



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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BLM and Sierra Club Mission Outdoors Commemorate Veterans Day with Photo and Essay Contest for Military Service Members and Families

As part of their continued commitment to serving the members of our nation's Armed Forces, the Bureau of Land Management and Sierra Club Mission Outdoors kicked off their first annual Veterans Day Essay and Photo Contest. This contest, centered on the theme "What My Public Lands Mean to Me," encourages 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.

The BLM and Sierra Club will accept entries through Thursday, December 6 at <http://mypubliclands.challenge.gov>. Beginning December 7 (Pearl Harbor Day) and through December 14, members of the public will be able to vote for their favorite entries through the same website. The three most popular entries will be featured on the BLM and Sierra Club websites and social media platforms, and receive an outdoor support kit from the Sierra Club.

"As a veteran, I have not only experienced the healing powers of our country's public lands first hand, but have been lucky enough to hear others tell me about their positive experiences," said Sierra Club Mission Outdoors Director Stacy Bare. "This contest will allow others like me to share their stories, photos, and videos highlighting the important role our public lands have played in their lives."

The BLM-managed lands provide veterans with not only a wide variety of recreational activities, but also an opportunity to enhance physical and emotional well-being. Today's announcement comes one month after a military family outing at the Organ Mountains on BLM-managed land in New Mexico, hosted by the Sierra Club. During the event, for service members and their families engaged in hikes, children's events, and educational workshops.

"Each and every day, the men and women of our Armed Forces commit their lives around the world to defending our nation," said BLM Acting Director Mike Pool. "The BLM is proud to welcome them home, celebrate their service, and invite them to enjoy the most beautiful parts of this country they have so dutifully served."

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.

More information on the contest, including how to enter and a complete set of rules, can be found at <http://mypubliclands.challenge.gov> .

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.

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