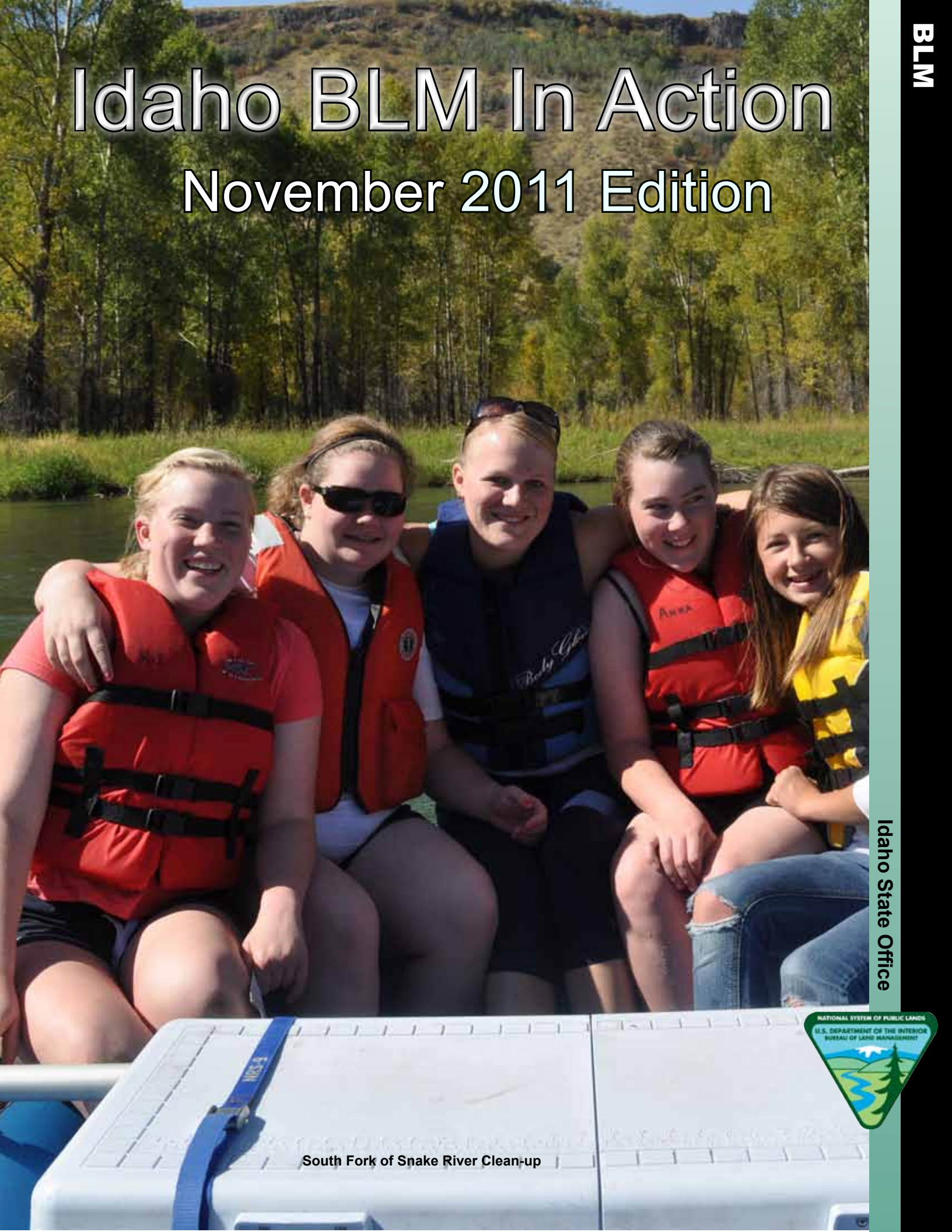


# Idaho BLM In Action

## November 2011 Edition



Idaho State Office



South Fork of Snake River Clean-up

## What's Inside this Issue

Get Outdoors with BLM Idaho Director Steve Ellis	3-4
Let's Move Outside	5-6
Education and Partnership	7-8
Volunteering on Public Lands	9-11
BLM in the Community	12
BLM on Assignment in the Great Outdoors	13
Honored BLM Employee	14
Welcome BLM New Employees	15-18
BLM Honors Veterans/Stay Connected with Us	19

## Get Outdoors with BLM Idaho Director Steve Ellis

### Hailey-area Bike Riders Show BLM the Future of Recreation on Public Lands

Bureau of Land Management Idaho State Director Steve Ellis marked completion of the Croy Creek trail system with a ride that began at the trailhead west of Hailey and ended with a run down the Punchline flow trail.

