Northwest Passage Volume 3, Issue 4 – Summer 2012

Cover

Northwest Passage

blm.gov/or

BLM Oregon/Washington

The Bureau of Land Management Magazine for Oregon and Washington

Summer 2012

The Future of Oregon Forests

What's in store for the next generation of Oregon's trees?

[Illustration of the State of Oregon and a Tree]

BLM Recycles

[Image of Recycling Symbol]

[Image of BLM Logo]

Also…

Photo Contest Winners

Veterans Fight Fires

Cows Love Deer

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Op-"Ed"

[Photo of Ed Shepard, State Director, Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management]

Letter from Edward W. Shepard, State Director, Oregon/Washington, Bureau of Land Management

Summer's back! And we at the BLM couldn't be happier to see so many families getting out in America's Great Outdoors to recreate, relax, and reenergize.

Our neighbors in Oregon and Washington constantly tell us how a little time in America's backyard – often only a few miles away – gives them the perfect mental and physical boost for their week. And though their kids may grumble at first, they're often the hardest to get back in the car once they actually get outdoors.

One reason for this positive experience is that the BLM is unique among Federal agencies in the diversity of activities we offer. The BLM provides arguably the greatest variety of recreation options to meet virtually every family's interest.

Want to get away from city life and go mountain biking? Our publicly lauded Sandy Ridge Trail System near Portland and Salem was written up in USA Today and The Wall Street Journal. (But you heard it here first in Northwest Passage.)

How about hiking? Or off-highway vehicle riding? Fishing, camping, swimming? Picnics and family reunions? We deliver them all. And virtually everything is close to where you live. You can do an internet search by location and activity with our handy online map: http://on.doi.gov/spqdTt

This summer brings some other news. After 38 years of public service, I'm heading off into the sunset. In fact, by the time you read this issue, I'll likely be clad in hiking boots trekking across peak and valley to capture some incredible photos of the Pacific Northwest.

So that guy with a camera next to you on the trail this summer? He might just be me. I hope you'll say hello. I'm happy you're out there with me.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve. And thank you for supporting America's public lands.

[Photo of an OHV rider grabbing some air at Christmas Valley Sand Dunes in Lakeview, Oregon]

http://on.doi.gov/KP83Z6

Photo by Kevin Abel

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youtube.com/blmoregon
facebook.com/blmoregon
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flickr.com/photos/blmoregon

Take it Outside!

Volume 3, Issue 4

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Mission:

The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Oregon and Washington, the BLM provides innovative leadership in managing natural resources of the Pacific Northwest.

This Month's Cover

[Reproduction of Magazine Cover Illustration: State of Oregon and a Tree]

I am not an expert on forests. I may spend a lot of time in them. But I can't speak to the intricacies and scientific details necessary for talking about a healthy, sustainable forestry plan. So I'm very thankful the BLM has hired many experts who can.

Oregon's forests have always been a critical component of our communities. They provide recreation sites, natural healthy habitats, and local employment opportunities. They're literally the building materials for our nation. A carefully planned approach to forestry is one that benefits Americans holistically – both physically and spiritually.

Inside this issue, we look at the BLM's efforts to partner with other experts in the field – as well as with you. We've been actively holding town hall meetings and seeking your feedback, your sage guidance, and your expert advice. More than just managers of the public lands, we're your neighbors. And we're asking to hear what you have to say.

So how can you chat with us? Well, in addition to the town hall meetings, the BLM has more outlets for open communications than we've ever had in our history. And though I'm certainly not an expert on forests, I am somewhat versed in social media and blogs.

The BLM in Oregon & Washington updates our pages at Facebook and Twitter every single day. And we post a new video at YouTube and a new photo album at Flickr each week. More than just bringing photos and stories of the northwest experience to you, we also raise current topics for discussion. We hope you'll share your ideas with us. You can find all our links at blm.gov/or.

We've also launched a new external blog called Explore Northwest. It's sort of like Northwest Passage. But we update it daily. Plus it has videos and room for your comments and discussions. Check us out sometime at explorenorthwest.tumblr.com.

So whether you've got feedback, a suggestion, a story idea, or just a cool link to check out, please visit us online. And if you've got some ideas for the future of Oregon forestry, we sure hope you'll drop by and help us shape the conversation for the next generation. We'll start the dialogue by listening.

