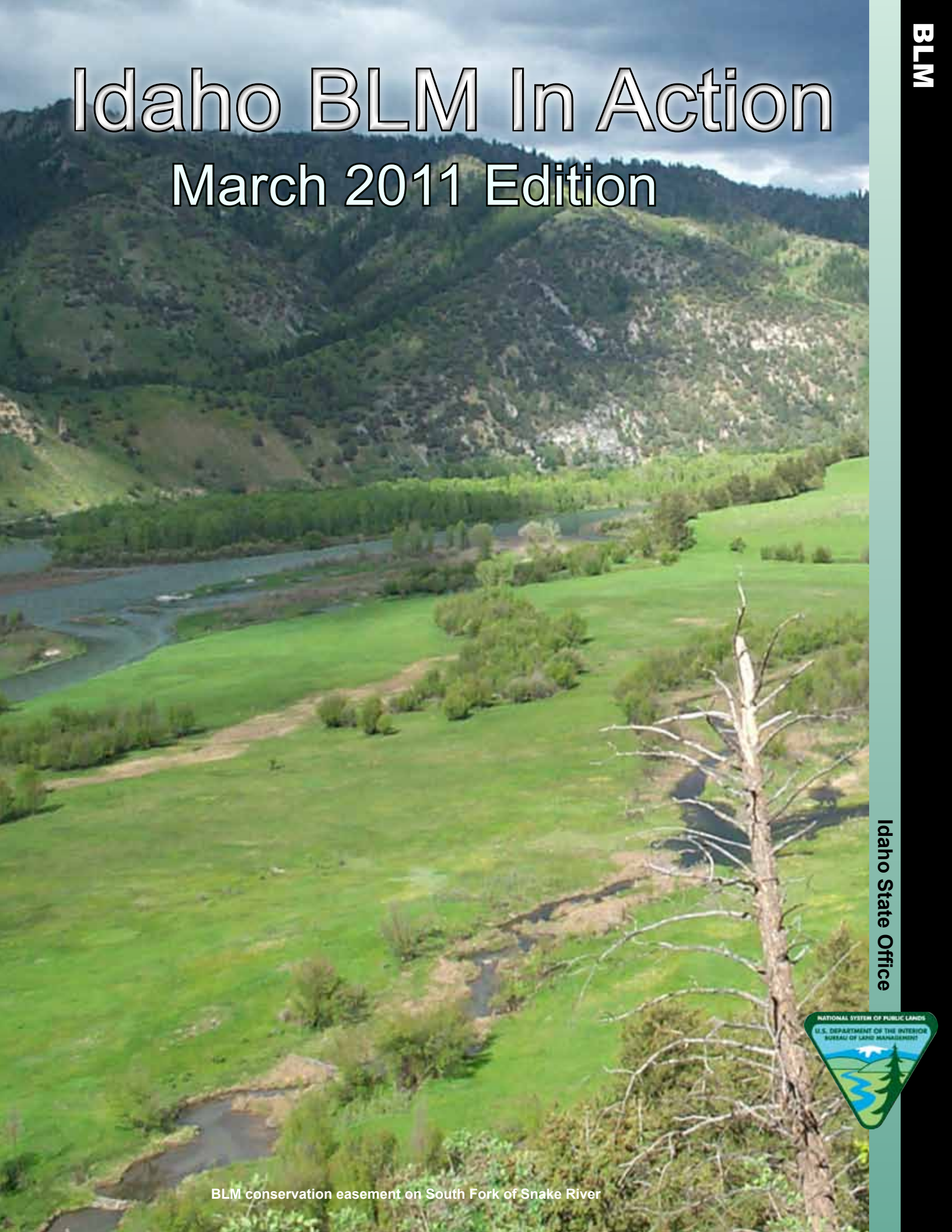


# Idaho BLM In Action

## March 2011 Edition



Idaho State Office



BLM conservation easement on South Fork of Snake River

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## In the Field with BLM Idaho Director Steve Ellis....

### Idaho BLM State Director Visits Coeur d'Alene District for Eagle Watch Week

The BLM Coeur d'Alene District hosted a visit from the Idaho State Director Steve Ellis and Deputy State Director for Communications Cheryle Zwang.

At a District All Employee meeting, Ellis introduced himself, provided his background information and discussed employee traits that are important to him. Ellis spoke of upcoming challenges and opportunities and asked employees for ideas on several topics. A question and answer session allowed employees to interact with Ellis and Zwang on issues pertinent to the District.

On a blustery Tuesday morning, Ellis and Zwang boarded a cruise boat for a bald eagle viewing trip on Lake Coeur d'Alene. They were joined by Coeur d'Alene District Manager Gary Cooper, Idaho Panhandle Forest Supervisor Ranotta McNair and Mitch Silvers, State Director for Senator Mike Crapo, along with 60 fifth-grade students.

During the educational presentation, Ellis displayed a taxidermied bald eagle to the students, while Zwang showed them eagle talons and a skull to illustrate the large size of each.

Once at the viewing area, upwards of 100 eagles were seen soaring in the air currents, perched in the trees or swooping down to fetch their next meal, spawned-out kokanee salmon.

During the 2010 winter season, a record 254 eagles arrived at Lake

Coeur d'Alene.

The eagle cruise was followed by a field trip to local BLM recreation sites, including the Blue Creek Bay site that was recently developed using ARRA funding.

The BLM Coeur d'Alene employees appreciated the opportunity to spend time with both Ellis and Zwang and look forward to a return visit when the weather is better.



During the 2010 winter season, a record 254 eagles arrived at Lake Coeur d'Alene.



