



# Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 1996, administers what remains of the Nation’s vast land holdings -- the public domain. The public domain once stretched from the Appalachian Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. In historian Frederick Jackson Turner’s words, it was “the richest free gift that was ever spread out before civilized man.”

Of the 1.8 billion acres of public land originally acquired by the United States, two-thirds went to citizens, corporations, and the States. Many of the remaining lands were set aside for national forests, wildlife refuges, national parks and monuments, and other public purposes.

BLM administers the remaining 270 million acres -- about one-eighth of America’s land surface, or 41 percent of the lands under Federal ownership. Most BLM-managed public lands are located in the 11 Western States, including Alaska, although small parcels are scattered throughout the eastern United States. BLM also manages

*“To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.”*

Theodore Roosevelt  
Message to Congress, December 3, 1907

570 million acres of subsurface mineral estate.

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.

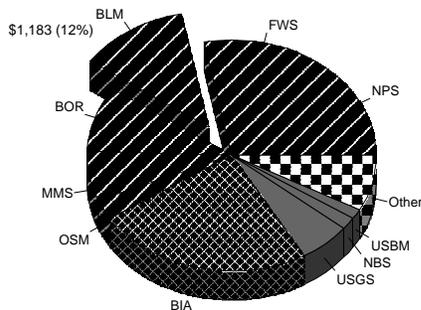
## HEALTHY PRODUCTIVE LANDS

The Bureau of Land Management has been the lead agency in developing new rangeland management regulations. *Soil, water, and air management* provides for the protection of soils, watershed values, and air resources on the public lands; reduces salinity and runoff from the public lands to protect water quality; and provides the basic data and technical information needed for resource management. *Riparian management* (i.e., riverbank) encompasses nearly 24 million acres of lands classified as riparian or wetlands. *Wildlife habitat and fisheries management* includes efforts to protect, manage, and improve fish and wildlife habitats. Selected 1995 achievements include:

- Establishment of Resource Advisory Councils to bring diverse groups of people together to develop shared solutions for managing public lands.
- Review of over 8,500 miles of riparian streams in the western States to determine the health and condition

Figure 12

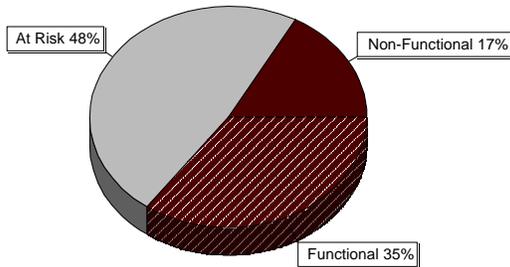
1995 Bureau of Land Management Budget Authority  
(\$ in millions)



Total DOI Budget Authority - \$9,744 million

Figure 13

Condition of BLM Stream Riparian-Wetland Areas  
Actual 1995 (Based on Miles Assessed)



of these crucial areas.

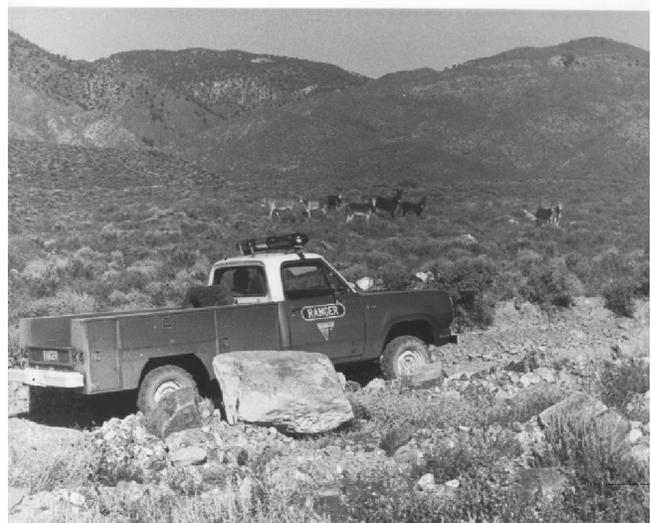
- Development of interim standards and guidelines for PACFISH, an interagency program to help Pacific fish species such as salmon and other anadromous fisheries.
- Participation in an interagency effort to reduce saline runoff and overall salinity in the Colorado River.
- Removal of 9,570 wild horses and burros from public lands and placement of 9,660 animals in private care through adoption.

## COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

BLM authorizes nearly 20,000 Western ranchers to use public rangelands, sells as much as 170 million board feet of saw timber and other forest products annually, and issues thousands of leases each year for oil, gas, or geothermal exploration and development. Public lands are also made available for coal production; gold and silver mining; sand and gravel operations; electrical transmission lines; oil, gas, and water pipelines; hunting and fishing guide services; meeting the infrastructure needs of local

communities; and movie filming.

During 1995, the public lands produced approximately \$1.1 billion from oil, gas, coal, and geothermal rents, royalties, and bonuses, as well as an additional \$200 million from grazing and timber fees and other fees, for a total of about \$1.3 billion. Oil and gas royalties are collected by the Minerals Management Service acting as agent for the Federal Government. Production from Federal coal leases was totaled over 245 million tons and generated about \$300 million in Federal royalties, of which 50 percent was returned to the states.



BLM Ranger checks the status of wild burros while patrolling Saline Valley. Photo credit - Steve Smith.

## RECREATION AND LEISURE

BLM lands are noted for providing wide-open spaces rather than highly developed recreation sites. While the Bureau does manage over 1,000 developed and semi-developed sites (campgrounds, picnic areas, etc.), most of the emphasis is on providing areas and trails for biking, hiking, float boating, camping, hunting, fishing, birdwatching, photography, and similar activities.

In 1995, the BLM focused efforts on visitor services, resource protection, use management, and plan preparation for special management areas. During 1995, a total of 126,331 recreation use permits were issued. Also, 204 BLM fee sites generated \$860,000 from collected fees, which were appropriated to BLM to be used for operating and maintaining facilities.

### ***PRESERVING CULTURAL AND NATURAL FEATURES***

As the manager of the Nation's largest land estate, BLM administers the Federal Government's largest, most varied, and most scientifically important body of cultural resources. BLM has inventoried more than 10 million acres of the 270 million acres of public lands in the 11 Western States and Alaska, or about 4 percent of the total area. More than 175,000 cultural properties, such as archaeological and historical sites, have been discovered through this inventory, with estimates of the total number ranging between 4 and 5 million. During 1995, over 430,000 acres were inventoried and 6,846 sites were managed.

During the year, BLM continued to enhance its ongoing Native American coordination and consultation program by maintaining a small program staff to provide coordination, assistance, policy guidance, training, and outreach on Native American-related issues. This program focused on supporting BLM managers in addressing the full spectrum of relationships between BLM and Native American communities, tribal governments, and Alaska Village Councils and Native Corporations.

### ***PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY***

Law enforcement and resource protection in BLM is



*Department of the Interior firefighters. Photo credit - John and Karen Hollingsworth.*

concentrated on mission-essential programs, such as resource protection, public health and safety, and drug control efforts that have a direct impact on public lands. In 1995, a total of 6,519 investigations and enforcement actions were conducted. These included opening 1,723 investigations, issuing 3,900 citations, and making 303 arrests.

A primary objective of hazardous materials management is to protect natural resources and the environment from the effects of hazardous materials or wastes. In 1995, a total of 43 emergency response actions were taken, 111 site cleanups were accomplished by BLM, additional site cleanups were performed by 37 potentially responsible parties, and 31 site cleanups were accomplished in cooperation with States.

During 1995, BLM provided wildlife protection for property and natural resources on 270 million acres of public land through operation and maintenance of the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, and the Alaska Fire Service in Fairbanks, Alaska. In 1995, BLM suppressed 2,966 wildfires that burned over 831,000 acres.



