



# BLM NEWS RELEASE

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## **BLM Enters into Agreement with Sierra Club to Advance Opportunities for Veterans and Military Families on Public Lands**

Recognizing the enormous value in partnerships that encourage veterans and military families to enjoy public lands, the Bureau of Land Management and the Sierra Club today signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) that will enable both organizations to work more effectively together on programs, training, and recreational activities for veterans and military families.

“For those brave men and women returning from military service to our country, BLM-managed public lands provide not only opportunities for recreating in the great outdoors, but also venues for enhancing personal well-being while connecting more closely with some of the land they fought to protect,” said BLM Acting Deputy Director Steve Ellis.

“The BLM is committed to helping those who have served in the Armed Forces enjoy the healing nature of their public lands,” said Carl Rountree, BLM Assistant Director for National Landscape Conservation System. “This MOU reflects that commitment.”

“The Sierra Club has a rich history protecting our country’s wild places and the recreational opportunities they provide,” said Dan Chu, Senior Campaign Director, Our Wild America. “Partnering with the Bureau of Land Management continues the tradition of connecting people with the outdoors by creating new opportunities for veterans to spend time in our country’s public lands.”

“It’s essential that we give back to our nation’s heroes who protected our country in uniform,” said Joshua Brandon, Sierra Club Military and Community Outdoor Recreation Organizer. “The Sierra Club is well versed in the healing powers of time spent in the outdoors, and our growing partnership with the Bureau of Land Management ensures greater access for veterans and their families to explore and enjoy the public lands they risked their lives protecting.”

Under the MOU, the BLM and the Sierra Club Mission Outdoors program will work together to provide veterans, active-duty military, and their families with opportunities to learn about and participate in conservation and recreation activities on public lands. The BLM and Sierra Club will identify partnership opportunities and jointly pursue projects that will enhance their their

ability to provide service members and their families with information about and programs on BLM land, as well as improve communication and understanding between the military community and public agencies.

The MOU builds on a several successful partnership programs between the BLM and Sierra Club Mission Outdoors program. In October 2012, the Sierra Club hosted a [military family outing](#) at the Organ Mountains on BLM-managed land in New Mexico, during which service members and their families engaged in hikes, children's events, and educational workshops. In November 2012, the BLM and Sierra Club launched the first annual [Veterans Day Essay and Photo Contest](#). This contest, centered on the theme "What My Public Lands Mean to Me," encouraged veterans, active-duty military, and their families to submit photos, essays and video about their experiences and memories of time spent outside on America's public lands.

Through direct programming, public education and advocacy, Sierra Club's Mission Outdoors program combats the growing divide between America and the outdoors by increasing opportunities for all to improve their overall well-being by exploring and enjoying the natural world. Over the last few years the Sierra Club has worked with over 50,000 service members, veterans, and family members from all over the country to help ease the stresses of service and coming home by helping them get outside.

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 multiple-use mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2012, activities on public lands generated \$4.6 billion in revenue, much of which was shared with the States where the activities occurred. In addition, public lands contributed more than \$112 billion to the U.S. economy and helped support more than 500,000 jobs.

The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 2.1 million members and supporters nationwide. In addition to creating opportunities for people of all ages, levels and locations to have meaningful outdoor experiences, the Sierra Club works to safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation. For more information, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org>.