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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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Memorandum

To: Secretary

Through: Richard T. Cardinale *Richard Cardinale*  
Acting Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management

From: Michael D. Nedd *Michael D. Nedd*  
Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management

Subject: BLM's Response to Secretarial Order 3347 – Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation

In response to Secretarial Order 3347, the BLM is pleased to submit the attached report designed to help advance conservation stewardship and increase outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, for all Americans. The report summarizes the BLM's actions taken to implement Executive Order 13443 as well as those actions that have not occurred, and potential barriers that have prevented or slowed successful implementation of the Executive Order. The report provides specific recommendations to further enhance recreational hunting and recreational fishing on BLM-managed lands, including certain legislative recommendations

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Nedd, Acting Director, BLM, at (202) 208-3801.

Attachment

**REPORT FOR THE SECRETARY  
ON SECRETARIAL ORDER 3347**

Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation  
Bureau of Land Management  
April 3, 2017

On March 2, 2017, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke issued Secretarial Order 3347 (Order), to advance conservation stewardship and increase outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, for all Americans. This document provides the responses requested in the Order, organized as follows:

- I. Introduction to the BLM and its conservation stewardship and outdoor recreation programs
- II. BLM Implementation of Executive Order (EO) 13443, Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation, including:
  - Actions taken to implement EO 13443 and achieve its goals from the time it was issued on August 17, 2007 through March 2, 2017;
  - All actions described by EO 13443 that have not occurred, along with an explanation of any regulatory, legislative, policy or other barriers that that prevented or slowed successful implementation of EO 13443;
- III. Specific recommendations to improve implementation of EO 13443 to enhance hunting.
- IV. Specific recommendation to enhance recreational fishing, specifically regarding efforts to enhance and expand recreational fishing access; and
- V. Legislative recommendations to improve conservation stewardship and outdoor recreation programs

**SUMMARY**

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) 245 million acres (approximately 383,000 square miles) of public lands are 99% open to hunting, fishing and recreational shooting opportunities. These lands are accessed through over 400,000 miles of travel routes or an average of approximately 1 mile of travel route per square mile of public land. The BLM is committed to providing exceptional hunting and fishing opportunities on the public land. The BLM sometimes hears concerns that there are inadequate opportunities for hunting and fishing on public lands. These concerns usually revolve around three main issues, abundance of game, quality of experience, and access, including road networks, infrastructure, and maps and other information.

- BLM aims to provide high quality habitat that supports a long-term abundance of fish and game animals and other wildlife. Achieving this goal involves working with state game and fish agencies, sports and conservation groups, and other users to maintain, restore and enhance important habitat and migratory corridors, as well as finding the right balance between too many roads, which can drive wildlife out of areas and decrease hunting opportunities, and too few roads, which limits access and therefore opportunities, particularly for those with limited mobility.
- BLM aims to provide high quality experiences to sportsmen and women. What constitutes a quality experience varies based on the user. Some users are interested in quick motorized access to hunting and fishing areas. Other users are interested in a "back-country" experience with fewer people. BLM strives to provide a diversity of multiple use experiences to meet these varied interests while also meeting the needs of other public land users.

- Improving satisfaction with access also means doing a better job providing maps and information, both online, so sportsmen and women can plan their adventure from home, and on site.
- BLM has an extensive network of access routes on public lands. Some areas have a denser network while other areas are less dense. A good route network provides a diversity of experiences and opportunities that meet the needs of the many public land users. BLM designates routes through a public process to meet access needs, provide a variety of recreational experiences including hunting and fishing opportunities, maintain quality wildlife habitat, protect archaeological sites, and other factors. When a decision is made to close a route, the rationale for the decision is clearly described, and most often involves stopping resource degradation or loss, improving wildlife habitat, eliminating duplicate routes, increasing safety, and providing a diversity of recreational opportunities.
- While 99% of public lands are open to hunting and fishing, some public lands lack legal access, usually because access is through private property. BLM works with willing land owners to gain access through acquisitions or exchanges of land, purchase of easements, reciprocal easement agreements, or voluntary access offered by the private land owner. The BLM also aims to provide clear information through maps and signs on where legal public access exists and where private property is located.

The BLM has accomplished innumerable actions to increase hunting and fishing on public lands. Many examples of the work accomplished and ongoing by the BLM in support of the EO from national, state, district and field offices is provided in the attached Appendix A. The BLM's website, Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr accounts also highlight many of these actions, and when possible, hotlinks to examples are included.

To continue to improve hunting and fishing opportunities, the BLM has developed an extensive set of possible actions as described in Sections III and IV and recommends prioritizing for action the following elements.

Increase participation of the sporting community in public land decisions. Seek out participation in the BLM's Resource Advisory Councils; land use and transportation planning; access, infrastructure, and habitat improvement projects; and other activities. Coordinate with sporting organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, and other partners to gather information on wildlife and fish habitat and hunting and fishing opportunities to determine which areas provide the highest quality hunting and fishing opportunities and work collaboratively to maintain and improve those habitats and opportunities.

Work with sport and conservation partner organizations and private landowners to gain access to public lands. Acquire land and easements; enter into reciprocal easement and voluntary access agreements; and pursue other programs with willing landowners. Coordinate with sporting organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, and other partners to identify and take action to address where additional access or infrastructure would be beneficial or where existing access or infrastructure can be improved.

Provide better and more accessible information for the sporting community. Provide online and onsite resources, including interagency maps with information on high-quality hunting and fishing areas, sportsman and woman education, ethics and associated data to enhance knowledge, access and experience. The maps will also show location, acres, ownership and verified legal public access status of road networks that access BLM lands.

Support hunting participation and the growth of a new generation of sportsmen and women. Provide resources for youth education and special interest events that will introduce underserved communities, such as urban dwellers and those new to the west, as well as youth to hunting and fishing. Work with youth and other organizations to offer incentives, events and training to the next generation of sportsmen and women. Enhance use of social media to increase the number and diversity of people the BLM reaches.

Increase resources for infrastructure improvements and to address maintenance backlog for recreational facilities, including roads, routes, trails, ramps, docks, and campgrounds.

Maintain and expand infrastructure for hunting and fishing, including improving access for those with special needs.

Working with state and tribal agencies and private partners to monitor and improve availability of high quality game habitat and species. Maintain, restore, and enhance important habitats and migratory corridors. Coordinate with state wildlife agencies, who have primary authority for management of resident wildlife species, to identify priority habitat for management. Reduce the negative effects of habitat stressors, such as nonnative/invasive species, catastrophic wildfire, drought, insects, disease, and habitat loss/fragmentation.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 directs the BLM to manage public lands for multiple uses, such as the development of fish and wildlife resources, livestock grazing, energy development, mining, timber harvest, and outdoor recreation, while protecting and sustaining a vast array of natural, cultural, and historical resources. With more than 245 million acres of public land, located primarily in 12 western states, the BLM manages more wildlife habitat than any other Federal agency. BLM-managed lands comprise some of the Nation's most ecologically diverse and essential habitat and are home to more than 3,000 species of wildlife, including big game, upland game, waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, raptors, and hundreds of nongame mammal, reptile, and amphibian species. **Currently, over 99% of the BLM's 245 million acres are open for hunting and dispersed recreational shooting activities.**

The BLM is responsible for managing habitat to help ensure a natural abundance and diversity of wildlife on public lands. The BLM works closely with many partners, including state fish and wildlife agencies, tribal organizations, conservation groups, and private landowners to identify conservation priorities for wildlife habitat and monitor progress toward achieving management objectives. These projects provide countless benefits to the public by protecting, restoring, and enhancing wildlife habitat to support healthy biological communities and quality wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities on public lands.

The BLM also manages the Nation's most ecologically diverse range of aquatic habitat, totaling more than 132,000 miles of fish bearing streams and rivers, over three million acres of lake and reservoir habitat, and nearly 13 million acres of wetlands. From desert reservoirs to mountain streams, BLM aquatic resources support public recreation and subsistence fisheries and are critical for sustaining the Nation's native aquatic biodiversity and fishing heritages. The BLM Fisheries program, in close partnership with other Federal, state, and non-governmental organizations, focuses on implementing

projects to restore and connect aquatic habitat on public lands, preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species, and enhancing the quality and quantity of recreational fishing opportunities on public lands. In Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15), the American public spent over 6.5 million visitor days on BLM water-based activities, including motorized boating, rowing/floating/paddling, and fishing.

## II. BLM IMPLEMENTATION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 13443

### Actions Taken to Implement EO 13443 from August 17, 2007 through March 2, 2017

Section 2. of the EO outlined seven activities that Federal agencies were required to address:

- (a) Evaluate the effect of agency actions on trends in hunting participation and, where appropriate to address declining trends, implement actions that expand and enhance hunting opportunities for the public;
- (b) Consider the economic and recreational values of hunting in agency actions, as appropriate;
- (c) Manage wildlife and wildlife habitats on public lands in a manner that expands and enhances hunting opportunities, including through the use of hunting in wildlife management planning;
- (d) Work collaboratively with State governments to manage and conserve game species and their habitats in a manner that respects private property rights and State management authority over wildlife resources;
- (e) Establish short and long term goals, in cooperation with State and tribal governments, and consistent with agency missions, to foster healthy and productive populations of game species and appropriate opportunities for the public to hunt those species;
- (f) Ensure that agency plans and actions consider programs and recommendations of comprehensive planning efforts such as State Wildlife Action Plans, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and other range-wide management plans for big game and upland game birds; and
- (g) Seek the advice of State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, and, as appropriate, consult with the Sporting Conservation Council and other organizations, with respect to the foregoing Federal activities.

The following sections summarize BLM's actions, outcomes, and highlights in support of EO 13443. Examples of actions and outcomes produced can be found in Appendix A.

***(a) Evaluate the effect of agency actions on trends in hunting participation and, where appropriate to address declining trends, implement actions that expand and enhance hunting opportunities for the public;***

BLM manages public lands to expand and enhance hunting opportunities for the public and also manages for sustainable wildlife habitat to promote self-sustaining wildlife populations in cooperation with state wildlife agencies. This includes populations of wild game species, and healthy, robust game populations that naturally enhance hunting opportunities for the public. Public lands administered by the BLM play an important role in our nation's hunting heritage and 99% of public lands are open to hunting, fishing and recreational shooting opportunities. According to data presented in the BLM's annual Public Lands Statistics, participation in hunting activities on BLM lands remained steady between 2000 and 2016, with such activities ranging from 4.8 and 6.5 million visitor days annually

(one visitor day represents an aggregate of 12 visitor hours), and no significant upward or downward trend.

While hunting has remained steady on public lands over the last 15 years, overall participation in hunting has declined over time. Though many social and economic factors contribute to the downward trends in hunting, national surveys have shown the primary reason people stop hunting is lack of adequate access to quality hunting areas. The BLM recognizes this and is working to develop new integrated strategies to address these concerns. Expanding and enhancing public hunting opportunities on public lands inherently involves addressing access to public lands. A 2004 report to the House Appropriation Committee, "Public Access to BLM Managed Lands", stated that approximately 9% of public lands lacked legal access. While these numbers have not yet been recalculated, the BLM has been working closely with state, private and non-governmental partners to improve access to public lands, both in terms of reducing the amount of public lands that are inaccessible due to land ownership patterns and by designating, maintaining, improving, and, in some cases, rerouting public roads, routes, and trails to areas with hunting opportunities.

Other factors which contribute to the downward trends in hunter recruitment and retention include an increasing urbanization in the West and new populations moving west who lack a hunting culture and are interested in other experiences. The BLM works closely with partners to share information about hunting, the benefits for conservation, and the hunting opportunities on public lands, including recently on twitter.

***(b) Consider the economic and recreational values of hunting in agency actions, as appropriate;***

The public lands managed by the BLM generate significant and quantifiable benefits for the nation by providing a diverse range of recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing. Participation in these activities generates millions of dollars annually to support state fish and wildlife conservation programs (both game and nongame species) through the collection of Federal excise taxes on the sale of firearms, ammunition, and hunting/fishing equipment. In 2013, the National Shooting Sports Foundation and Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies stated "...the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act was passed in 1937 and placed a special excise tax on firearms and ammunition to be shared among state wildlife agencies for the exclusive purpose of supporting conservation efforts. Since the program began, hunters have contributed over \$7.2 billion to state conservation efforts. Given current levels of firearms and ammunition sales, hunters now contribute over \$371 million annually." Other benefits of the public lands often identified by users is captured in the experience enjoyed by the participant.

As part of the agency's land use planning process, contributions to the social and economic value and well-being of local communities and public land users from recreational experiences on BLM lands are examined in terms of the new economic activity they stimulate in the local and regional economy, and the personal enjoyment users derive from their recreational experiences. In the case of wildlife-related recreation, such as hunting, additional personal benefits associated with the prevalence of big-game and ability to trophy hunt are also addressed.

***(c) Manage wildlife and wildlife habitats on public lands in a manner that expands and enhances hunting opportunities, including through the use of hunting in wildlife management planning;***

The BLM maintains and manages wildlife habitat to help ensure self-sustaining populations and a

natural abundance and diversity of wildlife on public lands. The BLM works closely with many partners, including Federal agencies, State fish and wildlife agencies, tribal organizations, hunting conservation groups, and private landowners, to identify conservation priorities for wildlife habitat/populations and monitor progress toward achieving management objectives, many of which pertain to game species.

The BLM manages wildlife habitat on public lands in close coordination with state wildlife agencies that have primary authority for management of resident wildlife species. The BLM works with these state agencies not only to expand and enhance hunting opportunities, but to also incorporate the use of hunting as a management tool to help the states meet wildlife population objectives. The Sikes Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to cooperate with the states in developing programs on certain public lands, including those administered by the BLM.

As part of its land use and management process, the BLM emphasizes implementing conservation actions intended to sustain healthy wildlife populations on BLM public lands by reducing the negative effects of habitat stressors, such as nonnative/invasive species, catastrophic wildfire, drought, insects, disease, and habitat loss/fragmentation. These actions conserve and enhance wildlife habitat for numerous game species.

***(d) Work collaboratively with State governments to manage and conserve game species and their habitats in a manner that respects private property rights and State management authority over wildlife resources;***

The BLM conserves and enhances wildlife habitat to help ensure self-sustaining populations, natural abundance, distribution, and diversity of all wildlife. BLM-managed lands are vital to an array of game species resources, including big game, upland game, furbearers, small mammals, waterfowl, and other migratory game birds. In order to provide for the long-term conservation of these wildlife resources, the BLM supports projects to address the needs of species or suites of species, taking into consideration local habitats, migration corridors, and the range requirements of these species. This multi-scale approach involves close coordination between BLM field, district, state, and national offices, and individual state governments, as well as state government associations, such as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), and the Western Governors' Association. This collaboration helps to accomplish goals and coordinate management to better address wildlife needs.

The BLM includes state fish and wildlife agencies as cooperators on major National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents when authorizing uses that may impact state management objectives for wildlife and habitats. BLM also works closely with state governments on public lands actions conducted for the benefit of game species. These include wildlife inventories and population counts; habitat inventories, treatments, compliance, and improvements; and monitoring species, populations, and habitat.

The BLM is careful to respect private property rights when managing wildlife habitat and providing hunting opportunities on public lands. Efforts are made to maintain and improve signage that identifies public lands boundaries and public access roads. The BLM also works with willing private landowners through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and with public-private groups, such as the Intermountain West Joint Venture to collaborate on habitat restorations, including removing invasive weed species and creating fuel breaks across public-private lands.



***(e) Establish short and long term goals, in cooperation with State and tribal governments, and consistent with agency missions, to foster healthy and productive populations of game species and appropriate opportunities for the public to hunt those species;***

The BLM works with state agency partners and tribes on multiple levels, both formally and informally, nationally and locally. The BLM works with tribes on fish and wildlife management issues, as well as providing access for traditional cultural uses, including hunting, fishing, and collecting vegetative products. Many BLM state offices have established formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with their state fish and wildlife partners to identify common goals and objectives for wildlife and habitat management, roles and responsibilities for staff, and expectations for communications. BLM offices rely on the planning process to identify, prioritize, and incorporate state population management goals and objectives into BLM resource management plans. The BLM incorporates State Wildlife Action Plans in establishing wildlife habitat management goals. BLM collaborates with the AFWA, WAFWA, and state committees and working groups that establish goals for game species management.

BLM district and field offices conduct thousands of tribal consultations each year involving a full range of topics from general communications to specific proposed actions, such as energy development, hazardous fuels reduction and cultural resource protection activities. Issues related to hunting and fishing on BLM lands are included, as needed. In Alaska, subsistence hunting and fishing is of particular concern and in addition to working through the Federal Subsistence Board, the BLM regularly consults with tribes to ensure management policies support continued access to crucial subsistence resources. The BLM is committed to improving and maintaining long term consulting relationships with tribes. The new BLM 1780 Manual and Handbook describes techniques state, district, and field offices can use to achieve success.

***(f) Ensure that agency plans and actions consider programs and recommendations of comprehensive planning efforts such as State Wildlife Action Plans, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and other range-wide management plans for big game and upland game birds;***

The development of fish and wildlife resources on public lands requires the BLM to work closely with state fish and wildlife agency partners on many different levels. The BLM relies on their specialized knowledge and input to effectively plan and implement resource management actions in support of state objectives for both game and nongame species. At the Land Use Plan decision level, BLM's Planning Handbook directs managers to designate priority species and habitats, and identify desired outcomes (goals and objectives) and habitat conditions that support a wide variety of game, non-game, and migratory bird species. It also specifies that the BLM acknowledge the state role in managing fish and wildlife, to work in close coordination with state wildlife agencies, and to use state wildlife conservation strategies. As described above, the BLM incorporates State Wildlife Action Plans in establishing wildlife habitat management goals during land use planning and works closely with state agencies and wildlife associations in planning and developing goals for habitat management.

***(g) Seek the advice of State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, and, as appropriate, consult with the Wildlife Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (formerly Sporting Conservation Council) and other organizations, with respect to the foregoing Federal activities;***

In addition to the coordination on wildlife habitat management and hunting on public lands described



above, the BLM is also advised by the Wildlife Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC). The WHHCC is an official advisory group established under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The WHHCC advises the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture on agency activities that benefit recreational hunting and wildlife resources, and activities that encourage partnership among the public, the sporting conservation community, the shooting and hunting sports industry, wildlife conservation organizations, and Federal and state governments. The WHHCC's primary goal is to promote and preserve America's wildlife and hunting heritage for future generations. Since the establishment of the WHHCC, the BLM has served as an ex officio member to the Council to seek consultation on wildlife and hunting heritage, as well as to provide input to the council on BLM activities.