– Matt Christenson, Editor

Best of the West

Contributors From Around the Great Pacific Northwest

[Five Photos of Contributors – Mike Mottice, Michael Campbell, Chip Clough Kevin Abel, Brooke Brown]

It's not the years. It's the miles. Allison C. Clough III, "Chip," was raised on the east coast but fell in love with the Pacific Northwest after moving to Oregon in 1999 and then Washington in 2012. Chip has over 30 years Federal experience including Search and Rescue with the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Fire Department, and 11 years (and counting) in fisheries biology and management with the BLM. Chip's hobbies include a love of the outdoors, hiking, garlic farming, and anything his family can come up with to do together. In Grazing Gone Green (p. 6), Chip shows us how hungry cows came to the rescue of endangered deer.

If you like enthusiasm, you will love the excitement Brooke Brown has for sharing the many stories Oregon's landscape has to tell. She knows well how the BLM's Lakeview District's Klamath Falls Resource Area is rich in history, and Brooke shares that wealth with a historic story about the Homestead Act of 1862 (p. 22). Fittingly, Brooke is also the co-lead for the BLM in Oregon & Washington to observe the 150th Anniversary of the Homestead Act. And when she's not writing about our history, Brooke is discovering it! Brooke's full-time job is as an archaeologist and heritage education coordinator.

Kevin Abel (photo, p. 2) is a retired U.S. Army photographer who spends most of his waking hours chasing the sun in an attempt to capture the true beauty of the great outdoors. Kevin recently transferred from the Department of Veterans Affairs when he was hired as the public affairs specialist for the BLM's Lakeview District.

Can you hear me now? Mike Mottice is the new acting State Director for the BLM in Oregon & Washington. (See this issue's Op - "Ed" for outgoing Director Ed Shepard's final column.) Mike has served the BLM for over 30 years as a forester, fire fighter, and surveyor. On page 18, Mike reaches out to local communities to talk about Oregon's future in forestry. Got an idea? Just ask Mike to pass you the mic.

Like Steve Martin on Saturday Night Live, Michael Campbell is such a frequent host here at Northwest Passage that we had to give him his own room. (Please tip the attendant on your way out.) Inside this issue, Michael joins our Fire & Aviation expert Leanne Mruzik to write about the BLM's outreach efforts to connect America's returning Veterans with jobs on their public lands (p. 10).

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Grazing Gone Green: Have a Cow, Man!

To help local deer, Oregon cows are munching on their favorite greens…

Story by Allison "Chip" Clough III

[Photo of a Group of Cows Eating Greens in a Forested Field]

The BLMs New Plan to Help Out the Columbian White-Tailed Deer

Photos by Cheyne Rossbach & BLM Staff

[Photo of a Cow with a Halo Above its Head]

[Image of Two Deer]

Back in 1994, the Columbian White-tailed deer faced an uncertain future. They'd been listed as a threatened species since 1978, and their numbers were declining in the face of challenges ranging from farming, logging, and hunting to commercial and residential development.

In hopes of providing the White-tailed deer a secure habitat to rebuild their numbers, the BLM acquired 6,500 acres of grasslands and woodlands near Roseburg, Oregon. But even with this new preserve, the deer had a hard time reaching the most nutritious green grass that would best help them thrive and multiply.

So. Cows?

Soon the question became how the BLM could help deer get at the best new grasses and clover. Initially, the BLM used hands-on techniques such as prescribed burns, mowing, seeding, fertilizing, and establishing forage plots. But by 2003, the BLM came up with a new strategy. A natural strategy. "We decided to bring local cattle into the area because they eat the part of grass that is called the 'thatch.' The thatch consists of grass that is dead or lower in nutrition, like the older leaf blades and stems. When it accumulates, it can stifle new growth," said Allie Barner, BLM soil scientist. "When cows eat away the thatch, it speeds up the growth of new grasses and vegetation that are more nutritious for the White-tailed deer."

When the BLM first met with local ranchers to talk about a cattle grazing project in the area, there wasn't a great deal of initial interest. The ranchers were concerned that any habitat-driven grazing plan might restrict grazing for livestock and have an impact on their animals. And so the idea of "green grazing" took a backseat to the more labor-intensive (and expensive) applications such as burning, mowing, and seeding White-tail forage. As with many other innovations, time and circumstances had to catch up with a bold idea.

A Second Look

But by 2011, high management costs and continuing concerns about a lack of available forage habitat for the deer led the BLM to relook at the cattle grazing strategy. Also, some of the techniques like burning and mowing weren't feasible in all areas. Thus the BLM reached out again to explore options with local ranchers and members of the grazing community.