## In the Field with BLM....

### **BLM Cadastral Surveyors Monument the Wilderness Boundary of Scenic and Historic Big Jacks/Little Jacks Creek**

*By: Daniel S. Young, Cadastral Surveyor for the BLM Boise District Office*

During the spring and summer of 2010, Boise District BLM cadastral survey crews performed a land survey to establish the legal boundaries of Big Jacks Creek and Little Jacks Creek Wilderness areas. These lands, located in southwest Idaho, were recently designated as Wilderness by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 and encompass approximately 104,000 acres of remote canyons, plateaus and rivers. Surveyors were tasked with finding and setting monuments that mark the location of the Wilderness boundary as outlined by Congress. This effort required hiking through the rugged desert with high accuracy GPS surveying equipment to locate the positions of stone and iron post monuments set by government surveyors in the early 1900s. These original monuments define section lines which control the location of new monuments set along the Wilderness boundary.

BLM cadastral surveyor Dan Young led the retracement of nearly 70 miles of section lines and placement of over 120 new Wilderness boundary monuments. He was proud to be part of this project. "It's great to be a part of the process to forever protect the amazing resources found in these areas. During the course of this survey, I have witnessed incredible vistas, bighorn sheep,

raptors, and native redband trout, along with amazing historic features. These are among the many resources worth preserving."

Crew members faced many challenges while surveying this remote and wild landscape including rattlesnakes, scorpions, primitive roads, creek crossings, canyon cliffs, extreme heat, summer thunderstorms, limited communication, and long hikes through steep terrain.

In spite of these challenges, Young thought the project was valuable. "While these factors made the discovery of original survey evidence and setting of final boundary markers more challenging, the experiences while travelling through this incredible Owyhee desert made it worthwhile."

The crew's efforts to identify the wilderness boundary will improve BLM's ability to effectively implement a management plan that allows multiple uses, while protecting the Wilderness area from unauthorized activities.

### **Bruneau Wilderness Website**



**Dan Young in the field**

## In the Field with BLM....

### **BLM Completes Fuels Project with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in Effort to Reduce Future Wildfires**

In March 2011, the BLM Twin Falls District fuels team completed the Connor-Gap Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) project, west of Malta, Idaho. This 210-acre juniper thinning and fuel break is the first to be completed under a long-term stewardship agreement with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF).

The RMEF initially approached the BLM in fall 2009 about a partnership opportunity that would benefit both groups and accomplish wildlife habitat and fuels reduction treatments at a landscape level. The stewardship agreement was in place by the summer of 2010, and work began on the Connor-Gap WUI project in the fall of 2010.

BLM crews aerially seeded the area with perennial grasses and sagebrush and then performed a mastication treatment. A mastication treatment involves using large equipment to simultaneously remove trees and grind them into mulch that remains on the ground. This process saves the BLM the expense of physically removing these large trees. This treatment will provide a reduced fire hazard and create a perennial plant community more resilient to future wildfires.

Twin Falls District BLM forester Kasey Prestwich has appreciated the value added by partnering with the RMEF. "The Connor-Gap project was a great project to get the ball rolling in our collaborative efforts with the Rocky Mountain

Mastication Process



Elk Foundation. Now the upcoming Burley Landscape project provides an opportunity to accomplish more great work under our agreement in future years."

This Burley Landscape Sage-Grouse Habitat Restoration project aims to reduce the amount of juniper encroachment into important sagebrush steppe communities.

The Twin Falls District BLM fuels team will continue coordinating with the RMEF to identify other specific work to be completed in 2012. The work identified would meet one or more of the following objectives: reduce conifer encroachment; improve the ecological conditions and resiliency of plant communities; protect the loss of habitats from wildfire; increase capacity to market forest products; and build a collaborative network of private and public partnerships so resources can be managed across boundaries.

# Volunteer: Your National Landscape Conservation System

*The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) was established in 2000 to recognize and protect some of the West's most spectacular landscapes. Officially designated National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, National Historic or Scenic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness areas, and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) together form landscapes of the American spirit. The Morley Nelson Birds of Prey National Conservation Area is one such recognized unit of the NLCS.*

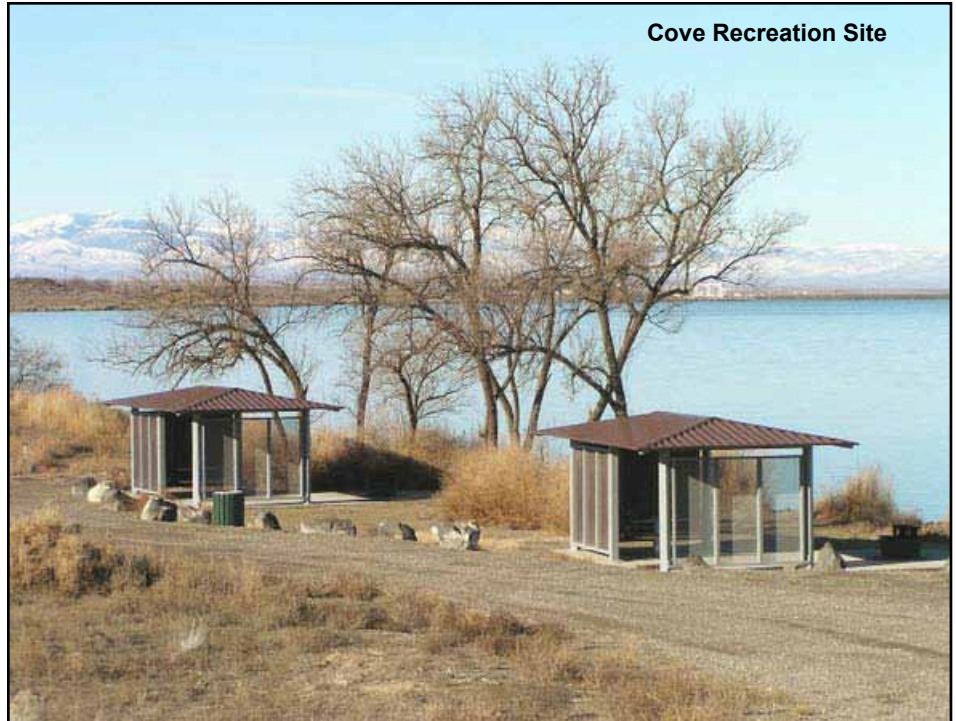
NLCS Website | Morley Nelson Website

## **Volunteers and BLM Employees Lend a Hand at Morley Nelson Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) Site**

