

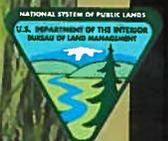
Connecting People to Their Public Lands

An Update on BLM Education, Interpretation, Volunteer, and Youth Employment Activities

2014

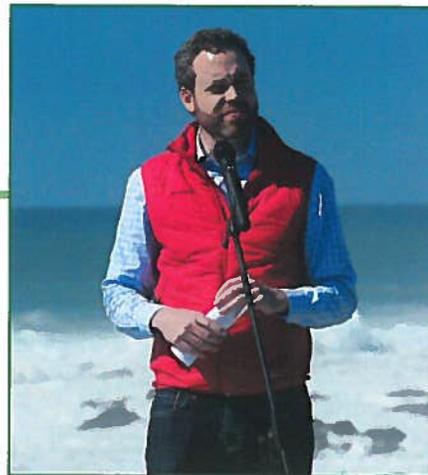


PLAY • LEARN • SERVE • WORK



From the Director

On behalf of the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management, I am pleased to present Connecting People to Their Public Lands, the BLM's 2014 update on education, interpretation, volunteer, and youth engagement activities. The programs and projects described here represent only a small sampling of the ways in which BLM employees work to connect local communities to BLM public lands. These efforts clearly demonstrate the BLM's commitment to the Secretary's goal of "engaging the next generation" by providing opportunities for youth—as well as families, educators, and the general public—to play, learn, serve, and work on the public lands.



Overall, the BLM has achieved a remarkable level of success in these programs, based on strong state office, district office, and field office participation. Among the accomplishments we document for Fiscal Year 2013:

- More than 68,000 youth and families participated in over 250 Take It Outside! activities.
- Over 61,000 students, teachers, and parents participated in formal education programs at our Hands on the Land outdoor classrooms.
- Some 30,000 volunteers contributed more than 1.1 million hours, worth an estimated \$26 million.
- The 20th annual National Public Lands Day brought thousands of volunteers to 136 BLM sites.
- The BLM and partner organizations hired about 3,200 youth for project-based work and internships.
- Our interpretation programs engaged an estimated 4.5 million visitors and guests on the public lands.

These undertakings would not have been possible without solid connections among the BLM, the communities we serve, and the partners and volunteers who support our programs. We share a clear vision of BLM public lands as ideal settings for superlative programs for both today's audiences and the generations to come.

Neil Kornze

Introduction



PLAY

With 245 million acres to manage, the BLM offers plenty of places to play. Each year, more than 59 million people visit, bringing family, friends—and kids. **Take It Outside!** offers fun activities for young people and families on the BLM's public lands. The program was established to help ensure that children, youth, and families have access to outdoor experiences on public lands. In 2013 the BLM achieved its Take It Outside! program goals by reaching more than 68,000 youth and families, who participated in over 250 different activities to get outdoors and active on BLM lands. Participants attended 34 overnight and day camps and 114 recreational outings, such as fishing, hiking, and paleontology explorations.



The mission of the **Stewardship Program** is to build appreciation and "ownership" of the public lands by fostering a connection between people and the land through outdoor experiences, education, and volunteerism. The BLM relies on partners and volunteers to help fulfill the Stewardship Program's mission. Two of the BLM's long-standing partners, Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, Inc., help the agency promote stewardship and teach outdoor ethics to the public and BLM staff. In 2013 Tread Lightly! trained 115 BLM staff as master Tread Lightly! trainers, while 10 BLM staff completed the 5-day Leave No Trace master educator course. Seventy-eight BLM-hosted Take It Outside! activities included Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace outdoor ethics sessions in 2013, helping to ensure that participants recreate responsibly.

