



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
**U.S. Department  
of the Interior**

[www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov)

## News Release

Date: May 10, 2012

Contact: Adam Fetcher (DOI) 202-208-6416

### **BLM Director Bob Abbey to Retire After 34 Years of Public Service**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Bureau of Land Management Director Robert Abbey announced today that he will retire from public service at the end of May to rejoin his family full-time in Mississippi. Appointed by President Obama in 2009, Director Abbey's three-year tenure in leadership of the nation's largest land management agency marks the culmination of a 34 year career of state and federal service.

"Bob has devoted his life and career to the service of his country and the stewardship of the resources with which we have been blessed," Secretary Salazar said. "There has not been a time of more real or positive change at the Bureau of Land Management than under Bob's leadership, from the renewable energy revolution he helped lead and the oil and gas reforms he implemented to the spectacular conservation lands he has helped protect for future generations. We are indebted to Bob for his visionary leadership, for his humility and kindness, and for the remarkable legacy he is passing along."

"Serving as the BLM Director and having the opportunity to work with the most dedicated public servants in all of government has been the highlight of my career," said BLM Director Bob Abbey. "It has been a privilege to work for President Obama and with Secretary Salazar and his team at the Department of the Interior on natural resource and energy issues of national importance. I will always be grateful to the Secretary for the opportunity he gave me and for his unwavering support. I am proud of what we have accomplished together and I leave knowing that our efforts to date will lead to even greater achievements in the months ahead."

Since being confirmed by the U.S. Senate in August, 2009, Abbey oversaw the approval of 29 large-scale renewable energy projects on public lands, including 16 solar projects, 5 wind farms, and 8 geothermal plants. Prior to 2009, not a single solar project land had been approved for construction on public lands.

Abbey also implemented important reforms to BLM's oil and gas leasing process to improve certainty, reduce conflict, and ensure that development is occurring in the right places and the right ways. At the same time, BLM has successfully helped expand domestic oil and gas

production, including through the approval of major new projects like recently authorized Greater Natural Buttes project in Utah.

During his tenure, Abbey oversaw a significant expansion of the National Landscape Conservation System, led the agency toward more landscape-scale and partnership-driven planning, was a key leader in President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, helped the agency incorporate climate change more fully into its planning, and developed a set of wilderness recommendations that are a blueprint for Congressional action.

Abbey, a native of Clarksdale, Miss., is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree. He and his wife Linda have been married for 35 years and have one daughter, Leigh. For a biography of Abbey, [click here](#).

Following Director Abbey's retirement on May 31, BLM Deputy Director Mike Pool will serve as Acting Director.

###

**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. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. 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.**