Chris Leman, trail specialist with the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), joined Ellis and BLM Twin Falls District Manager Bill Baker, along with Congressional and State staff and area trail users.

“Folks increasingly choose to live in places like the Wood River Valley because they want to be close to recreational opportunities,” Ellis said. “The BLM is excited to be involved in projects like this, which meet today’s demand for access to public lands and ways to enjoy the outdoors, while holding promise for use by future generations as well.”

Ellis noted that more than six million people visited BLM-managed lands in Idaho to recreate in 2010. Some 5,000 of those were users of the Croy Creek trails – among them youngsters participating in weekly races, sponsored by Sun Valley Road & Dirt Camp.

“The number of people for whom the public lands are ‘a backyard’ is increasing all the



time,” said Ellis. “This trail project is a great example of how the BLM can navigate the changes that can accompany that fact.”

Recreational opportunities have played an important role in improving the quality of life for residents, while supporting jobs and economic activity. Ellis cited a recent Interior Department study which showed that across Idaho, recreation now accounts for more public land-associated jobs than other major uses of those lands combined.

“I don’t think that’s news in Blaine County – recreation and tourism have been a prominent part of the local economy for a while now. But that report shows how important recreation is becoming for the

BLM, and what the future of our multiple-use management work is going to look like.”

Sun Valley resident Chris Leman is a trail specialist with IMBA and worked with BLM and county planners to design and build trail segments. “The BLM really led the way in this front-loaded approach to recreation planning – using collaboration and engaging various agencies, groups and individuals to bring this trail system into being.”

The BLM became involved in planning and building the Croy Creek trails in 1998, when the Shoshone Field Office began receiving requests for more single-track, non-motorized trails near Hailey. Working with rider groups, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game,

## Get Outdoors with BLM Idaho Director Steve Ellis

Blaine County Recreation District and the County, the BLM identified routes on public land that would be sustainable, offer scenic and challenging rides, and impact wildlife as little as possible.

The County and the BLM worked together to design trails that would fit the terrain. IMBA then helped construct the trails under a BLM assistance agreement. Additional involvement and help was provided by the U.S. Forest Service and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Through these partnerships, the 22-mile Croy Creek trail system was completed in June 2011.



[Croy Creek Trail Website](#)

[Blaine County Trail Maps](#)

*“Folks increasingly choose to live in places like the Wood River Valley because they want to be close to recreational opportunities,” Ellis said. “The BLM is excited to be involved in projects like this, which meet today’s demand for access to public lands and ways to enjoy the outdoors, while holding promise for use by future generations as well.”*



## Let's Move Outside: Geocaching

### Successful Public Land Adventurer Program Connects BLM with Idaho Geocachers

BLM has embarked on the adventure of geocaching. As cachers venture out on their treasure hunt, they learn more about BLM-managed lands and visit new and exciting destinations. These cache locations were chosen by BLM to highlight cultural, historical, recreational or scenic regions.

Geocaching is an outdoor adventure game played by global positioning system (GPS) users. Participants search for hidden containers, called geocaches, and then share their experiences online. Caches are typically waterproof containers of varying sizes and shapes, holding miscellaneous items such as logbooks and trinkets. Individuals and organizations have set-up caches all over the world and share the locations on geocaching websites.

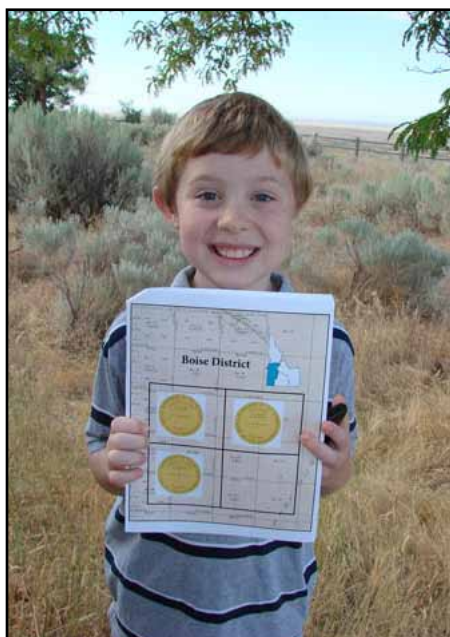
BLM Idaho placed 20 cache boxes throughout the state - five in each of Idaho's four districts. Each district contains four "district caches" and one "state cache."

