

Managing Archaeological and Historical Resources within the Bureau of Land Management

Arrowhead found after
archaeological survey
in the 2003 Hatten Road
Fire. (Lincoln County)



The archaeological and historic sites the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages are known as cultural resources. Cultural resources can include a vast range in types of sites and landscapes that result from past human activities. Archaeological sites on public lands in Oregon and Washington include rock shelters, stone tool quarries, campsites, village sites, and rock art sites. Historic sites and structures on public lands include ranches and homesteads, railroad logging camps, Civilian Conservation Corps sites and many historic wagon roads and trails. Some sites have traditional cultural importance to the region's American Indian tribes and other groups. These locations are often of religious significance or where traditional activities are carried out.

It is the responsibility of the BLM to inventory, evaluate, and manage these important but fragile resources for the public. The BLM manages cultural resources in order to conserve their significant cultural, scientific, educational, traditional, and recreational values for present and future generations. More than 1.2 million acres of public lands in Oregon and Washington have been inventoried for cultural resources. Over 10,000 cultural resource sites have been recorded.



Left: Historic
agricultural implement at
Lakeview
(Lincoln County).

Right: Spokane Tribe
digging for roots at Twin
Lakes (Lincoln County).



Paleontological Resources



Leaf fossils (Ferry County).

As a natural heritage resource, fossil localities must be considered in developing land use management decisions. The fossil record in the western U.S. includes almost all of the geologic periods from the Cambrian (500+ million years ago) to the Holocene (about 10,000-12,000 years ago to present). Many of the fossil deposits contain specimens of national and international importance and were first made known to the scientific world from deposits found in the western U.S.

The BLM manages fossils in accordance with the Paleontological Resources Protection Act (PRPA), passed into law in 2009, and general guidance of the FLPMA and NEPA to promote their use in research, education, and recreation. The BLM manages approximately 450,000 acres of public land in Washington State. Paleontological localities of Eocene (about 56 to 34 million years ago) plant fossils have been identified on BLM administered land in the state. Exposures of fossil layers can offer unique opportunities for scientists to study and understand changing ecology in the region.