Youth groups such as the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, and other national organizations work closely with BLM offices on youth programs. In the summer of 2013, for example, the BLM helped teach Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! outdoor ethics to more than 1,000 Boy Scouts and visitors at the Boy Scouts' 2013 National Scout

Jamboree in West Virginia, in addition to leading instruction for the archaeology merit badge. Nationwide in 2013 the BLM worked with 592 partners from nonprofit organizations, schools, businesses, and government agencies on Take It Outside! and stewardship programs. The BLM's investment of more than 21,000 hours of staff time was more than doubled by 38,400 volunteer hours. These efforts helped the BLM accomplish stewardship projects, get youth and families outdoors, and nurture future stewards of the public lands.



LEARN

Educational programs and interpretation programs are essential for the BLM to achieve its mission of sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands. Public lands are significant resources for engaging learners of all ages about cultural heritage and the natural world in which we live. Programs include the Hands on the Land network of outdoor classrooms; Project Archaeology training for educators; interpretive programs at visitor centers and other venues; and a variety of other educational outreach programs.

Hands on the Land

Hands on the Land (HOL) is a national network of outdoor classrooms on public lands. HOL sites develop education programs in partnership with local schools and communities. For the BLM, Hands on the Land is the principal means of delivering formal education programs to school audiences. In Fiscal Year 2013 the BLM's 56 HOL sites hosted 1,277 days of outdoor classroom activities and engaged more than 61,000 students, teachers, and parents.

Interpretation

The BLM's **Interpretation Program** connects public lands visitors to natural and cultural resources, enhancing understanding of resource management issues, adding to the quality of the visitor experience, and building interest in America's public lands. In 2013 almost 4.5 million people at 72 BLM sites participated in interpretive programs, walking tours, guided activities, and interpretive demonstrations, or benefited from nonpersonal interpretive media, including wayside kiosks, exhibits, films, websites, and social media.

The BLM recognized two BLM interpreters and educators with 2013 **Excellence in Interpretation or Environmental Education Awards** for programs they developed to enhance understanding of the public lands and management issues related to the BLM's multiple-use mission. The winners were Holly Beck of BLM-Idaho's Bruneau Field Office and Kathi Fine of BLM-Wyoming's Rock Springs Field Office. The awards were presented at the National Association for Interpretation's National Workshop in Reno, Nevada.

During 2013, BLM state and field offices produced more than a dozen new **Junior Explorer** activity guides. These kid-friendly booklets were completed for BLM sites in California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming.

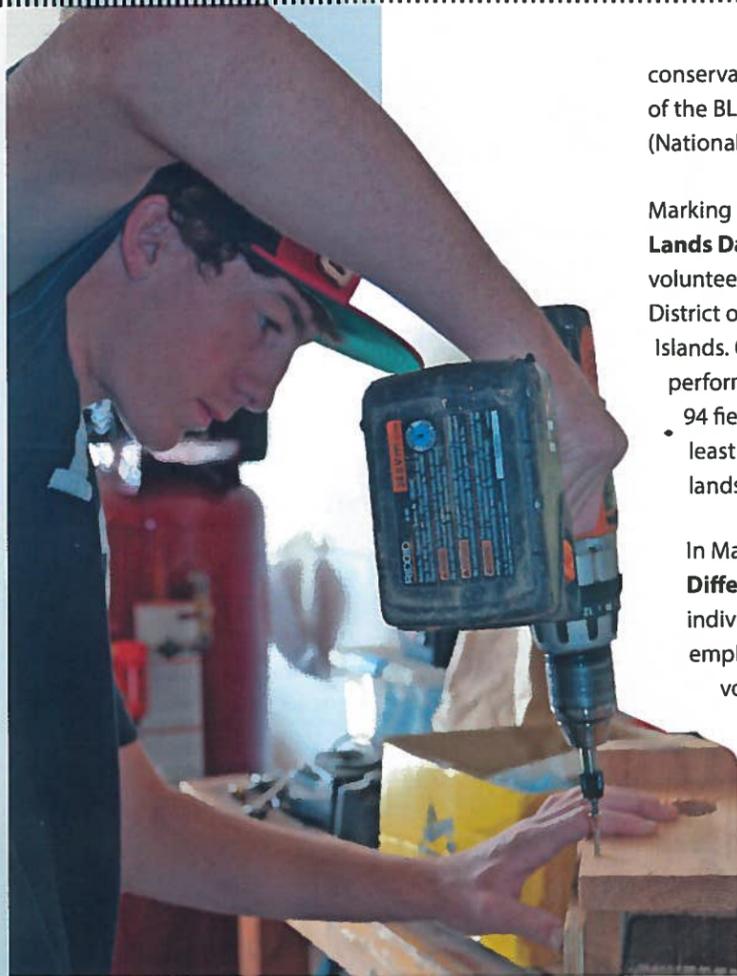
Through art, the **BLM Artist-in-Residence Program** encourages awareness of exceptional places on the public lands and provides an opportunity for learning and dialogue about the value of preserving important resources and landscapes. In 2013 the BLM hosted three artists, working in media ranging from pastels to oil paints, at Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The program's tagline is "Taking Public Lands to Heart."