In taking a collaborative approach, the BLM was successful in reaching an agreement this time. In December 2011, a 60-acre test grazing site was established with the assistance of the Sandberg Family Ranch and the Jefferson Conservation Crew.

The Sandberg family was a natural partner. They have a livestock operation located across the North Umpqua River and had been actively involved with the BLM's public outreach during the 2003 grazing. This partnership brought the Sandberg family's extensive experience – as well as actual cattle – to serve as part of the test grazing project.

The Jefferson Conservation Crew (see Summer 2011 issue – Ed.) was then brought in to assist in building out the 60-acre test area with an electrified fence. And as 2011 came to a close, 2012 brought great promise for the deer as their cow benefactors were turned out into the area.

Foraging for Success

Will the grazing help provide healthy forage for the White-tailed deer? So far, so good. But of course, only time will tell. "Our primary goal with grazing implementation is to really increase our production of high quality forage for the Columbian White-tail deer," said Max Yager, Swiftwater Field Manager. "The Roseburg BLM intends to monitor the grazing impacts within the test plot."

So for now the hope is that the BLM's plan will provide a four-to-six inch stubble height of new grass for the Columbian White-tail deer to eat. This better access to high quality forage should allow them to flourish and increase their numbers. Test grazing will run through early summer, at which time further grazing opportunities will be evaluated. If the project is deemed a success, cattle will be returned to this area later in the year. And, no doubt, the deer will be glad to welcome them home.

[Check out maps from the grazing area and learn more info online at: on.doi.gov/KvqNga

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The BLM Wants You

[Photo of a Group of Marines at Twilight]

When the BLM recruits America 's Veterans to protect their local public lands, the star's the limit.

Story by Michael Campbell & Leanne Mruzik with Matt Christenson

Original photo by CPL. Michael Petersheim, U.S. Marine Corps

Recruiting America's Veterans

After three overseas tours – to include two in the Middle East – Air Force veteran Jeff Clark was happy to finally return home to civilian life. With a Meritorious Service Medal in his pocket and the pride of honorable service behind him, Jeff realized he needed one more thing.

A job.

It's 2012 – a time when finding employment can be a challenge for anyone – and military veterans currently make up about 15 percent of the BLM in Oregon and Washington. This figure is approximately twice as large as the average for the American workforce as a whole. In the past year alone, another 83 veterans have joined BLM offices in the Pacific Northwest, making the move from serving their country overseas to serving the public lands in their own communities.

Seven Score and Seven Years Ago

This practice of reaching out to America's veterans has a long tradition going back to the Civil War. Recognizing our military members' supreme sacrifice, Congress has enacted a number of laws since 1865 that acknowledge the economic challenge experienced by citizens willing to take time out of their civilian lives to serve in uniform. By hiring from this pool of military veterans, Federal agencies often restore these veterans back to a favorably competitive position of employment while acknowledging our national obligation to them – especially to those who were disabled in the line of duty.

In addition, public lands provide not only an opportunity for employment but also a wide variety of recreational activities as well as a restorative solitude for veterans to rebuild their physical and emotional well-being while connecting with the homeland they fought to protect. For many veterans, these lands have a true healing effect.

Bringing the Stars Home

Recently, the BLM has forged new partnerships with programs that reach out to veterans. The BLM works with the Wounded Warrior Project to help reestablish wounded veterans reentering American

society. And the Feds Hire Vets initiative continues the BLM's own commitment to providing veterans the opportunity to begin their next career working on the public lands.

Another outreach unique to the BLM is the BLM's veteran fire crews. In Lakeview and Medford, Oregon, and Spokane, Washington, the BLM has formed three veteran crews with the capability to fight wildfires this summer. A total of 36 veterans will be hired – and most of the veterans will have little to no wildfire experience. The BLM is prepared to train the veterans to ensure they have safe yet meaningful work experiences – experiences that may grow into future employment opportunities with fire management agencies across the nation.

Before the start of this year's fire season, each veteran fire crew will receive the necessary firefighter training to gain national recognition as viable firefighters. Then they'll work in hot zones, facing and eradicating real danger. Only this time, the potential menace is closer to home. The crews will face real-world forest fires that may potentially attack their local towns. Crews will also assist with prescribed fire burning to clear dead, dry scrub brush before it has a chance to catch fire. And when called, they'll have the opportunity to travel and fight fires across the western United States.

