



For America's Heritage

THE PUBLIC LANDS Monitor

P.O. Box 7226, Arlington, VA 22207
703-935-0916

www.publicland.org
info@publicland.org

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2023 PLF ANNUAL MEETING – CHEYENNE, WY SEPTEMBER 25 – 26, 2023

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The 2023 PLF Annual Meeting was held in Cheyenne, WY on September 25-26, 2023. The theme for this year's Annual Meeting was "Public Land Access". The Board of Directors met on September 25th and the afternoon of September 26th. A General Meeting, open to the public, was held on the morning of September 26th. Thanks is provided to Maggie Wyatt and Beau McClure for preparation of the minutes from the meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Introductions – Eleven Board Members were in attendance including: Tom Allen, Dean Bibles, Jim Currihan, John Kwiatkowski, Bill LeBarron, Beau McClure, Bob Moore, Tim O'Brien, Mary Jo Rugwell, Don Simpson, and Maggie Wyatt. Sharon Friedman, PhD, represented the National Association of Forest Service Retirees. And, Amaris Shammaa, one of the 2023 George Lea Founder's Scholarship recipients, also participated.

PLF President, Mary Jo Rugwell, welcomed everyone and thanked John and Janice Kwiatkowski, Bill and Deanna LeBarron, and Beau McClure for organizing the Annual Meeting. Mary Jo stated that maintaining a working relationship with BLM is more important now than ever before. She was interviewed recently by BLM and the first PLF-related article has been distributed to BLM employees through the "BLM Daily" in an effort to educate BLM employees about the PLF. Hopefully, other articles will follow.



The Public Lands Foundation advocates and works for the retention of America's Public Lands in public hands professionally and sustainably managed for responsible common use and enjoyment.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Mary Jo Rugwell

Happy Fall 2023! While we are still enjoying some warm temperatures here in Wyoming, you can absolutely feel that chill in the air signaling that winter is not far. I hope this finds you all well.

I had the privilege of leading my second Public Lands Foundation Annual Meeting on September

25-26. This year's gathering was held in Cheyenne, WY, at The Little America Hotel and Resort. While I would have loved to have seen a larger number of attendees, it was a good meeting. Complete details on the Annual Meeting can be found in this edition of *The Monitor*. However, I wanted to share a few highlights with you in my column.

We were honored to have one of our most recent George Lea Founder's Scholarship recipients, Amaris Shammaa, a graduate student at Texas Tech University, at the meeting this year. She provided some valuable insights, including suggestions on how to best use social media platforms to reach a wider audience. One idea that I absolutely loved was starting Student PLF Chapters at Colleges and Universities. If any of our members are interested in working on this idea, I would love to hear from you.

At both the Board and General Meetings, we discussed the need to recruit new members to be a part of the organization and the need to fill several Board vacancies we have. The Board members committed to reach out personally to three individuals in the next two months and report back to me by December 1. If all members could reach out to at least one person before the end of the year to encourage them to join the PLF, that would be amazing. It is critical for us to recruit the next generation of public land advocates to keep the PLF viable.

Mark Davis and Margaret Lliteras provided a comprehensive report on PLF's finances by telephone during the Board meeting. I want to publicly thank them for the excellent job they are both doing to keep PLF's finances in such good order.

With so many proposed rules being issued by the Administration and BLM, many members have stepped up to do a fantastic job on reviewing and commenting on these proposed rules on PLF's behalf. I hesitate to include a list of those members here as I don't want to miss acknowledging anyone's contributions. Please know that your efforts are sincerely appreciated.

The dates and location for next year's meeting are still being determined. We would like to be able to meet in conjunction with the 2024 Student Congress in October in Las Vegas, NV. However, we need to determine whether this option would be affordable. More details will be coming soon.

The panel presentations arranged by Don Simpson for the General Meeting on Tuesday morning were exceptional. We heard from a range of local experts about public land access challenges, invasive species, resource damage, and land tenure adjustment issues. We received very positive feedback on the morning's program. During the afternoon session on Tuesday, we discussed a wide variety of topics including communications, outreach, marketing, and the need to support PLF financially. We also asked for feedback on the Annual Meeting structure. Most participants liked the idea of a two-day meeting with the possibility of an optional field trip at the beginning of the meeting. The Executive Committee will continue to study and refine the structure.

Finally, we wrapped up the meeting with the banquet on Tuesday evening. Thanks to help from Bill and Deanna LeBarron, John and Janice Kwiatkowski, Tim and Phyllis O'Brien, Tom Allen and Maggie Wyatt, Jim and Theresa Currivan, Elaine Zielinski and all the bidders, we had a successful Silent Auction and Raffle to benefit the George Lea Founder's Scholarship fund. Paul Summers made the Remembering BLM presentation.



Paul Summers
PLF Annual Meeting Banquet Speaker

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN *(continued)*

We announced the Annual PLF Award winners and were very pleased to present two well-deserved Lifetime Service Awards this year. The Lifetime Service Award for Fran Cherry was accepted by his son Jon Cherry. We also presented a Lifetime Service Award to Tom Lahti. The last order of business for



Beau McClure receives the first Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award from Mary Jo Rugwell

the meeting was the presentation of the first ever Henri R. Bisson PLF Service Award to Beau McClure. I know we all agree that honoring Beau with this award was more than fitting with everything he does on a daily basis for the organization.

The breadth of work that PLF does from annual awards, George Lea Founder's scholarships, Student Congress support, and PLF advocacy activities is more important than ever. The reality is that none of this would be possible without the unwavering support of the Executive Committee, the Board, and all the members. Thank you for all you have done and please help us to continue this work by contributing your time, talent, and treasure.

I also want to report on a PLF Board call we had with the BLM Director on September 5th for updates on BLM initiatives and activities.

The BLM Director indicated that the Mining Law Reform Report was expected to be released shortly, and was in fact released on September 12th. Congress will have a significant role to play with many of the mining law reform recommendations included in the Report. The Director is concerned that BLM is at a tipping point with the WH&B program, as there are significant impacts to the public lands with ever-increasing numbers and the increased costs for off-range facilities are just not sustainable. The BLM needs to ramp up the adoption program. The BLM is updating a 10-year strategy for submittal to OMB.

The BLM has placed a pause on work on grazing regulations and will instead proceed with an update of grazing policies and build as much flexibility into the program as possible, including opportunities for outcome based management. The Director also reported that BLM is reviewing the significant and substantive comments provided on the Conservation Proposed Rule and that the Final Rule time line is expected to be completed before the end of 2024. The PLF provided comments on the Conservation Proposed Rule and also informed the Director that the PLF provided comments on the Oil and Gas Proposed Rule as well. The Director reported that BLM is working with an interagency team on old-growth forest management and is expected to release a report sometime later this year.