Other Formal Education Programs

The BLM is organized into more than 150 state, district, and field offices, whose staff conduct hundreds of educational outreach programs each year. Many of these programs involve long-term partnerships with local schools and school districts. In times of tight school budgets, BLM staff and volunteers have enhanced curricula with classroom programs, reaching nearly 118,000 students in 2013. Generations of residents in local communities have learned to love and respect their public lands through the BLM's educational programs.

Project Archaeology

Through a partnership between the BLM and Montana State University, the **Project Archaeology** heritage education program offers basic and advanced professional development for educators throughout the nation. In 2013 Project Archaeology launched a new website to serve educators and students. The program also completed an introductory video for professional development. Project Archaeology-trained educators reached an estimated 14,888 learners with archaeology education in 2013.



conservation areas, national scenic rivers, and other units of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands).

Marking its 20th celebration in 2013, **National Public Lands Day** engaged the services of an estimated 175,000 volunteers working on 2,200 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of these, almost 10,000 were BLM volunteers who performed work on 189 projects at 136 sites hosted by 94 field offices in 16 states. These projects produced at least \$1.5 million in enhancements to the BLM's public lands and facilities.

In May 2013 the BLM presented its **"Making a Difference" National Volunteer Awards** to four individuals, one couple, one group, and one BLM employee for outstanding volunteer service or volunteer leadership on BLM-managed lands.

The selected volunteers were: Ray and Linda Panter, Central Yukon Field Office, Alaska; Annette Froehlich (Lifetime Achievement), Las Cruces District Office, New Mexico; Joshua Barlow, Price Field Office, Utah; Upper Ridge Wilderness Association (Lifetime Achievement), Redding Field Office, California; Illa Willmore (Lifetime Achievement), Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, Montana; and Pat Williams (Milestone Award),

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Nevada. Warren J. Trogden, Sr., Challis Field Office, Idaho, was the winning BLM employee.

SERVE

As the nation's largest land manager, the BLM relies on thousands of volunteers who offer their time in service to the nation's natural and cultural resources. The **BLM Volunteer Program** engaged more than 30,000 volunteers in 2013. Volunteer contributions exceeded 1.1 million hours, or the equivalent of 641 work years, at an estimated value of \$26 million to the BLM. Volunteers contribute their time, services, and skills to a wide variety of BLM program areas, including Recreation, Wild Horses and Burros, Wilderness, Cultural/Historical Resources, and Environmental Education/Interpretation. The return on investment for the Volunteer Program was roughly 22:1 in 2013 (that is, for every \$1 spent on the program, the BLM received more than \$22 in services contributed by volunteers). About one-third of the volunteer hours were spent working on national monuments, national

WORK

The **BLM Youth Program** supports initiatives and activities that build on the spark of childhood wonder about the natural world, sustain interest through hands-on education and volunteer experiences, and encourage long-term engagement and stewardship, as well as the pursuit of natural resource careers. In Fiscal Year 2012 the BLM had engaged more than 4,800 youth in project-based work and internships through student employment programs and through partnerships with youth-serving organizations, including youth corps. Despite budget cuts and restrictions on seasonal hiring, BLM states were still able to hire about 3,200 youth in 2013. The statistic is based on more than 1,100 reports submitted by BLM state and local offices.