These veterans will put to use the skills like leadership, risk management, and communication. You know, the skills they learned in the military. Win-win.

Shooting for the Moon

Jeff Clark, our Air Force veteran with three tours under his belt, did eventually find a job. "Honestly? It was tough enough transitioning back to civilian life and moving my family and getting used to being back home, let alone applying for jobs." But, as regular readers of Northwest Passage will recognize by his byline, Jeff brought his vast public affairs background from the military to the BLM.

"Even though I was qualified and had years of experience and all that, I know my veteran's status and military background were a big factor in my being hired," says Clark. "And after serving in the Air Force for so long, I appreciate that the BLM and my country were looking out for me, too."

Veterans interested in joining a fire crew in Klamath Falls or Medford, OR, or Spokane, WA, are invited to email BLM_OR_Firefighterhire@blm.gov.

[Image of U.S.M.C. Firefighters]

Original Photo Courtesy U.S. Marine Corps

USMC firefighters can apply the skills they learned the military to protect their public lands.

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District Round-Up

Welcome to News from the BLM in Oregon & Washington!

[Illustrated Map of Oregon & Washington with all Ten Districts Identified]

Your BLM Districts are "All Over the Map!"

Burns, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/burns

• "Hi-yo, Silver!" The Extreme Mustang Makeover is almost here! From June 28 to July 1, the third Northwest Extreme Mustang Makeover will be held in Albany, Oregon. With only 100 days to bring horses from wild to mild, 40 to 50 trainers from across America will gentle native Oregon mustangs while competing for $12,500 in cash and prizes. And at the conclusion of the Northwest Extreme Mustang Makeover, participating horses are available for adoption! More info online: extrememustangmakeover.com.

• The long-awaited Oregon Field Guide episode from Oregon Public Broadcasting about Balloon Archaeology has aired! Featuring geography experts Cory Plank, Orrin Fredericks, and Ed Zigroy as well as Burns archaeologist Scott Thomas, this short video is viewable forever on the OPB website: http://bit.ly/KIuz5t

• And speaking of videos, PBS series This American Land came to Burns to film, a feature about the Steens Mountain Running Camp. It's also available online: http://bit.ly/M7OePW

[Photo of a rider atop a mustang]

After their journey from wild to mild, these extreme mustangs will be available for adoption!

Coos Bay, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay

• Kerrie Palermo, head of Coos Bay's Wildlife Program, was honored with the David B. Marshall Award at the annual meeting of the Wildlife Society's Oregon Chapter. This lifetime achievement award is the most prestigious given by the organization. Kerrie was recognized for her 30-year career spent promoting responsible wildlife stewardship, habitat restoration, and all matter of resource issues. Great job, Kerrie!

• And speaking of award-worthy work, Coos Bay fisheries biologist Dan Van Slyke led the BLM to partner with four watershed councils, four private timber companies, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Siuslaw National Forest, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enhance 28.5 stream miles with 2,550 logs, six boulder weirs, and 990 boulders. Visitors to Coos Bay this summer will enjoy seeing such healthy streams and riparian areas. [Photo of American Youths Improving the Public Lands] American youths are hard at work on their public lands

[Photo of Kerrie Palermo]

30 years and going strong!

Eugene, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/eugene

• Timely to this issue's theme of Oregon forestry, the Eugene District held a public meeting on May 29 to connect with the community and talk in detail about the future of our forests. The meeting saw a great diversity of viewpoints and suggestions about the next steps to managing western Oregon forests in a sustainable manner.

• And after 33 years, 11 months, and 12 days, Siuslaw Resource Manager Bill Hatton retired from Eugene. Hatton, a retired Colonel in the U.S. Marine Reserves (for which he'd been featured in Northwest Passage) will be greatly missed.

Lakeview, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/lakeview

• Big news from Lakeview! Ms. E. Lynn Burkett was selected as the newest Lakeview District Manager! Though her previous position was as the Station Manager for the Lower Potomac Field Office in the BLM's Eastern States Office, Ms. Burkett is no stranger to Oregon. She previously served as the Roseburg District's Public Affairs Officer for five years And she's also worked on a number of well-traveled assignments from Washington D.C. to Idaho to Arizona. Welcome back to Oregon!