The EO directs that a "Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Resource Conservation Plan" be prepared and include specific actions and a 10-year agenda to pursue the EO. This implementation plan was completed on December 14, 2008 and included eight initiatives, 58 "major" actions and 173 sub-actions for a total of 231 specific actions. As an ex officio member of the WHHCC, the BLM supports implementing the 10-year plan as it pertains to BLM agency responsibilities. Many of the BLM's accomplishments cited in this report support the actions outlined in the 10-year plan.

## **Other BLM Actions that Support the Goals of EO 13443**

### ***Recreational Shooting Opportunities***

Recreational shooting is a legitimate use on public lands. The vast majority of public lands, 99%, are open for dispersed recreational shooting – an activity that many hunters favor as it enables them to practice their shooting skills outside of hunting seasons. Responsible shooting can be a safe and fun activity for participants. The BLM appreciates the role that centralized shooting sites can provide and has regularly supported the use of the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act as a land transfer vehicle for establishing shooting ranges. While the BLM no longer leases lands for shooting ranges, the BLM processes applications for transferring land to qualified applicants for the purposes of public shooting ranges under the R&PP Act, where allowable under current land use plans.

### ***Partnership Success Stories***

The BLM relies on hundreds of partners at all levels, across all programs, to help execute the challenging work of managing the nation's resources across 245 million acres of public lands. The BLM benefits from effective partnerships through expanded work capacity and accomplishments from donated labor and funding; enhanced public support for BLM programs; and increased agency knowledge, awareness, understanding of public interests and needs. BLM state, district, and field offices work with national wildlife partners and locally-based organizations, such as the Lemhi Regional Land Trust in Salmon, Idaho, and local chapters of the national partners. The BLM National Wildlife Program currently has 13 active Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to assist with implementing mutual conservation priorities, 11 of which are directly pertinent to hunting and fishing: three with Federal agencies (BLM/USFS/NRCS - Sagebrush; BLM/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Migratory Birds; BLM/APHIS - Wildlife Services); three with state agencies (BLM/AFWA; BLM/WAFWA Mule Deer and Black-tailed Deer Conservation; BLM/WAFWA Grasslands); and five with non-governmental partners (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Mule Deer Foundation; National Wild Turkey Federation; Quail Forever; and Ducks Unlimited).

### ***Digital Outreach Accomplishments***

Recently, the BLM launched a digital media campaign to promote locations that are open to the public for hunting and fishing, highlight partnership success stories, and share the benefits of these activities to our economy. Using #huntingisconservation, the campaign showcased photos, videos and stories of responsible hunting and fishing on public lands, seen by multiple thousands of people across several social media platforms:

Tumblr: <http://mypubliclands.tumblr.com/search/hunting>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/search?s=follows&vertical=default&q=%23huntingisconservation&src=typd>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BLMNational/posts/10154188483142312>

### **Actions Described by the Executive Order That Have Not Occurred**

The BLM has successfully met the intent and implemented the actions required under Executive Order 13443. The BLM also believes that more can be done and is committed to further advancing conservation stewardship, improving game and habitat management, and increasing access to outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing.. As specified in the EO, BLM has worked closely with WHHCC and acted upon many recommendations. Appendix B includes four recommendations from the WHHCC that were considered but not acted upon and the BLM's rationale for not acting.

Barriers that have limited the BLM's ability to further advance the Executive Order include: establishing secure and reliable funding sources to purchase easements or land parcels that provide access to public lands; addressing road maintenance backlogs; and investing in habitat improvement and restoration projects which would allow the BLM to increase the pace at which it gains public access to inaccessible public lands, improve and maintain roads to restore motorized access where impassible roads make access impossible, and complete habitat enhancement projects that support sustainable larger and healthier populations of fish and game. In addition, obtaining legislative authority for concession operations and a BLM Foundation would provide additional capacity to achieve the goals of the Secretarial Order through fees and donations.

## **III. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE RECREATIONAL HUNTING**

### ***Improving State and Tribal Government Coordination***

- Increase opportunities to coordinate with state fish and wildlife agencies and tribes to support shared efforts and update/develop agreements to work collaboratively to improve fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.
- Work with state fish and wildlife agencies and tribes to identify the Best Management Practices already occurring to address mutual priorities related to habitat, game population management, and access; and any additional actions that should be explored to improve these working relationships.
- Increase coordination with tribes to ensure we meet treaty and consultation requirements and to cooperate, including through MOUs or other agreements, on management and habitat improvement for wildlife and fish habitat.
- Consider staff details between state and BLM offices to help encourage greater understanding and cross-fertilization of ideas and priorities.

- Consider appointing a special liaison from the BLM to work with each state fish and wildlife agency to identify, track, and report on issues, concerns, resource priorities and progress. (See Western Governors Association *Principles to Clarify and Strengthen the State-Federal Relationship*, Dec 15, 2016).
- Work with state fish and wildlife departments to develop “special hunt” opportunities for disabled and youth populations that may require motorized access across private lands to largely inaccessible public land.
- Evaluate BLM policy for coordination with state agencies to ensure it reflects current needs and make consistent state-level MOU’s between the BLM and state fish and wildlife agencies.
- Reach out to States and counties to inform them of Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) options to help expand shooting sports opportunities.

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### ***Enhancing Partnerships***

- Support active and meaningful participation by public land managers in meeting the goals and objectives of the Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports Roundtable.
- Increase awareness of existing partnerships in BLM field organizations. For example, the BLM recently entered into a national agreement with the Intermountain Joint Venture to coordinate habitat improvements across public and provide lands in the sagebrush steppe ecosystem.
- Work with the WHHCC on their previous recommendations regarding recreational shooting and access.
- Work with the WHHCC to increase sportsmen representation on the BLM’s Resource Advisory Councils.
- Explore a program to leverage non-governmental partner funds for fish, wildlife, and recreational programs and projects.
- Increase partnership opportunities with conservation groups to promote safe shooting sport practices and responsible hunting on public lands.
- Work with partners to sign designated travel routes and public land boundaries and to provide, in print and electronically, travel maps to inform public land users, including hunters, where BLM land is located and the uses for which the lands are open.

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### ***Public Outreach***

- Identify and publicize management and habitat priorities to partners and the public to increase support for completing these actions.
- Sponsor more veteran (including wounded warrior hunting and fishing), youth, and other events.
- Identify underserved communities and develop and implement actions to increase the use of and enjoyment in public lands for hunting and recreation purposes.
- Update or develop, as needed, hunting information for each BLM district, in cooperation with any adjacent public lands when possible. The use of digital media, including apps and geo-referenced maps, would make this of particular use for the public. Ensure recreation products include public hunting information. Work with USGS and other partners to ensure products are user-friendly and accessible and as seamless as possible across Federal and state lands. Consider development of an interagency web site (such as [www.HuntPublicLands.com](http://www.HuntPublicLands.com)) for access to Federal and State maps, including easement information, imagery and hunter information, hunter ethics, and associated data to enhance hunter knowledge, access and experience.
- Resolve Google Places with the Department of the Interior’s interface to insure that this

primary interface used by the public displays correct information for all public lands.

- Conduct a public relations campaign to inform the public, and particularly sportsmen and women, that the public lands are open for hunting and fishing. Methods could include increased visibility at Expos and Conventions, increased branding of the Interior with complementary branding for the individual bureaus, and an Interior YouTube channel that shares hunting and fishing information.
- Increase the visibility of public land hunting and fishing opportunities through high-profile activities such as a competition to guide the Secretary of the Interior on public lands.
- Establish a BLM-wide digital communication strategy that features partners such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wild Turkey Federation and other key local and national stakeholders and government agencies. This coordinated approach will amplify messaging related to the Secretary's support for recreational hunting and fishing on public lands, as well as any hunting and fishing related events on public lands that partners participate in (e.g. "guide the Secretary" )
- Under a Bureau-wide digital communication strategy develop hunting and fishing digital media content (photos, videos, and narratives) for the BLM website and BLM National and State social media platforms that have the potential to reach our 170K followers on Tumblr, 22.7K followers on Twitter, 49K followers on Facebook, 273K followers on Instagram; Plus, BLM State accounts can work closely with local communities to promote partnerships, events and conservation/habitat work.
- Work with partners to create and disseminate digital outreach materials (short Public Service Announcement-type videos, audio ads, etc.) and hard copy materials (brochures, kiosks, signage) to help educate the public about the BLM's ongoing landscape restoration and the importance of adequate quantity and quality of habitat necessary to support healthy game populations. (Note: with the exception of the Wild Horse and Burro Program, the BLM does not currently have authority to spend appropriated dollars on mass media development).

### ***Incorporating Data, and Science into Planning Decisions***

- When revising land use plans, enhance sports men and women participation through various methods such as use of visitor surveys and community focus groups to determine which areas provide the highest quality hunting and fishing experiences and outcomes, where additional access would be beneficial, and what BLM management actions necessary to support those outcomes.
- Develop baseline habitat data, measurable habitat and species population goals (x number of y species by z date), and monitoring protocols in cooperation with state fish and wildlife agencies that are common across all land management units and can be shared to provide better information on wildlife habitat and movement needs.
- Use lessons learned from the development of the Actionable Science Plan and Science Framework for the Department of the Interior Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy as a pilot and work with states and partners to develop similar science plans and frameworks elsewhere.
- Building on existing terrestrial and aquatic monitoring strategies, develop an inter-agency monitoring framework to help facilitate early cooperation with state wildlife managers and the energy industry, assess habitat condition and trend, and identify priorities for habitat conservation, reclamation and restoration.
- Enhance existing capacity and technology to better incorporate WAFWA Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool information, and other wildlife data into BLM land use decisions along with State Wildlife Action Plans.

- Continue working with partners to map game species migration corridors that cross BLM public lands.
- Review existing science to develop more specific guidelines for the location of energy projects that avoid, minimize, or mitigate the potential negative impacts on wildlife.

### ***Increasing Access***

- Clarify and update the scope of the access problem on BLM lands. In 2004, it was estimated that nearly 9% of public lands lacked legal access as of 2004; this number is outdated and needs to be updated.
  - Analyze current access and identify where and why access is limited.
  - Provide contracting mechanisms and additional Travel Management Planning funding to expand field unit capacity to inventory and analyze access vulnerabilities and opportunities.
  - Create a validated (ground-truthed) geospatial layer showing location, number of acres, surrounding/adjacent ownership and verified legal public access status of road networks that access large blocks of BLM lands.
  - Identify potential priority projects from this comprehensive inventory of access needs.
- Address access priorities through various mechanisms, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs to acquire easements or land parcels.
- Explore incentives to encourage private landowners to willingly offer access opportunities to the public. Examples may include: expansion of Idaho's "Access Yes" program to encourage private land owners to allow access to other states; reciprocal rights-of-way across public lands for reduced or no fees; reductions in permit fees associated with public land use; expedited or novel land exchanges; resource improvement and maintenance on public-access roads on private lands (roads, culverts, cattle guards, weed treatments, etc.); and state incentives, such as free or reduced prices to landowners for hunting licenses and permits, additional/bonus tags, or assistance with land improvements or crop protection.
- Consider allowing greater flexibility for Federal agencies to consider additional values to assess and negotiate the Fair Market Value (FMV) of easement acquisitions. Currently, agencies are restricted to paying a FMV amount based solely on the value of the real estate included in easement purchases and cannot consider the additional value that accrues when access to public lands is increased.
- Re-evaluate the criteria for restricting use of BLM LWCF funds to designated units rather than all public lands.
- Work with partners to implement approved travel plans to provide hunter access and habitat protection.
- Work jointly to expand Cooperative Wildlife Management Programs to provide habitat needs and hunting opportunities to the public in areas where private lands predominate and access is limited to the general public.
- Train additional staff dedicated to respond to access vulnerabilities and opportunities in a timely manner.

### ***Infrastructure Improvements***

- Secure funding and coordinate with partners to develop handicapped access recreation opportunities.
- Work with local groups to identify popular hunting locations that need infrastructure improvements, such as hunter parking areas and campgrounds to increase access or remove conflicts with private lands.

- Consider public-private partnerships and sponsorships to support additional infrastructure and improve public access for fishing and hunting, including addressing habitat rehabilitation and invasive species.
- Address maintenance backlogs of designated roads, routes, trails and campgrounds. Public infrastructure funding and cooperative public-private (partnership) funding opportunities should be pursued.

### ***Improving Habitat***

- Continue work with state and tribal agencies and other partners to develop enhancement and restoration plans at multiple scales to maintain and restore important habitats used by mule deer, pronghorn, elk, and sage-grouse to address wildfire effects.
- Work with states under the Sikes Act to fully implement existing authorities to complete habitat improvement projects and related activities, protect threatened and endangered species, and support the public land stamp program to fund habitat improvement for game and fish species. For example, New Mexico is the only state that has successfully developed a stamp program for hunting, fishing, and trapping that funds habitat improvement projects on public lands.
- Invest in habitat improvement and restoration projects on BLM lands to provide high-quality habitat for fish and wildlife species that in turn provide high-quality fishing and hunting opportunities. Organizations like the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), a congressionally-chartered foundation that provides conservation grants to public and private partners, and hunting groups such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation can provide funding and capacity to expand the BLM's ability and capacity to complete projects on public lands.
- Improve wildlife habitat on BLM lands adjacent to public access areas, and state management areas. Increase cooperative habitat conservation restoration projects across the private/public land interface to develop and enhance partnerships between Federal, state, private land managers and sportsmen.
- Consider expanding the "Restore New Mexico" project to other BLM States. Restore New Mexico was successful in leveraging more than \$440,000 in spending on upland game and big game habitat projects.
- Work with partners to increase invasive species control, including through improved forest health, biofuels projects, and developing new and more effective herbicides and biocides.
- Address the backlog of restoring millions of acres of degraded habitat. For example, the BLM has identified more than 10 million acres of priority sagebrush habitat that is degraded, primarily due to fire and invasive species. Other important ecosystems have similar problems.
- Ensure an appropriate mix of habitats for increasing game species dependent on specific types of habitat. For example, higher elevation forests provide critical summer range for deer and elk, important for ensuring successful breeding and calf survival and where additional vegetation openings are needed, commercial timber sales can both provide jobs and economic benefit and improve wildlife habitat.
- Work with local businesses to develop a market-based source of native plants and seeds so they are available for habitat restoration activities and fire recovery to provide more benefit to wildlife.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE RECREATIONAL FISHING

##### ***Improving State and Tribal Government Coordination***

The BLM works closely with partners, especially state fish and wildlife and state recreational agencies, to manage public lands for fishing and boating opportunities. The BLM also works with tribes on fish and wildlife management issues, as well as traditional cultural uses. Highlights of these partnerships are included throughout this report.

The BLM can increase and enhance these efforts through the following actions:

- Evaluate and update as necessary the existing agreements with state fish and wildlife agencies to ensure they are up-to-date, include regularly scheduled meetings, and are inclusive of all necessary actions for the cooperative management of fish, wildlife and habitat.
- Continue and expand coordination with state agencies on invasive species prevention and control.
- Increase coordination with tribes to ensure we meet treaty and consultation requirements and to cooperate on management and habitat improvement, including through MOUs or other agreements, for wildlife and fish habitat.

##### ***Enhancing Partnerships***

The BLM participates on several aquatic interagency and partnership organizations, including the Association for Fish and Wildlife's Angler and Boating Participation Committee, the National Fish Habitat Partnership and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. The BLM has also worked closely with non-governmental organizations, such as Trout Unlimited for habitat restoration and FishingCommunity.Org on the Fisheries for Veterans Project. Highlights of these partnerships are included throughout this report.

The BLM can increase and enhance these efforts through the following actions:

- Increase participation with the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, which is chartered to "...advise the Secretary of the Interior, through the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, on aquatic conservation endeavors that benefit recreational fishery resources and recreational boating and that encourage partnerships among industry, the public, and government."
- Complete the Memorandum of Understanding with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, American Sportfishing Association, the National Marine Manufacturers Association, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for planning and implementing projects and activities to promote and provide enhanced fishing and boating opportunities on public lands and waters and increase the number of anglers and boaters to 60 million in 60 months.
- Encourage fishing events for veterans and their families through partnerships with Fishing Community.Org, Project Healing Waters, Wounded Warriors, and other organizations.
- Increase family events such as Youth Fishing with local state fish and wildlife agencies and Catch a Special Thrill (CAST) for Kids.
- Explore revitalizing the Recreational Fisheries Policy (1990) which was co-authored with the U.S. Forest Service for consistent and enhanced management of fisheries on public lands.
- Continue work on interagency invasive species coordination, outreach, and management efforts with state and Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, and the Western Regional Panel.
- Continue work with on-the-ground partners, such as Trout Unlimited, and local communities



and adjacent landowners to restore healthy fish habitat, enhance access, and support working lands.

### ***Public Outreach***

The BLM participates in many outreach efforts to increase responsible fishing on public lands. Some highlights for youth include kids fishing derbies in partnership with state fishing agencies in California and Idaho, invasive species education in classrooms, and the Adopt-A-Trout program with Trout Unlimited in Wyoming. During the 2015-16 school year, more than 140 students from Baggs, Wyoming helped employees from the BLM Rawlins Field Office tag and study fish as part of the program, providing the opportunity for an intense, hands-on learning opportunity for kids and developing a study that resource professionals can use. A unique project in Alaska partners with Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Nushagak-Mulchatna/Wood-Tikchik Land Trust presenting an annual week-long Bristol Bay Fly Fishing Academy. The Academy provides guiding, fly fishing and business instruction to rural Alaska Native youth with interests in managing their own businesses based out of their home villages.

The BLM also has several programs targeted to veterans fishing. These include Project Healing Waters fly-fishing events in Alaska and Oregon and veterans and family events at Lake Havasu in Arizona and the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area in Florida. The BLM partners with states across the country for free-fishing days for the entire community.

The BLM can enhance outreach for angler and boating opportunities on public lands through the following actions:

- Continue and expand youth, veterans, and family fishing events.
- Continue and expand education and outreach programs, especially concerning the prevention of invasive species.
- Update and develop where lacking "Fish Your Public Lands" information for each BLM district, in cooperation with any adjacent National Forests when possible. The use of digital media, including apps and geo-referenced maps, would make this of particular use for the public. Ensure recreation products include public fishing information. Work with USGS, states and other partners to ensure products are user-friendly and accessible and as seamless as possible across all lands.
- Complete MOUs with other agencies and non-governmental organizations to increase the opportunities for fishing and boating on public lands (see Partnerships).
- Conduct a public relations campaign to inform the public, and particularly sportsmen and women, that the public lands are open for hunting and fishing. Methods could include increased visibility at expos and conventions, increased branding of the Interior with complementary branding for the individual bureaus, an Interior YouTube channel that shares hunting and fishing information,
- Increase the visibility of public land hunting and fishing opportunities through high-profile activities such as a competition to guide the Secretary of the Interior on public lands.
- Establish a BLM-wide digital communication strategy that features partners such as the Trout Unlimited and other key local and national stakeholders and government agencies. This coordinated approach will amplify messaging related to the Secretary's support for recreational hunting and fishing on public lands, as well as any hunting and fishing related events on public lands that partners participate in (e.g. "guide the Secretary" )
- Under a Bureau-wide digital communication strategy develop hunting and fishing digital media

content (photos, videos, and narratives) for the BLM website and BLM National and State social media platforms that have the potential to reach our 170K followers on Tumblr, 22.7K followers on Twitter, 49K followers on Facebook, 273K followers on Instagram; Plus, BLM State accounts can work closely with local communities to promote partnerships, events and conservation/habitat work.