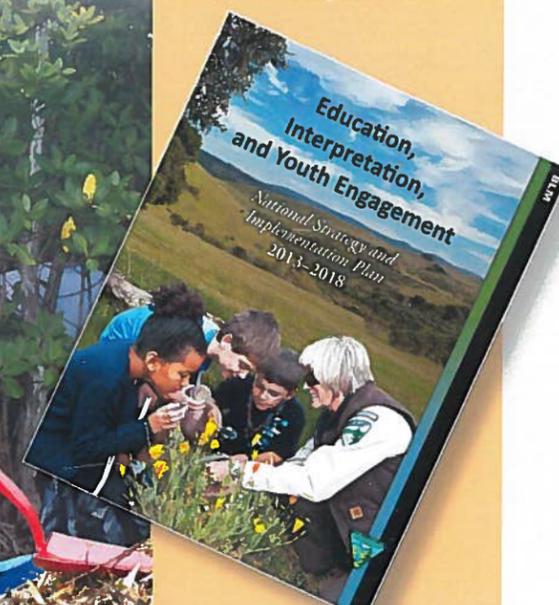


The Junior Explorer program provides an avenue for all segments of the BLM to create and provide engaging high-quality educational materials to parents, children, and teachers. In Fiscal Year 2013, BLM state and field offices created more than a dozen Junior Explorer booklets. Covers of several Junior Explorer booklets are shown above. Copies of all the Junior Explorer booklets can be downloaded from the BLM website, www.blm.gov/education.



A Strategy To Bring It All Together

In February 2013 the BLM published a new **Education, Interpretation, and Youth Engagement National Strategy, 2013–2018**. The strategy emphasizes the BLM's commitment to programs that foster connections between people and their public lands, expand understanding of the BLM's complex mission, and inspire conservation stewardship and service. The national strategy was accompanied by an implementation plan for internal use. In accordance with that plan, BLM states designed step-down implementation plans using a common format. At all levels, specific action items will help the BLM to achieve long-range goals and objectives. By addressing such priorities as shared stewardship and youth engagement, the strategy provides a vision and a plan for the next 5 years.



BLM-New Mexico offers a wide range of programs to educate and engage public lands visitors. Programs at the El Malpais National Conservation Area and the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument encourage students to explore nature and fossils. Youth partnerships with organizations in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and elsewhere reach underserved and disadvantaged youth.

PLAY

Horse Camp for Incarcerated Youth

Georgetown, TX: In spring 2013 the BLM Oklahoma Field Office and the Mustang Heritage Foundation cohosted Camp Wildfire, a 2-day camp for incarcerated students from the Williamson County (Texas) Juvenile Detention Center. Fifteen campers ages 15–17 attended the camp, located in Georgetown, Texas, where they spent hands-on time with horses and worked with a local mustang trainer. The campers also participated in painting activities, leather tooling, and a presentation by the trainer.

Night Hikes

Rio Puerco, NM: BLM staff from the Rio Puerco Field Office offered unique and adventure-filled summer Family Night Hikes, geared to get children out hiking after dark—without flashlights—to experience the outdoors using senses other than vision. More than 105 participants enjoyed a one-of-a-kind experience navigating trails and rocky terrain in the dark.

LEARN

Cave Video Simulation and Game

Roswell, NM: The Fort Stanton Cave Study Project, in partnership with the BLM Fort Stanton - Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area, created a video simulation and educational/interpretive video game based on the

Snowy River Passage in Fort Stanton Cave. This media piece showcases 12 miles of the longest cave passage in the world, including the unique calcite formation—the “snowy river”—that makes up its floor.

Art Walks and More at El Malpais

Grants, NM: In 2013 BLM staff at El Malpais National Conservation Area (NCA) presented 130 interpretive outreach programs to nearly 2,300 people. Among the highlights were monthly Art Walks, during which BLM park rangers accompanied art and photography enthusiasts into the NCA. There, they set up easels or brought out cameras and let nature inspire them.