• The Christmas Valley Sand Dunes expect to welcome many off-highway vehicle enthusiasts this summer. Composed largely of ash and pumice that blew into the area 7,000 years ago when Mt. Mazama erupted to form Crater Lake, nearly 8,900 acres of the Sand Dunes are open to vehicle use. For photos and links to directions, please visit http://bit.ly/LE2Rbq

• Klamath Falls has been recruiting America's Veterans to work on their local firefighting crews (see p. 10). Putting to use their critical leadership skills, these men and women will head outdoors this summer to protect the public lands around their towns and neighbors. And with no experience necessary, Veterans will receive all necessary training. Thank you for your service!

[Photo of Firefighters]

Military Veterans in Klamath Falls were hired by the BLM to fight fires in their local community.

Medford, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/medford

• In addition to building their own Veteran firefighting crew, Medford has been also been busy welcoming Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to view the Medford Pilot Project earlier this year. As host to one of Oregon's three ecological forestry pilot projects, the Medford District is demonstrating the feasibility of applying ecological forestry principles in the BLM's western Oregon forests. You can watch a video from the Secretary's trip at http://bit.ly/K2emtR.

• The Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe entered into an agreement with the BLM and The Nature Conservancy to protect and maintain the Table Rocks near Medford, Oregon.

• And have you seen Medford's amazing vintage Rogue River video?! It's one of the BLM's most popular clips on YouTube. This film, which appears to be from the 1960s, does a terrific job reminding us why the Rogue was one of the original eight rivers included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. Check it out online! http://bit.ly/Lgaxj1

Continues on next page

More great news from the BLM in Oregon & Washington!

Prineville, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/Prineville

• As summer approaches, Mecca Flat Campground is ready to live up to its name as an attractive recreation draw for many visitors. In 2011, Portland General Electric and the Prineville District put to use Federal Energy Regulatory Commission funding to re-engineer the campground. Located on the Lower Deschutes River, the revamped Mecca Flat Campground is now pulling in accolades like "brand new," "unrecognizable," and "amazing" regarding all the improvements. And summer visitors will now find themselves surrounded by native plantings with their own irrigation system as well as redesigned, level campsites with new fire rings and tables. Plus a new river access point! The site now has a campsite and restroom compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Not to mention a renovated day-use area with a new parking at the trailhead. Visitors get ready! Mecca awaits....

[Photo of a Campground Alongside a River]

Your gorgeous riverside campground is ready. All it needs is you!

Roseburg, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/roseburg

• The Roseburg District was thrilled to welcome Katrina Symons as the new District Manager. Katrina comes from the Grants Pass Field Office where she has served as the Field Manager since 2004. "Her passion for her work in natural resources and her day-to-day knowledge of the BLM's programs in western Oregon equips her well for working with the employees, communities and partners in the Roseburg District," said State Director Ed Shepard.

• The Roseburg District also provided youth outreach by attending a career day at the local Phoenix Charter School. BLM District staff presented information about careers and work opportunities as well as information about student programs, camps, and volunteer and job shadow opportunities. The career day was coordinated by Denny Weston, a Vista Volunteer working with the Roseburg District and Phoenix School to develop educational curriculum and lesson plans for use by BLM staff when teaching students in the field..

[Photo of Students at a Career Fair]

Students learn about careers on their public lands.

Salem, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/salem

• After a career with the BLM that started in 1980, Miles Brown celebrated his retirement as Salem District Manager. The Salem District thanks Miles for his passionate service and wishes him well in his retirement. And in June 2012, Kim Titus will become the new Salem District Manager! Kim's background in forestry and natural resources as well as her extensive leadership experience are a boon to Salem's public lands.

• Green means energy! And at the Salem District, energy efficiency projects have been underway to employ ground-based solar panels on the north end of the grounds plus an additional 165 solar panels on the roof to provide both power and heating for a domestic hot water system. Want to check it out in person? An open house will be planned soon...

[Photo of Solar Panels on the Roof of a Building]

Salem turns the sun into green energy.

Spokane, Washington: blm.gov/or/districts/spokane

• As the summer season begins, the Spokane District announced its annual fee season at Yakima River Canyon beginning May 15, 2012. Recreation fees continue to be very affordable for families on a budget with a $5 per vehicle daily fee at Umtanum, Lmuma Creek, Big Pines, and Roza Recreation Sites. Frequent visitors can save money and have the convenience of one pass to use all season long by purchasing a seasonal daily use permit for $25 per vehicle. Additionally, the cost to stay overnight is $15 per site, good until check out time at 11 a.m. the following day. This fee covers one campsite with two vehicles and up to ten campers.