The fog had lifted at Cove Recreation Site on CJ Strike Reservoir, leaving stands of Indian rice grass and needlegrass coated with frost. In spite of the cold, smiles and youthful energy were abundant. On this morning, twelve members of the Caldwell boy scouts troop and six high school students from Mountain Home, joined the BLM staff from the Morley Nelson Birds of Prey NCA to embark on a day of habitat improvement.

This unique recreation site is home to mule deer and waterfowl and this project included restoration of roads and protection of cottonwood and elm trees.

The boy scout troop, led by BLM outdoor recreation planner Jared Fluckiger and BLM restoration ecologist Anne Halford, prepared the seedbed of a disturbed area, while other crew members spread seeds on the prepared sites. The seeds were a mixture of Great Basin species including Wyoming big sagebrush, Indian



rice grass, squirrel tail, Snake River wheatgrass and Sandberg's bluegrass.

Along the reservoir BLM education specialist Barb Forderhase, wildlife biologist Jill Holderman, and forester Carey Crist applied wire mesh to protect shade and habitat trees from beaver impacts and pruned trees to increase vigor next spring.

Fluckiger enjoyed his experience on this important project. "While working, we saw deer all around and an immature bald eagle soaring above us. We hope that projects like this will become more frequent as we target and capture sites where stands of native species still thrive and continue to expand their growth."

Thanks to help from members of the public and a BLM camp host, weed removal has helped grasses such as needlegrass and Indian ricegrass to thrive.

Fluckiger was appreciative of the hard work completed by the volunteers. "BLM would like to thank all of the boy scouts and Mountain Home students that helped make this project such a success. The work was hard, but a lot of laughter was heard and the day went very smoothly. The volunteers were able to learn about the importance of habitat restoration and identify key species in the area, while enjoying a sunny day with friends," Fluckiger said.



# Learn: Your National Landscape Conservation System

## BLM and Partners Host Successful *WILD About Raptors* Teacher Workshop

In March, 26 local teachers participated in the 8th year of the *WILD About Raptors* workshop, facilitated by The Peregrine Fund (World Center for Birds of Prey), Idaho Fish & Game, and the BLM Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA).

Teachers learned about the adaptations of raptors and activities that can be used while teaching students about these birds. The teachers also participated in a tour of the Birds of Prey NCA in search of raptors. The tour turned into a fantastic birding day. They viewed a great horned owl, red-tailed hawks, northern harriers, burrowing owls, a rough-legged hawk, bald eagles, prairie falcons, ferruginous hawks, and a golden eagle sitting on its nest.

“The teachers enjoyed the workshop, particularly the opportunity to see live raptors up-close and in the wild,” said BLM education specialist Barbara Forderhase.

The participating teachers had a great experience at the workshop. “Working with the birds not only helped illustrate some of the adaptations of different raptor species, it also helped me to understand the excitement that a student would feel in this situation. It clearly enunciated the power of getting actual wildlife into the classroom as a teaching tool. It was an eye-opening opportunity,” one teacher responded.

Another teacher said, “Visiting the Birds of Prey area made me realize the importance of protecting this special habitat for our raptor friends.....Our natural laboratory to observe and learn couldn’t have been any better.”

Not all teachers had visited this area in the past. One first-time visitor to the NCA said, “After living in Idaho for 27 years, I can’t believe that I have never been to the Snake River Birds of Prey area, and cannot wait to share it with visitors.”



“Visiting the Birds of Prey area made me realize the importance of protecting this special habitat for our raptor friends.... Our natural laboratory to observe and learn couldn’t have been any better.”



“After living in Idaho for 27 years, I can’t believe that I have never been to the Snake River Birds of Prey area, and cannot wait to share it with visitors.”

# Volunteering to Gather and Plant Sagebrush

## Volunteers Plant 550 Sagebrush in Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area

On March 19, the Owyhee Mountains were still coated in snow from early spring storms providing a scenic backdrop to Dedication Point in Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA). On that day, fifteen volunteers, ranging in age from 15 to 85, from Moscow, Boise and the Kuna High School Science Club, planted 550 bare-root Wyoming big sagebrush plants.

The plantings will augment fire rehabilitation efforts from 1999 by establishing native Wyoming big sagebrush islands in this well-visited portion of the NCA.

The sagebrush seedlings were grown at Lucky Peak Nursery from seed collected by Snake River Raptor Volunteers in 2009.

BLM restoration ecologist Anne Halford enjoyed working on this project. "Being able to work with

enthusiastic and dedicated people is what makes my day. Our NCA staff greatly relies on volunteers to help accomplish the work we need to do on public lands and it's especially exciting to see youth involved in these projects."

BLM crews will plant larger Wyoming big sagebrush and forbs again at Dedication Point on September 24 for National Public Lands Day. This project is part of a recently funded National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant to increase pollinator-specific plant species in the NCA.



## Students from Shoshone-Paiute Tribe in Partnership with BLM Contribute Sagebrush Seedlings to IDF&G

When the Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDF&G) came up nearly 20,000 sagebrush seedlings short for their volunteer planting projects around the Magic Valley this spring, they called the BLM Twin Falls District.

As a result, BLM looked to its partnership project with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe. Since the partnership began, agriculture program students from Owyhee High School on the Duck Valley reservation have worked to grow sagebrush seedlings. The students grow the seedlings in a BLM-supplied greenhouse for use in BLM's rehabilitation projects.

