

**“BLM land grabbing?” Actually, it’s quite the opposite.**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA – “flip muh”) of 1976 gives the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) authority to **purchase** private lands, **accept donated** private lands, **exchange** private/public lands, and **donate or sell** public lands.

Under this authority, the BLM makes realty decisions for a number of different reasons, such as: improving management of natural resources, increasing recreational opportunities and public land access, preserving open space and traditional landscapes, protecting species and preserving habitat, and preserving historical resources.

Complicated? Yes, but a prime example of why realty actions are heavily analyzed to determine which course of action to take – *should* the land be exchanged, sold, donated? These analyses guide decision making that serves the public’s best interest. And remember...“public” interest means the *whole* public – public lands are for multiple uses and multiple users.

The BLM does **not** purchase private land or exchange public/private lands without a willing seller/exchanger. Ever. No willing seller? No change in ownership. There is no legal authority for the BLM (*executive* branch of the government) to “land grab” or assume ownership of private property without a willing seller.

Let this not be confused with the authority of the *legislative* branch (Congress). The legislative direction for the BLM to purchase, exchange, sell or donate lands is completely different than the executive (BLM) process. For example, a citizen-proposed land exchange with the BLM would be analyzed, reviewed by the public, etc., while Congress make a realty decision by passing a law. And did you know...the BLM is prohibited by law from lobbying Congress regarding legislative decisions? But the public is not! Don’t like a pending legislated land proposal? Work with your representative to get your voice heard.

And let’s not let this fun fact get lost in the shuffle: Since 1980, the Burns District of the BLM has actually sold or exchanged into private ownership nearly 118,000 more acres than it has purchased or acquired. That means there is actually less public land in the Burns District now than 30 years ago. True story!