And finally, the Director reported that two Board members for the Foundation for America's Public Lands are pending announcement and that a new Foundation CEO will start work in October. The Foundation will be hosting several public roundtable meetings on the recently-released BLM Recreation Blueprint Strategic Plan.

2023 PLF ANNUAL MEETING – CHEYENNE, WY *(continued)*



2023 Annual Meeting

Front Row (l to r): Larry Claypool, Jim Currivan, Dean Bibles, Dixie Bibles, Mary Jo Rugwell, Phillis O'Brien, Tim O'Brien, Maggie Wyatt, Nancy Haug, Deanna LeBarron, Amaris Shammaa.

Second Row (l to r): Theresa Currivan, Larry Larsen, Tom Allen, Bob Moore, Jack Placchi, Jenna Yeager, Dave Hays, Bill LeBarron, Don Simpson.

Back Row (l to r): Walter George, John Kwiatkowski, Paul Summers, John Ruhs, Amy Ruhs, Beau McClure
(photo by Buddy Green)

Mary Jo introduced Amaris Shammaa, who is pursuing a Masters degree in wildlife biology at Texas Tech University. The other 2023 recipient of the George Lea Founder's Scholarship is Tiffany Mar. She is a Junior at the University of California Berkeley and is pursuing a degree in environmental studies.

Mary Jo introduced Sharon Friedman, PhD, in Forest Genetics, as the NAFSR representative. Sharon is a NAFSR Board member from Colorado Springs, CO, and she runs the "Smokey Wire" publication.

Student Congress Update—Beau McClure provided an update on the 2024 Student Congress. The Congress will be held October 7-10, 2024, at the Hampton Inn Tropicana in Las Vegas. The theme is "Navigating the Global Energy Transition." The Congress will include a field trip to several solar energy locations, including the Gemini Solar Project and the Moapa Indian Reservation. The cost is significantly higher than previous years, due to the cost of lodging and catering in the Las Vegas area. The BLM and Forest Service have agreed to help fund the Congress. The PLF is looking into the possibility of a multi-year grant from both BLM and the Forest Service. About 25 students are expected, as well as 20 speakers and staff. About \$80,000 is the anticipated cost.

PLF Archives Update—Beau McClure reminded the Board that Connie Stone is the Manager of the PLF Glendon E. Collins Archives. There has not been much progress since COVID and the renovation of the BLM National Training Center. The Archives are packed in a corner of a room on the first floor of the Training Center. The BLM proposes to move

them to the third floor. Once that is done, members of the Arizona Chapter will begin arranging the files into a useable order.

The BLM has contracted an independent firm to digitize the PLF Archives files. They are working on about five file cabinets at this time. Once we receive the digital files, we intend to make them accessible on the PLF website. Hilary Zarin, BLM History Project Lead, is working with us on this project.

NAFSR Update—Steve Ellis will replace Jim Caswell as the NAFSR liaison to the PLF. However, Sharon Friedman attended this year's PLF Annual Meeting on behalf of NAFSR and provided information about the National Forest Service Museum in Missoula, MT, that is doing oral histories to tell the Forest Service story. She mentioned that the NAFSR has redone its constitution and by-laws. She considers this to be a critical time for NAFSR since no one else is advocating for Forest Service employees.

NAFSR testified before Congress for the first time on safety of fire retardant. They participated in the 2022 Student Congress. Sharon and Ed Shepard are working with the coalition for wildfire resilience. NAFSR recently held an organization-wide Zoom call. Mary Jo will look into the feasibility of having a PLF-wide Zoom call.

Sharon encouraged PLF members to contribute articles to NAFSR's "Smokey Wire" publication. The PLF needs a volunteer to take the lead and write articles for the "Smokey Wire".

Board Reorganization Update – Mary Jo briefly described the 2018 Board meeting decision to look at restructuring the PLF Board. The lack of engagement and support for reorganization of the Board has led to tabling this effort, and the Board structure will not change. At year’s end, we will have two more Director-at-Large vacancies, as George Stone and Van Manning will be stepping down. Also, we currently have five State Representative vacancies. It is important that we attract the new generation of BLM retirees and get them involved in the organization. Tom Allen pointed out that individuals need to be assigned a job to get them interested. And, face-to-face contacts are needed to get new members.

Update of PLF Goals to Support the NLCS – Ray Brady, by phone, summarized a Resolution and Motion to Update the PLF Goals to reflect the importance and value of the BLM National Landscape Conservation System of Public Lands. The National Landscape Conservation System Act was signed into law in March 2009 as part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act and established the NLCS of special management areas managed by BLM. The PLF has also identified the need for increased management of BLM’s special management areas as a Priority Advocacy issue of our Advocacy outreach and fund raising initiatives. It is timely for the PLF to update our organization’s Goals statement to support the long-term protection, conservation, and restoration of units of the NLCS of public lands managed by BLM.

Dean Bibles suggested the proposed motion be amended by adding the words, “as distinctly unique”, so that the motion would read, “We aim to: Support the long-term protection, conservation, and restoration of units of the National Landscape Conservation System as distinctly unique among the public lands managed by the BLM.”

After a brief discussion, Dean made a motion to accept the proposal as amended. The motion was seconded by John Kwiatkowski, and it received unanimous approval.

Goals and Objectives for 2024 – There is a need to prioritize our workload, given the large amount of BLM-proposed actions needing review. Dean Bibles reminded the Board of the need to support people going to DC to testify before Congressional committees. Don Simpson foresees there will also be a workload to update some of our older position papers during 2024.

IT Support Needs – George Stone has indicated he will be stepping down at the end of this year from the Board and many of the IT support needs he is currently providing. He has done much behind the scenes, including having a dedicated phone line for the PLF and a paid Zoom account. The Board greatly appreciates all that George has done over the years. David Howell, a current BLM employee, has offered to assist with our IT support needs as a volunteer. Margaret Lliteras is taking on some additional duties as well. Mary Jo will get a Zoom account. Sharon Friedman and Amaris Shammaa also offered to assist with our social media needs moving forward. Still, there is a need to learn from George exactly what he’s been doing with our social media outreach efforts.