Thanks to the crew's diligent efforts, the Twin Falls District was able to provide the necessary amount of seedlings to IDF&G. This will allow the scheduled planting projects to continue as planned. The seedlings will be planted on BLM lands throughout April 2011.



## Conservation of Critical Wildlife Habitat

### **BLM Purchases New Conservation Easement on North Fork of the Teton River**

In February 2011 with assistance of the Teton Regional Land Trust, the BLM Idaho Falls District purchased a conservation easement on the approximately 275-acre Harris property.

The property is located on the North Fork of the Teton River near its confluence with the Henrys Fork Snake River in Madison County, Idaho. This

property is a privately owned working ranch within the Snake River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Land and Water Conservation Fund appropriations to the Upper Snake/South Fork Snake River ACEC/SRMA project were used to purchase the conservation easement.

The conservation easement protects crucial wildlife habitat and substantial wetlands and river frontage. It also protects important year-round habitat

for deer, moose, great blue herons; a variety of waterfowl; sandhill cranes; and sensitive species such as trumpeter swans, bald eagles and Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

The Harris family had been searching for options to keep their wildlife-rich property and their traditional agricultural practices in place when they offered a conservation easement to the Teton Regional Land Trust and BLM.



# Rebuilding Our Past: Gilmore Mining District

## BLM Partners with National Park Service and the Idaho State Preservation Office to Preserve Remnants of Historic Gilmore Mining Community

While driving south on Highway 93 from Salmon, Idaho visitors are always greeted with beautiful scenery. Sagebrush, green valleys and snow-covered mountains expand across the horizon, without buildings, billboards or towers impeding the view. While it is not uncommon to pass a herd of cows, deer and or even foxes along the road, the presence of people is strangely absent. But, this was not always the case.

If you had traveled the same route over one hundred years ago, you would have discovered a bustling town just past Gilmore summit. Located 65 miles south of Salmon, Idaho, inconspicuously nestled against the mountainside, is the small town site of the once booming mining town of Gilmore. Gilmore was home to a prosperous community that supported a peak population of over 600 people, along with

numerous shops and businesses. Like many other mining communities, the boom didn't last long and by 1929, little remained of the town itself except for memories and empty buildings. But, the area's impact on southern Idaho and the rich history it produced hasn't been lost.

Recently, BLM partnered with historic preservationists from the National Park Service and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office to stabilize and preserve the area to ensure that future generations will always be able to learn about this interesting piece of Idaho's history.

In 1882, discovery of lead and silver lode deposits (along with trace amounts of gold) at the head of Liberty Gulch lead to the establishment of a mining camp named Gilmore. By the 1920s, capital investment and technological advances facilitated considerable development in the Spring Mountain District. Gilmore became the largest lead-silver camp outside of the mines at Coeur d'Alene in northern Idaho, and at one point produced the richest silver ore in the United States.

Gilmore's mining development

totaled more than 20,000 feet of tunnels and shafts. In 1909-1910, investors met the need for a more economical method to transport ore with the construction of the Gilmore and Pittsburgh Railroad. This railroad carried the ore from Gilmore across the Continental Divide to Armstead, Montana.

Gilmore was not just another mining town. During its hey-day from about 1910 through the 1920s, the town supported a mercantile, hotels, a bank, two restaurants, livery barn, building contractor, post office, butcher shop/meat market, candy shop, barber shop and "lady" barber, the Gilmore Commercial Club, numerous fine homes, a city park, and a large school building. In 1928, 71 students were enrolled in the local school.

In 1929, Gilmore's prosperity ended when the mining operations' main power plant exploded and the associated problems became insurmountable. With the onset of the Great Depression, engineering challenges, and the increasing cost of reaching the remaining ore, full-scale mining could not be resumed, and most of the population moved out within months of the explosion. Gilmore was largely a ghost town by the end of the 1930s; however minor extraction activities by small parties persisted into the early 1940s. In the end, Gilmore mines had produced nearly \$486 million dollars (present day value) worth of silver and trace gold.

The contributions of hard-working individuals helped to make this mine economically feasible. During the early 1900s, a group of these workers settled near the



## Rebuilding Our Past: Gilmore Mining District

main town site to build platform tents, small framed shacks, and a few log cabins. This neighborhood, including miners and their families often “down on their luck,” comprised the community of “Tent Town” or “Ragtown.” The name Ragtown is thought to have come about as a condescending description of the manner in which some of the hastily constructed residences were insulated, using tightly rolled rags and cloth stuffed into wall cracks.

These small, simple frame buildings and log homes illustrate frugality and ingenuity in construction and design in the face of very limited access to materials and money for construction. Upon closer inspection, much of the building materials used for additions and patching were scavenged. Holes and cracks were patched against harsh winters with flattened tinned can metal, cardboard, and rolled lengths of rags and cloth.

Over the years of its existence, the population of Ragtown fluctuated with the rise and fall of the prosperity of adjacent Gilmore. By the 1940s, the last Ragtown occupants had departed the area, long after the boom town of Gilmore had faded.

Though the history of Gilmore and the Spring Mountain Mining District is fairly well documented, Ragtown’s story remains elusive. This semi-autonomous community was not located on deeded property, nor was it ever formally annexed by neighboring Gilmore. Remnants from the majority of this community are now located on privately owned land and about half are located on

public land.

Today, the BLM Salmon Field Office manages approximately eight acres of the Ragtown community. This historic property consists of eight standing or partially fallen cabins and frame constructions, along with at least three more completely collapsed framed structures. The property also reveals a number of small shallow foundations or tent platform depressions, and several large, mixed concentrations of metal, glass, and ceramic artifacts dating from the beginning of the twentieth century. These remains have survived many decades of harsh alpine mountain environment and episodes of on-going vandalism.

