



Environmental Data & Governance Initiative Website Monitoring Report

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Removal of a Climate Change Webpage from and Shift in Language on the Bureau of Land Management's Website

January 9, 2018

Writing and review of this report was conducted and overseen by the members of EDGI's Website Monitoring Committee: Andrew Bergman, Gretchen Gehrke, and Toly Rinberg. Report writing was led by Justin Schell.

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Removal of a Climate Change Webpage from and Shift in Language on the Bureau of Land Management's Website

Overview

The Department of the Interior's (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) removed its climate change webpage and altered language on several webpages describing BLM's mission, management of public lands, and national priorities.

Description

BLM has altered and removed language and links about climate change, renewable energy, and the overall mission of the agency. The BLM climate change webpage has been entirely removed and no replacement page has been found. The page previously described BLM's approach to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation issues by providing examples about regional renewable energy programs and describing BLM's Rapid Ecoregional Assessments.

BLM has changed its statement of national priorities. "Clean and renewable energy" has been removed from the list and "Making America safe through energy independence" has been added. BLM has also changed its stated mission, removing language about renewable energy and introducing language about job creation. Additionally, BLM has altered the articulation of its "landscape approach" framework for managing public lands.

The most notable changes to the BLM website are summarized here:

1. Removal of "Climate Change" page

- a. Removed text about the importance of climate change issues: "As average temperatures rise, droughts are increasing, snowpack is declining, and water supplies are diminishing in key areas. Arctic permafrost is thawing. Wildfires have become larger and more frequent. Noxious weeds and invasive species are crowding out native plants and wildlife. In many areas of the West, increasing temperatures, drought, wildfire, insect outbreaks, and invasive species will accelerate transformation of the landscape." (1.1a)
- b. Removed text about BLM's landscape approach and climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts: "The BLM is adopting a landscape approach to more effectively manage the public lands during times of change. Some examples of this approach include the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan in California, and the Western Solar Plan. Another component of its landscape approach is the production of a series of Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, or REAs. The REAs examine ecological values, conditions, and trends in large, connected areas that have similar environmental characteristics." (1.1a)
- c. Removed text about BLM's climate change mitigation efforts: "The BLM working with local communities, state regulators, industry, and other federal agencies in building a clean energy future by providing sites for

environmentally sound development of renewable energy on public lands.”
(1.1a)

- d. A sidebar with 10 links to related climate change and clean energy resources at other agency and institution websites has been removed along with the climate change page (1.1c)

2. Reduced emphasis on renewable energy

- a. Removed “Clean energy and renewable energy” from a list of national priorities; added “Making America safe through energy independence” to the list (2.1a, 2.1b)
- b. Removed all mention of renewable energy from BLM’s mission page. The page previously included text stating that “the wide variety of values and activities we manage for include renewable energy production” (3.1c)

3. Increased emphasis on job creation

- a. Added “Getting America back to work” to the list of national priorities (2.1b)
- b. Included mentions of job growth in the BLM mission with the addition of the phrase “This promotes healthy and productive public lands that create jobs in local communities” (3.1d)
- c. Included phrase “promoting jobs on working landscapes” in BLM’s “How we manage page” (4.1d)

4. Changed BLM’s “landscape approach” framework for managing public lands

- a. Removed descriptions of BLM’s “Rapid Ecoregional Assessments”, “landscape-based plans”, “National Seed Strategy”, and “Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring or AIM Strategy” (4.1c)
- b. Added mentions of BLM’s Resource Management Plans and changed the list of national priorities (4.1d) to mention “energy independence” and “sovereignty”

Report Table of Contents

Report Section	Title	URL	Changes
Page 1	CLIMATE CHANGE	https://www.blm.gov/about/how-we-manage/climate-change	Removed page
Page 2	ABOUT US	https://www.blm.gov/about	Altered content
Page 3	OUR MISSION	https://www.blm.gov/about/our-mission	Overhauled page
Page 4	HOW WE MANAGE	https://www.blm.gov/about/how-we-manage	Overhauled page

Detailed Description of Changes

Page 1: CLIMATE CHANGE

- URL: <https://www.blm.gov/about/how-we-manage/climate-change>
- Removed page
- Changes occurred between **May 15, 2017 10:53 PM EST** and **July 27, 2017 4:47 PM EST** (*Note for images below: the Internet Archive reports times in GMT*)
 - **Note:** The unusually wide range of times is due to the fact that EDGI was not monitoring these pages. Instead, we accessed past versions through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

Screenshot 1.1

The entire BLM climate change webpage was removed. The following details the content that was removed along with the page:

(1.1a) Text removed along with page:

"Healthy public lands produce vital water supplies and natural resources for energy, food, and shelter. As places of solitude and beauty, they also provide valued recreation opportunities. Climate change is influencing the public lands and resources in many ways.