• The Spokane District hosted the San Juan Islands Terrestrial Managers Workshop in Friday Harbor, Washington. The workshop proved successful in serving as a forum for collaboration and will become an annual event to continue to foster collaboration among the BLM, Federal and State agencies, San Juan County, and local organizations.

Vale, Oregon: blm.gov/or/districts/vale

• The In Vale, Oregon, the BLM brought art into the classroom at the local middle school. After a Vale High School student delivered a presentation about the BLM's mission, natural resources, public lands, and potential career opportunities, the BLM provided the paper and paints – and the kids provided the inspiration! Want to see the majestic public lands that inspired this art? Visit us online and plan your next family trip at blm.gov/or/districts/vale/recreation. And visit http://bit.ly/J6Bl35 to see all the youths' art.

[Illustration of a Wolf Howling at the Moon]

A-Whooooo! It's the Oregon Youth Art Project!

Plus daily updates at Facebook and Twitter!

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The Future of Oregon Forestry

As Oregon moves forward in a new century, the BLM has been asking its neighbors to help usher in a future of forestry that balances the social, economic, and ecological values important to our communities.

By Ed Shepherd and Mike Mottice

[Illustration of a Tree with the Sun]

[Image of a Sunny, Green Forest]

In March, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced our intent to revise plans for 2.5 million acres of forest lands in western Oregon. Public outreach meetings have been held in Medford, Roseburg, Coos Bay, Eugene, Salem, Klamath Falls, and Portland. The question is now will Oregonians share their advice, opinions, and expertise with us? For the sake of our communities, our counties, and our forests, we hope so.

In December 2010, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar hosted an Oregon Forest Summit in Washington, D.C. Dozens of stakeholders voiced familiar interests to conserve old-growth, provide jobs, and reduce wildfire risk. Secretary Salazar urged participants to "get past the gridlock and litigation" and directed the BLM to pilot the ecological forestry concepts of two of the nation's leading forest scientists, Drs. Norm Johnson and Jerry Franklin. The pilots are in various stages, but one thing is clear – people have been ready, willing, and able to talk about these forestry principles as a possible path forward, especially in the drier forests. The BLM needs to craft a new plan that considers this approach and other ideas across the landscape.

We can understand why some folks may have been reluctant to participate in a new planning process. Federal land use planning is time-consuming and hard work, and there are no guarantees. However, the BLM has many reasons to be optimistic.

Amidst the intense, sometime contentious, public debate about how to manage these lands to help shore-up the finances of our western Oregon counties and at the same time provide clean water and habitat for endangered species, we are hearing some agreement. Sometimes you have to listen carefully, but when you do, you will hear many say that something must be done now to assist our counties and communities. There is growing public support for projects that improve forest health and reduce the risk of wildfire. We're also hearing some agreement about the value of forest diversity and the importance of older forests. The BLM planning process provides a forum to forge additional agreement and explore ways to resolve remaining differences in consideration of the important social, economic, and ecological values at stake.

These three values might best be viewed as the three legs of a “sustainability” stool – when all are present, the stool is stable and supportive. Remove or shorten one leg, however, and the stool topples over. We must find a way to balance economic needs with the capacity of its lands and not force a false choice between the environment and our communities. Making sustainable decisions requires all sides to “come to the table” to find solutions that fairly represent others’ interests – the other legs of the stool – as well as their own.

The management of public forests in western Oregon is ultimately a balancing act. Sustainable decisions provide successful, long-term outcomes and can be implemented with a high degree of certainty because they have a reasonable level of social acceptance. We need this balanced, sustainable approach in western Oregon. We urge everyone who participated in all these discussions as well as those who did not to be part of the solution.

Come share your ideas. We’re listening.

Ready to tell the BLM your ideas, suggestions, and experiences? Visit us online to send comments directly: blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon

And visit http://blm.gov/pgkd to view Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar’s visit to western Oregon to connect with local communities and discuss next steps for the future of forestry.