Cachers participating in the BLM geocaching program, "Public Land Adventurers," collect an electronic stamp for each of their cache discoveries in a passport book. Once they have earned all

stamps for a specific region, they can redeem their stamp-filled passport books for a prize at local BLM offices.

As a result of this program, BLM coordinated successful partnerships with the local geocaching community and the National geocaching association, Groundspeak. The local community provided great insights and support during the beginning stages of the program and Groundspeak was able to offer personalized information. These partnerships were a positive experience for BLM and helped to further promote and improve the program. It also helped open the lines of communication between the BLM and individuals outside of the organization.

More Information.



### *What's Being Said:*

*"My best find yet!  
Beautiful location."*

*"What a great hike to find  
your cache!"*

*"Thanks to the BLM for  
putting this adventure  
together."*

*"Each find is an adventure  
and a feast for the eyes."*

*"This was a nice, quiet  
place with a great view  
and wonderful history!"*



## Let's Move Outside: Education at Blue Creek Bay

### Blue Creek Bay Provides Ideal Venue for Outdoor Education

Twenty-eight third graders from Sorensen Elementary spent the day at the Blue Creek Bay recreation area learning about wildlife, nature and trail building with the BLM. Twenty-four students from North Idaho College's Outdoor Education Program also partnered with the younger students to share field techniques. The young students learned about trail building techniques and rotated through activity stations. During these activities, students learned about animal tracks, helped move rock to armor part of the trail and participated in litter patrol. At the end of the event, the students proudly claimed ownership to the portion of the trail they had helped create and excitedly pointed out wildlife, trees and different wildlife sounds in the area.

During another school trip, sixty-three fourth graders got outdoors to learn about geology, fishing, *Leave No Trace*, forest insects and disease, bird songs and animal tracks. At one of the ten natural resource stations, BLM Wildlife Biologist Carrie Hugo and BLM Forester Debbie Paul taught students about how and why birds communicate. Special bird-habitat relationships, like the Clark's nutcracker and its symbiotic



relationship with whitebark pine, were also highlighted. The enthusiasm for learning in the outdoors was contagious, even in the cold grey northern Idaho weather. The outdoor learning day was organized by Forest Service and BLM employees.

The Blue Creek Bay recreation site, located eight miles east of Coeur d'Alene, is quickly becoming an ideal location for educating local youth about the outdoors. The 736-acre Wallace Forest Conservation Area in Blue Creek is a unique setting rich with diverse recreation opportunities and varied species of wildlife and water fowl, trees and other fauna.

## Education and Partnership

### BLM's Educational Birding Program Takes Flight in Local Schools

For its third annual year the BLM, along with partner agencies, sponsored the *Bird by Bird* educational program for local students. The program uses bird watching to interest students in the outdoors, creatively teaching elementary through high school students about birds and nature. This program also encourages a love of nature, observational skills, and attention span improvement for the participating students.

Participating schools became a "citizen science center" helping to gather valuable information about birds and contributing to western and Idaho bird research.

The partners developed the program and leveraged collective funds and staff to operate in twelve schools



throughout Idaho's Treasure Valley. Participating schools were given bird feeders, spotting scopes and tripods, binoculars, a bird bath, perches, bird seed, and a great collection of bird books. The schools were also given native plants and trees to enhance bird habitat on school grounds.

Using these tools, students fed birds, monitored bird behavior, and recorded numbers, species and data in Cornell University's e-Bird Program. They also tracked their observations and thoughts in journals.

BLM recreation planner Larry Ridenhour believes in the importance of this program. "Birding can provide youth with a foundation for life-long observation skills and a heightened awareness of and appreciation for our natural environment. Families have even become involved in this fun, educational outdoor activity based on the enthusiasm of their children."

Several teachers involved in

this program have observed the positive impact made on students' physical, emotional and mental health.