As average temperatures rise, droughts are increasing, snowpack is declining, and water supplies are diminishing in key areas. Arctic permafrost is thawing. Wildfires have become larger and more frequent. Noxious weeds and invasive species are crowding out native plants and wildlife. In many areas of the West, increasing temperatures, drought, wildfire, insect outbreaks, and invasive species will accelerate transformation of the landscape.

The BLM is adopting a landscape approach to more effectively manage the public lands during times of change. Some examples of this approach include the [Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan in California](#), and the Western Solar Plan. Another component of its landscape approach is the production of a series of Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, or REAs. The REAs examine ecological values, conditions, and trends in large, connected areas that have similar environmental characteristics. These investigations provide improved understanding of the existing condition of these lands, and how conditions may be altered by ongoing environmental changes and land use demands. You can access the studies and the data produced for each of the REAs through the REA section of BLM's [Geospatial Portal](#).

In addition to developing strategies for adapting to climate change, the BLM is working to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The BLM working with local communities, state regulators, industry, and other federal

agencies in building a clean energy future by providing sites for environmentally sound development of renewable energy on public lands. [Renewable energy](#) projects on BLM-managed lands include wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass projects and the siting of transmission facilities needed to deliver this power to the consumer.

Taken together, the BLM's climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts provide a constructive framework for addressing climate change and the environmental challenges of the 21st Century."

(1.1b) Two images removed along with page.

(1.1c) Right sidebar removed along with page:

- RELATED RESOURCES
 - [LANDSCAPE APPROACH PORTAL](#)
 - [RENEWABLE ENERGY](#)
- CLIMATE CHANGE WEBSITES
 - [DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR](#)
 - [U.S. GEOLOGICAL SERVICES](#) (Note: This link leads to a removed page. A live page that appears to have related or similar content can be found at the URL <https://www.usgs.gov/science/mission-areas/climate-and-land-use-change>)
 - [NATIONAL PARK SERVICE](#)
 - [FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE](#)
 - [U.S. FOREST SERVICE](#)
 - [NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE](#)
 - [NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION](#)
 - [U.S. CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM](#)

INTERNET ARCHIVE
Wayback Machine
7 captures
9 Dec 2016 - 28 Nov 2017

https://www.blm.gov/about/how-we-manage/climate-change

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HOW WE MANAGE

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- DATA FOR PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT
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CLIMATE CHANGE

Healthy public lands produce vital water supplies and natural resources for energy, food, and shelter. As places of solitude and beauty, they also provide valued recreation opportunities. Climate change is influencing the public lands and resources in many ways.

As average temperatures rise, droughts are increasing, snowpack is declining, and water supplies are diminishing in key areas. Arctic permafrost is thawing. Wildfires have become larger and more frequent. Noxious weeds and invasive species are crowding out native plants and wildlife. In many areas of the West, increasing temperatures, drought, wildfire, insect outbreaks, and invasive species will accelerate transformation of the landscape.



The BLM is adopting a landscape approach to more effectively manage the public lands for multiple use during times of change. Some examples of this approach include the [Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan in California](#), and the Western Solar Plan. Another component of its landscape approach is the production of a series of Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, or REAs. The REAs examine ecological values, conditions, and trends in large, connected areas that have similar environmental characteristics. These investigations provide improved understanding of the existing condition of these lands, and how conditions may be altered by ongoing environmental changes and land use demands. You can access the studies and the data produced for each of the REAs through the REA section of BLM's [Geospatial Portal](#).



In addition to developing strategies for adapting to climate change, the BLM is working to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The BLM working with local communities, state regulators, industry, and other federal agencies in building a clean energy future by providing sites for environmentally sound development of renewable energy on public lands. [Renewable energy](#) projects on BLM-managed lands include wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass projects and the siting of transmission facilities needed to deliver this power to the consumer.

Taken together, the BLM's climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts provide a constructive framework for addressing climate change and the environmental challenges of the 21st Century.