In 2004, Ragtown was recorded by archaeologists and BLM determined that it was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

In March 2006, historic architect Hank Florence and preservationist Craig Holmquist

from the National Park Service, along with Suzy Pengilly Neitzel of the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, joined with staff from the BLM Salmon Field Office to visit and perform a condition assessment for stabilization needs at Ragtown.

Through an interagency agreement with the BLM, historic preservationists from the National Park Service returned in August of 2010 to conduct emergency stabilization on the eight remaining in-tact historic log and framed structures. The preservation work accomplished from August 4-11 was designed to be a first-phase stabilization effort.

This stabilization project has effectively halted instability and natural degradation until additional skilled preservation work can be implemented. In the future, BLM would like to provide public interpretation signage on-site to teach more individuals about this historical treasure.

Idaho Historical Society Website



## Partnership with BLM

### Idaho BLM Partner Wins National Award

On March 16, 2011, BLM Deputy Director Marcilynn Burke and USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Harris Sherman presented the BLM/USFS Natural Resource Conservation Award to Executive Director for Salmon Valley Stewardship Gina Knudson. The award was presented at the 76th annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Kansas City.

This BLM/USFS Natural Resource Conservation Award is a three-part award consisting of a conservation project, a conservation partner, and the Linda Siebert Career Achievement Award. Salmon Valley Stewardship won the Conservation Partner Award.

This annual award recognizes an organization/individual

representing a conservation organization demonstrating sustained dedication, leadership, and commitment to work collaboratively to build partnerships. These partnerships promote sound management practices and the conservation of wildlife, fisheries, and/or native plant resources that depend on public lands. Nominees must have a long standing partnership (4 years or more) with the BLM/FS; a track record of cooperative conservation successes; unique or innovative approaches, and work to promote the public's understanding of cooperative conservation.

Salmon Valley Stewardship is a non-profit organization based in Salmon, Idaho that works to promote a sustainable economy and a healthy environment in the Salmon River region. Salmon Valley Stewardship was recognized for its efforts in assisting the Salmon/Challis

National Forest with the Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group, Salmon/Challis Forest Hughes Creek Project, the BLM Salmon Field Office Travel Management Plan, and the interagency Aspen Working Group.

Salmon Field Office Manager Steve Hartmann nominated Salmon Valley Stewardship for the award. "The BLM is very excited that Salmon Valley Stewardship was selected for this national award in recognition of their ongoing success in facilitating collaborative efforts," Hartmann said. "From my perspective, an important role of Salmon Valley Stewardship has been to serve as a catalyst to engage the local community, agencies, and organizations in a constructive dialogue. The goal is to problem solve issues with the result of improving a sustainable resource-based local economy, while building relationships among diverse interests."



Left to Right: Marcilynn Burke, Gina Knudson, Harris Sherman

"...an important role of Salmon Valley Stewardship has been to serve as a catalyst to engage the local community, agencies, and organizations in a constructive dialogue."

## Partnership with BLM

### Idaho Falls District Conservation Partnership Receives Public Land Foundation Award

The Upper Snake River Land Conservation Partnership received the Public Lands Foundation's (PLF) Landscape Stewardship Award and Citation.

Mark Elsbree, Vice President and Northwest Director of The Conservation Fund; Chet Work, Executive Director, and Babette Thorpe, Land Protection Director, for the Teton Regional Land Trust; and Laura Hubbard, State Director of the Idaho Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, were each presented a plaque and citation by Deane Zeller, PLF Idaho State Representative.

Idaho BLM State Director Steve Ellis and National LWCF/FLTFA Coordinator David Beaver took part in the presentation of the

The Foundation honors private citizens and organizations that work to advance and sustain the community-based stewardship on landscapes that include public lands administered by the BLM.

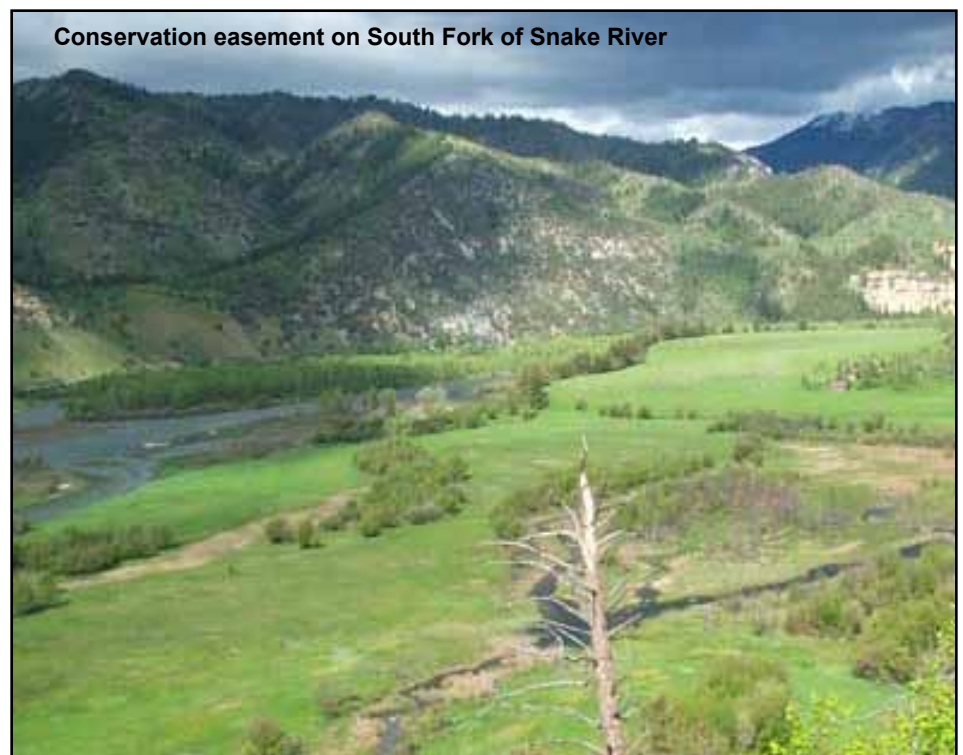
awards.