Mountain View High School Teacher Daisey Horner said it best. "The one hope I have for my students is that now they will be more observant when they are at the park, ball game, or in a parking lot. It is just like the saying about planting seeds and waiting for them to grow. Maybe someday down the line, a student will say, 'Look there's an American goldfinch.'"

*Bird by Bird* is included in Idaho's Children and Nature Network's *Be Outside* initiative. Sponsoring agencies include: BLM, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight, Idaho Department of Fish & Game's Watchable Wildlife program, Audubon Society's Golden Eagle Chapter, and Wild Birds Unlimited.



## Education and Partnership

### **“Remarkable Raptors!” Presentation Captivates North Idaho Audience**

Raptors and owls are resourceful and inspiring birds that live year-round in the north Idaho area. It is on rare occasion that members of the public get the opportunity to view them up-close and learn about their lifestyles. This opportunity was presented during a warm, late-summer evening at BLM’s Blackwell Island picnic pavilion. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game in cooperation with the BLM, hosted a public presentation called “Remarkable Raptors.”

The event captivated the audience, both young and old, with demonstrations of live birds including a variety of raptors and owls. Several mounted raptor species were also on display, as well as models of their eggs, nests and bird features.

Presenters included BLM wildlife biologist Carrie Hugo; wildlife education specialist Beth Paragamian; and representatives from the Audubon Society and the West Valley Outdoor Learning Center. Each presenter shared information about the birds’ habitat and shared how the birds live and hunt.

Beth Paragamian also explained the importance raptors and owls play in our world. “Raptors fulfill many

ecological roles that benefit humans. They aren’t just sitting on fence posts checking out the fields. Red-tailed hawks and barn owls play a big role in helping us with rodent control. Some, like the turkey vultures, act as janitors cleaning up carrion from our roads and fields,” she stated. “They are exceptional birds, with very unique features specifically designed for the role they play in the ecological cycle.”

The featured raptors and owls were victims of unfortunate circumstances, but now have been given new life through these presentations. The birds are often nicknamed for the incident that landed them in captivity - for example, the



barbed owl that became entrapped in a barbed wire fence is named appropriately, “Barb.”

*Raptors fulfill many ecological roles that benefit humans. They are exceptional birds, with very unique features specifically designed for the role they play in the ecological cycle.*

## Volunteering on Public Lands: River Clean-up

### Volunteers Pull Together to Clean-up Clearwater River with BLM

The Clearwater River is renowned for its superb steelhead fishing, but in the past year, the river has also become the unfortunate recipient of trash build-up. Thanks to the Clearwater Management Council (CMC), a multi-county and multi-agency board that works to improve the quality of the river, action was taken.

In early September, the group hosted a Clearwater River Clean-up Day to remove trash and other items littering the banks. Representatives from the BLM joined other volunteers from the Kamiah 4-H club, boaters, fishermen, county commissioners, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Bonneville Power Administration to help beautify the river.

The first clean-up day was highly successful, but volunteers quickly realized that additional work days would be required to make a huge difference on the river. Scrap pieces too big for the crew, such as an 18-wheeler tire and rim, car axels and other car parts required some heavy lifting. Volunteers worked in teams scouring various stretches of the river and the rest stops along Highway 12 between Kooskia and Kamiah for trash. Their initial efforts garnered almost two tons of garbage and 480 pounds of scrap metal.

Later in September, volunteer crews worked two additional work days along a 15-mile stretch of the Clearwater River and along six miles of roadway. Nearly 2,200 pounds of metal trash and almost another ton of garbage were collected.

In total, nearly 2,700 pounds of metal and almost three tons of trash were collected by the

hard-working volunteers.

In a continued effort to keep the Clearwater River a great place to fish and play, the CMC plans to host another clean-up day in August 2012.



# Volunteering on Public Lands: National Public Lands Day

## Heart Mountain Springs Clean-Up

At Heart Mountain Springs campground in Pocatello, about 20 Boy Scouts volunteered to construct 300 linear feet of a cedar split rail fence. This work protected Stockton Creek and its embankment from recreational use. The volunteers contributed a total of 120 hours of service and saved the BLM approximately \$2,000.

## Blue Creek Bay Trail Project

Twenty-two volunteers from the Coeur d'Alene area lent a hand at the Coeur d'Alene Field Office's annual National Public Lands Day event. The event was held at the Wallace Forest Conservation Area, located at Blue Creek Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene. Three groups of volunteers worked on activities including trail construction, enhancement of riparian



plantings and trash pick-up.