RELATED RESOURCES

- LANDSCAPE APPROACH PORTAL »
- RENEWABLE ENERGY »

CLIMATE CHANGE WEBSITES

- DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR »
- U.S. GEOLOGICAL SERVICES »
- NATIONAL PARK SERVICE »
- FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE »
- U.S. FOREST SERVICE »
- NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE »
- NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION »
- U.S. CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM »

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: previous [version from May 16, 2017](#) and current [evidence of removed page from July 27, 2017](#).

Page 2: ABOUT US

- URL: <https://www.blm.gov/about>
- Side-by-side View: 2/7/2017 - 11/26/2017
- Changes occurred between **Mar 1, 2017 10:58 PM ET** and **Apr 18, 2017 1:44 PM ET**
(Note for images below: the Internet Archive reports times in GMT)
 - **Note:** The unusually wide range of times is due to the fact that EDGI was not monitoring these pages. Instead, we accessed past versions through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

Screenshot 2.1

(2.1a) Removed links from the "National Priorities" sidebar.

- [CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY](#)
- [GREATER SAGEGROUSE CONSERVATION](#)
- [PLANNING](#)
- [NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS](#)
- [WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT](#)

(2.1b) Added links to the "National Priorities" sidebar. (Note: This was similarly added to the "[Quick Facts](#)" section on the homepage of the BLM website, as well as other BLM pages)

- [MAKING AMERICA SAFE THROUGH ENERGY INDEPENDENCE](#)
- [MAKING AMERICA GREAT THROUGH SHARED CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP](#)
- [MAKING AMERICA SAFE – RESTORING OUR SOVEREIGNTY](#)
- [GETTING AMERICA BACK TO WORK](#)
- [SERVING THE AMERICAN FAMILY](#)

(2.1c) Addition of black boxes to cover photos and blurred names for photo under "BLM ORG CHART".

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ABOUT US
We're a small agency with a big mission.

HISTORY OF BLM
The BLM was established in 1946, but its roots go back to the years after America's independence, when the young nation began acquiring additional lands. At first, these lands were used to encourage homesteading and westward migration. The General Land Office was created in 1812 to support this national goal.
Over time, values and attitudes regarding public lands shifted, and President Harry S. Truman, by means of a government reorganization, merged the GLO and another agency, the U.S. Grazing Service, creating the BLM.
Explore BLM's history through stories, video and more.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES
CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY +
GREATER SAGEGROUSE CONSERVATION +
PLANNING +
NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS +
WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT +
Tweets by BLMNational

BLM ORG CHART
View and download our organization chart.

WHAT WE MANAGE
Learn about the public lands and resources managed by the BLM, from National Conservation Lands to our nation's cultural resources to fish and wildlife habitat.

HOW WE MANAGE
The BLM manages across regions and landscapes, with partners and using sound science. Before you explore our programs, understand the foundation of how we manage.

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NATIONAL PRIORITIES
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GETTING AMERICA BACK TO WORK +
SERVING THE AMERICAN FAMILY +
OUR VALUES
To serve with honesty, integrity, accountability, respect, courage, and commitment to make a difference.
Tweets by BLMNational

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Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: previous [version from February 7, 2017](#) and current [version from November 26, 2017](#)

Page 3: OUR MISSION

- URL: <https://www.blm.gov/about/our-mission>
- Side-by-side View: 1/22/2017 - 11/28/2017
- Changes occurred between **Jan 22, 2017 1:03 PM ET** and **Nov 28, 2017 12:53 PM ET**
(*Note for images below: the Internet Archive reports times in GMT*)
 - **Note:** The unusually wide range of times is due to the fact that EDGI was not monitoring these pages. Instead, we accessed past versions through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

Screenshot 3.1

(3.1a) Added the word "multiple" to the phrase "America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generation" in the "OUR MISSION" section.

(3.1b) Added "OUR VALUES" sidebar with text: "To serve with honesty, integrity, accountability, respect, courage, and commitment to make a difference."

(3.1c) Removed text from the "MANAGING OUR PUBLIC LANDS TOGETHER" section:
"Today's Bureau of Land Management is a small agency with a big and complex job. Congress has directed that we administer the nation's public lands in a way that both protects and conserves natural resources for future generations. It requires us to carefully manage for a variety of uses on these lands. This type of management is called multiple-use and sustained yield.

