



Celebrate your 8.3 million acres of Colorado

By Helen Hankins

Coloradoans are well aware how much their quality of life is enhanced by public lands.

National Public Lands Day, observed on Sept. 24, provides the perfect opportunity to reflect on these 8.3 million acres of Colorado lands which are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. From the cultural heritage of areas like the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument to the unparalleled big game hunting of northwest Colorado, mountain bike trails to 14ers, Colorado's public lands provide the backdrop for so much of what it means to be a Colorado resident.

While we often think about recreation and sweeping vistas, it's also important to remember how critical these public lands are to the state's economy.

The BLM is one of a handful of federal agencies that generates more revenue than it spends. Last fiscal year, BLM public lands contributed more than \$6.5 billion to Colorado's economy and \$112 billion to the U.S. economy, while the BLM's annual budget was only about \$1 billion to manage more than 245 million acres of public land and 700 million acres of the public's mineral estate.

In Colorado, BLM public lands supported more than 28,000 jobs and 6.5 million visitors. Nationally, BLM public lands supported an estimated 507,750 jobs in 2010.

Traditional energy production continues to be a cornerstone of public lands management, with 22,912 jobs associated with mineral and energy development on public lands, generating nearly \$4.9 billion in total economic impact. Our careful management of public lands to increase renewable energy production is helping to create a cleaner, more secure energy future.

The BLM's public lands are not only critical in producing energy, but also delivering energy. Most oil and gas pipelines and power lines in the West require a right-of-way across public lands, meeting the needs of local cities and towns. The BLM supports community growth through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, which allows the sale or lease of public lands to state and local governments for schools, fire stations, municipal facilities, landfills, hospitals and parks. These partnerships between local communities and the federal government are crucial for Colorado's future.

Ranching on public lands and managing for healthy, productive forests remain important to the livelihood of many Colorado families. Grazing on public lands in Colorado generated \$54 million while timber activity generated nearly \$47 million.

At the BLM, we are dedicated to managing your public lands through community-based stewardship, ensuring that your public lands remain vital to the quality of life and economic health of current and future generations.