## St. Anthony Sand Dunes Project

The St. Anthony Sand Dune complex receives over 250,000 visitors annually and in many areas, litter and debris are left behind and buried by blowing sand. Over 500 volunteers, including OHV enthusiasts, pulled together to clean-up this area for National Public Lands Day (NPLD). Using sand sifters, garbage bags and gloves, the volunteers attacked old fire pits and other high-use areas to collect over 2,000 pounds of debris within and adjacent to the dunes. This year's event topped last year's clean-up event as the largest NPLD gathering at the dunes. The volunteers contributed over 1300 hours of work, saving the bureau over \$26,000 in clean-up costs.

## South Fork of the Snake River Volunteer Efforts

The South Fork of the Snake River is an eligible Wild and

Scenic River with 39 Wilderness Study Areas located within the corridor.

For National Public Lands Day, 23 volunteers from the Idaho Falls Key Club and the local Girl Scouts troop volunteered to clean-up approximately 40 designated campsites along a stretch of the South Fork of the Snake River. This stretch of river is a 14-mile roadless stretch and can only be accessed by boat. Volunteers collected over 300 pounds of garbage from this area.

About 100 Boy Scouts, as part of the Grand Teton Council, helped collect 700 pounds of



## Volunteering on Public Lands: National Public Lands Day

garbage from the Wolf Flats area. Volunteers also cleaned up debris at Cress Creek and painted and installed kiosk and regulatory signs at Stinking Springs Trailhead.

About 200 people volunteered to clean-up nearby Birch Creek campground and 30 Boy Scouts collected about 6,000 pounds of garbage in the North Menan Butte area.



improve public lands in southwestern Idaho. Some volunteers inventoried plant communities on a recently acquired parcel of public land within Little Jacks Wilderness. Other volunteers spread gravel and used small power tools to define a vehicle parking area and stile. Other volunteers installed a large bat house at Poison Creek Recreation Site.

### Morley Nelson Snake River NCA Clean-up

On a bright and warm fall day, about 25 individuals and families gathered at Dedication Point in the Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) to celebrate National Public Lands Day. The volunteers planted sagebrush seedlings and a variety of pollinator-friendly forbs and installed six new signs along the interpretive trail. Partners included the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Habitat Restoration Crew, Snake River Raptor Volunteers and participants from the local area.

### Willow Planting Project

Idaho Department of Fish and Game staff joined the School of Urban Wilderness members and BLM staff to cut willow poles in preparation for a Little Wood River streambank enhancement project/planting. About 40 volunteers including Wood River Land Trust

volunteers and Carey middle school 7th and 8th grade students participated. Students also hand-planted 100 river birch seedlings, grown from seed collected near Silver Creek in November 2010.

### "Go Bat Crazy" Volunteer Event

About 30 volunteers participated in the National Public Lands Day project at Poison Creek Recreation Site and in the Little Jacks Creek Wilderness. The event helped



## BLM in the Community

### BLM Partners with Idaho Fish and Game Department to Collect Bitterbrush Seed

For the second year in a row the BLM's Twin Falls District joined forces with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to collect seed for future rehabilitation projects.

After a few short hours, 27 pounds of seed were collected by about 15 volunteers from the Master Naturalists of Hailey, IDFG and BLM.

The seed collected was shipped to the Lucky Peak Nursery, where it was nurtured into seedlings. These seedlings will be planted to enhance wildlife habitat or as part of post-fire rehabilitation efforts.



### BLM Fire Personnel Assists FireWise Community

In October 2011, the BLM Fire and Aviation Program assisted the Warm Springs Mesa Neighborhood Association and Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council with re-seeding to prevent wildfire.

These groups planted perennial grasses and forbs on

land where the previous year's growth of medusahead thatch had been removed. The re-seeding reduced the potential for fast-moving catastrophic fires by replacing Medusahead wild rye and cheatgrass with these more fire-resistant perennial grasses. Volunteers also applied an herbicide with ground-based equipment to inhibit the germination of annual grasses.

The BLM Boise District; the Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Council; and the Boise Fire Department have been working with the Warm Springs Mesa Neighborhood Association for several years on fire mitigation projects.

In 2010, the neighborhood became a nationally recognized Firewise community. Through a grant, the neighborhood association has also conducted thinning.