Membership – Membership recruitment is everyone’s responsibility. However, it continues to be difficult to get new retirees’ names from BLM. Tom Allen asked for a commitment from Board members to make three contacts each for potential PLF membership and new Board members. A response by all Board members is due to Mary Jo by December 1. A survey is needed to also determine why in-person attendance by Board members at our Annual Meetings has been poor. Mary Jo and George will take this on. Amaris commented on the importance of raising awareness of the PLF through our social media outreach efforts.

Treasurer’s Report – Mark Davis and Margaret Lliteras participated in the discussions by phone. Mark Davis briefly summarized the Treasurer’s Report that he provided to the Board prior to the meeting. Overall, the PLF is financially sound. However, the Board needs to address its revenue stream and rethink clarifying its relationship with the Foundation for America’s Public Lands (BLM’s new Foundation).

A motion was made by Tom Allen to approve the 2024 budget with an amendment to move \$5,000 from the Student Congress funding to cover a potential shortfall in travel expenses. The motion was seconded by Dean Bibles and passed unanimously.

Process for Comments on Regulations and Policies – Mary Jo thanked the many people outside the Board, as well as those on the Board, that have recently provided detailed comments on various BLM regulations, policies, and other topics. Jim Kenna and Kit Muller were especially helpful on developing comments on the Conservation Proposed Rule. Walt George and Larry Claypool did a great

job on the Oil and Gas and Mineral Leasing Proposed Rule. Vicki Herren and Chris Iversen from NAFSR also did a great job on the ESA Proposed Rule. Don Simpson, Ed Roberson, Celia Boddington, Ed Shepard, and Ray Brady were thanked for their roles in the development of comments and the review process.

Don Simpson asked the Board if we should continue looking for regulations and policies that need to be reviewed and commented on, and should the draft comments be sent to all of the Board for review. The Board voted “yes” for both. Don also reminded the Board that subject-matter experts are needed to head up the reviews.

Identify Leads for Roundtable Meetings – Don Simpson discussed the need to identify leads to participate in roundtable meetings for the Recreation Blueprint, ESA Rules, fire policy, grazing policy, etc. Bob Moore and Jack Placchi agreed to participate in the BLM Recreation Blueprint Strategic Plan roundtable meetings. Sharon Friedman stated that NAFSR would also like a PLF person(s) to help with EIS and NEPA reviews. Mary Jo suggested that we need to develop a filter to decide which efforts are appropriate to sign onto as PLF amid the multiple public roundtable meetings being planned. Several PLF Board members expressed concern about the difficulty of reaching BLM employees.

PLF AWARDS

George Lea Founder’s Scholarship – David Stout is Chair of the Scholarship Committee. This year we had two very impressive winners—Amaris Shammaa and Tiffany Mar. There were 35 applicants from 18 colleges and universities for the two scholarships.

Lifetime Service Awards – Maggie Wyatt reported two recipients for Lifetime Service Awards for 2023. Tom Lahti will be presented a Lifetime Service Award at the PLF Banquet and Jon Cherry will accept the Lifetime Service Award for his father Fran Cherry. Maggie also pointed out that the criteria are difficult and need to be revised for future years.

BLM Professional and Technical Employee Awards – Jim Currivan mentioned that last year he received five nominations for each of the two awards. This provided his committee with eight carry-over nominations and two new ones this year. Mary Jo will present Lance Porter with his award in person, and Bill Lamb will present Gus Warr with his award in Salt Lake City.

Landscape Stewardship Award – Dave Mari is Chair of the Landscape Stewardship Award Committee. He only received one nomination this year. Maggie Wyatt and Tom Allen will make arrangements to present the award to the Colorado Canyons Association in Grand Junction.

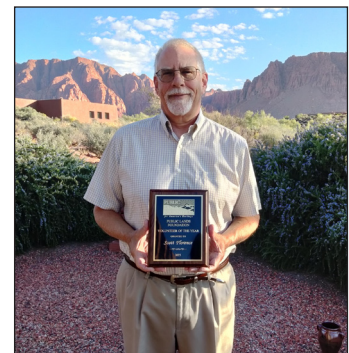
Volunteer of the Year Award – Mary Jo announced that Scott Florence is this year’s Volunteer of the Year. The award was presented to Scott after the Annual Meeting.



Tom Lahti receives Lifetime Service Award



Jon Cherry receives Lifetime Service Award for his father Fran Cherry



Scott Florence receives Volunteer of the Year Award

2024 Annual Meeting – There was a discussion of possibly holding next year’s Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, overlapping with the Student Congress in October. Although this was the preferred option, lodging and catering in the Las Vegas area are quite expensive, e.g., \$155.00+ for lodging. Another option to be considered is to coordinate with NAFSR’s meeting in Denver in January of 2025 or hold the meeting in Oregon, perhaps in Bend. Beau will discuss the Las Vegas option with the Student Congress organizers.

Quarterly PLF Board meetings were set for December 13, 2023; March 20, 2024; and June 12, 2024; all at 1:00 p.m. Mountain Time. The Annual Meeting will be scheduled for either September or October 2024.

GENERAL MEETING SUMMARY

Mary Jo welcomed the group, thanked organizers, encouraged membership in the PLF, and noted signing a MOU with BLM last year. She also introduced the PLF Executive Committee and officers.

A panel discussion moderated by Don Simpson, included Ryan Lance, Pathfinder Ranch President; John Espy, Carbon County Commissioner; and Jeremiah Rieman, Executive Director for the Wyoming County Commissioners Association.



WY Public Lands Panel
Ryan Lance, John Espy, and Jeremiah Reiman

Issues included trespass, Herd Management Area conflicts, dumping, resource degradation, and vandalism. There was much discussion on how to educate users, provide maps, use QR codes, involve the retail community in education efforts, and use of existing models such as school mountain bike teams, and invasive mussels control. There was further discussion on game migration



Joel Webster, TRCP (left) and Don Simpson, PLF (right)

routes and large land tenure adjustments. They discussed the difficulties of doing land exchanges, but understood they could be possible with the right proponent. Mineral right holders would have to be included as well.

Joel Webster from the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) gave the history of the TRCP and discussed the revolution in access that came with knowledge through technology. Some 15.5 million acres of federal land are landlocked with no legal access. There is still a lack of digitized road data on travel status. The appraisal process for exchanges is flawed. Exchanges are uncommon and difficult, and access focused projects are not prioritized. The LWCF cannot solve all the problems. Exchanges must be used. Agency efforts are underway to standardize GIS data but they need to standardize attributes. Tom Allen noted the video “Paper Trails” as a good product to see.

BLM Wyoming Panel on Current Issues – Andrew Archuleta, BLM WY State Director, talked about the funding available from the Inflation Reduction Act for landscape level restoration work, and that quarterly oil and gas lease sales have resumed. Other issues include wild horses, renewable energy, coal, sage grouse habitat, and major transmission lines.