As part of our work, we determine the best combination of uses for public lands based on good science and input from the public both in local communities and across the country. Working with the public and forging new partnerships helps ensure that the nation's public lands are managed and conserved for the good of the country and future generations.

The wide variety of values and activities we manage for include renewable energy production, mineral extraction, oil and gas leasing and development, timber harvesting, and grazing, as well as wildlife habitat, recreation, wild horses and burros, wilderness, scenic, historic and cultural resources. Our nation's public lands are one of America's greatest assets – both economically and environmentally."

(3.1d) Added new text under the "A MULTIPLE-USE MISSION FOR A GREATER AMERICA" section:

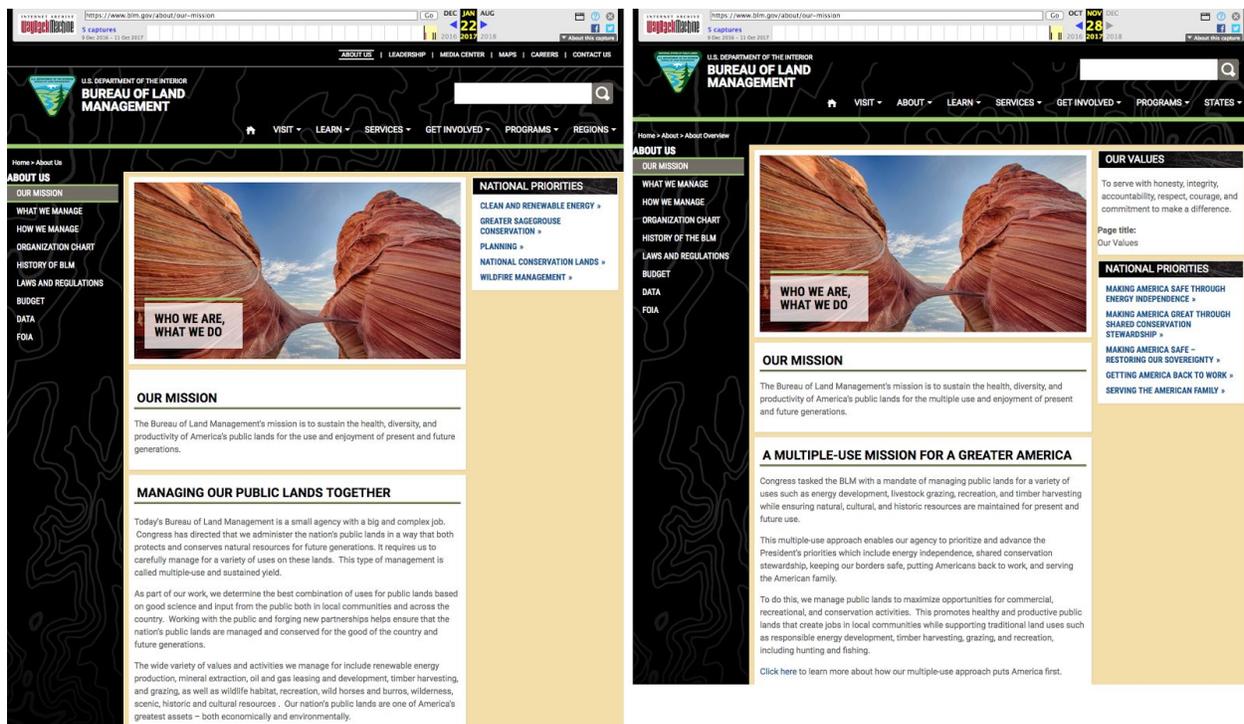
"Congress tasked the BLM with a mandate of managing public lands for a variety of uses such as energy development, livestock grazing, recreation, and timber harvesting while ensuring natural, cultural, and historic resources are maintained for present and future use.

This multiple-use approach enables our agency to prioritize and advance the President’s priorities which include energy independence, shared conservation stewardship, keeping our borders safe, putting Americans back to work, and serving the American family.

To do this, we manage public lands to maximize opportunities for commercial, recreational, and conservation activities. This promotes healthy and productive public lands that create jobs in local communities while supporting traditional land uses such as responsible energy development, timber harvesting, grazing, and recreation, including hunting and fishing.

[Click here](#) to learn more about how our multiple-use approach puts America first.”