### ***Increasing Access***

The BLM strives to ensure access to fishing and boating areas through easements and land exchanges and purchases. Recently, the BLM acquired acreage along the Wild and Scenic North Umpqua River, the Missouri River in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument, and the North Platte River in Wyoming, which will provide public access to hunting and fishing in perpetuity. The BLM has also used the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire access to the Magic Reservoir and East Fork of Fish Creek in Idaho.

The BLM can continue to improve access on public lands to fishing opportunities with the following actions:

- Identify areas for easements or land acquisition/exchange which would increase access for anglers to existing high-quality fishing waters. Use reciprocal rights-of-way and other tools to incentivize private landowners to provide access across their private property to otherwise inaccessible public lands.
- Identify areas with few angling opportunities and seek opportunities to enhance public access. For example, the Missouri River located in northeast Montana has very few publicly accessible sites. The BLM and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks are currently collaborating through a Recreation and Public Purposes Act agreement on the Redwater Fishing Access Site, which would provide additional river access to anglers and potentially campers, and also provide an opportunity for floaters and boaters.
- Identify opportunities where access is limited due to inholdings or travel restrictions. For example, the public has accessed Current Creek and the larger 31 Mile Mountain vicinity in Colorado through a parcel of State Land Board land, which is slated to be closed to motorized access. The BLM is now seeking alternative access to ensure the public can continue to access their public lands and fishing in this area.

### ***Infrastructure Improvements***

The BLM manages nearly 400 boat ramps, both developed and primitive, on 132,000 miles of fish-bearing streams and rivers and over three million acres of lake and reservoir habitat. The BLM strives to maintain, repair and replace, and expand infrastructure for angling, including roads, routes, trails, ramps, and docks. In New Mexico, the BLM recently reconstructed day-use parking lots, extended the boat ramp, extended and re-anchored the fishing pier, and other projects at the Santa Cruz Lake North Recreation Area. In Idaho, the BLM recently developed three new boat ramp facilities that have significantly expanded hunting and fishing on the South Fork and Henry's Fork of the Snake River. Improvements on the Lower Salmon River support rafting, jet boating, camping and chukar hunting as well as fishing.

The Lake Havasu Fishery Improvement Project is a long-term effort to improve habitat for sport fishing, and maintain and enhance recreational fishing access on Lake Havasu. The project includes Arizona Game and Fish Department, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Anglers United, Marine Association, Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since its inception, the partnership has installed six fishing docks, and a seventh fishing dock is currently in the

process of being completed. The BLM is working with its partners to address maintenance and replace one dock. Additionally, the BLM has been working to increase fish habitat and remove invasive species in Lake Havasu. The BLM also maintains several boat ramps on Lake Havasu, and works to improve fishing access along the Lower Colorado River.

Additional infrastructure improvements to increase recreational fishing opportunities include:

- The Lake Havasu Fishery Improvement Project has been a great success, but the BLM Lower Colorado River area needs continued resources, such as additional dock repairs, aquatic invasive weed management, and an expanded containment program for invasive quagga mussels.
- The BLM needs to improve support for sportsmen and women with disabilities. There are several projects proposed for ADA/ABA accessible trails and docks, including at popular sites like Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area in Florida and Hogan/Luce Recreation Site in Wyoming. These improvements would also help support veterans and family fishing opportunities.
- Increasing invasive species outreach and support for state programs has and continues to be a priority. Aquatic invasive species, including zebra and quagga mussels, can foul infrastructure and significantly reduce recreational opportunities. The BLM should continue and expand outreach and education to prevent the spread of invasive species and partnering with state agencies on management and decontamination/inspection on public lands.
- Maintenance and enhancement of existing fishing and boating infrastructure are needed. Many of the BLM boat ramps and fishing piers are in need of improvement or replacement, including those on the Lower Deschutes River in Oregon. Lake Havasu and Jupiter Inlet, highly popular boating and fishing areas, both have millions of dollars of additional infrastructure needs.
- Through land use planning, identify areas that need additional infrastructure, such as boat ramps and launch sites, campgrounds, and other facilities in new areas and keep existing facilities open year round. Consider public/private partnerships and sponsorships to support additional infrastructure.

### ***Improving Habitat***

Healthy fish populations depend on healthy habitats and one of the BLM's largest contributions to recreational fishing is through habitat maintenance, restoration and enhancement, in close coordination with local communities and the state fish and wildlife agencies. Recent highlights include a collaboration with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to examine escapement of Chinook and sockeye salmon on the Wild and Scenic Gulkana River, restoration of rainbow trout in the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the local high school fly-fishing club, barrier removal and flow restoration on the Pahsimeroi River in Idaho, enhancement of bass ponds in the Paynes Creek area where Take a Kid Fishing events are held each year with California Fish and Wildlife, and reintroduction of Bonneville cutthroat trout in the Bear River with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Trout Unlimited.

Trout Unlimited (TU) is one of the BLM's largest partners in on-the-ground habitat work. Examples of projects with TU range from Wyoming, where TU has helped restore habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout, to New Mexico, where TU is just beginning work with the BLM and the local community of Lincoln, NM to improve the Rio Bonito fishing experience both in quality and accessibility.

Trout Unlimited has also been instrumental in helping to support responsible ranching. Maggie Creek

Ranch and the Searle family of Elko, Nevada, were recognized at the 2016 Nevada Cattlemen's Association Annual Convention as the national winners of the 2015 Environmental Stewardship Award. The ranch has worked in close collaboration with the BLM, TU and other Federal agencies and private partners to improve habitat for threatened and endangered species and other wildlife, including the installation of irrigation diversions and a fish passage to protect the Lahontan cutthroat trout. The BLM has also implemented other grazing techniques to improve sport fisheries. For example, the BLM-Montana/Dakotas Miles City Field Office fenced three sport-fish reservoirs in order to exclude grazing pressure from the riparian zone and adjacent uplands surrounding the reservoirs.

Aquatic invasive species such as quagga mussels, New Zealand mudsnail, and aquatic weeds pose a serious threat to river and lake habitats and recreational fishing. The BLM has a strong invasive species prevention program, focused on outreach to sportsmen and women through a partnership with Wildlife Forever. The BLM also works with the state game and fish agencies on inspection and decontamination efforts to prevent the movement of invasive species, especially in the lower Colorado River and Lake Havasu.

The BLM can continue its focus on habitat protection, restoration and enhancement to increase recreational fishing on public lands with the following actions:

- Continue work with on-the-ground partners, local communities, and adjacent landowners to restore healthy fish habitat, enhance access, and support working lands.
- Work with partners such as state game and fish agencies, TU, and the Western Native Trout Initiative to increase habitat for native trout, anadromous, and other native sport fish.
- Work with partners such as state fish and wildlife agencies and the Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership on efforts to increase recreational fishing in reservoir and lake habitat. For example, Rattlesnake Reservoir in Montana, actively stocked with black crappie, needs habitat improvements to maintain the structure of the reservoir.
- Work with states under the Sikes Act to fully implement existing authorities to complete habitat improvement projects and related activities, protect threatened and endangered species, and support the public land stamp program to fund habitat improvement for game and fish species. For example, New Mexico is the only state that has successfully developed a stamp program for hunting, fishing, and trapping that funds habitat improvement projects on public lands.
- Expand efforts to partner with the states on the management of aquatic invasive species to prevent ecological and economic harm, especially in the lower Colorado River and Lake Havasu.
- Restore instream and riparian habitat following removal of invasive species, including tamarisk.
- Ensure that subsistence management is fully supported in Alaska.

## **V. LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) enables agencies to provide enhanced experiences at recreation sites around the country managed by BLM, and other Federal agencies. FLREA strengthens the connection between visitors and the lands they cherish by requiring that the fees they pay benefit the sites they visit. In BLM, 100% of the funds are retained locally to reinvest in improving the public's recreation experience.

Thousands of projects, large and small, have been supported by FLREA fees since 2004. The authority for FLREA is scheduled to sunset on September 30, 2018, and, if it does, the BLM will no longer have explicit recreation fee authority to support recreation access, facilities, and services.

- Seek permanent reauthorization and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to support wildlife conservation and access improvements to public lands.
- Under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), enacted in July of 2000, the BLM could sell public lands identified for disposal and retain the proceeds from those sales in a special account in the Treasury. The BLM and the other Federal land managing agencies were then able to use those funds to acquire, from willing sellers, inholdings within certain federally designated areas and lands that are adjacent to those areas that contain exceptional resources. Prior to its expiration in 2011, approximately 27,200 acres were sold under FLTFA authority and approximately 18,100 acres of high resource value lands were acquired. By reauthorizing FLTFA, Congress would enable the BLM to continue a rational process of land disposal that is anchored in public participation and sound land use planning.
- Develop a legislative proposal that establishes explicit concession authority for the BLM. This authority would provide multiple opportunities in support of hunting and fishing by ensuring that recreation visitors on BLM lands and waters will have access to the services, products, and facilities necessary for them to realize the full enjoyment of public lands and related waters.
- Establish a BLM Foundation to be able to use private gifts of money or personal property to support the management of BLM lands, including the funding of habitat improvement and restoration projects on public lands.

## APPENDIX A

### BLM Highlights and Examples of Projects Implementing Executive Order 13443

- (a) Evaluate the effect of agency actions on trends in hunting participation and, where appropriate to address declining trends, implement actions that expand and enhance hunting opportunities for the public;*

#### National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights

- In FY13, Congress included special line item funding (\$2M) for the BLM to improve access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities. Since 2013, Congress has appropriated special access funding to the BLM in FY15 (\$2M) and FY16 (\$8M). These funds have been used to support 18 access projects in 10 western states, representing new or improved legal access to more than 500,000 acres of public lands. In addition to Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act funding, many BLM field offices have improved public hunting and fishing access through land exchanges with private entities and donations from conservation organizations and/or individuals.
- Between 2009 and 2016, an estimated 48,675 acres of land have been acquired within units of the National Conservation Lands with the aid of the LWCF. The large majority of these lands provide additional access to hunting and fishing recreational opportunities.
- The BLM Recreational Mapping Project increased the number of easily accessible standardized maps available to the public and the “Google Effort” resulted in all BLM’s National Monument and National Conservation Areas boundaries now being incorporated into Google Maps. These efforts have increased the quality and availability of online maps and the public’s ability to access fishing and hunting areas.
- Many recreationalists depend on the BLM’s National Conservation Lands for access to some of the country’s best fishing and hunting opportunities. National Scenic and Historic Trails provide critical access links between roads and other access points to fishing and hunting areas on BLM and other public and private lands.
- Since 2006, the BLM has participated in the Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports Roundtable Memorandum of Understanding with 42 conservation groups to collaborate on projects and activities related to hunting, fishing, and shooting sports conducted on Federal lands including hunting and fishing access.
- BLM district and field offices work closely with state fish and wildlife agencies to implement actions to improve hunting opportunities on public lands. For example, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the BLM maintain records indicating the availability of public access routes (roads, trails, campsites) that can be used to reach public lands and waters and BLM Arizona is actively involved in an interagency Travel Management Working Group tasked with addressing demands for recreational uses, including hunting and fishing, on public lands. Additionally, BLM offices in Montana are also working with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to establish Block Management agreements to increase access to public lands for hunting. Block Management is a cooperative effort between FWP, private landowners, and public land management agencies to help landowners manage hunting activities and to provide free public hunting access to private and isolated public lands.
- BLM district and field offices coordinate with state fish and wildlife agencies to support game species management to improve hunting opportunities on public lands, such as: BLM Utah working with the state and Pheasants Forever (PF) to release pheasants on public lands; BLM New Mexico working with state partners to collar and translocate mule deer onto public lands;

and working with state agencies to provide for separation of wild sheep and domestic sheep to protect herd health.

### **BLM Alaska**

- The Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the BLM maintain general land status records. Both agencies also maintain records indicating the availability of public access routes (roads, trails, campsites) that can be used to reach public lands and waters.
- The Central Yukon Field Office is currently analyzing the potential for increasing the number of hunter access points along the Dalton Corridor. The intent of increased hunter access points is to both: 1) mitigate user conflicts between subsistence hunters and other hunters; and 2) enhance the hunter/recreational user experience in a vast, largely roadless, tract of Federal land.
- The Central Yukon Field Office co-manages a winter moose hunt with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a portion of BLM-managed lands. The authorization for this hunt is based on: 1) the status of the moose population and its capacity to support an antlerless hunt; and 2) local need and annual food security status of specific interior Alaska villages.
- The Central Yukon Field Office aids the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) in staffing a hunter check station during the fall moose season. This provides BLM staff the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of hunters that use BLM and other public lands.
- The Eastern Interior Field Office recently approved Resource Management Plans (2016) for the Draanjik, Fortymile, Steese, and White Mountains planning subunits which provide opportunities for recreational use of fish and wildlife, including hunting and fishing, and emphasizes maintaining and protecting subsistence resources. Opportunities for larger Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs) were also expanded in one subunit of the plan, allowing for greater access to the area by hunters.
- Recreation and biology specialists in the Anchorage Field Office regularly participate in the annual Great Alaskan Sportsman Show by staffing a BLM information booth and providing information on public lands access for hunting, fishing and general recreation.

### **BLM Arizona**

- The BLM-Arizona Leadership and Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) Leadership meet annually to address issues related to management of fish and wildlife resources on public lands. This includes issues related to hunter access.
- BLM Arizona is actively involved in the Travel Management Working Group developed by the executives of each agency and tasked with addressing recreational uses, including hunting and fishing, on public lands in Arizona. The group has been in place since the spring of 2015, and includes Federal, State, and local agencies (including a County sheriff representative).
- BLM and AGFD meet annually at the regional/district coordination meeting which provides a forum for addressing access and other issues related to enhancing hunter opportunities.
- BLM provides customized mapping services at the local and state office public rooms to assist the public. The maps show land ownership at a scale that is useful and popular with hunters.
- Since 2007, the BLM has utilized the LWCF to acquire 10,014 acres in Arizona. Maintaining and improving habitat for wildlife resources, including game species, and improving outdoor recreation opportunities were the primary considerations in these acquisitions.
- In the last 2 years, the BLM has elevated LWCF acquisition proposals that enhance hunter access to Federal lands. In Graham County, the BLM is expecting to close on an acquisition of 600 acres that will provide new, and the only legal motorized, access to 32,000 acres of designated Federal wilderness lands. Negotiations are underway on two similar acquisitions that will provide legal access for hunting and other recreational uses.



### **BLM California**

- Land acquisition for hunting and fishing habitat and improved access in the last ten years totals over 4,000 acres statewide for BLM California.
- In 2016, BLM California worked with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) on the acquisition of 5,000 acres of additional land for the Cache Creek Natural Area in Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. The two parcels secured and improved year-round public access, provided multiple recreational opportunities for camping, hunting, angling, and birdwatching, while protecting important cultural, natural resource, and wildlife habitat for the rare Tule elk. California's Tule elk herds have recovered from the brink of extinction and Cache Creek now has several trophy bull tags available each year. One of the tags is reserved for an "apprentice hunt" for youth hunters.
- Applegate Field Office was awarded FY16 Access funds to acquire two parcels and one road easement that will significantly improve public access to approximately 100,000 acres of public land, providing quality hunting opportunities. The Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) is a partner.
- One office spent over 2.5 million dollars on road improvements, bridge replacement and access improvements to support increased hunting and fishing access.

### **BLM Colorado**

- In 2015, the Little Snake Field Office initiated a carrying capacity study to inform issuance of commercial special recreation permits. The study will support the office in its efforts to provide the best recreational experience for commercial hunting outfitters and their clients in northwest Colorado, one of the premier elk hunting areas in the United States.
- Little Snake Field Office partnered with Western Rivers Conservancy to acquire a 920-acre parcel along the Yampa River. This FY13 LWCF Access acquisition provided enhanced river access and new hunting opportunities on more than 88,000 acres of BLM lands.
- Since 2007, BLM Colorado and its partners have purchased 1,752 acres of land with a combined value of over \$7M for the specific purpose of enhancing access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and related sporting activities.

### **BLM Eastern States**

- The Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area on the Mason Neck Peninsula near Lorton, Virginia is located near metropolitan Washington, D.C. and is heavily used for a variety of recreational opportunities. Because of this mixed use and its proximity to residential areas, Meadowood is open for controlled hunts only at the request of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.
- Douglas Point Special Recreation Management Area is located on the Nanjemoy Peninsula in Charles County, Maryland and is adjacent to the Douglas Point Natural Area managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. It is open for hunting in accordance with Maryland state law.
- The Northeastern States District manages hundreds of small islands in the lakes and rivers of Minnesota and Wisconsin where hunting is allowed in accordance with Minnesota and Wisconsin state law.

### **BLM Idaho**

- The Pocatello Field Office worked with The Conservation Fund (TCF) to obtain 2016 LWCF access funding to acquire 400 acres along 1.5 miles of the Blackfoot River. This acquisition is located within the Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area, where hunting and

- fishing are identified as priority activities in the Pocatello Resource Management Plan.
- BLM Idaho, RMEF, TCF, and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) are working together through the High Divide Landscape Collaborative to obtain LWCF funding to acquire a 723-acre parcel located within the Greater Yellowstone Ecoregion. The Sands Desert Habitat Management Area acquisition would protect a critical migration corridor and winter range for elk and deer, provide a stronghold for west-slope cutthroat trout, and offer habitat for numerous migrating and resident bird species. Acquisition will also improve public access to surrounding BLM-managed lands.
  - BLM Idaho continuously seeks improvement of river access along the Lower Salmon River, including boat ramp improvements, expanded camping facilities and amenities, and improved infrastructure. The Lower Salmon River is popular for rafting, jet boating, camping, chukar hunting and fishing.
  - Acquisition of 320 acres of wilderness inholdings of private lands from willing sellers in Little Jacks Creek Wilderness improved access for hunting of big game and upland birds.
  - Several donations to the BLM have provided hunting access (Goldbug Hot Springs Area Public easement 0.28 acres; Idaho Department of Lands McGinty Road public road easement 8.16 acres; Dale Cox Salmon River Recreation 33.38 acres, Jack Furey/Fisher Creek 1.94 acres).
  - In 2016, the BLM partnered with the RMEF to acquire a 398-acre parcel (Dogtooth Ranch) surrounded on three sides by BLM-managed and IDFG lands. Acquisition of the property linked approximately 360 BLM acres to 1,500 acres in Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area. The acquisition improved hunting access and protected elk and deer winter range from fragmentation due to threats from residential, commercial, and wind energy development. Recreational opportunities include: fishing, hunting, ATV/UTV riding, sightseeing, hiking, birding, mountain biking, camping, moto trail riding, wildlife watching and much more.