Andrew Archuleta
WY State Director

Duane Spencer, DSD Lands and Minerals, talked about major issues that include unlawful enclosures, a flat budget for realty, wind projects, eagle conflicts, and orphan wells being plugged and rehabbed.



Duane Spencer
DSD Lands and Minerals

Jennifer Fleuret McConchie, DSD Resource Policy



Jennifer Fleuret McConchie
DSD Resource Policy/Management

and Management, talked about resource management planning that is ongoing, staff turnover that is impacting processing lands actions, and the difficulty of addressing climate change in NEPA documents, as it is a moving target.

BOARD AND MEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

Vision—There is a need to develop a communications strategy, including needs, costs, marketing—how to get PLF’s name out there. Many BLM employees have never heard of the PLF. Our main mission remains as advocacy. Nancy Haug suggested the PLF do a marketing plan. John Ruhs suggested focusing on a communications strategy, which might need to be done even before a marketing plan.

Board Restructuring—As a result of a 2018 decision at the Billings annual meeting to examine the PLF Board structure, George Stone chaired a team effort to develop recommendations for restructuring. But after considerable review and consideration, the decision was made to leave the Board as is, since the level of support to make major changes was not there. Members attending the Annual Meeting agreed that no change is needed at this time.

Annual Meeting Structure—Participants suggested that we consider a membership-wide Zoom meeting and a hybrid for the Annual Meeting to include both an in-person meeting and a Zoom opportunity.

PLF Membership Fee Structure—The recommendation to eliminate the Lifetime Membership category was confirmed. There is a sense that not all lifetime members continue to support the PLF through donations. The annual membership fee is \$50, with other categories for those who wish to contribute more. Having 100 percent Board participation in financial support above membership dues is very important for receiving grants and corporate donations.

ANNUAL MEETING – SILENT AUCTION AND RAFFLE

The PLF Annual Meeting Silent Auction and Raffle was held during the banquet on Tuesday evening, September 26th. The Silent Auction and Raffle was a great success. We had 20 donations for the silent auction and a dozen or more items for the raffle. The Silent Auction made \$1,211 and the Raffle made \$266, for a total of \$1,477. Thanks to the donors of items and the generous bidding of those present and afar. One hundred percent of these funds will go to the 2024 George Lea Founder’s Scholarship Fund. Thanks to everyone that participated.

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION?

Please help us keep our records current and ensure we have your current e-mail address on file. Message us at info@publicland.org, or call at 703-935-0916.

FOUNDATION FOR AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS

The Foundation for America's Public Lands on July 13, 2023 announced the selection of I Ling Thompson as the foundation's first CEO. Thompson was most recently the Executive Vice President of Strategy and Engagement for the Trust for Public Land and started her new position with the Foundation in October. Thompson has years of experience promoting and marketing for nonprofit conservation and public lands organizations. Prior to working for the Trust for Public Land she served as Director of Marketing for the Nature Conservancy and also served as Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the Outdoor Industry Association. She is also a member of the Board for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.



**I Ling Thompson, CEO
Foundation for
America's Public Lands**

The Foundation for America's Public Lands was authorized by Congress in 2017 to support BLM, however, was not organized or funded until 2021. This new foundation will help leverage public and

private dollars to conserve, protect, and restore public land managed by BLM. The PLF has been a strong proponent in advocating for this new foundation to help provide BLM with the same kind of support that similar foundations provide for the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

The PLF is a wholly separate organization from the Foundation for America's Public Lands. The PLF was organized over 35 years ago as a nonprofit organization that advocates and works for the retention of public lands administered by BLM; professionally and sustainably managed for the responsible use and enjoyment of all Americans. PLF members are

predominantly retired employees of BLM and as such are dedicated to the sound management of these valuable public lands and resources for the future. The PLF is looking forward to working with the new foundation and the new CEO of the foundation, and providing support consistent with our mutual missions and interests.

ELECTION 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our annual election for Officers and Board Members of the PLF is underway. You should have received a notice by e-mail to look for a SurveyMonkey link that contains an on-line PLF ballot for the election. The on-line ballot should take only a minute or two to complete. There will be no paper ballots provided to members this year. You may vote for any or all of the National Representatives and for your individual State Representative. It should be noted that we currently have vacant State Representative positions for Alaska, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oregon/Washington and are looking for volunteers to fill these positions.

Be sure to vote before December 15, 2023. Please also consider paying your 2024 dues when you complete your on-line ballot.

130TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OKLAHOMA LAND RUSH

Exactly 130 years ago, on September 16, 1893, more than 150,000 settlers took part in the massive Cherokee Strip land rush to claim one of 42,000 parcels of the public domain. This was one of the most colorful single events in the history of federal land management and a huge job for one of BLM's founding agencies, the General Land Office (GLO).

Through treaty, and an \$8.5 million purchase, the federal government acquired title to 8.1 million acres of land from the Cherokee Tribe across the Northern Oklahoma territory, fourteen years before Oklahoma Statehood in 1907. We cannot minimize or ignore the long history of the federal government's relocation of Indian Tribes throughout the Southeast and into Oklahoma's Indian Territory. That is another story...and a long, unfortunate tale.

"The Strip" was 58 miles wide and ran for 228 miles along the Kansas border. A cadastral survey to establish land boundaries had already been completed before the area was opened for settlement. Under direction of then Secretary of the Interior M. Hoke Smith, the GLO set up nine temporary offices or "Booths" in tents across the Kansas state line and along the southern border of the strip. The concept was that settlers were to pre-register at these temporary offices, but they only opened for business shortly before the event. The three officials who staffed each booth were totally unprepared for the thousands of people who lined up day and night to secure their right to claim a homestead.

At one location on one day, more than 7,000 people waited in the blistering heat around the clock to secure their piece of the American dream. The booth at Arkansas City recorded more than 30,000 pre-registered settlers. Despite the rules of the game, more than 40,000 un-registered pioneers made the dash with everyone else across the prairie and scrambled to secure a homestead. As romantic as it all sounds, the reality was that GLO, the Army, and the local officials that tried to organize the event were completely overwhelmed by the sheer number of people that descended upon these remote areas without adequate food, water, and other basic necessities. The heat and dust were intense and many "Sooners" tried to cheat the system and sneak into the strip ahead of time and "Jump the Gun." Lawlessness, bribery, fraud, and even prairie fires added

to the melee. Simply stated, chaos and confusion prevailed and little happened according to plan.

