



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of the Interior Presents "Partners in Conservation" Awards to Four BLM-Led Partnerships

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar presented his “Partners in Conservation” Awards to a number of outstanding conservation partnerships at a ceremony today. The awardees included four BLM-coordinated partnerships: the Gila Watershed Partnership of Arizona; New Mexico’s Permian Basin Memorandum of Agreement Program; Oregon’s Jefferson Conservation Corps; and the nationwide Project Archaeology program.

These awards recognize partnerships that use innovation and collaboration to promote conservation, initiate large landscape projects, and protect natural and cultural resources through diverse stakeholder and youth engagement. A national panel assembled by the Department of the Interior selected the award winners from a large pool of nominees. Winners were chosen for their exceptional contributions to conservation and management of the public lands.

“Every day, I am proud to see BLMers working with other agencies, state and local governments, advocacy groups and the public to ensure that the lands under our care will be here for future generations to enjoy,” BLM Director Bob Abbey said. “These collaborative conservation efforts are actively improving the health of America’s public lands through BLM-led partnerships that promote shared stewardship and public engagement,” he added.

Representatives from the winning partnerships were recognized by the Department in an awards reception held at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building followed by an award presentation ceremony with Secretary Salazar at the Department’s South Interior Building.

In congratulating the winners, BLM Deputy Director Mike Pool noted, “Our greatest conservation legacies embody this spirit of collaborative conservation. These partnerships prove that continuing to engage diverse groups and the youth of America in our land management efforts is the key to our long-term success.”

The BLM’s 2011 “Partners in Conservation” honorees are profiled below.

Gila Watershed Partnership of Arizona (Arizona)

Arizona’s long-standing Gila Watershed Partnership is a diverse group of stakeholders that collaborates in consensus-driven efforts to identify solutions to watershed-level challenges. Partnership activities have helped build trust between private and public stakeholders and focus efforts on the shared goal of watershed stewardship.

Permian Basin Memorandum of Agreement Program (New Mexico)

New Mexico's innovative partnership brings together the BLM, state historic preservation organizations, and the Mescalero Apache Tribe to protect cultural resources while also facilitating energy development in southeastern New Mexico. The collaboration has contributed more than \$3.3 million in pooled resources to fund landscape-level archaeological research and foster a balance between cultural resource protection and energy development on public lands.

Jefferson Conservation Corps (Oregon)

Oregon's Jefferson Conservation Corps builds on other local and regional partnerships to provide work experience and training opportunities for disadvantaged young adults from the economically-challenged, rural communities of southern Oregon. The pilot program provides youth with conservation-oriented work that includes trail maintenance and riparian restoration projects.

Project Archaeology (Nationwide)

Every year, Project Archaeology uses a collaborative network of state and regional programs to provide educational materials and professional development opportunities to nearly 10,000 classroom teachers and informal educators nationwide. Sponsored by the BLM and Montana State University, Project Archaeology annually engages an estimated 210,000 students in cultural resource stewardship education in classrooms, museums, visitor centers, and in America's great outdoors.

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The BLM manages more land - more than 245 million acres - 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.