

# America's Public Lands

Did you know that there are millions of acres of land in this country that belong to you? 240 million hectares (600 million acres), to be more specific. This land is not owned by any individual or company. Instead, it's Federal land and it's owned by the American people . . . and that means you!

The U.S. government takes care of Federal lands. The U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service are responsible for some of these Federal public lands. And so are other Federal agencies. But the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) takes care of the most—106 million hectares (262 million acres). That's almost equal to all the land in the states of Texas and California put together! BLM's main job is to keep public lands healthy, so that you can enjoy the lands now and so that young people like you can enjoy them for many years to come.

Most BLM lands are found in the western states and Alaska. In the eastern United States, BLM manages only about 12,000 hectares (30,000 acres)—mostly small, isolated areas scattered through 31 states. (These areas are too small to be seen on the map on page 5.) The agency also owns 283 million hectares (700 million acres) of underground mineral rights located throughout the country.

## ACTIVITY Map Talk

- Look at the map on the next page. Can you find your state?
- Where in your state do you live? Put a mark there.
- Use the map key to find the BLM land. Which BLM land is closest to you?
- Draw a line from the mark where your home is to the nearest BLM land. About how many kilometers (or miles) away is it? Ask a grown-up if you need help reading the scales at the bottom of the map.
- Does your state have a lot of BLM land or a little? Estimate how much of your state is BLM land. Is it one-fourth or less? Less than one-half? More?
- Find two states that have a lot of BLM land.