

News Release

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For immediate release

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BLM Presents 'Making a Difference' National Volunteer Awards

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Bureau of Land Management presented its prestigious “Making a Difference” National Volunteer Awards for outstanding volunteer service in 2015 on BLM-managed lands in a national videoconference on Thursday, June 2. Top BLM leaders recognized the award winners via live videoconference. Staff at the BLM’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. hosted the conference, which connected to five states around the country. Two winners were in attendance at the BLM’s Washington Office.

“We have held this ceremony for 21 years, and each year we find new inspiration in the dedication and hard work of BLM volunteers,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze.

“Congratulations to all the honorees this year—you and all the exceptional BLM volunteers represent all those willing to stand together as our partners in the stewardship of America’s public lands, each and every year.”

In 2015, BLM volunteers contributed more than 1 million hours, equating to more than \$24 million of service and 577 work years. The annual “Making a Difference” Award recognizes exceptional volunteers who have contributed thousands of hours improving the public lands. These hard-working volunteers have helped BLM to improve fish habitat, keep campers safe, find homes for wild horses and burros, and provide environmental education and other visitor services. A new “Group Excellence” category this year recognizes the contributions of volunteer groups.

The volunteers selected for this year’s awards are:

- Bill Mackie (Outstanding Achievement), Lake Havasu Field Office, Arizona;
- Sharron Evans (Outstanding Achievement), Utah State Office;
- Danny and Barbara Frye (Outstanding Achievement), Butte Field Office, Montana;
- Asha Lela (Lifetime Achievement), San Juan Islands National Monument, Washington;
- Jack and Sandy Gasser (Lifetime Achievement), Yuma Field Office, Arizona;
- Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve (Group Excellence), Redding Field Office, California;
- Lesly Smith (Employee Winner), Wyoming State Office;
- Shanita McLean (Outstanding Youth), Eastern States Office, Virginia.

A national panel of BLM specialists and partner representatives selected the award winners from dozens of nominees submitted by BLM state offices. The winners demonstrated exceptional contributions to the conservation and management of public lands.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.