607

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Beginning Assets	\$414,218
Ending Equity	\$435,738
Current Liabilities	\$ 0
TOTAL ASSETS	\$435,738

Thank You for Your Support !

Appreciation for PLF Financial Supporters:

Contributing Members \$100

George Alderson	David Beaver	Michael Blymyer
Ray Brady	Nicholas Brokaw	Mike Gardner
Nancy Haug	Gregory Hill	John Husband
Ann Hutchinson	Jim May	Lonna O'Neal
James Ramakka	Teresa Raml	Linda Rundell
Renee Snyder	Jenna Whitlock	Carl Zulick

Sponsoring Members \$200

Ted Hudson

George Lea Founders Scholarship

George Alderson	Tom Allen	Mary Bellesi
Dean Bibles	Pamela Bisson	Celia Boddington
John Case	Dave Cavanaugh	Jim Colby
Carolyn Droscher	Kathy Eaton	Scott Florence
Pat Harvey	Dwight Hempel	Linda Hofman
Eric Janes	David Jones	John Kwiatkowski
George Lea	William LeBarron	Pamela Lyon
Van Manning	Beau McClure	Mat Millenbach
L.J. Porter	Skip Renschler	Ed Roberson
Lois Sands	Bob Schneider	Ed Shepard
Don Simpson	Gregg and Mary Simmons	
David Stout	Smith Williams	Sharon Wilson
Al Wright	Margaret Wyatt	Elaine Zielinski

Memorial Contributions

Bob Abbey in memory of John Reil
Tom Allen in memory of Rick Harrison
Tom Allen in memory of Jim Ruch
Tom Allen in memory of Kathy Lamb
Tom Allen in memory of Paul Lance
Dean Bibles in memory of Henri Bisson
Celia Boddington in memory of Jean Sonneman
Celia Boddington in memory of Fran Cherry
Celia Boddington in memory of Kit Muller
Carolyn Droscher in memory of Jack Belmain
Carolyn Droscher in memory of James Kor
Carolyn Droscher in memory of Pete Pederson



Emigrant National Historic Trail - WY

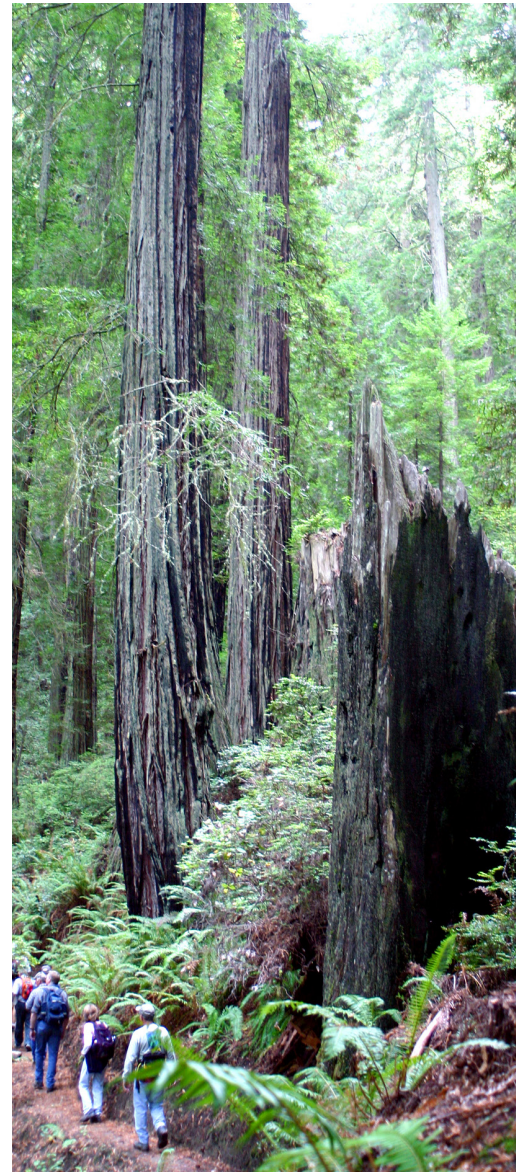
Kathy Eaton in memory of Fran Cherry
 Kathy Eaton in memory of Kit Muller
 Dwight Fielder in memory of Kit Muller
 Mike Ford in memory of Mike Taylor
 Mike Green in memory of Dean Crubbs
 Kim Harb in memory of Kit Muller
 Rita Leavell and Behram Sahukar in memory of Bill Leavell
 Renne Lothrop in memory of Bill Leavell
 Pamela Lyon in memory of Ray Jorgensen
 David Mari in memory of Barry Ashworth
 David Mari in memory of Fran Cherry
 Jim May in memory of Bob Steele
 Jim May in memory of Max Bruce
 Jim May in memory of Glen Collins
 Jim May in memory of Ed Spang
 Beau McClure in memory of Hank Noldan
 Beau McClure in memory of Fran Cherry
 Beau McClure in memory of Kit Muller
 L J Porter in memory of James Roger Kor
 Ed Roberson in memory of Mary Roberson
 Mary Jo Rugwell in memory of Larry Claypool
 Lois Sands in memory of Ray Jorgensen
 Robert Schneider in memory of Barry Ashworth
 Louise Senzel in memory of Irving and Jennie Senzel
 Al Wright in memory of John Reil
 Elaine Zielinski in memory of Mike Taylor

Student Congress

Celia Boddington	Jim Colby	Bill Disbrow
Beau McClure	Don Simpson	

General Fund and Advocacy

Robert Abbey	Tom Allen	Mark Davis
Carolyn Droscher	Kathy Eaton	Ewing Family
Dwight Fielder	Mike Ford	Michael Green
Kim Harb	Nancy Haug	David Jones
Rita Leavell	Bill LeBarron	Renee Lothrop
Courtney Lyons-Garcia	David Mari	Jim May
Mat Millenbach	Mary Jo Rugwell	Behram Sahukar
Louise Senzel	Gregg and Mary Simmons	Don Simpson
David Stout	Maya Tims	Elaine Zielinski
Carl Zulick		



Headwaters Forest Reserve - CA

Appreciation for Partners

The PLF expresses its appreciation to partners whose collaboration and support during 2024 contributed significantly to our accomplishments. These include:

American Wildlife Conservation Partners
Andrus Center for Public Policy, Boise State University
Conservation Lands Foundation
Department of Interior Federal Credit Union
Foundation for America's Public Lands
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:

- Joining the Public Lands Foundation or making a gift or donation to the PLF
- Being a BLM volunteer
- Attending a BLM public meeting or BLM Resource Advisory Committee meeting
- Commenting on a BLM resource management plan or BLM proposed regulations
- Alerting the PLF or BLM to public land issues
- Following the PLF on social media and at publicland.org



Red Rock Canyon NCA - NV

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.



Snake River ACEC - Idaho

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 the public lands.