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Millions of Acres

150 Years Ago, the Homestead Act of 1862 Opened a New Frontier to West-Seeking Settlers

Story by Brooke Brown

[Photo of a Historic Homestead]

"The Homestead Act, as you know, intended to populate the Vacant countryside, and…in the Midwest it worked just fine, you know, 160 acres. But, in this kind of turf here...It's a rough go." Ned Livingston, Gerber Family historian

Additional historic homesteading photos online at http://bit.ly/MWJ0FP

Exactly 150 years ago in the midst of the American Civil War, Congress passed a bill signed by President Abraham Lincoln making the 1862 Homestead Act into law. Pioneers – especially new immigrants – looked westward, buoyed with hope that homesteading would allow them the opportunity to establish themselves in a new country. They searched to find a home in America where they could make a living on its land.

By way of the Oregon Trail, the Pacific Northwest welcomed many homesteaders. Some 50,000 travelers made their way here. And perhaps one of the more interesting plots is the Gerber Block in southern Oregon. Currently public lands managed by the BLM's Lakeview District, the Gerber Block was initially described by cadastral surveys in 1868 and 1871 as grassy prairie land surrounded by timber.

A Legacy Begins

In 1886 and 1888, Louis Gerber and his brother John acquired 840 acres in southern Oregon under the Swamp Land Act. Then in 1895, Louis filed for a homestead comprised of 167.77 acres in Horsefly Valley, Oregon, along Miller Creek – a place known today as the "Gerber Block."

Back in Sacramento, California, Louis and John had originally established themselves as purveyors of a wholesale meat business. Louis was a meat buyer for the company known as "Gerber Brothers" which allowed him to travel through northern California and southern Oregon. He drove cattle from southern Oregon to northern California for shipment by rail to his own slaughterhouse.

Over the course of his travels, Louis slowly began building a ranch. And in 1899, Louis married a school teacher from southern Oregon, Ida J. Campbell. Louis and Ida had two sons. Though one died when he was two years old, the other grew up as Henry Gerber.

Watering the West

Louis and John weren't the only ones helping to develop the west. In 1878, a number of irrigation projects were building canals to deliver crucial water to thirsty farmlands. And once the Reclamation Act was passed in 1902, the Federal government became a key player in Oregon's irrigation efforts in the Klamath Basin.

A few years later, the Klamath Project was authorized to provide additional irrigation water to the local agriculture community. This water came from Lost River, Oregon, and Clear Lake, California, to serve tens of thousands of acres within the Klamath Basin. At the Gerber Block a dam was constructed. And by redirecting water to grow crops, many of the 359,000 acres of wetlands in this area were drained – and ultimately offered as homesteads to U.S. citizens as well as World War I and World War II veterans.

For the Public Good

By 1923, the Gerbers' original 840 acres acquired under the Swamp Land Act and the 167.77 acres of homestead lands were sold to the U.S. government for development under the Bureau of Reclamation's Klamath Project. Today, these lands have been taken over by the Gerber Reservoir that was developed as a part of that project.

Ranchers in this area came to realize that the quality of the rangeland was seriously declining. And competition between livestock would only make the situation worse. So in opposition to potentially tighter grazing controls, local livestock men formed the Southern Oregon Grazing Association in 1933. Louis' son Henry Gerber was an original member of the Association as well as the group's secretary. The Association submitted a bill to Congress seeking the creation of a Federal grazing district.

First in Oregon, First in the Nation

The Taylor Grazing Act was passed shortly thereafter by Congress in 1934. This new law took out 142 million acres across 11 western states from homesteading. Ultimately, this act created the U.S. Grazing Service – which has been incorporated into today's BLM. But the original mission of the Grazing Service was to manage lands in the public domain and to develop grazing districts. And Henry Gerber wrote to the Department of the Interior asking for help in establishing a grazing unit in the Gerber Block.

Two days after the Taylor Grazing Act was passed, the U.S. Geological Survey recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that the Gerber Block was useful for grazing and forage crops and that a grazing district should be established. And so in April 1935, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes created Grazing Districts 1, 3, and 4 in Oregon. The Gerber Block was bestowed the title of Grazing District Number 1 making it the first grazing district in Oregon – and the nation.

Home, and Back Again

Perhaps even more impressive in the Gerber Block becoming the first grazing district in Oregon is the fact that the three granddaughters of Louis Gerber – all daughters of Henry – still retain Gerber Ranch lands in the Gerber Block area and live on the lands. From the 1980s onward, the Gerber family has been a key player in lands management working with both the BLM and U.S. Forest Service. The Gerber Family has also implemented their own land improvement projects to include fencing, thinning, and

wildlife habitat improvement projects – as well as working with Oregon wildlife biologists to monitor and reintroduce elk on the lands.