*The goal of the Firewise Community is to reduce the loss of lives, properties, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities in a way that is compatible with our natural surroundings.*

*Find out how to make your neighborhood a FireWise Community.*

## BLM on Assignment in the Great Outdoors

### On Assignment in Alaska By: Kris Long, Idaho State Office Public Affairs Specialist

Alaska was an unforgettable experience for me. As a long-time BLM-Idaho Public Affairs Specialist, I know about Idaho's 12 million acres of BLM-managed public lands, with places like the stark Owyhee Canyon-land Wilderness area, the snow-capped Tetons or the rugged Lower Salmon River. Yet, Alaska's vast landscapes fill the horizon on a much grander scale—a scale I couldn't appreciate until I was there.

In August, I joined Alaska BLM employees on a whirlwind weekend road tour, staying three days at the BLM Tangle Lakes Campground. As a photographer and journalist, I traveled a 600-mile loop from Anchorage on the Glenn, Taylor, Denali and Parks highways. The experience was overwhelming, with the beauty of the vast autumn landscapes of the Matanuska Valley, Eureka, Mendaltna Creek and the Chugach and Talkeetna



mountains.

The tour continued on with the inspiring Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Gulkana Wild and Scenic River, and the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District. I also experienced the Delta Wild and Scenic River, Alaska Mountain Range, Maclaren and Susitna glaciers and Denali National Park. Along the way, we visited BLM's Glennallen Field Office, Paxson Lake Campground, Gulkana River Trail and Brushkana Creek Campground.

A highlight was participating in the BLM-partnered Project Healing Waters weekend for recovering soldiers and their families, and meeting many employees from the BLM and

their partner organizations.

Every turn in the road revealed something new and exciting, like migrating tundra swan, moose, caribou, arctic ground squirrels, thick spruce forests and beautiful glacial vistas. Stepping onto tundra for the first time felt soft and spongy under my feet; it made me smile. Others smiled back when picking ripe tundra blueberries I slipped, spilling a gallon on the trail.

And it's true that Alaska's mosquito population is the stuff of legend. There are 35 species of them, and all but a few feed on humans. In addition to dodging giant mosquitos, I was almost hit by a fleeing caribou on the Denali Highway. The abundant wildlife in Alaska is truly amazing.

I will never forget working with the BLM staff in Alaska or that weekend road trip. It reinforced the pride I have about the resources BLM manages and the opportunities these lands provide.

Learn More.



## Honored BLM Employee

### **BLM Supervisor of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Program Receives Spirit of Service Award from BLM Director Bob Abbey**

In Washington DC, BLM Director Bob Abbey presented the second annual BLM Director's Awards to agency employees for exceptional public service.

"People are the BLM's most valuable asset, and these awardees set superior examples for all of us to follow," said Abbey. "These awards recognize outstanding leadership, successful stewardship, collaborative efforts and innovative approaches that are helping the BLM pursue our goal of becoming the premier natural and cultural resources management agency in the government."

Twin Falls District employee Scott Uhrig received the Director's Spirit of Service Award. As Supervisor of the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) Program for the Twin Falls District, Uhrig has created high-quality ES&R plans after wildfire events. Uhrig also works with the Department of Agriculture and local counties to administer weed-control contracts throughout the district, where he devotes time to assisting with national and local seed buys for the ES&R



program.

The BLM Twin Falls District ES&R Program is recognized as one of the most successful in the Bureau. Treatments include seeding of native vegetation, soil stabilization structures and monitoring the success of these treatments. Through the efforts of Uhrig and his staff, ES&R treatments were completed shortly after wildfires and were instrumental in allowing grazing to resume in many allotments the following year.

BLM Idaho State Director Steve Ellis commented, "Congratulations to Scott Uhrig as recipient of this year's Director's award for Spirit of

Service! This recognition not only exemplifies his fine performance, but also a sustained dedication to his fellow employees and the proper management of public land resources."