The Foundation grants this recognition to honor private citizens and organizations that work to advance and sustain community-based stewardship on landscapes that include, in whole or in part, public lands administered by the BLM.

Through this non-profit partnership, approximately 91 privately owned properties, many of them working farms and ranches, have been protected through purchase of 10,300 acres of fee estate and 14,500 acres of conservation easement.



(Left to Right) Deane Zeller, Idaho State Representative, Public Lands Foundation - Mark Elsbree, Vice President, Northwest Director, The Conservation Fund - Laura Hubbard, Idaho State Director, The Nature Conservancy - Babette Thorpe, Land Protection Director, Teton Regional Land Trust - Chet Work, Executive Director, Teton Regional Land Trust.



## BLM Takes it Outside

### BLM Partners with Local Schools to Teach Students about Owyhee Ecosystem

On March 23, over one-hundred third grade students and teachers from Nampa's Willow Creek Elementary School participated in a BLM-hosted environmental education field trip to Jump Creek recreation site. This site is located outside of Marsing, Idaho.

This Owyhee Ecosystem Environmental Education Outreach Program was initiated in spring 2011 in coordination with local school teachers and the BLM Owyhee Field Office. The program offers primary and secondary school students (grades 3-12) an opportunity to learn about the Owyhee Ecosystem through hands-on activities.

Through this program, BLM hopes to instill a sense of appreciation for the Owyhee Ecosystem, the area's natural resources, and public lands management in the area's youth. Field activities are integrated into the school science program, and students explore the use of the scientific method by learning about the area's plants and animals and development of individual or class projects. In the field, students learn standardized and accepted protocols and methods for collecting and recording natural resource data to test hypotheses formulated in class.

During the field day, students collected data on vegetation and conducted observations of raptors while eating lunch at the Jump Creek Falls. The data from this early spring visit will be compared with data collected during a future



visit planned for mid-May 2011. Findings will be compiled for a final report.

In the future, BLM would like to expand the program to more schools and set up other field sites that exemplify the full and unique diversity of the Owyhee region.



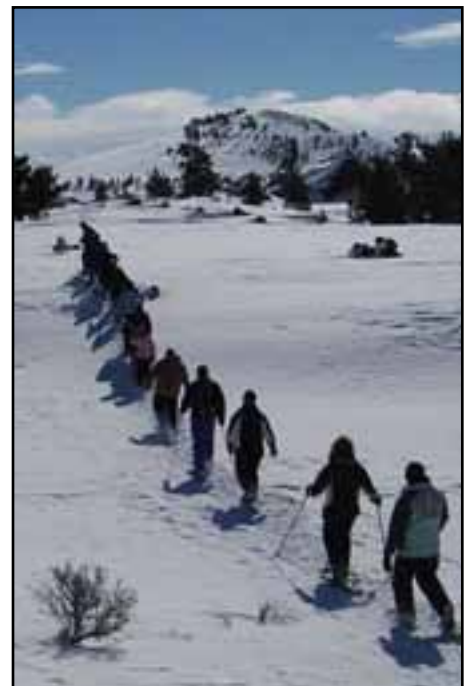
BLM hopes to instill a sense of appreciation for the Owyhee Ecosystem, the area's natural resources, and public land management in the area's youth."

### Shoshone BLM Staff Participate in Snow School at Craters of the Moon National Monument

Idaho BLM Shoshone FO Park Rangers Nathan Jayo and Casey Bryant assisted the National Park Service with a 1.25 mile snowshoe walk in February at the Craters of the Moon National Monument. They joined 40 fifth-graders from Shoshone Elementary School to learn about wintertime ecology in the Monument.

Students learned how some animals hibernate while others adapt, or even migrate, to cope with the cold weather. While on the walk the students identified animal tracks in the snow and observed animals within the park.

Jayo said, "This is a great opportunity for these kids to get outside and learn about the animals that live here. They had a great time running in the snowshoes too. For some, it was their first time snowshoeing."



## BLM Takes it Outside

### BLM Partners to Develop Trail System Promoting Local Economy, Resident Well-being

A unique system of mountain bike trails has expanded recreational opportunities for residents of Hailey, Idaho, and adds another dimension to the already dynamic quality of life in the Wood River Valley.

Valley residents prize the many recreational opportunities found in their backyards, making frequent use of trails on the Sawtooth National Forest to hike, bike, and ride motorcycles and horses. But in recent years Blaine County officials and recreation planners in the Bureau of Land Management Shoshone Field Office began to hear more and more requests to add mountain-biking trails at lower elevations in the southern part of the county that year-round residents could enjoy. These include trails residents could use earlier in the spring, later in the fall and as an alternative to existing trails during the busy summer tourist season.

The two agencies partnered with local residents, trail-user-groups and local merchants to develop the Croy Creek Trail System. These trails avoid cutting across private land or encroaching on environmentally sensitive areas while being easily accessible from town and remaining a rewarding ride for frequent users.

“This type of trail experience is unique to the Wood River Valley,” said BLM Shoshone Field Office outdoor recreation planner John Kurtz.

“Different segments offer varying features that are

enjoyable for a variety of riders. Users can choose to spend two or three hours on a challenging ride or just a quick 45-minute lunch-hour break on these trails.”

In 2010 BLM used funds allocated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to build a mile-long trail segment in the Wilson Creek drainage behind the Rotarun ski hill, west of town. The new segment is what mountain bikers call a flow trail, with rolling jumps and tabletops to challenge and reward riders of various ages and experience levels.