Guided Hikes, Summer Presentations, and Junior Explorer Art

Las Cruces, NM: In the course of developing a BLM Junior Explorer activity program and booklet for the Dripping Springs Natural Area, the BLM Las Cruces District Office commissioned artist Lorenzo Moreno to create ink and watercolor paintings of the area’s vegetation and wildlife. Moreno’s 15 impressive illustrations were featured in a winter art display at the Las Cruces Museum of Nature & Science.

First Teacher on the Public Lands

Las Cruces, NM: In 2013 the BLM’s first Teacher on the Public Lands, Eileen Davis, took up residence at Prehistoric Trackways National Monument. She visited several sites within the BLM Las Cruces District to learn about the area’s diverse resources and complex management issues. Then, with monument staff, she developed educational programs and a curriculum for use in both traditional educational settings and the monument’s outdoor classrooms.

North Texas Conservation Biology

Amarillo, TX: Sixty-one Caprock High School students attended a six-station outdoor classroom at the BLM Cross

WORK

Signs for the New Monument

Taos, NM: Crewmembers from the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) assisted the Taos Field Office with installing signs in the new Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. The crew of nine constructed bases for entry signs as well as information kiosks in and adjacent to the monument. Another RMYC crew thinned some 33 acres of juniper and piñon pine and constructed enclosures to protect aspen regeneration in the treatment area. This project was completed on New Mexico State Land Office lands adjacent to BLM lands and funded through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Taos, NM: The Chimayo Youth Conservation Corps conducted a forest treatment project for reducing hazardous fuels on approximately 75 acres of BLM lands adjacent to private and U.S. Forest Service lands in the Canjilon area. This project was funded through a grant from the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program. Corps members also began work on a 680-acre motorized and nonmotorized park in the La Puebla Special Recreation Management Area on BLM lands. This project is funded through a Recreational Trails Program grant, a Federal Highway Administration program administered through New Mexico State Parks.

CAMP Interns

Albuquerque, NM: First-year college students from the University of New Mexico’s College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) worked as BLM interns to gain experience in public lands management and to assist with BLM projects. Interns worked in a variety of BLM programs, including archaeology, fire management, fisheries, forestry, Geographic Information Systems, range, realty, recreation, and wildlife.

Youth Works in Santa Fe

Santa Fe, NM: In partnership with the BLM New Mexico State Office, Santa Fe ¡YouthWorks! formed a workcrew of 15 youth who worked on environmental stewardship projects in northern New Mexico in 2013. Funded through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, projects included wildfire prevention, informational kiosk building and installation, fence removal and installation, trail construction, and invasive species removal.

Bar Management Area to explore the complexities of conservation biology. Students particularly enjoyed a radio telemetry activity in which they learned to track lesser prairie chickens. Participants also helped count birds, handled skulls and skins, observed snakes, and caught fish with a net. The Cross Bar is part of a local initiative to evaluate the benefits of learning in outdoor settings.



Archaeological Adventure Lessons

Oklahoma & Texas: The BLM Oklahoma Field Office vastly expanded its archaeological outreach program in 2013 by conducting several events in rural and underprivileged areas throughout Oklahoma and Texas. Hundreds of school children participated in lively, outdoor, hands-on archaeological adventure lessons. There were interactive demonstrations of prehistoric hunting techniques and lessons on archaeological site stewardship. Students were encouraged to interpret the past from direct contact with artifacts.

SERVE

Take Pride in America Awardee

Roswell, NM: Longtime volunteer Jim Cox was presented the prestigious Take Pride in America® National Volunteer Award by Roswell Field Office Manager Chuck Schmidt. As part of his volunteer work for the Fort Stanton Cave Study Project, Jim fabricated stainless steel panels for the cave’s Don Sawyer Memorial Hall/Mud Turtle Dig Shaft, and assisted the BLM with gate building and video production.

