



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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Bureau of Land Management
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President Proposes \$1.13 Billion for BLM in Fiscal Year 2012 To Protect Resources and Manage Uses of Public Lands

Focus on Protecting America's Great Outdoors, Advancing Renewable Energy, Promoting Landscape Conservation

President Obama today requested \$1.13 billion in appropriations for the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, a decrease of \$12.0 million from the 2010 Enacted/2011 Continuing Resolution level. The budget makes strategic investments in support of Administration and Secretarial initiatives, and offsets funding increases for these priorities with \$25.5 million in administrative and management savings, shifting \$42.4 million in energy and minerals inspection costs to industry, and reducing lower-priority programs.

"Today's budget proposal reflects the Administration's effort to maximize public benefits while recognizing the reality of funding constraints and the need to reduce the Nation's budget deficit," said BLM Director Bob Abbey. "Under this cost-conscious proposal, we can still meet the challenge of managing and protecting the Nation's public lands."

Under the President's proposed budget, the BLM will focus on the following priorities:

America's Great Outdoors

To enhance the conservation of BLM-managed lands and resources and reconnect Americans to the outdoors, the 2012 budget proposal calls for \$1 billion for BLM operations, which includes a \$29.9 million increase in funding for outdoor-related programs in support of the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative. This includes \$15.0 million for the BLM's 27 million-acre National Landscape Conservation System, which includes special areas, such as designated Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Monuments, and National Conservation Areas. An additional \$7.9 million would go for cultural resource protection, along with a \$7 million increase for outdoor recreation management.

The budget request also includes an increase of \$20.4 million for priority land acquisition.

New Energy Frontier

The New Energy Frontier initiative recognizes the value of environmentally sound, scientifically grounded development of both renewable and conventional energy resources on the Nation's public lands. To encourage and facilitate renewable energy development, the President's budget proposes a \$3.0 million increase for renewable energy environmental studies, which builds on the \$16.7 million program enacted in FY 2010. An additional \$2 million would go for air-quality monitoring to better analyze the impacts of oil and gas development on public lands. In the conventional energy program, the BLM will focus on implementing oil and gas leasing reforms put forward by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar while placing continued emphasis on oil and gas inspections, environmental enforcement, and production monitoring activities. The budget includes an increase of \$13.0 million for processing oil and gas applications for permits to drill (APDs) to offset a projected reduction in revenue from APD fees. The budget proposes to shift a significant share of the cost of oil and gas inspection activities from discretionary appropriations to industry fees for a savings of \$38.0 million. The budget also proposes to shift the cost of inspection activities in its coal management and other mineral resources management programs to industry for savings of \$2.4 million and \$2.0 million, respectively.

Cooperative Landscape Conservation, including Sage-grouse Habitat Management

The Secretary's Cooperative Landscape Conservation initiative recognizes the need to better understand the condition of BLM-managed landscapes at a broad level. The FY 2012 BLM budget includes a \$2.5 million increase for this scientific effort. The budget would also add \$2 million to enhance monitoring and assessment of habitat used by the

Greater sage-grouse and the Gunnison sage-grouse. The need to take action relating to these ground-dwelling birds was intensified by a March 2010 finding of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the Greater sage-grouse warrants protection under the Endangered Species Act, but is precluded from being listed as threatened or endangered because of the need to address other species first. As a result, the Greater sage-grouse was placed on a candidate list for future action. In response, the BLM – which manages more habitat for the Greater sage-grouse than any other government agency – issued guidance to its field offices that calls for expanding the use of new science and mapping technologies to improve land-use planning. The directive also supports additional measures to conserve sage-grouse habitat while ensuring that energy production, livestock grazing, recreational access, and other uses of Federal lands continue as appropriate.

Youth in the Great Outdoors

The Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative recognizes the value of encouraging young people to experience the myriad resources offered by the Nation's public lands and to engage and connect with the land around them. The President's 2012 BLM budget proposal includes \$8.6 million, a \$1 million increase from 2010, to support programs and partnerships that engage youth in natural resource management; encourage young people and their families to visit, explore, and learn about the public lands; and promote stewardship, conservation, and public service.

Abandoned Mine Lands and Hard Rock Mining Reform

The budget assumes a legislative proposal to reform hardrock mining on both public and private lands by addressing abandoned mine land (AML) hazards and providing a better return to the taxpayer from hardrock production on Federal lands.