*"These awards recognize outstanding leadership, successful stewardship, collaborative efforts and innovative approaches that are helping the BLM pursue our goal of becoming the premier natural and cultural resources management agency in the government."*

## Welcome New BLM Employees

**Aimee Betts**  
***Bruneau Assistant Field  
Manager***

Aimee Betts' career with the Bureau of Land Management began in Washington DC working as the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) science coordinator through the Presidential Management Fellows program. As part of this experience, she gained an interest in Idaho BLM during details at the Craters of the Moon National Monument and the Boise District Office. She then worked over five years in the Jarbidge Field Office as a resource management plan project manager. Betts grew up in Caldwell, attended the College of Idaho and studied rangeland ecology at the University of California in Berkeley. Aimee enjoys spending time with her family including her husband Brian, son Morgan, an aussie/beagle mix named Molly and box turtle named Scout. She also enjoys traveling, cooking, gardening, and home improvement projects.



**Brian Davis**  
***Jarbidge Field Manager***

Brian Davis' professional experience over the last 30 years has included a balance between government and private sector with duty stations in North Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. These experiences have afforded Davis a practical level of insight in addressing conflicts and analyzing a wide range of situations associated with the BLM's mission. Brian Davis began his Federal career with the BLM in 1991 in Farmington, New Mexico as a petroleum engineer.

Davis grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico and received his degree in petroleum engineering from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology.

When he's not in the office, he enjoys traveling, outdoor activities, running, exercising, cooking, and spending time with family and friends.

**Heidi Whitlach**  
***Supervisory Natural  
Resource Specialist***

Whitlach has returned to her hometown of Twin Falls after 23 years to work for the Idaho BLM. Her Federal career began in 1988 on the Boise National Forest, where she worked as a seasonal forestry technician during her college summer breaks. Since then, she has worked in Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon and Mississippi. Most recently, she was a natural resource manager for the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming and managed five programs for the Greys River Ranger District, including timber and recreation. She is also a certified silviculturist, or forester. Whitlach has an associate degree in biology from the College of Southern Idaho, a bachelor of science degree in forest management from Utah State University, and a master of science degree in forest resources from the University of Idaho. Heidi enjoys photography, fishing, and walking her 7-year old black lab Teddy.



## Welcome New BLM Employees

### **Jeremy Casterson** *Upper Snake Field Manager*

Born and raised in Salmon, Idaho, Jeremy obtained his bachelor degree in environmental science from the University of Idaho. During the summers, Jeremy worked for the BLM. Following graduation, he worked in Kenya for the Peace Corps where he taught local groups how to integrate trees into farming to enhance the environment. After two years in Africa, Jeremy pursued his masters degree in international development at Clark University in Massachusetts. In 2001, he was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to further enhance his international studies in Africa. Following graduation, Jeremy was the planning and environmental coordinator with Colorado BLM. Jeremy loves camping, fishing, boating, hiking, and spending time with his wife Emma and 19-month old son Keenan. They are expecting their second child in April.



### **Kurt Wiedenmann** *Idaho State Office* *Supervisory Resource* *Management Specialist*

Kurt Wiedenmann came to BLM Idaho from the Wallowa Whitman National Forest in La Grande, Oregon where he was the district ranger. Wiedenmann's career has included experience in land use planning, forestry and district management. Before Idaho, Kurt worked in Oregon at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Siskiyou National Forest and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Kurt was raised in Kansas and graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in forest management. Kurt enjoys being outside to recreate and travel on public lands and woodworking. Kurt and his wife Nancy have two sons.



### **Meagan Conry** *Boise District Associate* *Manager*

Conry first worked for BLM as a Presidential Management Fellow in Washington DC as a Planning Analyst, where she helped revise the NEPA handbook. She completed details in Cottonwood, Idaho and the Stanislaus National Forest. She spent five years as the district planner in Roseburg, Oregon, where she worked on the resource management plan. During this time, she also completed details in Winnemucca, Nevada and the Oregon State Office. She has a master of science degree in forestry from the University of Montana, with undergraduate work at Xavier University in Cincinnati and Georgetown University in DC. Meagan and her husband, Casey are the proud parents of a 15-month-old daughter, Molly Marie. Her family also includes two cats and lots of bicycles. She enjoys hiking, biking, cooking (and eating), reading and running.



## Welcome New BLM Employees

**Mike Morcom**  
**State Fire Management**  
**Officer**

Morcom most recently worked in the Vale, Oregon BLM District office, serving as the district fire management officer (FMO) for the last several years. Mike is a Type 1 incident commander (IC) who has successfully managed a complex fire program that included 19 engines, helitack, Snake River Valley (SRV) and Hotshot crews, Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) program, air attack, dispatch center and seven guard stations. Mike brings a career of Great Basin experience to Idaho BLM's program. As a Type 1 incident commander, he also brings a track record of success in working with fire personnel, line officers, communities, state and Federal agencies, and other partners across the West.