*BLM River Patrol in Gulkana National Wild River. Photo credit - James Thomson.*

### ***LAND RESOURCES, LAND EXCHANGES AND TITLE INFORMATION***

Cadastral survey is responsible for legal identification of all Federal land boundaries and maintenance of the Public Land Survey System. Cadastral surveys, which identify boundaries, property lines, and other features, are an integral component of the Alaska land conveyance program. BLM's 1995 survey emphasis supported land and realty actions (i.e., land exchange/acquisition and trespass abatement) and boundary surveys for various special land management designations such as wilderness, Wild and Scenic River designations, and National Conservation Areas.

In 1995, over 200 Bureau projects, totaling approximately 6,350 miles of cadastral survey, were completed. A total of 47 projects consisting of approximately 1,500 miles and 62 projects encompassing approximately 1,030 miles of cadastral survey were accomplished at the request of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and U.S. Forest Service, respectively. BLM also completed 48 cadastral survey projects requested by other external customers; these involved approximately 924 miles of cadastral surveys.

Alaska lands management provides the special lands and realty functions for Federal lands in the State of Alaska. This program includes continuing the transfer of title for large acreage to the State of Alaska and Native corporations; processing Native allotments, land exchanges, and use authorizations; performing easement management; and doing other lands and realty work to support natural resource programs in Alaska. In 1995, 1,650,815 acres were patented to Native corporations, while 982,272 acres were conveyed to the State of Alaska.

### ***TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE***

The Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program provides for payments to counties for lands located within their boundaries that are administered by BLM, the Forest Service, the National Park Service, or other Federal agencies. The law provides for payment of 75 cents per acre, reduced by payments made under certain other revenue sharing programs such as the Mineral Leasing Act and the National Forest Revenue Act, or a payment of 10 cents per acre, whichever is greater. The payment to each recipient, however, may not exceed a statutory ceiling based on population.

In 1995, over \$101 million was distributed to counties and states as payments in lieu of taxes.

### ***CUSTOMER SERVICE***

During June and July 1995, the BLM conducted its first national survey of customers to determine the level of customer satisfaction with the BLM services. The survey was conducted with a random sample of over 7,000 customers, grouped according to the products or services they receive most often from BLM: (1) information



A Co-op student serving as BLM's Public Contact Specialist in the Joint Information Office in Portland's Multnomah Building. Photo credit - Theresa Gibson.

access, (2) recreation and education, and (3) use authorization. These groups encompass the vast majority of BLM's day-to-day customers. In addition, some 3,000 front-line employees were surveyed about providing customer service.

The survey asked a variety of questions in different categories (see Figure 14). Customers rated their experiences with BLM on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 meaning "needs improvement," and 7 meaning "excellent." As shown in Figure 15, information access customers indicated the highest level of satisfaction with BLM, followed by recreation and education customers, and then use authorization customers.

Figure 14

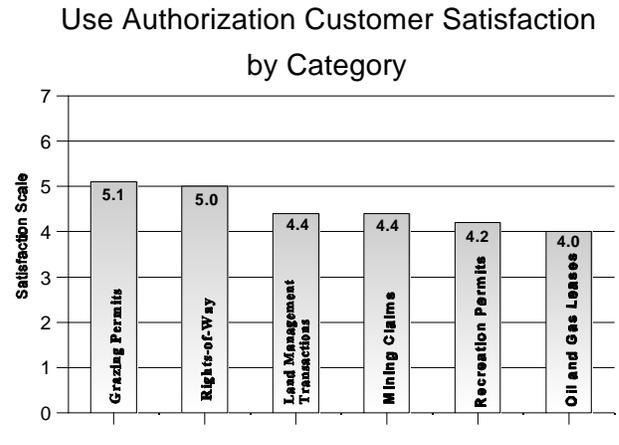


Figure 15