When the dust settled, thousands of land patents were recorded during what is often thought of as the last days of the wide-open West. Many historians mark this event as "The Closing of the American Frontier" and the end of a two century-long era of



Oklahoma Land Rush by John Stuart Curry
(National Archives and Records Administration)

settlement and westward expansion. Except for the unexplored wilds of Alaska, this great unclaimed remnant of the public domain was the last major land area managed by the government which was suddenly opened for homesteading and settlement.

Once a parcel of land was staked out people had to find their way to one of the land offices in Perry, Alva, Enid, or Woodward to file their claim and pay a \$1.00 - \$2.50 per acre fee. The most that could be claimed was a 160-acre quarter section. Ironically, after all the excitement and shenanigans were over and some degree of normalcy kicked-in, only about 25 percent of the pioneers who filed claims actually survived the six-month residency requirement and received a deed to their land.

The excitement and thrill of the land rush has been brought to the big screen many times including the 1939 film "The Oklahoma Kid" with James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart, and the 1992 Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman movie "Far and Away." And of course, today the Oklahoma University "Sooners" football team is still the pride of the state, yet with fewer and fewer people realizing the true origins of name, or what a huge job it was in September 1893 for BLM's ancestral agency, the General Land Office.

Editor note: This article was prepared by Chip Calamaio (BLM National Training Center 1985-2015) for inclusion in this edition of the Monitor.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATE

The PLF continues to monitor Congressional legislation, rulemaking activities, and Executive Orders pertaining to the Department of the Interior, BLM, and public lands management. The PLF, as an advocacy organization for the public lands, is actively engaged in providing our perspectives on a wide range of issues including the annual BLM appropriations, any program oversight hearings, proposed amendments to FLPMA and other major statutes affecting public lands management, and proposed regulations regarding BLM resource programs. Reviewing legislation and proposed rules and preparing comments and testimony, when appropriate, is an important part of our advocacy work. We update our Legislation and Regulations web page on our website under the “Advocacy” link and provide updates in the *Monitor* on significant actions.



Photo by Ray Brady

MODERNIZING ACCESS TO OUR PUBLIC LANDS ACT (MAPLAND ACT) P.L. 117-114

STATUS: Approved by Congress and signed by the President on April 29, 2022.

SUMMARY: The MAPLand Act requires the Federal land management agencies to publish within the next four years digital online maps of public lands and information on access to public lands, including easement acquisitions. This legislation and passage of the Dingell Act in 2019 (P. L. 116-9) provide tools to address public land access issues and an opportunity for the public to nominate parcels of land for acquisition to improve access to public lands.

PLF POSITION: The PLF has been tracking a court case in Wyoming that involves public land access to checkerboard lands, commonly referred to as “corner crossing”. The U.S. District Court in Wyoming issued a decision on May 26, 2023 that dismissed the trespassing lawsuit brought by the private landowner against four hunters accessing public lands by corner crossing in the Elk Mountain area in southwestern Wyoming. The private landowner in this case had sought \$7.75 million in damages, citing diminished property values due to the alleged “corner crossing” trespass. *Public land access was the theme for the PLF Annual Meeting held in Cheyenne, WY in September 2023.*

MINING LAW REFORM – 1872 MINING LAW

STATUS: A Federal Register Notice announcing formation of a Mining Law Reform Interagency Working Group published March 31, 2022 by Interior. *The Department on September 12, 2023 released the Final Report from the Interagency Working Group.*

SUMMARY: The Department of the Interior announced the formation of an Interagency Working Group to gather information and develop recommendations for improving the Federal hardrock mining regulations, laws, and permitting processes. The Federal Register Notice also invited public comments to help inform the efforts of the Interagency Working Group. *The Department released a Final Report from the Interagency Working Group on September 12, 2023 that included some 65 recommendations for improving the mining law program, although many of those recommendations would require Congressional action.*

PLF POSITION: The PLF on April 24, 2022 provided a copy of a Position Statement, in response to the FR Notice, on recommendations for amendments to the 1872 Mining Law. The PLF and the National Association of Forest Service Retirees on August 29, 2022 provided joint supplemental comments on the hardrock abandoned mine lands (AML) program in response to an Interior request for comments. The PLF on March 24, 2023 signed onto a joint letter, with several other organizations, to both Senate and House Appropriations Committees to provide

funding of \$287 million as a budget line item in the FY 2024 appropriations bills for the Section 40704 abandoned hardrock mine reclamation program in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The PLF also on March 24, 2023, forwarded to the Interior Mining Law Reform Interagency Working Group a copy of comments prepared by Bob Anderson on the Small Miners mining claim assessment waiver program. *The Final Report did include some recommendations on changing the mining claim assessment and Small Miners waiver program.*

SOLAR AND WIND ENERGY REGULATIONS – 43 CFR 2800

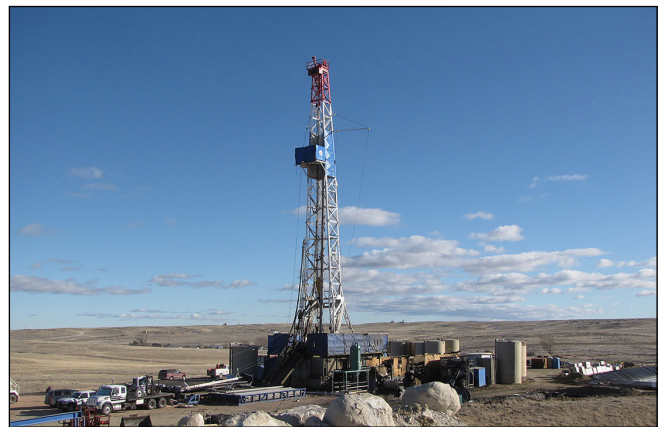
STATUS: The BLM on June 16, 2023 published a Proposed Rule for solar and wind energy right-of-way authorizations on the public lands under the 43 CFR 2800 regulations.

SUMMARY: The Proposed Rule would adjust rental fees for solar and wind energy authorizations, provide BLM with more flexibility in processing applications for solar and wind energy development in designated leasing areas, and update criteria on prioritizing solar and wind energy right-of-way applications.