- “Click here” link leads to URL <https://www.blm.gov/about/how-we-manage>



Screenshot note: “OUR VALUES” sidebar is erroneously presenting “Page title: Our values” in the screenshot above.

Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine: previous [version from January 22, 2017](#) and current [version from November 28, 2017](#)

Page 4: HOW WE MANAGE

- URL: <https://www.blm.gov/about/how-we-manage>
- Side-by-side View: 1/22/2017 - 11/26/2017
- Changes occurred between **Jan 22, 2017 1:02 PM ET** and **Nov 26, 2017 2:21 PM ET**
(Note for images below: the Internet Archive reports times in GMT)
 - **Note:** The unusually wide range of times is due to the fact that EDGI was not monitoring these pages. Instead, we accessed past versions through the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

Screenshot 4.1

(4.1a) Changed banner photo.

(4.1b) Removed sidebar link "CLIMATE CHANGE" linking to URL <https://www.blm.gov/about/how-we-manage/climate-change> (See Page 1 of this report)

(4.1c) Removed text from the "HOW WE MANAGE" section:

"For the men and women who manage the nation's public lands, a landscape is a large swath of terrain that has similar plants, animals and geography – think Alaska's vast coastal plain, the arid Sonoran desert of Arizona and California, or the colorful red rock country of the Colorado Plateau.

The BLM is beginning to implement a landscape approach to managing the public lands to better respond to large-scale challenges such reducing the risk of wildfire, controlling weeds and insect outbreaks, and providing for energy development on the public lands. Scientists, land managers, and land management partners are working to gather and share the scientific information needed to better understand these wide-ranging impacts and to [develop and implement shared conservation strategies](#).

This landscape approach maintains the central role that BLM's field offices play in managing public lands. They prepare land use plans, authorize land uses, conduct monitoring, and work with partners and stakeholders to [develop and implement local management strategies](#). Partnerships are critical to successful resource stewardship, particularly at the broad landscape level, where the diversity of land ownership (Federal, tribal, state, county, municipal, and private) requires cooperation and coordination to implement effective responses to widespread environmental issues.

How is the BLM implementing a landscape approach?

The BLM's landscape approach consists of multiple interconnected parts that provide a way to integrate science with the agency's management responsibilities for the public lands. It incorporates gathering data to determine the health of the

public lands, using that data in preparing land use plans, designing projects and authorizing uses to implement these plans, and monitoring how well these management actions are working in achieving their goals. All of these efforts are based on strong science and continually improved uses of mapping technology.

To help support this effort, the BLM has:

- **Initiated 15 eco-regional assessments** covering more than 800 million acres to evaluate patterns in the ways that plants and animals rely on these landscapes. These Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, or REAs, provide map-based data to examine resource conditions and trends over broad areas. You can access the studies and the data produced for each of the REAs through the REA section of BLM's Geospatial Portal.
- **Developed landscape-based plans**, such as California's Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan and Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve, to more effectively integrate conservation and development decision-making.
- **Expanded the collection of native seeds** for on-the-ground project work through the National Seed Strategy.
- **Adopted the Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring or AIM Strategy** that allows the BLM to collect data in a structured manner that meets local management needs and addresses broader, landscape-level concerns.

The purpose of these initiatives is to help BLM managers and public land stakeholders understand environmental conditions and trends from a broader perspective, and to use this information to inform, focus, and coordinate management efforts on the ground."

(4.1d) Added text to the "HOW WE MANAGE" section:

"The BLM promotes multiple-use on public lands, consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

This means supporting energy independence through environmentally responsible development; promoting conservation through shared stewardship; making America safe through effective border management; promoting jobs on working landscapes; and serving the American family - which includes being good neighbors and recognizing traditional uses of public lands (i.e., hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities).

To manage public lands, the BLM prepares land-use plans, also known as Resource Management Plans (RMPs). RMPs serve as blueprints for keeping public landscapes healthy and productive for multiple-use. As these RMPs are prepared, the BLM invites and values local voices and diverse views; respects the ties that native and traditional communities have to the land; and develops partnerships that bring

successful resource stewardship. As a result, we have a strong history of ensuring opportunities for commercial, recreational, and conservation activities on public lands.