The trail system fits in with the overall vision and plan for the city of Hailey and the greater Valley area.

“Blaine County residents are active people, and that is reflected in the whole society in the area,” said Blaine County Commissioner Tom Bowman. “Having these trails is not only good economically for the city of Hailey, but good for the residents socially. When people have the chance to get out and recreate, they feel happier and have better quality of life.”



Trails close to home also seem to fit the times, Bowman said. “We’re seeing that more people are recreating in ways that don’t cost as much money – for instance, hiking and using bicycles that they already have,” he said. “This trail system, which is based on human-powered activities, really came at a great time for our community.”

Collaboration was integral to the design and completion of this trail. Given current budget constraints, Bowman said the county had no money available to make the trail system a reality. “There would be no way that the county could do this on its own,” he said. “Cooperation between the BLM and Blaine County, as well as the Forest Service, allows us to implement visions that we would not have otherwise.” The contract to build the Rotarun segment was awarded by BLM-Idaho to a local contractor based in nearby Shoshone.

From the BLM’s perspective, community involvement during the planning stages of trails projects has other lasting benefits. “When users feel that government agencies are addressing their concerns and suggestions, we notice the reduction of unauthorized trails, which in turn, helps minimize user conflicts and protect other important resources like critical riparian habitat,” Kurtz said.

Kurtz said BLM plans to begin building the final section of the Croy Creek trail system in summer or fall of 2011.

[Video 1](#) | [Video 2](#) | [Trail Website](#)

## BLM In Your Community

### Boise District BLM Participates in 12th Annual Bald Eagle Days Celebration

In late January 2011, BLM participated in the 12th annual Bald Eagle Days. Bald Eagle Days is a free family-oriented event that includes a variety of activities designed to allow participants to get “up close and personal” with America’s national symbol.

Students and other members of the community participated in wildlife viewing along the Boise River with Audubon Society volunteers, listened to informative presentations with bald eagles and other live birds of prey, participated in hands-on educational activities, and visited informative environmental booths from local organizations. BLM recreation planner Larry Ridenhour presented his owls to groups of excited students and shared his expertise about owls in the Treasure Valley.

This event was hosted near the Barber Pool Conservation Area. This 700-acre natural area located on the Boise River is one of the last remaining in-tact black



cottonwood stands within the rapidly-urbanizing Boise area. Barber Pool hosts some 200 species of birds, and over 60 species of reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Barber Pool is the perfect place to host Bald Eagle Days each year, as it supports a communal bald eagle roost and nesting site.

Event coordinator and watchable wildlife program lead for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Deniz Aygen enjoyed her involvement with this event because “it provides an opportunity for nature-lovers to experience the beauty of the Boise River during the winter.”

### 20th Annual Ice Fishing Derby Draws over 100 Kids of All Ages

The 20th Annual Kids’ Ice Fishing Derby was held at Hyde Creek Pond, near Salmon, Idaho. The fishing derby was a success, in large part due to great weather and hungry fish that kept the attention of parents and kids throughout the morning. An estimated 200 rainbow trout were caught during the four-hour derby. About 107 kids, ranging in age from 1 to 16 years old, registered for the event. The young anglers came from places throughout Lemhi County and as far away as the Pahasimeroi Valley, Challis and Idaho Falls.

BLM Salmon Field Office fisheries biologist Jude Trapani has worked at the event for the past several years. “The Salmon Ice Fishing Derby has always been a local community favorite for kids of the local area for years. After many years of helping out and seeing the different kids fishing each year and growing up, I got to take my 4-year old daughter this year for the first time. She had a great time and did not want to go home. We caught six fish and had some for supper. She still talks about it and asks when the next time we are going up to the “Fishing Rink.”

Larry Ridenhour at Bald Eagle Days



## Introducing the “Idaho BLM Youth News Team”

### Youth News Team Discovers and Shares the Stories Happening in the BLM

The BLM Youth News Team is a new partnership between BLM and Capital High School. The Youth News Team includes a group of aspiring photography and journalism students.

The students work as volunteers and earn class credit, photographing and reporting on stories important to the management of the nation’s public land.

Through their work, they educate other youth and themselves on public land opportunities and challenges, as well as numerous associated public policy issues; public policy that they will one day help decide as adults.

While exploring the natural world around them, they will also learn about federal career opportunities, how federal bureaucracies work, how public policy is formed, and what resources, services and values public lands provide.

For their class credit, the students learn about journalistic reporting, photography, ethics, and business practices as they create their own news stories. Specific resource topics to be covered by the students over the 2010-2011 school year include: Wind energy; Payette River recreation; BLM and 4-H partnership to train wild horse weanlings; Wild horse adoption and management; Wildland fire management (function of the National Interagency Fire Center, Prescribed fire, Smokejumpers, Predictive



Student photographs a BLM prescribed burn on public lands

Services); and the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area.

Check out future editions of the BLM In Action Newsletter and the BLM Volunteers Website to catch up on the crew’s latest stories and check out the photo galleries.



Student photographs the Payette River

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## Honored BLM Employees

### Boise District Employee Honored with Meritorious Service Medal

In February, retired Master Sergeant John M. Banks, IT Specialist for the BLM Boise District, was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal by the U.S. Department of the Air Force for nearly 2,600 hours flown. The hours flown included 139 combat hours and 143 combat sorties, all with zero mishaps during operations in support of U.S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and with the Israeli Air Force.

Banks also flew numerous humanitarian missions for the Idaho Air National Guard in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. These missions included transporting hundreds of displaced residents from New Orleans, Louisiana.

Banks is also the recipient of the Air Medal for Meritorious Achievement in Flight by the U.S. Air Force in 2009.