PLF POSITION: The PLF in February 2022 provided comments to BLM on draft policy guidance to promote solar and wind energy development on the public lands. This Proposed Rule will carry forward those updated policies and include additional provisions for solar and wind energy right-of-way authorizations on the public lands. *The PLF submitted comments on the Proposed Rule to BLM on August 9, 2023. Those comments are posted on the PLF website.*



Silver State Solar project, Nevada



Oil and Gas Drill Rig – WY (BLM photo)

OIL AND GAS REGULATIONS – 43 CFR 3100

STATUS: *The BLM on July 24, 2023 published a Proposed Rule to revise the oil and gas leasing regulations to reflect provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.*

SUMMARY: *The Proposed Rule is the first comprehensive update of the BLM onshore oil and gas leasing regulations since 1988 and would modernize the program, ensure a balanced approach to public lands management, ensure a fair return to the public, codify new provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and implement reforms from the Interior Report on the Federal Oil and Gas Leasing Program (November 2021). The Proposed Rule would increase royalty rates to 16.67 percent, increase rental rates to \$15 per acre, increase minimum lease bids to \$10 per acre, eliminate non-competitive leasing, reduce the non operational period for idle wells to four years, increase minimum lease bonds to \$150,000, increase minimum statewide bonds to \$500,000, eliminate nationwide bonds, and include other provisions to ensure responsible oil and gas leasing and development on the public lands.*

PLF POSITION: *The PLF submitted comments on the Proposed Rule to BLM on September 8, 2023. Those comments are posted on the PLF website.*

CONSERVATION REGULATIONS – 43 CFR 1600 AND 6100

STATUS: The BLM on March 30, 2023 announced the release and publication of a Proposed Rule on Conservation and Landscape Health under the 43 CFR 1600 and 6100 regulations.

SUMMARY: The Proposed Rule would clarify and support the principles of multiple use and sustained yield in the management of the public lands, restore

degraded habitat, and apply land health standards to all BLM-managed public lands. This rule would incorporate climate resiliency and restoration through conservation and preservation in the management of the public lands pursuant to FLPMA and other relevant authorities. This rule within 43 CFR 6000, which includes Conservation and Preservation, would also revise existing regulations to prioritize designating and protecting Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and provide an overarching framework for multiple BLM programs to promote ecosystem resilience on the public lands. The Proposed Rule would also provide for the use of “conservation leases” to support mitigation efforts and promote the protection and restoration of public lands.

PLF POSITION: The PLF submitted comments on the Proposed Rule to BLM on June 15, 2023 and those comments are posted on the PLF website.

GRAZING REGULATIONS 43 CFR PART 4100 *Work Suspended*

STATUS: On January 17, 2020 BLM announced the intent to prepare an EIS to consider proposed revisions to the grazing regulations to improve and streamline the grazing permit process, improve the administration of grazing permits, and also potentially consider the adoption of outcome-based grazing authorizations. *However, in August 2023 BLM decided to abandon work on the update of the grazing regulations and instead focus efforts on implementing management changes to the grazing program through policy updates and internal guidance to BLM Field Offices. At the same time, a lawsuit has been filed by Western Watersheds Project and PEER that asserts BLM has failed to comply with NEPA in the renewal of grazing permits on the public lands.*

SUMMARY: The proposed revisions are intended to update, modernize, and streamline the current grazing regulations and provide for greater flexibility in land and resources management. The BLM seeks to improve land-use planning and grazing permitting procedures, strengthen controls to prevent unauthorized grazing, enhance environmental protections, and improve public input opportunities.

PLF POSITION: The PLF on February 24, 2020 provided comments to BLM in response to the Notice

of Intent to prepare an EIS to support proposed revisions to the grazing regulations. The PLF on June 18, 2020 also co-signed a collaborative letter with other organizations to BLM providing comments on proposed revisions to the grazing regulations. The PLF updated a Livestock Grazing Position Statement in May 2023 and posted the Position Statement on the PLF website. *The PLF will continue to track the development of updated grazing program policies and guidance and provide comments as appropriate.*



Grazing on the Public Lands – Oregon (BLM photo)

BLM RECREATION BLUEPRINT – STRATEGIC PLAN

The BLM on August 31, 2023 released a “Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation” and requested public feedback on implementing the strategy to guide BLM in the management of recreation resources on the public lands into the future. The Blueprint is intended to guide investments, partnerships, outreach, and program development to respond to current recreation demands on the public lands and chart a course to meet future needs. The BLM outlined four strategic pillars as a foundation for successful recreation management in the 21st century. The four Strategic Pillars were identified as follows:

- Grow and Diversify Resources for BLM Recreation
- Prioritize and Embrace Partnerships
- Expand Outreach and Establish a Culture of Inclusion
- Meet the Demand, Protect Resources, and Improve Access



Recreation on the Public Lands (BLM photo)

In sharing the Blueprint, BLM invited partners to share their feedback to further enhance the vision and its implementation. The BLM and the Foundation for America’s Public Lands anticipate hosting a series of public roundtable discussions to allow partners to share their perspectives and further explore partnership needs and opportunities. The first virtual roundtable discussion was held on October 5, 2023. The BLM will also be developing national and state action plans to ensure progress towards meeting the vision outlined in the Blueprint.

In response to the request for feedback, the PLF on September 6, 2023 submitted comments to BLM on the Recreation Blueprint and requested to be added

to any mailing list or contact list for future outreach efforts or roundtable discussions that may be hosted by BLM or the Foundation for America’s Public Lands. The PLF also provided a copy of the recently updated PLF Position Statement on Recreation Use on Public Lands which includes several recommendations to enhance the recreation program on the public lands. The PLF specifically recommended that BLM consider the following areas to address the increased recreation use of the public lands:

- Increase the overall number of developed recreation fee sites.
- Enhance existing developed recreation fee site.
- Increase funding to support the management of dispersed recreational use.
- Rebuild BLM’s capacity to process land exchanges, acquisition of easements, and land purchases to benefit the recreation and public access programs.

The PLF also intends on identifying specific PLF members as points-of-contact for each of the roundtable meetings that may be scheduled in the future. The PLF has already identified PLF members Bob Moore and Jack Placchi as points-of-contact for any outreach efforts in Colorado.

PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION GOALS

- Keep lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in public ownership and open to use by the public.
- Support the long-term protection, conservation, and restoration of units of the National Landscape Conservation System, as distinctly unique among the public lands managed by BLM.
- Support multiple use management under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
- Encourage professionalism by BLM employees.
- Increase the public’s understanding of and support for the proper management of the public lands.