**Tina M. Ruffing**  
**Owyhee Field Office**  
**Supervisory Rangeland**  
**Management Specialist**

Ruffing comes to the BLM from the U.S. Forest Service, where she began as a summer seasonal employee in 1989 on the Sawtooth National Forest collecting field data for the Snake River Basin Adjudication. Tina also assisted with range vegetation monitoring and constructing range improvements. She worked for nine years as a range technician on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in Stanley, Idaho. In 2001, Tina moved west to work for the Boise National Forest as a rangeland management specialist. She received her degree in range livestock management from the University of Idaho (go Vandals!) in 1989. Tina enjoys horseback riding, hiking, camping, and fishing. She is also an active member of the Daniel Dopps Memorial Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

**Rebecca Jenkins**  
**Boise District Range**  
**Technician**

Between the BLM and the Forest Service, Rebecca brings over thirty years of experience in trails and wilderness management to her new position as the Boise District BLM range technician.

Jenkins was recently an employee of the U.S. Forest Service in the Ochoco National Forest, located in Prineville, Oregon. She also worked for the BLM in the Salmon Field Office as a recreation and range technician.

Rebecca enjoys hiking, yoga, and spending time with her three dogs and five horses.



## Welcome New BLM Employees



**Zach Peterson**  
**Forester**

Peterson was born and raised in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon. He attended Oregon State University and graduated with a degree in forest management. He previously worked for the BLM Nevada's Ely District as the district forester. Zach is very excited to be in Cottonwood, a field office with "real" trees as compared to the Nevada desert. Zach spends much of his free time volunteering as an emergency medical technician (EMT) and structural firefighter. While in Ely, he worked with the City of Ely ambulance service and with the Ely Volunteer Fire Department. In 2010, he was awarded the Department of the Interior's Exemplary Service Award for a heroic action to save a person's life following an automobile accident on a remote stretch of Nevada highway. His other passions include downhill and cross-country skiing, hiking and other outdoor activities.

**Dusty Parson**  
**Boise District Office**  
**Presidential Management**  
**Fellow**

Presidential Management Fellow (PMF) Dusty Parson has been working at the Boise District Office since October and will continue gaining experience through January 2012. Parson has been focusing on lands and realty group issues and working with technical specialists to gain an overview of BLM's priority issues.

Parson is currently a budget analyst for the Energy and Minerals program. He began his Presidential Management Fellow duty in Washington, DC in BLM's Budget Office, Oil and Fluid Minerals Section. This was just four months after the British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

PMFs are generally expected to be prepared to take on difficult assignments as soon as they arrive and are expected to immediately delve

into the projects to which they've been assigned.

This program is sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Since 1977 the PMF Program has matched outstanding graduate students with exciting Federal opportunities. The PMF Program creates a lasting bond as well as a spirit of public service, ultimately encouraging and leading to a career in the government.

*The Presidential Management Fellows Program creates a lasting bond as well as a spirit of public service, ultimately encouraging and leading to a career in the government.*



## BLM Honors Veterans



### Veterans and Active Military Eagle Watch Cruise a Hit

About 320 veterans, active military members and their families enjoyed two-hour cruises on Lake Coeur d'Alene to view bald eagles in November. The cruises were held in partnership with Idaho Fish and Game. Beth Paragamian, watchable wildlife coordinator, presented an informative program for participants, both young and old. The cruise boats toured

Wolf Lodge Bay and Beauty Bay, where attendees were able to spot approximately 30 to 35 eagles along the way.

In December, a series of cruises focused on school children. The students learned about bald eagles through interpretive programs and wildlife viewing of the birds along Lake Coeur d'Alene. Almost 900 local youngsters participated.

Check the current eagle count.



## Stay Connected

Subscribe to Idaho BLM Newsletter



**Facebook**  
Idaho | National



**YouTube**  
Idaho | National



**Twitter**  
Idaho | National



**RSS**  
Idaho | National

## Upcoming Event

**December 26 - January 1**  
**Eagle Watch Cruise on Lake Coeur d'Alene**