Our management priorities are consistent with the themes and related goals of the Administration and FLPMA. These priorities are organized along five themes:

- **Making America Safe through Energy Independence** (encouraging environmentally responsible development of energy and minerals on public lands);
- **Making America Great through Shared Conservation Stewardship** (by working with our partners to promote multiple-use on public lands);
- **Making America Safe** – Restoring Our Sovereignty (through effective management of the borderlands and cooperation with the Department of Defense on public land issues);
- **Getting America Back to Work** (by promoting job creation and supporting working landscapes); and
- **Serving the American Family** (by being good neighbors, supporting traditional land uses such as grazing, and providing access to hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities).

America comes first as we manage 245 million acres of land and 700 million acres of mineral estate. These public lands and subsurface acres are integral to the lives and livelihoods of communities and families across the country.”

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A LANDSCAPE APPROACH

HOW WE MANAGE

For the men and women who manage the nation's public lands, a landscape is a large swath of terrain that has similar plants, animals and geography – think Alaska's vast coastal plain, the arid Sonoran desert of Arizona and California, or the colorful red rock country of the Colorado Plateau.

The BLM is beginning to implement a landscape approach to managing the public lands to better respond to large-scale challenges such as reducing the risk of wildfire, controlling weeds and insect outbreaks, and providing for energy development on the public lands. Scientists, land managers, and land management partners are working to gather and share the scientific information needed to better understand these wide-ranging impacts and to develop and implement shared conservation strategies.

This landscape approach maintains the central role that BLM's field offices play in managing public lands. They prepare land use plans, authorize land uses, conduct monitoring, and work with partners and stakeholders to develop and implement local management strategies. Partnerships are critical to successful resource stewardship, particularly at the broad landscape level, where the diversity of land ownership (Federal, tribal, state, county, municipal, and private) requires cooperation and coordination to implement effective responses to widespread environmental issues.

How is the BLM implementing a landscape approach?

The BLM's landscape approach consists of multiple interconnected parts that provide a way to integrate science with the agency's management responsibilities for the public lands. It incorporates gathering data to determine the health of the public lands, using that data in preparing land use plans, designing projects and authorizing uses to implement these plans, and monitoring how well these management actions are working in achieving their goals. All of these efforts are based on strong science and continually improved uses of mapping technology.

To help support this effort, the BLM has:

- Initiated 15 eco-regional assessments covering more than 800 million acres to evaluate patterns in the ways that plants and animals rely on these landscapes. These Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, or REAs, provide map-based data to examine resource conditions and trends over broad areas. You can access the studies and the data produced for each of the REAs through the REA section of BLM's Geospatial Portal.
- Developed landscape-based plans, such as California's Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan and Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve, to more effectively integrate conservation and development decision-making.
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The purpose of these initiatives is to help BLM managers and public land stakeholders understand environmental conditions and trends from a broader perspective, and to use this information to inform, focus, and coordinate management efforts on the ground.

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A LANDSCAPE APPROACH

HOW WE MANAGE

The BLM promotes multiple-use on public lands, consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

This means supporting energy independence through environmentally responsible development; promoting conservation through shared stewardship; making America safe through effective border management; promoting jobs on working landscapes; and serving the American family - which includes being good neighbors and recognizing traditional uses of public lands (i.e., hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities).

To manage public lands, the BLM prepares land-use plans, also known as Resource Management Plans (RMPs). RMPs serve as blueprints for keeping public landscapes healthy and productive for multiple-use. As these RMPs are prepared, the BLM invites and values local voices and diverse views; respects the ties that native and traditional communities have to the land; and develops partnerships that bring successful resource stewardship. As a result, we have a strong history of ensuring opportunities for commercial, recreational, and conservation activities on public lands.

Our management priorities are consistent with the themes and related goals of the Administration and FLPMA. These priorities are organized along five themes:

- Making America Safe through Energy Independence** (encouraging environmentally responsible development of energy and minerals on public lands);
- Making America Great through Shared Conservation Stewardship** (by working with our partners to promote multiple-use on public lands);
- Making America Safe – Restoring Our Sovereignty** (through effective management of the borderlands and cooperation with the Department of Defense on public land issues);
- Getting America Back to Work** (by promoting job creation and supporting working landscapes); and
- Serving the American Family** (by being good neighbors, supporting traditional land uses such as grazing, and providing access to hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities).

America comes first as we manage 245 million acres of land and 700 million acres of mineral estate. These public lands and subsurface acres are integral to the lives and livelihoods of communities and families across the country.

Internet Archive's Wayback Machine: previous [version from January 22, 2017](#) and current [version from November 26, 2017](#)