ANCESTRAL FOOTPRINTS OF THE GRAND CANYON NATIONAL MONUMENT

The President on August 8, 2023 signed Proclamation 10606 establishing the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument in Arizona. The name means “where Indigenous peoples roam” in the Havasupai language and means “our ancestral footprints” in the Hopi language. The name reflects the significance of the Grand Canyon area in northern Arizona to many Tribal Nations. This newest National Monument will protect over 900,000 acres of public land, including 529,242 acres of BLM-managed public lands and 388,376 acres of Forest Service lands, surrounding Grand Canyon National Park. The designation will protect thousands of cultural and sacred sites important to Tribal Nations in the Southwest, including Gray Mountain which is part of Navajo ceremonial songs, stories, and rituals and Red Butte which is a sacred site of the Havasupai. The designation will also conserve and protect important wildlife habitat, public land and water resources, and other historic and scientifically important features surrounding the Grand Canyon. The new Monument is made

up of three distinct areas to the south, northeast, and northwest of Grand Canyon National Park. It is bordered by the Kanab Creek watershed to the northwest, the Havasupai and Navajo reservations to the south, and stretches from Marble Canyon to the Kaibab Plateau in the northeast.



President signing National Monument Proclamation
August 8, 2023 (DOI photo)



Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni
Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, Arizona
(photo Grand Canyon Trust)

PARTNERSHIP CONSERVATION PROJECTS

The BLM on September 5, 2023 announced the funding of \$28 million for six large-scale partnership efforts with national conservation organizations, States, and the Navajo Nation to support restoration and conservation projects on public lands. This funding came from the Inflation Reduction Act and is in addition to \$161 million of funding for 21 landscape restoration projects previously announced in May 2023 and reported in the Summer edition of the *Monitor*. This partnership funding will help BLM implement critical conservation projects in sagebrush, forest, grassland, desert and aquatic ecosystems through a collaborative approach and also leverage additional funding to ensure the long-term success of these restoration efforts.

The partnership efforts include:

- \$9.9 million with The Nature Conservancy for restoration projects in western watersheds to support healthy riverscapes and sagebrush ecosystems in MT, WY, ID, CO, OR and UT.
- \$8.9 million with Trout Unlimited for watershed and aquatic restoration projects in the Upper Colorado Basin, California-Great Basin and Columbia Pacific Northwest regions.
- \$3.5 million with the Mule Deer Foundation to improve and conserve important habitat for mule deer and sage-grouse.
- \$2.5 million with Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to inventory, modify and remove fences on BLM-managed public lands throughout the west in areas of identified need.
- \$1.8 million with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to support project work as



Upper Salmon River Restoration Project, Idaho
(BLM photo)

part of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative and the Southern Plains Grassland Program in NM.

- \$1.2 million for the Navajo Nation's Dine Native Plants Program, a native plant seed banking and ecological restoration program, to establish a native seed certification program to be able to market and sell native plant materials to Federal and non-Federal agencies, including directly to BLM.

BLM LEADERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

With the continued changes in the leadership positions of BLM, we would like to provide an update on the current BLM Leadership, including the State Directors that provide the day-to-day on-the-ground management for the public lands. The following are the current Deputy Directors and the State Directors for each of the BLM State Offices:

Director	Tracy Stone-Manning
Deputy Director, Policy and Programs	Nada Culver
Deputy Director, Operations	Michael Nedd
Alaska State Office	Steven Cohn
Arizona State Office	Raymond Suazo
California State Office	Karen Mouritsen
Colorado State Office	Doug Vilsack
Eastern States Office	Mitchell Leverette
Idaho State Office	Karen Kelleher
Montana State Office	Sonya Germann
Nevada State Office	Jon Raby
New Mexico State Office	Melanie Barnes
OR / WA State Office	Barry Bushue
Utah State Office	Greg Sheehan
Wyoming State Office	Andrew Archuleta

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	
Name	_____
Address	_____
City/State/Zip	_____
Phone	_____
E-mail	_____
Date	_____
Amount Enclosed	_____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES	
Regular	\$50
Contributing	\$100
Sponsoring	\$200
Patron.....	\$500

ELECTRONIC MAILING ONLY

The PLF has gone to an all digital distribution of the quarterly *Monitor* newsletter to save on printing and mailing costs of our newsletter. All editions of the *Monitor* are distributed electronically to PLF members and available on the PLF website. The PLF 2022 Annual Report, however, was printed and mailed to all members.

IN MEMORIAM

Susan Conlin Dana on September 10, 2023, in West Valley City, UT. Susan worked for the IRS and BLM and retired after 34 years of public service. She worked in the Range and Wild Horse and Burro Program with BLM in the Salt Lake District office.

Randall Eardley on September 24, 2023, in Boise, ID. Randy was a graduate of Boise State University with a degree in Communications, with an emphasis in Journalism. He began his career with BLM as a seasonal firefighter and also served as a fire lookout in Oregon. He later gravitated toward fire aviation and eventually became the lead air attack Group Supervisor for the BLM Boise District and also the lead Fire Prevention Officer for the District. He later transitioned into Public Affairs responsibilities and was selected as the External Affairs Deputy Group Manager at the National Interagency Fire Center and eventually the Division Chief of External Affairs where he retired. His career in wildfire management spanned some 40 years.

Stacy Lenora Hawkins on August 13, 2023, in Little Rock, AR. Stacy attended the University of Alaska Anchorage. Stacy worked in the BLM Alaska State Office and reluctantly had to take an early retirement from the job she loved due to medical reasons. She was also active in the prison ministry and started her own charity to supply much needed household goods and groceries to newly released prisoners.

Dallas Eugene Heller on July 19, 2023, in Worland, WY. Dallas was a U.S. Navy veteran. He earned degrees in Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University and Range Management from Montana State University. He worked for BLM in Yuma, AZ and Worland, WY and retired in 2011.

Herman Lee Kast on September 17, 2023, in Coleman, TX. Herman graduated from Texas State University with a Masters degree. He worked for BLM, includ-

ing positions as District Manager in Yuma, AZ and Deputy State Director for Renewable Resources in the AZ State Office. He retired in 1996.

Steven Charles Madsen on September 29, 2023, in Sioux Falls, SD. He worked for the BLM for 30 years in Vernal, UT and Salt Lake City, UT as a Wildlife Biologist.

Johnnie Gail Moody on August 21, 2023, in Holts Summit, MO. Johnnie was a retired aircraft safety specialist from the U.S. Air Force and later worked for BLM in Winnemucca, NV. He had a total of 44 years of military and federal service.

Steven Myron Muscha on August 31, 2023, in Ogden, UT. Steve graduated from Sacramento State University with a B.S. degree in Business Administration and was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. He worked for the Federal government for 27 years, including with BLM in Battle Mountain, NV and Rock Springs, WY.