"I got paid to do a job I loved. I worked with some of the finest people I have ever had the pleasure to know and I will miss them all," Banks said.



### Idaho BLM Special Agent Kyle Gandiaga Earns National "Agent of the Year"

On March 14, 2011, Idaho State Office BLM criminal investigator Kyle Gandiaga was honored at an awards ceremony in New Mexico as the "Agent of the Year."

In 2010, Agent Gandiaga teamed with the Twin Falls Ranger Program and investigated two Idaho residents who had dismantled and sold two mining structures on public lands in the Sun Valley area. The mining structures were the last of their kind in the mining district and had been eligible for the Registry of National Historic Places.

Agent Gandiaga continued to be a key participant in the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Taskforce case that in the previous year had resulted in 38,000 marijuana plants eradicated, 11 arrests, and 23

pounds of marijuana seeds seized. The successful efforts of the case showed on-the-ground results for the 2010 growing season, as there was a marked decrease in the number of marijuana gardens discovered on public lands in Idaho.

To top all of this off, Agent Gandiaga took on the extra challenge of working as a police officer on the Wind River Indian Reservation for two weeks.

Agent Gandiaga's work ethic, character, and ever increasing investigative skills have established him as one of the top Special Agents in the BLM.

Agent Gandiaga's continued high level of professionalism, coupled with his 'can do attitude' has resulted in several successful cases in 2010.

## Welcome New BLM Employees

### **Todd Kuck** ***Challis Field Office Manager***

On February 14, Todd Kuck reported for his first day on the job as the new Challis field office manager. Kuck is a 20-year BLM employee with a forestry background. Before taking the position in Challis, Kuck was the assistant field manager in Baker City, Oregon and served on a detail (temporary job) as assistant district manager in Prineville, Oregon.

“Todd has a great background in natural resource issues, enjoys working with people, and will bring balanced management. He will fit in very well in Challis,” said Idaho Falls BLM District Manager

Joe Kraayenbrink.

Kuck, a native Montanan, studied forest resource management at the University of Montana, Missoula. All 20 years of his BLM career before Idaho has been spent in Oregon, working as a natural resource specialist, a hydrologist and as a supervisor over range, forestry and noxious weed control programs.

Todd and wife Joy, a native of Twin Falls, have a daughter attending Boise State University, plus two stepsons and a grandson in the Twin Falls area.

Kuck’s hobbies include hiking, riding mountain bikes and woodworking.

### **Judy Culver** ***Cottonwood Field Office Recreation Planner***

Judy Culver is the new recreation planner in the Cottonwood Field Office. Culver was most recently an outdoor recreation planner in Vermillion Cliffs in St. George, Utah.

Growing up in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, water systems and unique ecosystems were always a part of Judy’s everyday tomboy lifestyle.

Culver said, “I became focused on rivers and river management when I powered my way through two hard weeks of guide training in Maine on the Penobscot, Kennebec and Dead Rivers followed by passing the written and oral board to obtain the Maine Guides License in 1988-1990. I also had a New York guide license for the Moose and Hudson-Indian Rivers. I ended my guiding career after spending a few seasons in Alaska on the Nenenna River which borders Denali National Park.”

During her career so far, Judy has held positions with the US Forest Service, Dinosaur National Monument; USFWS at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center in Fairbanks.

Culver has a bachelor of science degree from the University of Alaska - Fairbanks with a major in geography/environmental sciences and a minor in anthropology.



## Webpages in the Spotlight

### Forest Service Launches New Nez Perce National Historic Trail Website

The Forest Service has unveiled a new website for the Nez Perce National Historic Trail (NPNHT). The newly designed site went live in March 2011 and features plenty of updates and improvements. The new site is more user-friendly and easier to navigate. On the new home page, visitors can read about the latest news and events happening along the Trail, learn about new Trail publications, access frequently asked questions about the Trail, become involved in the current effort to revise the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for the NPNHT, and access numerous tools to prepare for a trip along the NPNHT.

Sections and features of the new website include:

- Trail maps, including the start of a Google earth virtual tour hosted by the Nez Perce Trail Foundation
- News and events along the Trail
- A publications page, which includes the quarterly Trail Progress Report, auto tours, and other handouts
- Learning Center for youth, parents and teachers
- Land & Resources Management page, which features ways to be involved with the Trail CMP revision
- Annotated bibliography, listing numerous publication related to the NPNHT
- Key contact information
- Photo gallery

Website | Brochure | Map | Winter 2011 Report - Steve Ellis featured as a "New Face on the Trail"

## BLM Idaho Supports Our Troops

### BLM Idaho Employees Successfully "Support Our Troops"

Idaho BLM employees donated toiletries, snacks, books, videos, and other comfort items, along with nearly \$180 in cash in support of our men and women in the armed forces. Donations were taken to the Veterans' Resource Network (VRN) and will be sent on behalf of BLM Idaho. The items will be used to create care packages, which will be sent to active duty military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. The cash will be used for postage in sending the items.

BLM Idaho State Director Steve Ellis and Associate State Director Peter Ditton were appreciative of the employees efforts. "These donations help show our support and gratitude to our military men and women. We appreciate your generosity and your contributions."

To read "thank you" emails from deployed troops, check out the website.

## Stay Connected

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## Upcoming Events

- **April 15-17**  
Idaho Horse Expo - Nampa | 4-H trained BLM mustangs will be available for adoption
- **April 22**  
Earth Day
- **April 29**  
Arbor Day - Seedlings will be available at the BLM Idaho State Office
- **April 30**  
Youth Appreciation Day - Emmett | BLM to host Wild Horse and Burro Booth
- **May 1-30**  
Idaho Archaeology/Historic Preservation Month; Watch for BLM website updates
- **May 13-15**  
Snake River Birds of Prey Festival; Kuna | Don't forget to check out the BLM booth