



The Antiquities Act Centennial 1906-2006

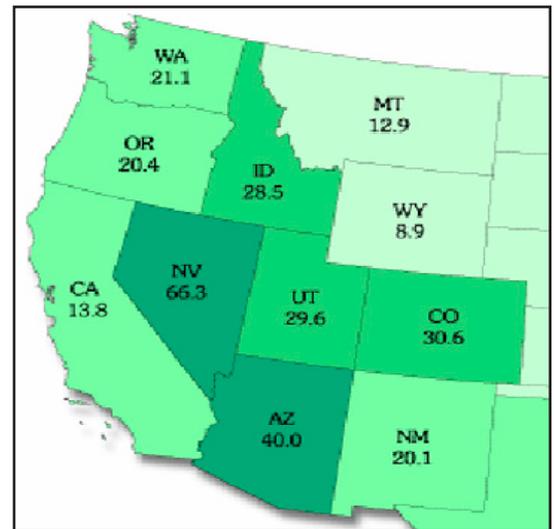


www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures

OVERARCHING STORY IDEAS

Urbanization of the West

The Western United States has seen rapid population growth in the past few decades, but this isn't the first time. There was rapid population growth across the southwest millennium ago. Major 1,000-year-old population centers can be found in southwestern Colorado, southern Arizona, and north central New Mexico, to name a few examples. Some places, like southeastern Utah, were more populous in antiquity than they are now. How did farmers support urban centers, and what choices did they make in the face of resource depletion (soil fertility, woodlands, or water)? By studying the consequences of their choices, what can we apply to the choices facing westerners today? Well-preserved archaeological sites let us have unique insights that are directly relevant to modern life. Contacts: LouAnn Jacobson, E-mail: louann_jacobson@blm.gov, Telephone: (970) 882-5616; Sarah Schlanger, E-mail: sarah_schlanger@nm.blm.gov, Telephone: (505) 438-7454; Gary Stumpf, E-mail: gary_stumpf@az.blm.gov, Telephone: (602) 417-9236; Dr. Timothy Kohler, E-mail: tako@wsu.edu, Telephone: (509) 335-2698; or Winston Hurst, E-mail: winstonhurst@frontiernet.net, Telephone: (435) 678-3305.



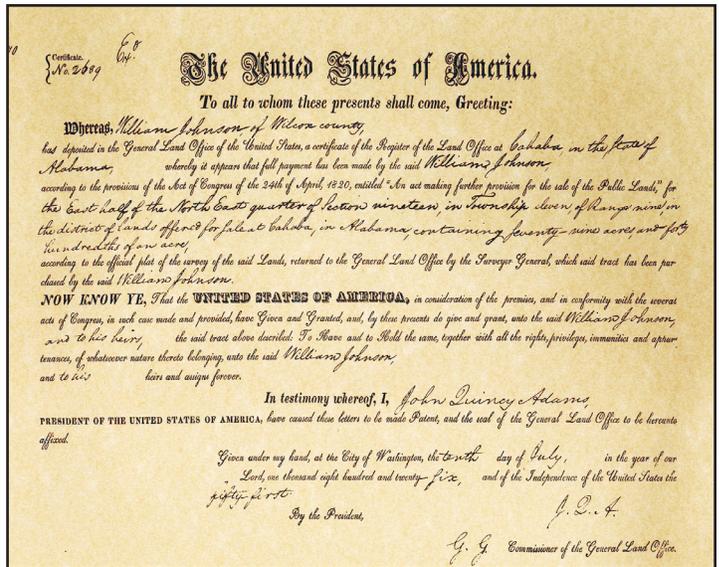
The Accidental Vandal

BLM lands are increasingly-valued as open spaces and for a myriad of recreational pursuits. Their untamed nature fulfills a much-desired niche for exploration, self-discovery, and challenges in the great outdoors. There is a collateral casualty of this growing interest, however: prehistoric and historic sites. Damage occurs mainly in two unintentional ways: incidental to other interests, and by too much love. The first way is when sites are damaged in the course of activities like rock-climbing over rock art panels, ATV jumping over an ancient wall or historic railroad grade, and making a campfire in a cliff-dwelling's alcove. The second, and growing, trend is for back-country activities to include planned visits to "wild" prehistoric and historic sites (ones that are not interpreted or "hardened" for visitor use).

Once a place has been discovered, its location and the directions to get there are widely disseminated via the Internet. Land managers may not even know about the site, much less that its visitation has skyrocketed. So much traffic through fragile 1,000-year-old structures results in walls collapsing because the soil next to them has been eroded by foot paths; pocked plaster murals because backpacks rubbing against them cause abrasion; and structures weakened and roofs

collapsing because people use doorframes as handholds to pull themselves into a room. Surface artifacts like broken pottery pieces that hold important data for deciphering the site's story disappear (Archaeologists refer to this phenomenon as the site being "vacuumed.") and become souvenirs in a hiker's pocket. The cumulative effect of these activities and others is more deterioration of sites in the past 10 years than has happened over the past millennia—from people who count themselves as environmentally aware and responsible. Contacts: Nancy Shearin, BLM's Monticello Field Office, E-mail: nancy_shearin@ut.blm.gov, Telephone: (435) 587-1529; Shelley Smith, BLM State Office, E-mail: Shelley_J_Smith@ut.blm.gov, Telephone: (801) 539-4053.

General Land Office Automation Records: Today, the Bureau of Land Management-Eastern States (BLM-ES) is the largest Public Land title holder in the world. As the successor agency to the original General Land Office (GLO), we maintain more than nine million historic land documents—survey plats and field notes, homestead records, patents, military warrants, and railroad grants, dating back to the 1780s. They were among the very first land records developed from the Land Ordinance of 1785, which authorized the transfer of public lands to private individuals. Even today, these records are extraordinarily valuable documents for natural resource agencies, historians, and genealogists. With an increased demand for these land records, BLM-ES looked for the best ways to make these historic treasures more easily accessible to the public. With key partnerships in place, we joined the e-Government movement in 1989, and began scanning and indexing the GLO records for Public Land States, which include: AL, AR, FL, IL, IN, IA, LA, MI, MN, MO, MS, OH, and WI. Beginning in May 1998, online access to the GLO Web site at www.gloreCORDS.blm.gov was made available for about 1.9 million western land records and about 2 million eastern land records issued between 1820 and 1936. Today, there are over 4.2 million records available to the public, and over 3,204,642 land patent records have been scanned, indexed, imaged and posted to the GLO Web site since the project began in 1989. Title companies, historians, genealogists, and other interested people are able to view these fascinating and valuable records online at the Web site. This Web site provides the public with a wealth of historical data and literally tells the story of the settlement of the West. For more information, contact Patricia Tyler, Branch Chief, GLO Records Automation, E-mail: pat_tyler@es.blm.gov, Telephone: (703) 440-1786, Pat_Tyler@es.blm.gov.



How Can I Help Protect Cultural Resources?

A small but growing cadre of volunteers called “Site Stewards” is working behind the scenes to help BLM archaeologists document and protect cultural resources on the public lands. Site Stewards keep an eye on archaeological sites threatened by vandalism or natural deterioration. They monitor conditions of the sites and report these to professional archaeologists, using observations, field notes, drawings, and/or photography to record changes over time. Site Stewards also assist in surveying, mapping, and collecting oral histories. Many Site Stewards provide educational outreach programs that increase awareness of the importance and lasting value of cultural resources, and encourage understanding and respect for cultural diversity. Contact: Adrienne Babbitt; E-mail: adrienne_babbitt@blm.gov, Telephone: (801) 539-4601.