Through the Homestead Act, folks like the Gerber family laid a historical foundation that have allowed these lands to be set aside for public use and enjoyment and to be managed responsibly by the BLM. Travelers to the Gerber Block can still hear and feel the echoes of earlier settlers. They can see, if faintly, the roads which once carried wagon trains and early pioneer families. And by their continued presence, it is perhaps the Gerber family who carries on this history the most. Louis Gerber's 1895 homestead led to a family legacy on a public landscape that is still very much felt and seen today.

[Recreation of a Historic Homestead Poster]

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I Shot That!

The BLM's Annual Photo Contest

Every year the BLM holds a photo contest open to all employees. These shots are just a sample of the talent and awesome creativity of our photographers. To see the full-size photos, drop by our photo page at flickr.com/photos/blmoregon

[Illustration of a Camera]

[Illustration of a Film Canister]

[Illustration of a Camera Light]

[Image of a Blue Ribbon]

First Place

[Photo of a Farm] Gregg Morgan, Roseburg District – Anytime/Anywhere

[Photo of People Fishing] Kevin Klatt, Burns District – People & Recreation

[Photo of an Aqueduct] Macrina Lesniak, Roseburg District – Artistic

[Photo of Mountain Goat] Nick Miller, Burns District – Wildlife

[Photo of a Rider on a Horse] Mitch Thomas, Vale District – BLM@Work

[Photo of a Stream] Anne Boyd, Spokane District – Landscape

[Photo of Firefighting Gloves and Ax] Cory Geisler, Salem District – Fire

[Photo of a Mushroom and Log] Cory Geisler, Salem District – Plants

[Photo of a Historic Homestead] Ed Hennagin, Lakeview District – Cultural

[Image of a Red Ribbon]

Second Place

[Photo of Wildflowers at Steens Mountain] Nick Miller, Burns District – Artistic

[Photo of a Historic Homestead] Sarah Canham, Prineville District – Cultural

[Photo of a Snow-Capped Mountain] Desraye Assali, Medford District – Anytime/Anywhere

[Photo of Tall Trees] Deanna McCrory, Roseburg District – BLM@Work

[Photo of Wildflower] Ron Exeter, Salem District – Plants

[Photo of a Foggy Forest with Light] Cory Geisler, Salem District – Landscape

[Photo of a Photographer at Steens Mountain] Nick Miller, Burns District – People & Recreation

[Photo of a Helicopter Fighting a Wildland Fire] Lisa Grant, Burns District – Fire

[Photo of a Fish in a Stream] Jeff McEnroe, Roseburg District – Wildlife

[Image of a Yellow Ribbon]

Third Place

[Photo of the Oregon Coast] Ron Exeter, Salem District – Anytime/Anywhere

[Photo of a Youth Holding a Fish at Free Fishing Day] Gregg Morgan, Roseburg District – BLM@Work

[Photo of the Eastern Oregon Plains at Twilight] Cari Taylor, Prineville District – Landscape

[Photo of Wildflowers] Macrina Lesniak, Roseburg District – Plants

[Photo of Native American Rock Art] Sarah Canham, Prineville District – Cultural

[Photo of Dragonfly] Jeff McEnroe, Roseburg District – Wildlife

[Photo of the Aftermath of a Fire] Jonas Parker, Roseburg District – Fire

[Photo of a Dragonfly] Pete Huppi, Eugene District – Artistic

[Photo of a Boater in a River] Patrick Kollodge, Prineville District – People & Recreation

Want to see more photos? Or share your own? Drop by our official Flickr page at www.flickr.com/photos/blmoregon

Backcountry

Saving Our Sage-Grouse

[Illustration of a Sage-Grouse and the State of Oregon]

Icon of the west, the Greater Sage-Grouse have seen their numbers decline over the last century. And if the sage-grouse is in trouble, then other sagebrush-dependent species may be as well.

As steward for more than half of all sagebrush habitats in the United States, the BLM is working with its many Federal, state, and local partners to play a leading role in developing and implementing plans to conserve sage-grouse.

To follow the BLM's efforts to protect and preserve sagebrush habitat for the sage-grouse and other native plants and wildlife, please visit us online at on.doi.gov/H9NDe1.

By themselves, sage-grouse stand only two feet tall. But atop the shoulders of the BLM and our dedicated partners, these birds shall rise much higher – and from here, they'll soon see a long & healthy future.