Charles "Everett" Newman on December 30, 2022, in Morristown, TN. Everett earned a Bachelor degree in Business at Louisiana Tech University. After college he began his career as a federal law enforcement officer, initially with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and subsequently with the Drug Enforcement Agency. He later worked for BLM and retired as the Lead Law Enforcement Officer in the Eastern States Office. His primary activities included enforcement of oil and gas and mineral leases, and support to the Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Program.

Jim "Jimmie" Pribble on July 27, 2023, in Lakewood, CO. Jimmie earned a B.S degree in Forestry from the University of Missouri and began his career with BLM in Coos Bay, OR. He later worked in Dillon, MT; Belle Fourche, SD; Burley, ID; and then moved

The PLF is committed to never forgetting the dedicated employees of BLM who have left us. We do so on our website's Memorial Wall and by publishing names of those who passed away in the *Monitor*. If you have a death to report, please e-mail us at obits@publicland.org, preferably with a link to or copy of an obituary. You can rely on the PLF to keep you informed of topical news on the public PLF Facebook page, our website, other social media sites, and the *Monitor* newsletter.

Note: Putting together the Memoriam list in the Monitor and maintaining the Memorial Wall on the PLF website takes a lot of work by PLF volunteers. If you find errors, or if you know of something we may have missed, we apologize, and will correct the record. If you have concerns, please let Ray Brady know at rbrady@publicland.org.

IN MEMORIAM

to Lakewood, CO in 1987 where he retired in 1993. He was active in the Society of American Foresters and the Denver Bicycle Touring Club.

Robert “Bob” Reed on July 3, 2023, in Corrales, NM. Bob attended the University of New Mexico and later served in the U.S. Air Force. He worked for BLM for 29 years as Chief of Operations in the Albuquerque District and at the New Mexico State Office.

Linda Smith on September 25, 2023, in Washington, D.C. Linda began her federal career with the USGS in the Office of Communications and Publishing and later with the Office of Budget, Planning and Integration. In 2012, Linda became the Budget Officer for the BLM and remained at the BLM until 2019. She then moved to the Department of Justice

as their Budget Director and in 2023 transitioned to a senior budget and financial policy advisor to the Assistant Attorney General where she remained until her passing.

Todd Rice Smith on July 5, 2023, in Saratoga, WY. Todd received a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Wyoming and a Master’s degree from the University of Oklahoma. He served for 19 years in the U.S. Navy. After his service in the Navy he worked for the BLM in the Rawlins Field Office.

Phillip Herman Weber on September 17, 2023, in Rawlins, WY. He was a U.S. Army veteran. He moved to Rawlins, WY in 1976 and worked for Medicine Bow Coal for several years before accepting a position with the BLM in Rawlins as an equipment operator. He retired from the BLM in 2000.

DONATIONS*

MEMORIAL DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM	IN MEMORY OF
Linda Hofman	Bob Jones Jennie Senzel

SCHOLARSHIP FUND	
Ben Collins	Linda Hofman
David Jones	Eric Janesn
Gregg and Mary Simmons	

GENERAL FUND	
Courtney Lyons-Garcia	Kim Harb
Gregg and Mary Simmons	

MEMBERSHIP DUES ABOVE \$50.00 CONTRIBUTING MEMBER		
Scott Florence	Abbie Jossie	Ann Hutchinson

ENDOWMENT FUND
Eric Janes

PATRON MEMBER
Barron Bail

Reminder: The PLF is a benefiting non-profit organization under the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Customers with a Kroger rewards card can register and designate the Public Lands Foundation (number DN597) on their rewards card account and purchases will benefit the PLF. Participants just swipe their registered Kroger rewards card when shopping for each purchase to count. We would like to get more members to participate in this program and generate more donations to the PLF. Just 20 households could potentially generate some \$1,000 per year of donations to the PLF.

The PLF continues to request donations to support the George Lea Founder's Scholarship fund. We hope members will make a special contribution to the scholarship fund. The PLF awarded two \$5,000 scholarships in 2023 to deserving students. The fund needs to be replenished to be able to continue to offer these scholarships each year.

You can make a designated donation by credit card on our website at www.publicland.org, or by check sent to the Public Lands Foundation, P.O. Box 7226, Arlington, VA 22207. In your transmittal, please make sure to mention if your donation is for the **PLF General Fund**, **George Lea Founder's Scholarship**, or the **Student Congress Fund**. Remember, if you are making a donation in memory of someone who has passed away, you can designate your donation to go to one of these funds. The PLF has also established a **PLF Endowment Fund** to support the long-term purposes and mission of the organization. The PLF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. Your donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent permitted under the law.

** This list reflects donations received during the period of July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023. Donations received after this period will be reported in the next edition of the Monitor.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor: The Winter 2022 and Summer 2023 editions of the Monitor included Letters to the Editor that requested greater attention by the PLF in the management of BLM's National Conservation Lands. Several inquiries have also been received from retired BLM employees that the PLF needed to update the Goals of our organization to reflect the importance and value of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) of public lands. The PLF has also identified the need for increased management of BLM's Special Management Areas as a Priority Advocacy issue for our Advocacy outreach and fund raising initiatives. In response to these requests, the PLF Board approved at the Annual Meeting in Cheyenne, WY on September 25, 2023, an update to the PLF Goals statement to include an additional Goal to "Support the long-term protection, conservation, and restoration of units of the National Landscape Conservation System, as distinctly unique among the public lands managed by the BLM". The PLF will also be including articles in the Monitor that highlight the management of Special Management Areas on the public lands.



The *Monitor* is what we make it and we encourage you to provide Letters to the Editor or provide other reviews and comments on articles included in your newsletter. It is important to hear from our membership, and if you like something or don't like something, let us know. If you do send an e-mail to the Editor, don't be surprised if it winds up as a Letter to the Editor in the next edition of the *Monitor*. Please provide your comments to rbrady@publicland.org. Comments should be limited to no more than 500 words in length. In addition, members are encouraged to use the bod@publicland.org e-mail address to communicate with the PLF Board.

The *Monitor* generally reflects ongoing PLF activities, events, updates, awards, and information on former BLM employees. We encourage articles and discussions of issues by posting quality content that also provides a positive exposure of the goals, objectives, and mission of the PLF. However, we need to take some precautions when posting information to the newsletter and other forms of social media to ensure appropriate rules of behavior. In keeping a positive experience for our members, we reserve the right to publish only comments, photos, and other material deemed appropriate by the PLF. We intend on maintaining a friendly and professional tone in the articles in the *Monitor* and any Letters to the Editor.



THE PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION IS A TAX EXEMPT 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION