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Contacts: Cynthia Moses-Nedd (BLM), 202.912.7446
Randy Phillips (FS), 703.887.3239
Ryan Yates (NACo), 202.942.4207

Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and NACo Renew Public Lands Management Partnership

Sign MOU to Continue, Strengthen Working Relationship

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (FS) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) have officially renewed their longstanding partnership that allows them to tackle public lands issues across boundaries.

By signing the Memorandum of Understanding, the BLM and FS recognize the important role counties play in locally based decision-making and the need to emphasize a landscape-level approach across local, state and federal boundaries.

The agreement, signed March 3, establishes a framework for the Bureau, the Forest Service and NACo to work cooperatively to address fire, weed management, planning and other areas of common concern, as well as seek creative solutions to issues impacting local communities such as recreation, grazing, wild horses and burros and energy development. It ensures that broad lines of communication are opened to county officials to contribute to federal land management initiatives and policies. At a national and local level, the groups will collaborate to proactively address potential conflicts and achieve results that benefit each organization.

“Counties are key partners on-the-ground in the successful management of public lands,” BLM Principal Deputy Director Neil Kornze said. “The BLM values the spirit of partnership, goodwill and cooperation we have enjoyed in this longstanding relationship.”

“It’s essential that we continue our strong, productive partnership with the National Association of Counties,” said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “We appreciate the association’s interest and participation in the wide variety of land management issues we face every day on forests and grasslands

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across the country.”

NACo President Chris Rodgers said he is pleased that our federal partners recognize the unique role and perspective counties play in the management of public lands. “This agreement strengthens our intergovernmental relationships and ensures that county officials have input on federal decisions affecting counties and communities.”

The BLM is a federal agency that manages approximately 245 million acres of public land, primarily in the West, and 700 million acres of federal mineral resources. In addition, the BLM is responsible for managing public lands scattered throughout the 31 states bordering on, and east of the Mississippi River. The agency’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of these public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The Forest Service is a land and resource management agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture responsible for managing and protecting approximately 193 million acres of public lands. The Forest Service provides leadership in the management of the Nation’s state and private forests, forest research, and international assistance for the protection and sound management of the world's forest resources.

National Association of Counties is a national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,069 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money.

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