The first component of this proposal addresses abandoned hardrock mines across the country through a new AML fee on hardrock production. The Administration proposes to hold the hardrock mining industry responsible for abandoned hardrock mines, just as the coal industry is held responsible for abandoned coal sites. The proposal will levy an AML fee on the production of hardrock minerals on both public and private lands and will be charged on the volume of material displaced after January 1, 2012. The fee will be collected by the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), while the receipts will be distributed by the BLM. Using an advisory council composed of representatives of Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and non-government organizations, the BLM will create a competitive grant program to restore the Nation's most hazardous hardrock AML sites each year. The advisory council will recommend objective criteria to rank AML projects to allocate funds for remediation to the sites with the most urgent environmental and safety hazards. The proposed hardrock AML fee and reclamation program would operate in parallel to the coal AML reclamation program as two parts of a larger proposal to ensure that the Nation's most dangerous abandoned coal and hardrock AML sites are addressed by the industries that created the problems. The 2012 BLM budget request also includes an increase of \$4.0 million in discretionary appropriations to address high priority AML sites, such as the Red Devil mine in Alaska.

The legislative proposal would also institute a leasing process under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 for certain minerals (gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, uranium, and molybdenum) currently covered by the General Mining Law of 1872. After enactment, mining for these metals on Federal lands would be governed by the new leasing process and would be subject to annual rental payments and a royalty of not less than five percent of gross proceeds. Half of the receipts would be distributed to the States in which the leases are located and the remaining half would be deposited in the Treasury. Existing mining claims would be exempt from the change to a leasing system, but would be subject to increases in the annual maintenance fees under the General Mining Law of 1872. However, holders of existing mining claims for these minerals could voluntarily convert their claims to leases. The Office of Natural Resources Revenue will collect, account for, and disburse the hardrock royalty receipts.

Wild Horse and Burro Program

Putting the BLM's wild horse and burro program on a sustainable track while ensuring the humane treatment of these iconic animals is one of Secretary Salazar's and Director Abbey's top priorities. Toward that end, the budget places a greater emphasis on fertility control. The BLM is also contracting a study by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review previous wild horse management studies and make recommendations on how the BLM should proceed in light of the latest scientific research. The NAS review is expected to be completed in about 24 months (early 2013). During that time, the BLM will hold a series of public meetings and workshops to continue the dialogue on various wild horse management issues. In the meantime, the BLM will continue to pursue public-private partnerships to hold excess horses gathered from Western public rangelands. The 2012 BLM budget proposes \$75.0 million for the wild horse and burro program, a program increase of \$12.0 million over the FY 2010 level.

Secretary's Western Oregon Strategy

The budget includes a program increase of \$3.0 million in the Oregon and California Grant Lands account to increase the volume of timber offered for sale; support key resource management planning objectives; increase surveying for rare, uncommon, or endangered species; provide for landscape-level timber sale project environmental analysis; and facilitate joint development and implementation of a revised recovery plan for the northern spotted owl.

Reductions, Tough Choices, and Efficiencies

Difficult choices were made during formulation of the 2012 budget in order to support the initiatives and priorities described above. In addition to the administrative savings and energy-related decreases already noted, the BLM budget reduces funding for lower priority programs, projects, and activities. The budget reduces funding for the Alaska Conveyance program by \$17.0 million. Interior will explore opportunities to further streamline the program. The budget proposes an \$8.2 million reduction to the Resource Management Planning program and will focus efforts on completing ongoing plans. A reduction of \$600,000 reflects the discontinuation of funding for two one-time congressional earmarks. The Management of Lands and Resources account includes an additional \$3.3 million in base funding reductions consisting of smaller reductions in several programs. The BLM budget also includes a reduction of \$3.5 million for information technology that is in addition to the administrative efficiencies savings enumerated below. The budget also reduces the construction program by \$5.0 million.

The request includes reductions that reflect the Accountable Government Initiative to curb non-essential administrative spending in support of the President's commitment on fiscal discipline and spending restraint. In accordance with this initiative, the BLM's budget includes \$11.5 million in savings in 2012 against actual 2010 expenditures in the following activities: \$5.5 million for travel and transportation of persons, \$3.2 million for advisory and assistance services, and \$2.8 million for supplies and materials. Actions to address the Accountable Government Initiative and reduce these expenses build on management efficiency efforts proposed in 2011 totaling \$9.1 million in travel and relocation, information technology, and strategic sourcing, along with bureau-specific efficiencies totaling \$1.5 million. Overall, cost-savings and efficiencies total \$22.1 million.

The BLM manages more land – over 245 million acres – more than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the Nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.