### **BLM New Mexico**

- In 2016, the Socorro Field Office worked with the RMEF and a conservation-minded family to permanently protect and open access to 5,867 acres of prime wildlife habitat. The acquisition also improved access to more than 35,000 acres of surrounding BLM and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed lands in west-central New Mexico. The parcel connects BLM-managed lands to the Cibola National Forest and contains vital summer and winter range that is home to more than 1,000 elk; as well as, mule deer, antelope, black bears and a variety of other wildlife. More than five miles of Alamosita Creek runs through the property creating quality riparian habitat in a state where such habitat represents less than one percent of the land coverage.
- The Wilderness Land Trust has offered to donate 3,595 acres of land to the BLM in the Taos Field Office. Acceptance of the donation would, for the first time, provide legal public access to the 16,000-acre Sabinoso Wilderness. The wilderness area offers outstanding opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, backcountry camping, and hunting.
- The Taos Field Office, in partnership with the Trust for Public Lands, obtained LWCF funding to purchase 2,576 acres of private land within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. The acquisition has enhanced BLM's ability to protect fragile cultural, biological and scenic resources within the National Monument, secure and increase traditional and recreational access, and prevent fragmentation of a vital interstate wildlife migration corridor and critical winter range for elk and deer.
- The Farmington Field Office is working with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) under a statewide agreement that provides BLM with funding generated by New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) registration fees to design and construct campgrounds, parking / staging areas, and an OHV training site and skills trail within the Glade Run

Recreation Area. A recent modification to that agreement created a multi-year project with dedicated funds being allocated from the state's capital outlay monies.

- Public access to BLM managed lands has been improved through the "Open Gate" program coordinated through the NMDGF. Several new opportunities for accessing public lands for the purpose of hunting have been implemented:
  - Carlsbad Field Office - Consolidation of block hunting areas for mule deer and Barbary sheep;
  - Roswell Field Office - Access through private land, made available to oryx hunters through the use of real-time cellular technology and providing gate combinations to authorized hunters in the field;
  - Amarillo Field Office - Cross Bar Management Area – allows year round archery hunting opportunities for any species that is in season and occurs on the property. In 2014, the field office entered the Cross Bar Management Area into the Texas Parks and Wildlife Departments lottery hunt which allows selected hunters to hunt the property.

### **BLM Montana/Dakotas**

- Six BLM Montana/Dakotas Field Offices completed 32 realty transactions which provided 45,043 acres of new public land legal access. These realty actions also provided improved public access to an additional 67,080 acres of public land.
- Purchase of 5,446 acres of land within the Blackfoot River Watershed LWCF Project Area will ensure continued public access to hunting opportunities.
- The RMEF is assisting the Havre Field Office in acquiring an important 93-acre parcel that provides motorized and non-motorized access to more than 21,000 acres of prime deer and elk hunting on BLM managed and state lands. FY16 LWCF access dollars will be used to purchase the Cow Island Trail parcel from RMEF.
- Purchase of a 1.1 mile long road easement utilizing FY16 LWCF access funding will provide public access to an additional 20,500 acres of public lands for hunting and other recreational activities.
- Purchase of 238 acres of land on the Missouri River along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail within the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument will enhance river access for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities and protect cultural resources. The project is being accomplished with National Trails Collaborative Landscape Planning LWCF funding.
- In 2015, the Dillon Field Office worked with RMEF, Montana FWP and other partners to secure and improve public access to approximately 40,000 acres of BLM and FS lands in the popular hunting area of Medicine Lodge Valley in southwest Montana.
- In 2015 and 2016, the Glasgow Field Office executed a hunting access agreement with a private landowner to allow public hunting access through private lands to 18,000 acres of public lands and 9,000 acres of private land. BLM continues to work with FWP to secure long-term access through their Block Management Program or separate access easement.
- The Pumpkin Creek Area land exchange was finalized on November 17, 2009. The exchange created a contiguous block of Federal land covering approximately 20,556 acres. In addition to hunting opportunities, BLM is working with FWP and other partners to improve wildlife habitat and stream restoration.
- The Miles City Field Office Access Committee identified roads or areas that needed public access and easements. The committee also identified potential land exchanges, which would create blocks of public land while disposing of the isolated parcels that are inaccessible and hard to manage.

- The Miles City Field Office has worked cooperatively with FWP to install informational signs on public lands. The “Entering Public Lands” and “Leaving Public Lands” signs inform public land users, such as hunters and recreationists, to respect private property. Approximately 188,000 acres of BLM managed lands in 12 counties in eastern Montana, have been signed through this partnership. For 2017, BLM has requested additional funds to buy more information signs for FWP to continue this cooperative effort.
- BLM, RMEF, and FWP are working through the High Divide Landscape Collaborative to obtain LWCF funds to acquire a 3,344-acre parcel along the popular Madison River within the Madison River Special Recreation Management Area. The Madison River is a blue ribbon fishery and one of the most productive streams in Montana. The property would also provide hunting access and protection for crucial winter range for migrating elk, deer and antelope.
- The BLM acquired 652 acres along the Missouri River in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument which parcel offers public access and opportunity for hunting and fishing.
- Offices in Montana are currently working with FWP to establish Block Management agreements in order to increase access to public lands for hunting. Block Management is a cooperative effort between FWP, private landowners, and public land management agencies to help landowners manage hunting activities and to provide free public hunting access to private and isolated public lands.

### **BLM Oregon**

- The Spokane District located in Eastern Washington has upgraded vehicle access and trail access around the Fishtrap Recreation Area which provides waterfowl and upland bird hunters an improved hunting experience through the ease of access and the ability to disperse over a larger area.
- Recent acquisition of land parcels along the Crooked National Wild and Scenic River located in Central Oregon near the town of Bend has improved access along a unique high plateau waterway benefiting waterfowl and upland bird hunters, as well as anglers.

### **BLM Utah**

- The Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSESM) travel management plan maintains a system of open accessible roads for hunters and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The open roads allow recreationists and hunters to access many areas of the GSENM, while managing for non-impairment for the Wilderness Areas and Wilderness Study Areas. Although not accessed by road, many of these areas provide recreationists and hunters with a unique opportunity to pursue game in a more primitive manner either on foot or horseback.
- BLM Utah has partnered with Pheasants Forever (PF) to release pheasants on public lands.

### **BLM Wyoming**

- The Casper Field Office has acquired riverfront property along the North Platte River increasing access for waterfowl hunting and trophy trout fishing opportunities. This acquisition project provides for six newly-developed sites, including three campgrounds and three boat launches. All were built on the acquired properties to accommodate increased visitor use and enhance recreational fishing and hunting opportunities for the public.
- In 2016, the Pinedale Field Office purchased a 160-acre inholding parcel from RMEF, called the LaBarge Creek Parcel Acquisition, providing critical motorized and non-motorized access to BLM managed lands in the Miller Mountain Management Area. The parcel is popular with hunters, anglers, and other recreational users and is home to elk, mule deer, moose, Colorado River cutthroat trout and other important recreational wildlife species.

- The Devil's Canyon land acquisition (11,200 acres) on Little Mountain, located approximately 15 miles east of Lovell, Wyoming, improved public access to thousands of acres of BLM-managed public lands; as well as state and National Forest lands on the west slope of the Bighorn Mountains (Craig Thomas Little Mountain Special Management Area).

*(b) Consider the economic and recreational values of hunting in agency actions, as appropriate;*

#### **National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- The BLM issues over 1,000 Special Recreation Permits (SRP) for hunting outfitter and guides annually. These permitted guides contribute significantly to local and regional economies and provide access to hunting for individuals who may otherwise be unable to participate.
- The BLM's Recreation Strategy, *Connecting with Communities*, builds upon and expands collaboration with local, regional and national organizations to provide outstanding and sustainable recreation opportunities on public lands including hunting, that produce lasting benefits from the places citizens live, work and play.
- The BLM assesses how proposed changes in management may affect specific user groups, like hunters, as well as overall visitation during the land use planning process. Since changes in visitor use can affect the social, cultural, and economic well-being of local communities and public land users, socioeconomic specialists have utilized a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to assess these potential impacts.
- Fishing and hunting are considered important examples of primitive and unconfined recreation and the BLM promotes these uses in its wilderness areas.
- Visitor information provided by BLM offices, as well as on its websites, identifies the unique hunting and fishing values provided by BLM managed lands.
- The BLM is the first Federal agency to develop a National Travel and Tourism Action Plan (TTAP) to implement the National Travel and Tourism Strategy, which recognizes the role of the Federal government to create conditions for economic growth by ensuring that government services meet the demand for tourism and that natural resources are conserved and managed for future generations. The BLM's TTAP contains numerous actions that provide visitor resources and services for hunting and fishing, wildlife habitat conservation, and contributions to local and rural economies.
- BLM field offices consider the social and economic values of public land resources during formal land use planning. Some offices may provide details specifically related to hunting and fishing, depending on local management issues and priorities. In addition to subjecting each proposed action on BLM lands to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, BLM Alaska evaluates impacts to fish and game populations and subsistence hunting activities in accordance with Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) § 810 (a).

#### **BLM Alaska**

- Subsistence hunting and fishing is one of the primary uses of BLM land in Alaska. In addition to subjecting each proposed action on BLM lands to NEPA review, BLM Alaska evaluates impacts to fish and game populations and subsistence hunting activities in accordance with Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) § 810 (a).

***(c) Manage wildlife and wildlife habitats on public lands in a manner that expands and enhances hunting opportunities, including through the use of hunting in wildlife management planning;***

**National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- The BLM's Planning Handbook H-1601-1 Appendix C offers guidance to district and field offices to identify important game animals as "priority species" and their habitats as "priority habitats", and resource allocations can be made to emphasize these.
- A Backcountry Conservation Area is a new planning allocation that manages for large, contiguous, relatively intact geographic areas with wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities. Through the planning process, field offices can prioritize geographic areas for special management emphasis on hunting and fishing opportunities and wildlife/fisheries habitat management.
- In 2014, at the request of the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, the BLM designated a liaison to help coordinate and promote BLM employee participation in Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLfT) professional workshops. Workshops target agency personnel with little to no hunting experience and provide a unique hands-on opportunity to learn about the critical role that hunting, fishing, trapping and the shooting sports play in supporting successful wildlife conservation in North America (North American Model of Wildlife Conservation). Since 2012, 26 BLM resource professionals and managers representing leadership, wildlife, recreation and planning programs have participated in the workshops.
- The BLM is an active partner in the Department of the Interior's Wildland Fire Resilient Landscape and the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy between the Departments of Agriculture and Interior and the Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy. These initiatives improve the integrity and resiliency of forests and rangelands by restoring natural vegetation landscapes to specific conditions to maintain fire resiliency and enhance and conserve habitat for many game species.
- As part of the Sagebrush Conservation Strategy, an unprecedented and proactive partnership to conserve habitat that supports wildlife, outdoor recreation, ranching and other traditional land uses, the BLM, the USFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) continue to work together to ensure the conservation of the west's sagebrush habitats. These efforts not only benefit habitat for the sage-grouse, a game species in several states, but also for elk, mule deer, pronghorn, and numerous other game species as well.
- In 2016, BLM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USFS and NRCS to work cooperatively across shared landscapes to address sagebrush restoration needs. Also in 2016, BLM and the Intermountain West Joint Venture entered into a 5-year agreement to support BLM sage-grouse conservation and sagebrush restoration efforts.
- The BLM receives hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in grants and in-kind volunteer services from many wildlife conservation organizations to supplement Federal budgets for habitat improvement projects, which benefit game and nongame species.
- BLM offices across the west are actively engaged in habitat restoration and enhancement projects to support healthy game populations, as well as management actions that enhance the overall quality of hunting experiences on BLM lands (i.e., translocation of game animals; seasonal road closures designed to protect winter/parturition range and encourage game animals to remain on public lands longer during the hunting season.) Other examples include BLM working with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to radio collar deer, elk, bighorn sheep and sage-grouse to identify animal movements and important seasonal habitats and BLM Idaho treating more than 600,000 acres under the fuels, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation

(ESR), weeds and wildlife programs that benefit elk, mule deer and other game species. Treatments consisted of aerial seeding, drill seeding, sagebrush seedling planting, noxious weed and invasive species control, prescribed fire, forest and woodland thinning, shrub mowing and biomass removal.

- The BLM Mitigation Policy (MS-1794, H-1794-1) includes actions identified in the December 2008 WHHCC Report to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to game species and habitat and increase funding for wildlife conservation and hunting access (Actions 40, 41, and 55).

### **BLM Alaska**

- The recently signed Resource Management Plans (2016) for Steese National Conservation Area, White Mountains National Recreation Area, Draanjik, and Forty Mile all emphasize working with ADFG to conserve/enhance wildlife populations.
- Eastern Interior Field Office is working in cooperation with ADFG, Yukon Territory, Canadian, State Government and the University of Montana on research related to caribou habitat.
- Eastern Interior Field Office partners with ADFG to conduct population monitoring studies of Big Game species to support hunting opportunities.
- Anchorage Field Office provides financial and technical assistance to ADFG conducting annual population monitoring of the Mulchatna caribou herd in Southwest Alaska. This joint effort on this important subsistence population has been conducted for 20 consecutive years.
- Anchorage Field Office serves as the in-season manager for Chinook Salmon adjacent to BLM lands in the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River corridor, and the in-season manager for moose and musk ox under Federal subsistence regulations.
- ADFG has been a cooperating agency in all of the Alaska BLM Resource Management Plans developed since 2007. ~~The AGFD has been engaged in all travel management plans to cooperatively address hunter access issues.~~

### **BLM Arizona**

- Since 2010, BLM Arizona has accomplished over 60,000 acres of vegetation treatments that have benefited game species through planned and unplanned managed fire, as well as mechanical treatments. These restoration and protection projects had objectives to improve understory forage for wildlife as well as protection for key wildlife habitat.
- BLM Arizona has been committed to habitat protection through fire suppression efforts with its interagency partners. Fire management planning has provided for protection of critical wildlife habitat areas through suppression efforts. In addition, several hundred acres of wildlife habitat have been treated and restored through the Burned Area Rehabilitation program, most notably in response to several fires along the Lower Colorado River.

### **BLM California**

- BLM California has developed upland habitat restoration projects in cooperation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife resulting in water development projects, such as water catchments, guzzlers and vegetation treatments statewide.
- BLM California works cooperatively with state agencies and special interest groups to provide fisheries habitat restoration, fish stocking and reintroduction of game species, such as bighorn sheep.
- The Palm Springs and El Centro Field Offices worked with partners California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Desert Wildlife Unlimited to install guzzlers for deer and other wildlife.



### **BLM Colorado**

- The Royal Gorge Field Office worked closely with the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) to include a new designation of Backcountry Conservation Areas in resource management planning efforts currently underway. The areas being considered cover 122,500 acres and would be managed to enhance habitat for game species and enhance access for backcountry recreation, including hunting, fishing, and trapping.
- BLM has partnered with CPW to radio collar various game species, including bighorn sheep and sage-grouse, to identify animal movements and important seasonal habitats, thus better informing management recommendations.

### **BLM Idaho**

- Since 2007, multiple BLM Idaho restoration projects have been implemented to improve wildlife habitat. The BLM Idaho Soda Hills acquisitions have supported the protection of wildlife populations in perpetuity, primarily wintering mule deer.
- The BLM Idaho Buckwalter sagebrush steppe restoration project treated 160 acres with site-appropriate non-native grass species and 160 acres with native grass species to enhance and restore habitat for sagebrush steppe-dependent wildlife species.
- The BLM has removed net wire fence and replaced with a more wildlife friendly design to allow big game movements without restrictions.
- Since 2008, BLM Idaho has planted over 280,000 sagebrush seedlings to improve habitat and rangeland health.
- The BLM actively installs spring exclosures and riparian habitat improvements designed to improve nesting and brood rearing habitat and riparian habitat quality for all wildlife species.
- Soda Hills, Hansel Mountains, and Chinese Peak - Blackrock Canyon travel management plans have seasonal restrictions to protect big game winter habitat.
- The BLM is conducting extensive, ongoing invasive species treatments to maintain and improve habitat for game species, such as elk, deer, moose, antelope, and upland game birds, such as sage-grouse and chukar.
- The BLM implements seasonal closures on roads to protect wildlife during critical times or critical locations (i.e., big game parturition and winter range).
- Fuel break projects, and juniper treatments help to reduce the amount of habitat lost to fire, and BLM Idaho actively conducts these treatments which benefit mule deer, bighorn sheep, elk, pronghorn antelope, sage-grouse, and upland game.
- The Burley Field Office implemented several habitat improvement projects to improve rangeland conditions which benefit wildlife through more functional and resilient habitats. Many of these projects were developed and implemented by collaborating with private landowners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Pheasants Forever (PF), RMEF, MDF, Trout Unlimited (TU), and other Federal and state agencies.
- Hundreds of thousands of acres of wildland fire rehabilitation efforts by BLM Idaho have helped to restore habitat important to game species and other wildlife.
- Over the last ten years (2007-2016), the BLM has treated approximately 607,925 acres for the benefit of wildlife and their habitat. These treatments were implemented under the fuels, ESR, weeds and wildlife programs. Treatments consisted of aerial seeding, drill seeding, sagebrush seedling planting, noxious weed and invasive species control, prescribed fire, forest and woodland thinning, shrub mowing and biomass removal.

## **BLM Montana/Dakotas**

- BLM Montana/Dakotas has planned and implemented restoration, habitat improvement, and fuels projects throughout the three states, and these efforts will be ongoing into the foreseeable future. Efforts have focused on thinning unnatural fuels buildup in forested stands, improving riparian area function, and removing conifer encroachment into grassland and sagebrush habitats. These projects are expected to increase and stabilize game animal populations, resulting in long term benefits to hunters.
- BLM Montana/Dakotas has planted native trees and shrubs (buffalo berry, cottonwood, sandbar willow, and chokecherry) around five sport-fish reservoirs in order to increase available cover and food source for wildlife including big game species and upland game birds.
- Every oil and gas lease within the Montana/Dakotas BLM Offices has been evaluated for impacts on game species and design features were used where impacts were expected on populations. These design features include seasonal restrictions of use in identified crucial winter range or breeding and nesting habitat. All parcels are reviewed down to 40-acre increments and may have stipulations that apply to big game to all or portions of the parcels.
- In Montana and the Dakotas, the BLM has modified and/or removed over 600 miles of fencing to improve big game passage and access to habitat. Decadent fences have impeded big game daily movement and/or seasonal migrations, caused mortality, and altered habitat use in areas crucial for antelope, mule and white-tailed deer, and elk. The North Dakota Field Office also removed approximately 18 miles of woven wire fence in Bowman County, in core habitat for pronghorn antelope. Pronghorn antelope movement is highly affected by fences, such as woven wire or sheep fences. These sheep fences prevent free movement of antelope and increased predation due to the barriers. The BLM replaced these fences with wildlife-friendly fences that allow free movement of antelope and other big game species across the landscape. The increased movement of these species has allowed for a more robust population of pronghorn antelope, thus improving hunting opportunity for big game hunters. The project was embraced and monitored by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.
- BLM Montana/Dakotas has installed over 1,120 wildlife escape ramps in water troughs in 12 counties to reduce mortality of numerous wildlife species, including game birds.
- BLM Montana/Dakotas has sixteen completed travel management plans which provide a tool for the BLM to minimize impacts to wildlife habitat, reducing the introduction and spread of invasive weeds, and lessening conflicts among various user groups.
- BLM Montana/Dakotas has partnered with FWP on multiple occasions since 2007 to capture and translocate Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. These efforts supplement existing or establish new viable populations of sheep throughout the state and provide future hunting and recreational opportunities to the public.
- The Glasgow Field Office has begun conversion of over 2,000 acres of monotypic crested wheatgrass stands into more productive and diverse vegetation stands for wildlife.
- The Glasgow Field Office has improved sage-grouse habitat in the Sagebrush Focal Area by taking 7 miles of overhead power line off the landscape and putting it underground.
- BLM Montana/Dakotas has a very pro-active weed management program. Partnerships with multiple counties treat wildlife habitat and recreation areas (including trailheads) to improve land health including popular hunting areas such as the Scratchgravel Hills, Elkhorns, and the Upper Big Hole.
- BLM Montana/Dakotas is working collaboratively with Montana State University on West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance in the state. This work is being used to help assess the presence of WNV and provide management techniques to minimize the potential for the virus.

- The RMEF and NWTF have contributed more than \$100,000 since 2009 to aid the Lewistown Field Office in the implementation of prescribed burns on approximately 19,000 acres of public lands; partners have also assisted a Judith Mountains 90-acre timber thinning project to enhance big game habitat.
- The RMEF has assisted the Lewistown Field Office in working with multiple grazing permittees and landowners to treat lands at larger scales, providing for improved land health, wildlife habitat and reduced fuel loads in a fire prone area (Missouri and Musselshell River Breaks).
- The Miles City Field Office has identified and marked 84.9 miles of fences on public land that were identified to occur in high-risk areas for bird collisions.

### **BLM Nevada**

- BLM Nevada works with partners to increase hunting access, manage wildlife and wildlife habitats through expediting and streamlining permitting needed for access including installation of water access features such as docks and piers, development of guzzlers, fence removal, and cattle guard replacements for gates.
- BLM Nevada works closely with several NGOs including RMEF, NWTF, and Wild Sheep Foundation to improve habitat, including guzzler installation and maintenance.

### **BLM New Mexico**

- BLM New Mexico participates in the Habitat Stamp Program that focuses entirely on the management of habitat for big game, upland game, waterfowl and game fish and is funded solely through the sale of a habitat stamp to hunters, anglers and trappers who conduct their activities on BLM and FS managed lands. The monies are collected by the NMDGF and distributed to the Federal agencies through a project submission process. Currently, this program brings in well over \$300,000 in non-federal monies annually to BLM Field Offices for direct on-the-ground habitat work with a primary focus on big game, upland game, waterfowl and fisheries.
- Since 2008, BLM New Mexico has put \$3.5 million into the management of wildlife habitat improvements with a primary focus on game species and sports fisheries. Additionally, through this program, \$1.5 million of Pittman/Robertson money has been received from the NMDGF to rebuild wildlife habitat structural improvements and to conduct vegetative treatments, such as prescribed burns and mechanical thinning of pinon-juniper woodlands.
- BLM New Mexico actively participates in the statewide Restore New Mexico program. Restore New Mexico is an aggressive partnership to restore woodlands, grasslands and riparian areas in the state to a healthy and productive condition. The BLM is working with partners on all land ownership types (state, private and Federal) and involving communities, agencies, industry, organizations, and private citizens who want to assist. The focus is on large-scale restoration efforts, dealing primarily with invasive and exotic brush species, including mesquite, juniper, creosote and salt cedar.
- As part of Restore New Mexico, BLM New Mexico works with the oil and gas industry to reclaim lands impacted by historic oil and gas development. Reclamation treatments focus on repairing impacted habitat, erosion, and invasive plants that have resulted from decades of mineral development. Since 2005, 3.4 million acres have been treated with a mix of prescribed fire, mechanical and chemical vegetation treatment, and vegetation manipulation to benefit wildlife in a variety of ways, including opening travel corridors, rejuvenating browse, establishing mosaic form on the landscape, elimination of non-natives and invasives, and improving watershed health.

### **BLM Oregon/Washington**

- The resource management plan amendments have identified over a million acres of vegetation treatments annually across the planning area as part of a 5-year Integrated Program of Work (IPoW). Risk factors such as juniper encroachment, invasive species expansion and wildfire are not unique to GRSG. Many of the proposed treatments will improve game species habitat, as well.
- The Vale District of Eastern Oregon has reseeded thousands of acres of burned over non-native grass lands with native grass seeds resulting in improved forage for big game and upland bird species.

### **BLM Utah**

- BLM Utah is an active participant in the statewide Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (UWRI). UWRI boasts in-kind and financial contributions from nearly 500 agencies, organizations and individuals. UWRI partners have completed nearly 1500 projects, improving habitat on more than 1.5 million acres statewide. These large-scale treatments provide economic benefits to local communities and provide countless benefits to mule deer and other wildlife, including: increased quality and quantity of water; improved plant community structure and composition; reduced fuel loads and lower risk of catastrophic wildfires; reduced sedimentation to surrounding creeks and rivers; increased forage quantity and quality; and improved wildlife movement corridors.
- The GSENM is implementing habitat treatments on the 30,000-acre Fivemile Sagebrush Restoration project. Annually, the GSENM partners with BLM Color Country Fuels and WRI to apply for funding to complete various phases of the project. To date, nearly 10,000 acres have been restored, improving trophy mule deer winter habitat.
- GSENM completed an additional 10,000 acres of pinyon-juniper thinning and removal on the wintering grounds of one of the premier mule deer herds in the west, the Paunsaugunt Unit with funding from WRI, Utah Department of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) and the BLM forestry and fuels programs.
- Kanab Field Office is home not only to the legendary Paunsaugunt mule deer herd (known for its abundant trophy bucks and impressive migrations between Utah and Arizona), but also to the westernmost population of Greater Sage-Grouse. For the past 16 years, the BLM has been actively engaged in the Upper Kanab Creek Vegetation Enhancement Project, covering more than 19,000 acres, including removal of encroaching pinyon-juniper through mastication, hand thinning and lop and scatter. In the past three years, alone, over \$3 million dollars have been contributed by BLM, UWRI, NRCS and private landowners. An additional 7,000 acres are proposed for future treatments in this project area.
- The Kanab Field Office Yellowjacket Vegetation Enhancement Project is located within the Lower Colorado – Lake Mead watersheds. Between 2011 – 2016, the BLM Color Country District Office fuels team and Kanab wildlife biologists designed and implement Bullhog mastication and re-seeding treatments on more than 7,600 acres to reduce expanding pinyon/junipers and restore shrubs, perennial grasses and forbs to historic natural conditions.
- The Kanab Field Office South Canyon Vegetation Enhancement Project treated 21,000 acres between 2010 and 2016 through mastication, hand thinning and re-seeding.
- BLM Utah and UDWR habitat council have partnered to place lids on existing large water storage tanks to eliminate wildlife entry and mortality. Eight lids have been built since 2011 using money from this partnership.

- The GSENM has partnered with the UDWR to reintroduce pronghorn, bighorn sheep, wild turkey, river otter, and chukar partridge populations. Numerous sage-grouse habitat restoration projects are also ongoing.
- In 2013, the GSENM partnered with UDWR, Arizona Game and Fish, Utah Department of Transportation, Arizona Department of transportation, Kane County, and numerous other partners to secure funding and resources for the construction of 25 miles of deer proof highway fencing and three wildlife crossing structures on U.S. Highway 89. The GSENM submitted a proposal to the Federal Highways Administration and received a \$1.5 million grant. This money was leveraged with our partners and the project totaling \$2.5 million was completed with assistance from all partnering groups.
- In 2010, the GSENM worked with the state and other wildlife partners to secure funds to construct three large wildlife water catchments and storage facilities to provide dependable water sources on crucial mule deer winter range.

### **BLM Wyoming**

- BLM Wyoming works closely with local, state, and Federal partners in implementing strategies for maintaining and improving fish and wildlife habitats and recreational hunting and fishing experiences on BLM lands. Through implementation of the BLM's new Greater Sage-Grouse RMP Amendment, the Wyoming BLM is maintaining and improving sage-grouse habitat throughout the State of Wyoming. Some early accomplishments include over 25 miles of hazard fence marking in core sage-grouse habitat and restoration of more than 1000 acres of historic crested wheat monocultures in core grouse habitats.
- The Martin Ranch Prescribed Burn was completed in 2007 in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, NRCS, and private landowners to improve 200 acres of sage-grouse, mule deer and elk habitat. Six miles of temporary electric fencing was installed to facilitate post-treatment livestock management.
- The BLM in cooperation with private landowners, completed the Bathtub Spring Prescribed Burn, 820 acres to improve mule deer and elk habitat and facilitate post-treatment livestock distribution.
- - In 2008, BLM worked with WGFD, NRCS, private landowners, State of Wyoming, RMEF, MDF, NWTF, and Bowhunters of Wyoming to treat 1,008 acres of big sagebrush habitat in the Bates Creek Watershed and 57 acres of conifer-encroached aspen to improve sage-grouse, mule deer and elk habitat, increase water quantity in first order streams, and enhance livestock and wildlife forage quality and quantity.
- In 2008, the BLM completed the Sand Draw Prescribed Burn, 1,010 acres of mule deer winter range, in cooperation with WGFD, private landowners and the State of Wyoming.
- In 2010, BLM, WGFD, NRCS, private landowners, the State of Wyoming, RMEF, and the MDF implemented the Sheep Creek Prescribed Burn, treating over 650 acres of big game transitional habitat.
- The Casper Field Office, working with local partners and the WGFD, installed three wildlife water guzzlers to improve big game use and distribution on publicly-accessible public lands.
- The BLM worked with multiple partners, including WGFD and Natrona County Weed and Pest, to restore sage-grouse habitat in Bates Hole. Encroaching junipers were removed from approximately 400 acres, followed by chemical application to reduce cheatgrass invasion on over 9,600 acres in Natrona and Weston Counties.
- The BLM is working with WGFD, RMEF and MDF on the Lost Creek mule deer habitat improvement project in the Southern Bighorn Mountains to enhance over 175 acres of habitat through the removal of encroaching conifers.

- The Wyoming Front Aspen Restoration Project began in 2007 with a BLM/RMEF Stewardship Contract and is expected to conclude in 2017. The project design removes encroaching conifers from existing or depleted aspen stands to stimulate aspen regeneration and growth. The vegetation treatments benefit overall plant community health and resilience, and increase diversity and vigor within the stands. Healthy aspen stands provide forage and cover benefits to elk, mule deer, moose and other important game species.
- The JY Ranch Cedar Draw Prescribed Burn and chemical cheatgrass treatment was conducted in 2008/2009 in cooperation with WGFD, NRCS, private landowners, RMEF, and MDF to improve mule deer and elk habitat on 1500 acres using prescribed fire, followed by chemical application to reduce cheatgrass invasion of newly burned areas.
- In the Fortification Creek Area of NE Wyoming multiple state, Federal, and local partners assisted with: conifer thinning on 114 acres of BLM managed and private lands to benefit mule deer crucial winter range; collaring elk herds in proximity to oil and gas development to monitor population response; removal of 4.7 miles of restrictive woven wire fencing and replacing with wildlife friendly fence; repairing water wells heavily used by elk in Bull Creek drainage; and chemically treating approximately 11,800 acres of cheatgrass to protect wildlife forage resources.
- The BLM used mowing, aeration, and herbicides to remove decadent sagebrush from approximately 10,000 acres of mule deer winter range to promote new forb growth and establish different age classes of sagebrush.
- The BLM actively removes noxious weeds and invasive plant including in Mosier Gulch (162 acres), West Range Fire (1080 acres), Petrified Tree Recreational Area (780 acres) and many more across the State to benefit wildlife conservation.
- The Stateline South Summit Meadow Restoration is a partnership between BLM, RMEF, MDF, and WGFD to remove encroaching conifers and restore historic meadows, providing increased productivity in mule deer crucial winter range. The project was conducted from 2013 through 2016 in Weston County on the state line with South Dakota on BLM managed land.
- The Little Missouri Juniper Thinning Project is an ongoing partnership with the Newcastle Field Office and WGFD to remove encroaching juniper to restore meadows and enhance bur oak. The project will enhance winter forage for mule and white-tailed deer and habitat for wild turkey.
- The BLM is engaged in cooperative mountain pine beetle infestation reduction activities across land ownerships with the USFS, the State of Wyoming, State of South Dakota, and county Weed and Pest Districts to minimize the spread and impact of beetles on the forest.
- The Powder River Basin Restoration Efforts under the Healthy Lands Initiative Focal Area in north central Wyoming are restoring and rehabilitating sagebrush habitat following extensive mineral development, benefitting many wildlife species.
- In Crooks Creek, Wyoming, RMEF helped fund a 320-acre burn, thereby reducing encroaching limber pine and juniper from a critical elk calving area. These burns give rise to grasses, forbs and browse species and bring grasslands and forests back into succulent early-growth stages.
- In 2009, the Worland Field Office sponsored the Lower Enos Creek project as part of a basin-wide effort to remove invasive and non-native species that alter water cycles and natural vegetation patterns, including juniper, Russian olive, saltcedar, and other species. Lower Enos Creek is valuable habitat for a variety of species, including mule deer, elk, antelope, and a variety of songbirds and fish. The total project cost \$275,000, with \$100,000 coming from the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust.

- (d) Work collaboratively with State governments to manage and conserve game species and their habitats in a manner that respects private property rights and State management authority over wildlife resources;***

**National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- The BLM works in close partnerships with state governments (specifically state wildlife agencies) who retain management authority over wildlife resources. To help achieve this collaboration, there are three active MOUs, including one with AFWA, and two with WAFWA (Mule Deer and Black-tailed Deer Conservation and Grasslands Conservation).
- BLM attends the AFWA annual conference and actively participates on 17 AFWA committees, including: Angler and Boating Participation; Bird Conservation; Climate Change; Education, Outreach & Diversity; Energy & Wildlife Policy; Federal & Tribal Relations; Fish & Wildlife Health; Fisheries & Water Resources Policy; Hunting and Shooting Sports Participation; International Relations; Invasive Species; Leadership and Professional Development; Legislative and Federal Budget; Science and Research; Teaming with Wildlife; Threatened and Endangered Species Policy; and Wildlife Resource Policy.
- The BLM coordinates with western states wildlife agencies by annually attending both the summer and winter WAFWA conferences. The BLM Wildlife Program maintains membership and works closely with the WAFWA Mule Deer Working Group, the WAFWA Western Quail Working Group, and the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group.
- The BLM is a member in the US North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). NABCI membership includes representation from Ducks Unlimited, the Upland Game Bird Working Group, and the North American Bobwhite Initiative. The committee meets formally twice a year to collaborate on the vision of NABCI for all birds.
- The BLM provided financial support for the development of the Western Governors' Association Wildlife Council Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT; now managed by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies). This tool was developed to bring greater certainty and predictability to planning efforts by establishing a common starting point for discussing the intersection of development and wildlife. The BLM has issued guidance to our agency personnel to utilize this state agency information tool in making BLM land use decisions.
- In the Great Basin region, which includes portions of the states of Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and California, a significant portion of the landscape administered by the BLM is comprised of the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem. This landscape supports energy development, ranching and outdoor recreation such as hunting, hiking and camping but is one of the most imperiled in the United States due to altered wildfire regimes, invasive, non-native annual grasses and the encroachment of pinyon-juniper into the sagebrush-steppe. To address the protection, conservation and restoration of this ecosystem, the Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy was developed through a collaborative effort involving Department of Interior Office of Wildland Fire, BLM, USGS, and USFWS working closely with USFS and NRCS, WAFWA and other non-government organizations, private landowners, private landowners and tribes. The BLM continues to play a vital role in the implementation of the Strategy in many ways, including vegetative treatments in the sagebrush-steppe which provide habitat to over 350 species, including mule deer, pronghorn, sage-grouse and other non-game species. The Strategy promotes a science-based "All Hands, All Lands" approach using new and existing technology to assist resource managers with prioritizing areas for conservation and restoration management actions.
- BLM state and field offices work collaboratively with state governments to manage and



conserve game species and their habitats. For example, the BLM Arizona and the AGFD entered into a Master MOU to provide a framework for cooperation and coordination in the management of fish and wildlife resources in Arizona. Similarly, BLM Colorado has been engaged in the state-led *Colorado West Slope Mule Deer Strategy & Implementation* (2015) effort and participated directly in development of *Colorado's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy & Wildlife Action Plans* (2006) and provided feedback to the recently updated *Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan* (2015).

- Many BLM field offices work collaboratively with states, private landowners and other partners on large statewide conservation efforts, such as the Utah Restoration Initiative, Restore New Mexico, and the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative. These collaborative efforts combine resources and technical expertise to improve game management and wildlife habitat across land ownerships.

### **BLM Alaska**

- The BLM, through the Federal Subsistence Management Program works closely with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) to manage and conserve game species and to coordinate wildlife surveys that fulfill both agencies missions.
- BLM Alaska conducts annual moose, caribou, Dall sheep, muskox, and brown bear population surveys/counts on BLM-managed lands in cooperation with the State of Alaska, the National Park Service, and the USFWS, and opportunistically provides indirect support to ADFG (funding, staffing, or logistical support) for moose, Dall sheep, caribou, and brown bear survey efforts.
- The Central Yukon Field Office characterizes known mineral source locations (mineral licks), as well as locates previously unrecorded mineral sources that are utilized by Dall sheep on BLM-managed lands in the Brooks Range.
- The Eastern Interior Field Office Law Enforcement works cooperatively with Alaska State Troopers to enforce State of Alaska Hunting Regulations and provides lodging for Alaska State Troopers and ADFG at administrative sites to conduct wildlife conservation work and enforcement activities.
- Eastern Interior Field Office signs rights-of-way and access through private property and also maintains land status maps to educate hunters and other recreation groups.
- BLM Alaska works cooperatively with ADFG to monitor populations and habitats and manages public lands to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and a natural abundance and diversity of wildlife resources to ensure opportunities for hunting.
- The Anchorage Field Office collaborates with ADFG and the USFWS to sponsor rural student participation at the annual Onion Portage Western Arctic Caribou Herd radio collaring event, providing students with hands-on science, handling, and processing experience.

### **BLM Arizona**

- In November 2007, the BLM Arizona and the AGFD revised a Master MOU to provide a framework for cooperation and coordination in the management of fish and wildlife resources in Arizona. The Master MOU addresses roles and responsibilities, planning, cooperative management of populations and habitat, public fishing and hunting access, cooperative studies of fish and wildlife populations and habitat, cooperative public outreach, annual statewide and local coordination meetings, coordination during the NEPA process, fish and wildlife project development and wilderness management. The Master MOU was renewed in 2013.
- Since 2007, BLM Arizona has entered into financial assistance agreements with the AGFD to improve big game habitat through the development and maintenance of wildlife waters. The

BLM has contributed over \$300,000 toward maintaining reliable waters for big game species. Maintaining water in the arid southwest is a priority for the BLM wildlife program.

- BLM Arizona, AGFD, and several other partners are working to improve coordination on landscape habitat restoration in Arizona. Big game habitat restoration projects are a key focus.
- Four Rapid Ecoregional Assessments were completed in Arizona to inform management at a landscape level. Game species, bighorn sheep, mule deer, and pronghorn were identified as conservation elements.
- Travel Management Plans are developed via an extensive public scoping process. The AGFD, interest groups, local communities, and the general public are encouraged to comment on the existing inventory system. Tribal governments are consulted as part of the planning process. Inventory maps are provided at scoping meetings and digitally from the BLM website.

### **BLM Colorado**

- BLM Colorado has a strong collaborative relationship with CPW. The agencies work together in managing the land, plants, and wildlife of the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness Area (BRCWA) within the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area in western Colorado. The BRCWA is home to Colorado's largest population of desert bighorn sheep which provides visitors with outstanding prospects to view this iconic game species in addition to recreational hunting opportunities. Direct collaboration with both the BLM and CPW has identified that the effects of wildfire on bighorn sheep habitat and vegetation composition are management priorities for the wilderness area. BLM's National Conservation Lands funded research in 2012 to further understand wildfire impacts.
- BLM Colorado and State of Colorado meet on a regular basis to further wildlife conservation and recreation opportunities, and coordinate regularly with CPW, the Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry, Department of Regulatory Affairs, Colorado River Outfitters Association and Colorado Outfitters Association for streamlining and improving the licensing and operations of commercial hunting and fishing on public lands to improve consistency among the regulating agencies.
- BLM Colorado has been engaged in the state-led *Colorado West Slope Mule Deer Strategy & Implementation* (2015) effort. BLM Colorado also participated directly in development of *Colorado's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy & Wildlife Action Plans* (2006), and provided feedback to the recently updated *Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan* (2015).
- BLM Colorado works with CPW and other organizations on the Colorado Auction & Raffle Project Advisory Committee, where representatives from multiple agencies and big game organizations review and recommend funding of projects designed to benefit moose, elk, deer, bighorn sheep, antelope and mountain goats in the state.
- The BLM is a member of CPW's *Habitat Partnership Program* that addresses issues of big game use or damage on private lands. The goal of the organization is to identify big game/private land conflicts and recommend/fund projects or management actions that may alleviate or mitigate those issues. This is a statewide program with working committees at both the field and state level in Colorado.

### **BLM Idaho**

- The BLM is working collaboratively with IDFG to: provide data on sage-grouse breeding habitat, including use of seasonal habitats through collaring and tracking of birds; perform sage-grouse lek (breeding bird) counts to identify population trend; cooperate on trapping efforts for bighorn sheep, mule deer, and elk; enact area closures to protect wintering big game after wildfire; and encourage volunteer seed collection, willow plantings, and brush plantings

- Several Idaho BLM Field Offices coordinated wildlife habitat improvement projects with the IDFG within the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area – an extremely popular area for hunting and various recreational activities in north central Idaho.
- Idaho BLM has partnered in collaborative efforts to manage the CJ Strike Wildlife Management Area to improve waterfowl habitat with IDFG, Ducks Unlimited, and the Idaho Power Company.
- BLM Idaho developed an agreement under the Sikes Act with IDFG to manage tracts of public lands for wildlife habitat and publish information to sportsmen.
- BLM Idaho collaborated on agreements between BLM, IDFG, and permittees with domestic sheep grazing permits to actively manage for separation of bighorn and domestic sheep.

#### **BLM Montana/Dakotas**

- The Montana/Dakotas BLM routinely solicits comments from Montana FWP, North Dakota Game and Fish and the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks on habitat proposals. Biologists and other specialists from each agency often conduct a joint field trip to work out solutions to wildlife habitat issues.
- The Butte Field Office has also been working cooperatively with FWP on a study in the Elkhorn Mountains to examine the effects of pine beetle kills on elk habitat.
- The Montana/ Dakotas BLM Offices cooperates with the USDA, Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service, and Wildlife Services' Montana State Office to minimize natural resource losses by predatory animals. Support is provided through technical assistance and direct controls to reduce livestock losses and increase big game populations.

#### **BLM Nevada**

- BLM Nevada is actively working towards improving riparian habitat throughout public lands within the state in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW). Water availability and riparian health and functionality within Nevada landscapes are critical components of providing adequate habitat for most wildlife species. Current work within BLM Nevada's riparian program includes active riparian restoration projects, construction and maintenance of riparian exclosures, monitoring and assessing riparian condition and training specialists in techniques to improve riparian management.
- BLM Nevada collaborates with the NDOW to evaluate wildlife guzzler performance, assess new locations for guzzlers, expediting and streamlining any permits needed to place new guzzlers or repair/replace existing guzzlers.

#### **BLM New Mexico**

- Through an agreement with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), BLM New Mexico provides the state agency funding to accomplish habitat management programs, big game surveys, and other cooperative efforts that are agreed to by both agencies.
- During 2015-2017, to augment populations in areas of low density, the Taos Field Office partnered with NMDGF to translocate mule deer from private land to BLM lands within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. Most adult deer were fitted with VHF radio collars prior to release and some were fitted with real-time GPS collars to monitor survival and movements. The BLM is collecting data to monitor treatment effectiveness of past vegetation enhancement projects to be used to inform future adaptive management decisions.
- In coordination with the Taos Pueblo and the NMDGF, the BLM augmented the Taos Pueblo release of 23 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep on tribal land in 2007 by releasing an additional

27 on public land in the Rio Grande Gorge in 2008. Population growth of more than 200 sheep resulted in a first time public land draw of two tags in 2015 and again in 2016 and 2017.

- The New Mexico Department of Transportation and the RMEF also partnered with BLM to construct miles of lay-down fence to enable big game mammals to migrate into critical winter range areas.

### **BLM Oregon/Washington**

- The BLM completed a series of Resource Management Plan Amendments (RMPA) in September of 2015 to consider conservation and management of the Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) across the Great Basin. These RMPAs were completed in cooperation with State agencies, Tribal governments, and private landowners. The Records of Decision and RMPAs apply not only to GRSG and its habitat, but also to over 350 wildlife species associated with the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem.
- Oregon/Washington BLM works cooperatively with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on multiple wildlife and waterfowl habitat improvement projects including wetland habitat restoration, winter range projects, and water source development.

### **BLM Utah**

- BLM Utah has partnered with the UDWR and the Dedicated Hunters Program on:
  - Support/improvement and expansions of big game populations and habitat
  - Construction/maintenance of wildlife guzzlers
  - Watershed restoration projects
  - Pinyon/juniper removal projects to enhance wildlife habitats
  - Implementing/completing UWRI projects
  - Fence removal or marking (for sage-grouse)
  - Partnering with Pheasants Forever to release pheasants on public lands.
  - Species introductions/reintroductions/augmentations

### **BLM Wyoming**

- The BLM and WGFD have an MOU to coordinate quarterly with the WGFD and prior to any leasing determinations. This formal coordination ensures timely and informed decisions by the BLM Wyoming State Director concerning WGFD's interests in hunting and fishing recreational opportunities and potential impacts to wildlife conservation.
- The BLM works closely with the Wyoming Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation Team throughout the development and implementation of Wyoming's Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy and incorporated the strategy and all implementation commitments into the Wyoming BLM Resource Management Plans. BLM Wyoming continues to work closely with all state agencies and partners in the planning, management, and implementation of balanced conservation of game species and their habitats.
- BLM Wyoming has partnered with WGFD and several other agencies and organization as part of the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative. One of the goals of this initiative is maintaining and re-connecting wildlife corridors and passages in southwest Wyoming where some of the most spectacular big game migrations in North America occur. This partnership has funded extensive research on pronghorn and mule deer seasonal movements, and identified impediments to these migrations. During 2016, four fence projects and one water development project were initiated to help improve mule deer and pronghorn passage, provide access to important seasonal habitats, and reduce stress, energy loss, injury, and mortality.

- BLM Wyoming worked collaboratively with WGFD, Muley Fanatics and the University of Wyoming to identify and refine the now famous Red Desert to Hoback Mule Deer Migration Route, identify mule deer and elk habitats, and assess population health and identify reproductive limitations.
- Wyoming BLM supports mule deer population research with the University of Wyoming and the WGFD to address concerns over population dynamics. This research project, which began in 2013, is collecting information on the nutritional relationship between energy development, mule deer population dynamics, and habitat conditions to better understand what factors may be influencing mule deer population numbers.
- BLM Wyoming worked collaboratively with WGFD and Muley Fanatics to place modified steel-jack fencing around impacted aspen stands near Little Mountain to minimize impacts from livestock and elk, in an effort to promote aspen stand regeneration.
- BLM Wyoming works collaboratively with WGFD to conduct sage-grouse lek surveys and counts and to identify and delineate winter and other seasonal habitat areas to guide habitat protections and improvements.
- A joint research project between BLM, WGFD, and South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Department aims to determine bighorn sheep seasonal habitat use on BLM and Forest Service managed land in the Black Hills on the Wyoming and South Dakota state line. The project also aims to determine the availability of rams during the hunting season in each state. Bighorn sheep were captured, collared, and tracked for a period of 1 year, from January 2009 to January 2010.

*(e) Establish short and long term goals, in cooperation with State and tribal governments, and consistent with agency missions, to foster healthy and productive populations of game species and appropriate opportunities for the public to hunt those species;*

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#### **National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- The BLM is working with the Mule Deer Working Group (MDWG) to develop an educational webinar for BLM employees to highlight the important mule deer science and management tools available to BLM resource specialists. The BLM is also collaborating with the working group on a planned ungulate migration science forum with the Wyoming Migration Initiative. The forum is intended to share new science and management tools related to wildlife movement and migration corridors; as well as, wildlife science public outreach/education methods.
- The BLM is working with the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group to better manage domestic sheep and goats on public lands to sustain wild sheep by identifying areas where wild sheep may be more susceptible to respiratory disease and working to achieve temporal or spatial separation of bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goats to reduce the risk of bacterial transmission.
- The BLM participates on the WAFWA Western Quail Working Group to help implement the habitat objectives and management recommendations outlined in the Western Quail Management Plan.
- The BLM national leadership attended two RMEF-hosted Elk Summit Workshops (2013; 2016) to meet with western states fish and wildlife agency Directors to learn about state concerns and objectives for management of elk herds.
- The BLM participates in the AFWA Waterfowl Working Group which meets biannually to share and collaborate to resolve issues of waterfowl conservation needs and interest among the AFWA state membership. The BLM manages about 25 million acres of waterfowl habitat and

- has very significant conservation partnerships in the Pacific Flyway in Alaska, South Eastern Oregon, Eastern Montana, Central Valley of California, Nevada, and South Central Colorado.
- As a member of the Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group, the BLM meets biannually with state and other partners to share and collaborate to resolve issues of crane, dove, band-tailed pigeon, and other migratory game shorebirds' conservation needs and interest among the AFWA state membership. BLM lands provide extensive habitat for migratory shore and upland game birds across the west.
  - BLM state and field offices meet regularly with tribal governments to discuss wildlife-related issues. Tribal cultural and resource concerns often focus heavily on the maintenance of fish and wildlife habitats for subsistence hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering uses to ensure food security, well-being, and retention of culture in native communities. In an effort to learn about and incorporate traditional tribal practices into land management actions, the BLM California and Nevada State Offices co-hosted the first Traditional Ecological Knowledge Summit, along with the Nevada Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Nevada Indian Commission, the Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, the Nevada branch of the USFWS, and the Tubape-Numu traditional use advocates. The successful summit was held at the Steward Indian School in Carson City, Nevada and approximately 200 Tribal members, Tribal leaders, land management specialists and managers attended from throughout Nevada and Eastern California.
  - BLM field offices work closely with state agencies to incorporate wildlife population, habitat, and hunting objectives into BLM management plans, such as the Wilderness Study Areas in Utah's Henry Mountains, which are home to one of four free-roaming bison herds in the United States. Successful habitat and population management has allowed the expanding bison herd (300-400 animals) to be used to start a new herd in BLM's Book Cliffs Wilderness Study Area. Similarly, CPW conducts periodic reviews of big game herd management plans (Data Analysis Units) and the BLM is invited to the table to share ideas for how herds should be managed to balance the biological capabilities of the herd and its habitat with the public's demand for wildlife recreational opportunities.

### **BLM Alaska**

- The Central Yukon Field Office is revising the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan (RMP) to include measurable wildlife habitat objectives. The objectives were designed to complement ADFG regional objectives for game species and their habitats.
- The State of Alaska is a cooperating agency in developing the Central Yukon RMP. The ADFG has a designated representative who has participated in RMP alternative development with the BLM interdisciplinary team, ensuring coordination of BLM planning proposals with ADFG fish and wildlife management objectives.
- During a recent review period of preliminary alternatives for the Central Yukon RMP, the BLM held public meetings in Alaska Native tribal villages and re-invited government-to-government consultation, as well as cooperating agency status for tribes to actively participate in the RMP process. Input received from tribes and Alaska Natives has focused heavily on maintenance of fish and wildlife habitats for subsistence hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering uses to ensure food security, well-being, and retention of culture in native communities. One tribal government is signing on as a cooperating agency for the RMP and multiple government-to-government contacts and relationships are being developed.
- Tribal and state governments participated in the process of developing the recently signed Resource Management Plans (2016) for Steese National Conservation Area, White Mountains National Recreation Area, Draanjik, and Forty Mile.

- Collaborative work with the ADFG is focused on healthy and productive populations. These goals are emphasized in the recently signed (2016) Resource Management Plans for the Steese National Conservation Area, White Mountains National Recreation Area, Draanjik, and Forty Mile.
- The BLM, through the Federal Subsistence Management Program, work closely with the State of Alaska, tribal governments and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations when crafting hunting and fishing regulations for federally managed public lands in Alaska. Two co-management experiments have recently been initiated to bring a stronger native voice to management decisions being made that affect subsistence hunting and fishing and Federal lands in specific areas of Alaska.

### **BLM Arizona**

- The AGFD was a cooperating agency during the development of Resource Management Plans (RMP) and all associated tribal governments were consulted during the planning process. Game species, such as bighorn, sheep, mule deer, pronghorn, and upland game birds, were treated as “priority species” during all land use planning efforts. For example, desired future conditions were established to meet the needs of game species, such as bighorn sheep, mule deer, pronghorn, and upland birds. Two RMPs are for units within the National Conservation Lands system and identify big game species as monument objects. Several plans have identified Wildlife Habitat Areas to emphasize management for priority wildlife species and habitat. For example, the Arizona Strip Land Use Plans identifies crucial winter, summer, and fawning/lambing grounds for bighorn, mule deer, and pronghorn. Several plans address issues related to movement and all plans include a commitment to maintaining habitat improvements, such as wildlife water developments.
- There are five Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designated in Arizona that focus on bighorn sheep. Three are newly designated since 2007. Other ACECs have been designated primarily for other resources, but also provide benefit to game species.
- Representatives of the Hualapai Tribe and the Kingman Field Office attended a field planning session to assist in the identification of appropriate locations to install a wildlife water catchment in the remote Goodwin Mesa area.

### **BLM California**

- In June, the culmination of more than a year’s worth of planning and coordination came to fruition with the first Traditional Ecological Knowledge Summit held at the Steward Indian School in Carson City, Nevada. The summit was hosted by the BLM Bishop Field Office, the BLM Nevada State Office, the Nevada Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Nevada Indian Commission, the Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, the Nevada branch of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Tubape-Numu traditional use advocates.
  - The summit was intended to broaden the perspectives on proposed Federal actions related to sagebrush steppe habitat restoration, with the hope that a more expansive dialogue would incorporate traditional practices into land management actions. Approximately 200 Tribal members, Tribal leaders, land management specialists and managers came from throughout Nevada and Eastern California.
  - Highlights included a Native youth panel discussion that revealed an intellectually vibrant, up-and-coming generation dedicated to keeping cultural traditions flourishing and protecting indigenous plants and wildlife. The success of the summit and the widespread interest in the topic led to a follow-up “next steps” meeting to establish a working group that will expand and continue the discussion. Many believe that this is

an example of a more expansive “little-c” consultation effort is the future of tribal relations when Federal agencies propose landscape-scale undertakings.

### **BLM Colorado**

- BLM Colorado regularly consults with the State of Colorado Department of Natural Resources on land use planning efforts. The state is often represented as a formal cooperating agency in decision-making processes.
- Originally found throughout the Rocky Mountains, the desert bighorn sheep is the state mammal of Colorado and BLM Colorado considers desert bighorns a sensitive status species. In an effort to aid with population stabilization, the BLM assigns hunting limits with statewide population considerations. Populations have been generally increasing since 1960 estimates. Colorado’s Black Ridge Canyon Wilderness typically hosts four of the state’s 11 trophy desert bighorn ram tags each year. These are highly coveted “lifetime” hunts, meaning a hunter can only draw a tag once in their life.
- The Resource Management Plan for the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness also outlines meeting land health standards as a priority, including but not limited to vegetative reclamation and restoration projects, as well as working with the CPW, through the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, as a cooperating agency for bighorn sheep herd management.
- The BLM coordinated with CPW on developing a threshold concept to manage mule deer seasonal ranges in the White River Field Office. Disturbance thresholds are applied across game management units to reduce the impact of oil and gas development activities. The plan also coordinates closely on timing limitations in seasonal habitat by working with state officials to establish appropriate timeframes for avoidance.
- CPW conducts periodic reviews of big game herd management plans (Data Analysis Units/DAUs) and the BLM is invited to the table during revisions of these plans, which include review and update of big game population objectives. *“The purpose of a DAU plan is to integrate the plans and intentions of Colorado Parks and Wildlife with the concerns and ideas of land management agencies and interested public to determine how a big game herd in a DAU should be managed.” “In preparing a DAU plan, agency personnel attempt to balance the biological capabilities of the herd and its habitat with the public’s demand for wildlife recreational opportunities.”*(CPW Website)
- The BLM also reaches out to Colorado Parks and Wildlife for review and input to quarterly oil and gas lease sales. This collaboration is intended to insure appropriate minimization measures have been incorporated into nominated mineral leases, for the purpose of reducing impacts to big game and other species in the state.

### **BLM Idaho**

- The Deer Parks Wildlife Management Unit is cooperatively managed by IDFG, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and the BLM, with IDFG being the primary on-the-ground manager. The BLM has acquired approximately 2,590 acres in fee in this area which provides opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and other recreational activities.
- The BLM cooperatively manages the Soda Hills in partnership with the IDFG and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. Soda Hills provides valuable winter range habitat for resident, and a large population of mule deer that migrate from throughout southeastern Idaho. Management of Soda Hills perpetuates mule deer populations throughout the region, thereby increasing hunting opportunities.



- The BLM consults regularly with the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes on on-going actions to ensure tribal interests are understood and addressed.
- The BLM prepared a new Wildlife Tract Management Plan with IDFG, which includes habitat improvement projects for specific tracts and prioritizes tracts for treatment(s). Examples of projects include habitat restoration, fencing to reduce conflicts with adjacent land uses, guzzlers or ponds, signs, and fence walkthroughs.
- The BLM is working in cooperation with IDFG and Idaho State University to re-establish native game birds such as mountain quail.
- Idaho BLM actively conducts government-to-government consultation with federally recognized tribes in Idaho, with 70 face-to-face meetings in FY 2016.
- Intensive consultation is conducted with Shoshone-Paiute tribes through the Wings and Roots process, which meets at the Boise and Twin Falls District monthly along with several ad hoc meetings to address the many energy projects in Idaho, as well as Resource Management Plans in progress in the Four Rivers and Jarbidge Field Offices.

#### **BLM Montana/Dakotas**

- The Montana/Dakotas BLM continually seeks the advice of State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, and, as appropriate, consults with numerous organizations, with respect to the foregoing of Federal activities

#### **BLM Nevada**

- The BLM meets with NDOW to discuss grazing permits with domestic sheep or goat permittees in occupied bighorn sheep habitat.
  - BLM attends events such as RMEF shows to showcase hunting and recreation opportunities on BLM lands..
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#### **BLM Oregon/Washington**

- The BLM's planning process considers wildlife habitats important to game species and recognizes goals set forth by the state and Tribal governments where appropriate (e.g., winter range, traditional use, fawning/calving/brood rearing habitat). Short and long term goals for game species populations are set by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as the regulations which provide the opportunities for the public to hunt those species.

#### **BLM Utah**

- The Wilderness Study Areas in Utah's Henry Mountains are home to one of four free-roaming bison herds in the United States, and the only hutable herd. Approximately 40 hunting permits per year are issued for the 300-400 animal herd. The population has increased so that some of the animals are being located to begin a new herd in the Book Cliffs Wilderness Study Area.
- BLM participates in the UDWR big game management planning process and species management plans for hunted species.
- BLM continues to collaborate with the state on implementing the Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Amendment and the National Seed Strategy.
- BLM also works cooperatively with local counties and partnerships for big game planning.

- (f) Ensure that agency plans and actions consider programs and recommendations of comprehensive planning efforts such as State Wildlife Action Plans, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and other range-wide management plans for big game and upland game birds;***

**National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- Each State Wildlife Action Plan identifies priority wildlife species and habitats, addresses threats to their survival, and identifies long-term conservation actions needed in the state, including those on BLM-managed lands. The strategies provide a solid foundation for furthering wildlife conservation and an opportunity for the states, Federal agencies and other conservation partners to address their individual and coordinated roles in conservation efforts.
- In 2010 and 2011, the BLM sponsored a series of one-week workshops with state fish and wildlife agency partners to better incorporate State Wildlife Action Plans into Resource Management Plans and accomplishment targets. The project brought together technical experts and natural resource decision makers from states and BLM to develop key conservation priorities in each state and high-priority targets to track achievement of desired outcomes and conditions.
- The BLM maintains board membership on all western Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, cooperative, regional partnerships that work to conserve habitat for the benefit of birds, other wildlife, and people. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan called for the establishment of Joint Ventures in 1986, and Joint Venture Technical Committees include individuals from universities, Federal agencies, state fish and wildlife agencies, and non-governmental organizations.
- The BLM also encourages the use of shared resource data, tools, and methodology between states and field offices, such as state Natural Heritage databases and the WAFWA's CHAT, which was developed to assist Federal partners and others with large landscape planning to avoid conflicts with crucial or sensitive wildlife habitats, such as migration corridors, calving areas, and breeding ground.
- In addition to routinely incorporating goals and objectives from State Wildlife Action Plans and other range-wide management plans for big game and upland game into BLM plans and actions, the BLM has been an active participant in developing many State Wildlife Action Plans (ex. BLM Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona). Likewise, state wildlife agency staff are often included as active members of BLM's interdisciplinary teams to attend field trips and provide input on management alternatives. For example, the BLM Grand Junction Field Office Resource Management Plan adopted state-identified wildlife emphasis areas across 150,000 acres to protect important habitat for a variety of species, including wintering deer/elk.
- Other examples of BLM and state agency cooperation in plan development, include: BLM and Arizona Game and Fish Department holding a series of workshops together, led by the Heinz Center, to develop a monitoring plan to mutually track the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans; BLM Nevada inviting the Nevada Department of Wildlife to attend and participate in meetings with grazing permittees; and BLM Oregon incorporating programs and recommendations contained in the 2016 Oregon Conservation Strategy and 2015 Washington State Wildlife Action Plan, which identify Strategy Species, Conservation Risks and Conservation Opportunity Areas.

**BLM Alaska**

- The Central Yukon Field Office is revising the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan to include measurable wildlife habitat objectives. The objectives are being developed with full

consideration of all applicable and/or relevant management plans for big game and upland game birds.

- The Anchorage Field Office provides financial, science and fieldwork support for Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH) working group partnership, one of the largest caribou herds on the North American continent. The BLM oversees planning and financial agreements between the BLM, the USFWS and the National Park Service to sponsor the WACH Working Group annual meeting in Anchorage each December and annually assists in collaring caribou at Onion Portage.

### **BLM Arizona**

- The BLM was an active participant in the development of the State Wildlife Action Plans that were first signed in April 2006, and updated in 2012. The BLM in cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department held a series of workshops lead by the Heinz Center to coordinate a monitoring plan to track the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. The report was completed in January 2011.
- The land use planning and implementation planning effort utilizes information from State Wildlife Action Plans, and other big game and upland game bird plans when developing resource objectives and implementing management actions.

### **BLM Colorado**

- BLM Colorado coordinates closely with the State of Colorado on ongoing land use plans to consider management actions that support wildlife action plans and other range-wide plans. Often local CPW staff are directly involved in the plan development as members of the interdisciplinary team and provide input on the range of management considered. An example of this is coordination on the Grand Junction Resource Management Plan that adopted state-identified wildlife emphasis areas across 150,000 acres to protect important habitat for a variety of species, including wintering deer/elk.

### **BLM Idaho**

- The 2012 Pocatello Resource Management Plan considered and incorporated management direction from Idaho regional big game and upland game bird management plans.
- The Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Management Plan (2015) maintained access to opportunities for historic uses, such as hunting and fishing regulated by the State. The plan maintains opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, including hunting and fishing.

### **BLM Montana/Dakotas**

- The Montana/Dakotas BLM continually seeks the advice of state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, and, as appropriate, consults with numerous organizations, with respect to Federal activities.

### **BLM Nevada**

- BLM Nevada was invited to work collaboratively on the State's Wildlife Action Plan which was completed in 2012. National and State wildlife management plans are considered in BLM Nevada's resource management efforts, where appropriate. The NDOW is invited to attend and participate in meetings between grazing permittees and range management specialists overseeing the permits.

### **BLM Oregon/Washington**

- The BLM considers programs and recommendations contained in broad-based management plans for big game, upland game birds and fish. Particular emphasis is placed on implementing the 2016 Oregon Conservation Strategy and 2015 Washington State Wildlife Action Plan which identify Strategy Species, Conservation Risks and Conservation Opportunity Areas. Although neither strategy is focused specifically on game species, the actions and habitats affected can influence game species populations.

### **BLM Utah**

- The BLM participates on collaborative habitat projects through the UWRI.
- The BLM updates and reviews field office special status species and threats to those species considering information provided in the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- The BLM incorporates the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in the management of wetlands in Utah.
- The BLM collaborated with the UDWR to develop Habitat Management Plans and partners with the state on wildlife translocations.

### **BLM Wyoming**

- The Rawlins Field Office has a representative on the South Central (Greater-Sage Grouse) Local Working Group. The purpose of Local Sage-Grouse Working Groups is to develop and facilitate implementation of local conservation plans for the benefit of sage-grouse, their habitats, and whenever feasible, other species that use sagebrush habitats. The plans will identify management practices and the financial and personnel means to accomplish these practices, within an explicit time frame, for the purpose of improving sage-grouse numbers and precluding the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The committee has representation from the State of Wyoming, NRCS, Conservation Districts, Federal agencies, conservation groups, industry, and agriculture/private landowners. Accomplishments include a habitat status report, research projects, and updating the plan with recent information and strategies to guide the group's future sage-grouse conservation efforts.

***(g) Seek the advice of State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, and, as appropriate, consult with the Wildlife Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (formerly Sporting Conservation Council) and other organizations, with respect to the foregoing Federal activities;***

### **National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- In 2014, on the recommendation of the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC), the BLM established a baseline of hunting and recreational shooting data by creating a reporting module in its Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) database. This allows the BLM to track and report recreational shooting and hunting trends over time, such as the change in the number of acres open or closed to hunting and shooting sports. Currently, over 99% of the BLM's 245 million acres are open for hunting and dispersed recreational shooting activities.
- As documented throughout this report, the BLM actively seeks advice and input from many state and Federal agencies, tribal governments, and wildlife conservation organizations to address planning and implementation of wildlife habitat restoration/enhancement projects; game population management; hunting opportunities; and access to public lands. The BLM is in regular communications with the following organizations: AFWA; the WAFWA; Wildlife Management Institute (WMI); RMEF; MDF; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF);

NWTF; Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF); Backcountry Hunters & Anglers; NABCI; ; Partners in Flight (PIF); Watchable Wildlife; and the TRCP, among others.

- BLM state and field offices also engage directly with multiple agencies and partners, such as the 31 regionally-based Resource Advisory Councils (RACs), which are made up of 10-15 members from diverse interests in local communities, including ranchers, environmental groups, tribes, state and local government officials, timber companies, academics, and other public land users. The RACs advise BLM on a wide variety of public land resource and management issues, including land use planning, recreation, noxious weeds, energy development, and wild horse and burro management.
- Similarly, many rural communities have organized with other diverse interested parties to form landscape conservation coalitions to collectively address long-term conservation of wildlife and other resources, hunting/recreation, ranching, research, and local economic concerns. BLM is an active partner in working with groups, such as the Blackfoot Challenge and the High Divide Landscape Collaborative in western Montana, and the Western Colorado Landscape Collaborative. These groups organize their interests around balancing ecosystem health and sustainable resource management with preserving rural lifestyles and local community economic vitality.
- Additional examples of state and field offices seeking input from states and other partners include: the Central Yukon Field Office working with the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council, an advisory group made up of rural subsistence users who provide recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board, regarding changes to Federal hunting and fishing regulations; BLM Arizona field offices reaching out to local Resource Conservation Districts; and BLM Colorado participating with the State of Colorado, other Federal agencies, and special interest groups in a Colorado Bighorn Sheep Working Group to identify opportunities, options and common goals in addressing potential concerns related to interaction of domestic sheep and wild sheep across the state.

### **BLM Alaska**

- The BLM and the Federal Subsistence Management Program work closely with the State of Alaska, tribal governments and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations when crafting hunting and fishing regulations for federally managed public lands in Alaska. Two co-management experiments have recently been initiated to bring a stronger native voice to management decisions being made that affect subsistence hunting and fishing and Federal lands in specific areas of Alaska.
- The Central Yukon Field Office actively engages with the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council (WIRAC), which is an advisory group made up of rural subsistence users. The function of this group is to provide recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding changes to Federal hunting and fishing regulations, which apply to Federal lands in Alaska.
- The Central Yukon Field Office is an active participant in activities coordinated by the Wild Sheep Foundation, a non-profit, international scientific and educational organization dedicated to the management and conservation of northern wild sheep and mountain goat populations and their habitats in North America.
- The Central Yukon Field Office actively communicates with the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers organization and the Alaska Professional Hunters Association with respect to management decisions on BLM land, including the ongoing Resource Management Plan revision.

- The Central Yukon Field Office works together with the State of Alaska Big Game Guide Services Board in managing permitted hunting activities on BLM lands.
- The Eastern Interior Field Office uses the Fortymile Caribou Habitat Needs Assessment to prioritize caribou calving and post-calving habitats and delineate crucial habitats and ACECs. The assessment was created by a planning team, which included multiple agencies (including tribal/first nations) and interest groups in Alaska and Canada).
- The Anchorage Field Office actively participates in three semi-annual Federal Subsistence Resource Advisory Committee meetings (Northwest Arctic, Seward Peninsula, Western Interior) with state, Federal, and local partners and land managers, tribal organizations and interested rural residents, proposing and discussing wildlife harvest and management actions on public lands in northwest Alaska. The Anchorage Field Office stays engaged with the actions of three additional Federal subsistence Resource Advisory Councils which have minimal BLM managed lands by providing information and agency updates, as appropriate.
- The State of Alaska Boards of Fish and Game and the Federal Subsistence Management Program establish hunting and fishing regulations across the State of Alaska. Each Board has liaisons to each other's respective regulatory program who coordinate between the two independent regulatory programs. This affords agencies the opportunity to minimize conflicting regulatory and policy changes that broadly affect wildlife management on adjacent Federal, state and private lands.

#### **BLM Arizona**

- As described in the AGFD Master MOU, the BLM coordinates with the AGFD during the NEPA process when wildlife values are involved to ensure those values, public access and usage are addressed. The AGFD has been, and continues to be, engaged in the review of land health evaluations for grazing permit renewals, habitat restoration efforts through the Healthy Lands Initiative, travel management plans, and RMPs. Additionally, BLM field offices reach out to local Resource Conservation Districts, and the BLM is part of a statewide Landowner-Lessee advisory council, facilitated by the AGFD.

#### **BLM California**

- On matters related to hunting, fishing and recreational shooting BLM California is actively engaged with state, Federal, and nongovernmental organizations on any planning efforts that could affect hunting and fishing opportunities.

#### **BLM Colorado**

- The BLM is participating with the State of Colorado, other Federal agencies, and special interest groups in a Colorado Bighorn Sheep Working Group. The focus of this group is to identify opportunities, options and common goals in addressing potential concerns related to interaction of domestic sheep and wild sheep across the state.

#### **BLM New Mexico**

- New Mexico's Rio Grande del Norte National Monument was designated in 2013 with the help of more than a dozen local sportsmen's groups. The spectacular Rio Grande Gorge offers the state's top wild trout fishery, as well as hunts for elk, mule deer and bighorn sheep. BLM New Mexico cooperates with state and Federal partners on planning efforts.

## ***(h) Recreational Shooting Opportunities***

### **National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- Approximately 99% of the BLM's 245 million acres are open for hunting and dispersed recreational shooting activities. Forty-two designated shooting ranges are operated under leases through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.
- BLM, along with the USFS, USFWS, and the Army Corps of Engineers, participates in the Federal Lands Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting Sports Roundtable with 42 non-governmental entities through a MOU. Since becoming a signatory to the MOU in 2006 and renewed in 2014, the BLM has been engaged in coordination with the Roundtable members whenever addressing shooting sports issues, when writing land use plans, and when issuing temporary restriction orders or supplementary rules. In addition, all state and field offices have added the 42 private organizations to their public mailing lists and regularly notify these organizations when land use plans, activity plans and/or travel management plans are to be developed, revised, or amended.
- In 2007, the agency prepared and distributed a Shooting Range Toolkit to states and field offices. The Toolkit contained information and practical advice for managers working with private groups and local governments to establish shooting ranges on public lands. The Toolkit provided up-to-date information on laws and techniques dealing with lead contamination, safety considerations in designing shooting ranges, and environmental considerations in choosing shooting range locations.
- In 2008, after working with the Shooting Sports Roundtable, the BLM issued an Instruction memorandum, IM-2008-092, in coordination with the USFS. The agencies asked each state or region to identify high priority access needs to improve public access to public lands for hunting, shooting sports, and other recreational activities.
- BLM works closely with nonprofit groups like "Tread Lightly!" on stewardship campaigns such as "Respected Access is Open Access" to educate the public about recreational shooting. The goals of the campaign are to provide safe recreational shooting opportunities on public land, reduce the amount of litter on the landscape, reduce natural resource and property damage, and build support from the shooting community to promote responsible recreation and increase their stewardship activities.
- Many BLM state and field offices throughout the west are actively working with state, county, and local governments, as well as, private gun clubs to facilitate the transfer of public lands for purposes of development of recreational shooting and target training ranges under the R&PP Act. Additionally, BLM Idaho has multiple R&PP leases supporting recreational hunting and fishing, as well as other recreational interests, such as Smokey Mountain Campground (State Parks), Twin Falls County (multiple leases for boating, hunting and fishing access), and the Burley Trap and Sporting Clays Club.
- BLM Colorado developed several web sites to assist the public in finding safe places to shoot. These web resources include area-specific information and maps on shooting and hunting restrictions and opportunities. The proposed Colorado Recreation Website, which is intended to replace them, will have additional site-specific information in a central location for end-user convenience.

### **BLM Arizona**

- BLM Arizona worked with Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the USFS to implement the "Respected Access is Open Access in Arizona" initiative. The goals of the campaign are to provide safe recreational shooting opportunities on public land, reduce the amount of litter on

the landscape, reduce natural resource and property damage, and build support from the shooting community to promote responsible recreation and increase their stewardship activities. Citizens are asked to take a pledge to become responsible shooters and have a variety of events available to them.

- The Table Mesa Recreation/TMP designated areas that are appropriate for safe and responsible recreational shooting
- The BLM is currently reviewing a patent application from Lake Havasu City for a shooting range presently authorized under an R&PP lease and operated by a local shooting club. Since 2007, BLM Arizona actions under this authority include:
  - One new shooting range patent issued to the AGFD and constructed in 2013 on public lands to serve the Bullhead City and the Mohave County area, as well as providing a three state regional shooting facility - Arizona, California, and Nevada.
  - One shooting range lease in Sierra Vista was conveyed to AGFD in 2010 and is operated by three local gun clubs.
  - One shooting range lease in Wickenburg was renewed in 2008.
  - One shooting range title transferred from Maricopa County to the AGFD in 2013.
  - One shooting range lease assigned from Mohave County to Lake Havasu City in 2009.

### **BLM California**

- In Bishop California, the BLM issued an R&PP lease to a local gun club for a shooting range facility. This action was conducted in coordination with the National Rifle Association.

### **BLM Colorado**

- BLM Colorado developed web sites to include area specific information and maps on shooting and hunting restrictions and opportunities. The proposed Colorado Recreation Website, intended to replace them, will have additional site-specific information in a central location for ease of access.

### **BLM Idaho**

- BLM Idaho sold land near Challis, ID to the Rod and Gun Club in 2011.
- The Cottonwood Field Office transferred the Riggins Gun Range, a 36-acre BLM parcel, to Idaho County for a shooting range through legislation that was passed as part of the FY 2015 Defense Authorization Act.
- The BLM has multiple R&PP leases supporting recreational hunting and fishing, as well as other recreational interests. Examples are Smokey Mountain Campground (State Parks), Twin Falls County (multiple leases for boating, hunting and fishing access), Burley Trap and Sporting Clays Club.

### **BLM Montana/Dakotas**

- BLM Montana/Dakotas manages leases for three shooting ranges under the R&PP Act. Two of the ranges are located in South Dakota and one range in Montana.
- In 2003, the Butte Field Office issued an R&PP Lease to Broadwater County. This 400-acre facility provides a designated area for local residents to safely target shoot. The Butte Field Office is also currently working on a possible transfer of the 40-acre Last Chance Handgunner's Shooting Range (R&PP Lease), located near Boulder, to Jefferson County, which will provide designated target shooting opportunities for the public and a safe location for local law enforcement training exercises.



### **BLM Nevada**

- In the urban areas that have a need for a developed shooting facility, BLM Nevada has worked with local, state and congressional representatives to establish those areas. One example is the Clark County Shooting Complex in North Las Vegas. Las Vegas is a metropolitan area, with a population of over 2.5 million people, plus a robust tourist population, surrounded by public lands which are heavily visited by the recreating public. This facility is located on 2,900 acres of land that were transferred from the BLM to Clark County in 2002.

### **BLM New Mexico**

- Shooting range development in Cibola and Santa Fe counties are some of the efforts ongoing with the NMDGF to improve the access to, and safety of, recreational target shooting and hunter safety training classes. The NMDGF has identified several locations throughout the state for development of official National Rifle Association (NRA) approved shooting ranges, and the BLM is working to complete the process necessary to make these shooting ranges a reality.

### **BLM Utah**

- Numerous BLM Utah Field Offices are working on or have established R&PP leases to provide public shooting ranges on BLM lands managed by local counties.
- The Monticello Field Office is currently working on an R&PP conveyance to transfer a public shooting range outside of Blanding, UT to San Juan County.
- The Kanab Field Office has authorized a R&PP lease to Kane County for a shooting range just north of the community of Kanab. The field office is working with Orderville Town and Garfield County on authorizing R&PP leases for two additional shooting ranges.
- St. George Field Office is currently working with Washington County to authorize an R&PP lease for new public shooting range.
- The Vernal Field Office has worked on an arrangement with Uintah County, where they have established and developed a public shooting range near the town of Vernal in the Buckskin Hills Complex.
- The town of Kanab currently has a shooting range on lands managed by the Kanab Field Office.
- The Salt Lake Field Office has completed an R&PP patent to Utah County for Soldier Pass Shooting Range.

### ***(i) Partnership success stories***

A brief overview of some long-standing key national partnerships is provided below:

**Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)** - BLM is an active participant with several WAFWA working groups, including the Mule Deer Working Group (MDWG). The MDWG develops strategies and tools to assist agencies in the management of declining black-tailed deer and mule deer populations and works to improve communications among wildlife professionals. The MDWG has produced numerous professional publications/products that provide technical guidance to aid in the planning and management of mule deer populations and their habitat. These publications can help BLM wildlife biologists and planners stay informed with the “best available science” related to mule deer and black-tailed deer management.

**Mule Deer Foundation (MDF)** - The Mule Deer Foundation works to conserve mule deer and black-tailed deer and was established in 1988 in Redding, California. MDF's priority concerns include: range-wide population declines; habitat degradation; migration corridors; habitat fragmentation/energy development; hunting access and hunting heritage; and losses from deer/vehicle collision mortalities. The BLM manages approximately 131 million acres (16%) of the mule deer habitat in the United States and has been working with the MDF for more than two decades. In 2015, BLM and MDF renewed a MOU, which included development of new measurable national objectives to guide priority work together. MDF and BLM are working together on Statewide Stewardship Agreements to expand habitat conservation work in Colorado and Utah and recently partnered with others to plant more than 1 million seedlings to restore vegetation in the BLM Twin Falls District.

**National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf)** - The NWTf is one of the BLM's longest-standing national wildlife partners. NWTf's mission is the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of the nation's hunting heritage. This translates to improving forest health, pine management and water quality; increasing winter wildlife survival; maintaining healthy hardwood forests; restoring prairies, oak woodlands and savannas; and stopping habitat loss/degradation for turkeys and upland wildlife species. NWTf has identified priority focal areas to improve the sustainability of wildlife and habitat across larger landscapes and to ensure the health and stability of wild turkey populations for future generations. NWTf and BLM continue to work together to identify key projects and landscapes to leverage limited resources and expand resource benefits. Wild turkey habitat covers over 414 million acres of the western United States, approximately 18 million acres (4%) are managed by the BLM.

**Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF)** - The BLM and the RMEF have been working together to conserve wildlife and enhance wildlife habitat on public lands since 1984, with a conservation partnership portfolio valued in excess of \$133M. The partnership has completed more than 1,050 projects together that improved or protected habitat on nearly 1.7 million acres of BLM public land. Current conservation priorities include: habitat stewardship projects (early seral habitat expansion, aspen restoration, weeds, and restoring larger landscapes); access to public lands and habitat protection (summer/winter ranges, migration corridors); eastern elk restoration; and hunting heritage. Other concerns include: use of sound science in agency management and planning; wild horse and burros on public lands; state predator control; and declining trends in hunter participation. BLM manages approximately 43 million acres (16%) of the estimated 277 million acres of elk habitat in the western United States.

**Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF)** - The Wild Sheep Foundation has been actively working to restore and conserve wild sheep in North America and across the globe since 1974. For more than 42 years this partner has been actively conserving wild sheep by raising more than \$110 million for population recovery, habitat enhancements/acquisitions, and disease research and surveillance. The WSF works to support trap and transplant operations; control respiratory diseases afflicting wild sheep through effective separation of domestic and wild sheep; fund new studies and management plans for Dall's and Stone's sheep; and promote the sustainability of wild sheep herds and their habitat worldwide. WSF is also working closely with BLM on domestic sheep grazing management practices and is an active member of the Steering Committee for the National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition. The coalition includes members from 16 national wildlife, sportsmen, land conservation, and livestock industry organizations dedicated to sound, scientific management of horses and burros to conserve healthy rangelands and wildlife habitat.

The following examples illustrate the important role that conservation partnerships play in helping the BLM accomplish its mission:

**National, State, District, and Field Office Highlights**

- In 2014, the BLM designated a liaison to coordinate and promote employee participation in Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLfT) professional workshops. Workshops target agency personnel with little to no hunting experience and provide a unique hands-on opportunity to learn about the critical role that hunting, fishing, trapping and the shooting sports play in supporting successful wildlife conservation in North America (*North American Model of Wildlife Conservation*). Since 2012, 26 BLM resource professionals and managers representing leadership, wildlife, recreation and planning programs have participated in the workshops.
- In 2011, BLM and RMEF entered into an agreement to jointly fund a BLM/RMEF National Liaison position to develop and expand partnership opportunities with BLM field offices in 10 western states. The agreement was renewed in 2016 to focus on: information sharing; aligning partner mission priorities and leveraging funding to expand BLM capacity and increase accomplishments; developing new partnership opportunities and improving working relationships with BLM state and field offices, Federal, state and local government agencies, private landowners, universities and related partner groups (MDF, NWTF, WSF, and CLfT).
- In 2012, the BLM worked with partners from the RMEF, the MDF, the NWTF, the WSF, and the WAFWA to produce and distribute a full color brochure entitled, “*Wildlife Conservation and Our Hunting Heritage*”. The brochure was intended to promote hunting and wildlife viewing on public lands and includes information on BLM’s wildlife program, conservation work with partners, and geospatial maps illustrating the distribution of deer, elk, turkey, and wild sheep habitat on BLM lands. Additional copies of the brochure can be ordered through the National Operations Center.
- The TRCP assisted BLM with initiating a “Backcountry Conservation Area” designation to help BLM identify and prioritize large blocks of land suitable for special management emphasis on hunting and fishing opportunities and wildlife/fisheries habitat management.
- In 2017, the BLM launched a national social media campaign to promote hunting opportunities on public lands and educate the public about the role of hunting in wildlife conservation. Content will be repurposed for release again in the fall prior to hunting season.
- Many BLM state and field offices have been working successfully with partners to implement habitat enhancement projects and acquire conservation easements and fee title to lands from willing sellers to conserve wildlife migration corridors, prevent habitat fragmentation and degradation from development, and improve access to public lands. Other field office partner accomplishments examples include: partnering with Power County and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to build new boat docks, install a new vault toilet, and improve the main access road at Pipeline Recreation Area for sportsmen; working cooperatively with Arizona Game and Fish Department, MDF, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, and Arizona Antelope Foundation to cooperatively maintain over 700 wildlife water developments on public lands; and developing free digital access maps and smartphone apps to assist hunters with navigating legal access to public lands.

**BLM Alaska**

- In 2016-2017, the BLM used road and trail data from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to create new digital maps for improved hunter/outdoorsmen access. Maps will be available in the spring of 2017 free of charge to the public.

### **BLM Arizona**

- The BLM and the AGFD are working cooperatively to ensure maintenance of over 700 wildlife water developments on public lands. Sportsman groups like the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Arizona Antelope Foundation, and MDF are active partners in implementing projects that improve wildlife habitat. BLM Arizona is currently developing a new 5-year financial agreement to address maintenance over the next 5 years.

### **BLM Colorado**

- *The Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Partners in the Outdoors Conference* brings hunters, anglers, conservationists, and recreationists together with outdoor industry representatives, agencies and organizations (including youth organizations) to collaborate on improving stewardship of all public lands. BLM Colorado is a co-sponsor and active participant.

### **BLM Idaho**

- Since 2000, the BLM has acquired and conserved approximately 27,000 acres (56 conservation easements for 16,500 acres and 37 fee title properties for 11,300 acres) within the Snake River and Henrys Lake ACECs. Properties were acquired to prevent fragmentation from development and conserve habitat for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. Funding was obtained through LWCF, the BLM Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, and the Bonneville Power Administration's wildlife mitigation program. BLM also partnered with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, The Conservation Fund, Teton Regional Land Trust, and The Nature Conservancy.
- Northern Idaho BLM participates in the Clearwater Basin Collaborative and the Clearwater Management Council partnerships to focus on the economic benefits of recreation including hunting and fishing and resource management of lands within the Clearwater River Basin.
- The BLM is currently involved in several stream re-connection projects to enhance riparian habitats and water quality along Hawley Creek as part of the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program.
- The BLM is working with the State of Idaho and Owyhee County to acquire approximately 27,000 acres within or adjacent to BLM wilderness areas and 6.5 miles of wild and scenic river segments. The State of Idaho will acquire approximately 34,000 acres of scattered isolated BLM tracts through this exchange, while public access and recreational opportunities will be enhanced by acquisition of the inholdings and edge-holdings.
- BLM Idaho has a state-level position dedicated to developing and maintaining wildlife conservation and other partnerships.
- The BLM is partnering with Power County and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to build new boat docks, install a new vault toilet, and improve the main access road at Pipeline Recreation Area for sportsmen.
- The BLM is partnering with Bear Lake County to build an access road and develop a trailhead for sportsmen access in Fish Haven, Idaho.

### **BLM Montana/Dakotas**

- The BLM is working with Montana FWP to improve big game and upland bird habitat and hunting opportunities in the Pumpkin Creek Area. The Tongue River Chapter of Pheasants Forever (PF) has a 10-year plan in place to improve habitat by removing non-native grasses and planting native grasses. The project encompasses approximately 1,330 acres of treatments

- and complements BLM riparian restoration work. In addition, PF is working to improve upland habitat in an area designated as open for hunting within the Matthews Recreation Area.
- The RMEF donated 5,565 acres on the east side of the Elkhorn Mountains, near Townsend, MT. The project was assisted by the Montana FWP Conservation Trust, The Conservation Fund and other partners. Iron Mask provides outstanding hunting opportunities and helps to protect critical winter range for up to 300 elk, bighorn sheep and mule deer. A new BLM trailhead will be installed over the 2017-2018 field seasons, providing a designated parking area, hitching posts, and informational kiosks.
  - In 2007, BLM partnered with North Dakota State University, Dickinson Research Extension Center to convert old agricultural farm fields at Schnell Recreation Area that were seeded with non-wildlife friendly introduced grasses to native grasses and forbs. Approximately 180 acres were chemically treated and reseeded using a specialized “cross-slot drill” to establish diverse habitats for resident game species (pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse, partridge and deer).
  - The BLM worked with multiple state and Federal partners to enhance big game security and travel compliance associated with 20 miles of backcountry roads. The project included installing kiosks in strategic locations to provide maps with up-to-date road status information, along with information on noxious weed control and hunter etiquette. The kiosks also include a bar code to allow the public to use their smartphones to reach an APP called AVENZA, which provides current information regarding open and closed roads in the area. The project is intended to limit overall disturbance and increase security to big game and wildlife within the area.

#### **BLM Nevada**

- At the request of Nevada Outfitter and Guide Association (NOGA), the BLM worked with the NDOW and NOGA to develop a multi-jurisdictional hunting guide SRP. This streamlined process established a lead BLM office to coordinate with all other BLM offices where a guide would conduct hunts. Before this coordinated multi-jurisdictional SRP system was created, guides would have to apply to each BLM office individually and obtain separate SRPs for each office. This new process has reduced time and paperwork for both BLM and outfitters.

#### **BLM New Mexico**

- More than one million dollars has been put into the agreement with the NWTF since 2013 for purpose of managing landscapes for wildlife (mechanical thinning, fence modification for antelope movement, wildlife surveys, etc.). Additionally, the partnership generated through this agreement has brought focus to the NWTF’s Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt Initiative, and the various aspects of this initiative including “Women in the Outdoors”, Jakes (youth) events and “Wheelin’ Sportsmen”. In the future, BLM will look for opportunities to provide venues for these activities to occur on public lands.
- Research is being conducted to determine the effectiveness of BLM vegetative treatments and their benefits to big game. Treatment effectiveness monitoring has been conducted since 2004. In cooperation with state and wildlife conservation partners, the BLM has implemented approximately 20 habitat improvement projects on the Taos Plateau, utilizing various treatment methods, such as thinning and burning dense piñon/juniper stands, diskings of sagebrush in a mosaic treatment pattern, seeding/planting of native grasses and forbs, pruning decadent mountain mahogany stands, and maintaining and constructing water developments to benefit mule deer and other wildlife. USGS using real time locations of mule deer on the range, along with quantitative vegetative baseline data, will help inform the BLM whether deer fitted with GPS collars are frequenting vegetation treatment areas.

- BLM New Mexico is an active voting member on the RMEF Project Advisory Committee. The annual meetings promote positive working relationships between agencies and non-governmental organizations and inform partners of cooperative opportunities.

#### **BLM Oregon/Washington**

- The Medford District has a Community Outreach Specialist dedicated to developing and maintaining partnerships with state agencies, local communities, counties, and organizations like Ducks Unlimited and Oregon Hunters Association.
- In Washington State, partnerships exist with local government agencies to maintain road access to public lands open to big game hunting.
- The BLM contributed to the development of elk nutrition and habitat models in cooperation with the Pacific Northwest Research Station, RMEF, and more than 20 other partners. The models have application to both Western Oregon and the Blue Mountains and help inform habitat management decisions.

#### **BLM Utah**

- The BLM is involved with multiple projects with the UDWR Dedicated Hunter volunteers and Utah Partners for Conservation and Development, with over 20,000 acres of habitat treated for mule deer elk, antelope, sage-grouse and other wildlife species.
- UDWR Dedicated Hunter groups work with the BLM to clean up shooting areas.
- The BLM is completing vegetation enhancement projects, which encompass landscape level restoration projects focusing on watersheds, involve working with partners across boundaries. Partners include permittees and local sporting groups (MDF, RMEF, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife) who help develop projects that are multi-species in nature.
- More than 50 state, local, and community youth outreach and education events occur each year to share information about BLM natural resources and wildlife conservation.

#### **BLM Wyoming**

- The Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative (WLCI) is a long-term science-based effort to assess and enhance aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitats at a landscape scale in southwest Wyoming. The WLCI is a coalition of government and non-government organizations focused on facilitating responsible development through local collaboration and partnerships. Local Project Development Teams work cooperatively to identify issues affecting wildlife, habitat, and other resource issues. Each team includes biologists, rangeland managers, conservation districts, landowners, county commissioners, and other interested parties. WLCI's 10-year history gives the group a firm baseline to address conservation issues and actions necessary for long-term sustainability of Wyoming's landscapes.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Actions Described by the Executive Order That Have Not Occurred**

The BLM has successfully implemented and met the intent of all actions required under EO 13443. While the BLM has taken action on most recommendations from the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC), certain actions were not implemented as described below.

#### **WHHCC Recommendations Considered but not Implemented**

- In 2011, the BLM shared a draft policy document titled “Managing and Addressing Recreational Shooting in Land Use Plans”, with the WHHCC. Due to some of the comments, Secretary Ken Salazar issued the BLM Director a “take no further action to develop or implement the policy” memorandum. In 2014, the WHHCC asked Secretary Sally Jewell to withdraw former Interior Secretary Salazar’s memorandum to the BLM Director that directed the BLM to take no further action to develop or implement a national recreational shooting policy. The Secretary took no action. In correspondence to the BLM, the WHHCC stated that management of public uses should be guided by policy.
- The WHHCC has proposed that shooting sports be considered in land use planning efforts and to formally designate shooting ranges on public lands managed by the BLM. The former BLM Director responded, “the BLM has carefully considered this concept and has determined that it is not in the public’s or the agency’s best interest to have specific sites designated for target shooting. One large factor in this determination is the fact that the BLM does not have the financial resources or personnel that would be needed to assume the liability associated with concentrated lead deposition and the subsequent clean-up”.
- In 2013, the WHHCC requested the Secretary and BLM Director to develop a Resource Advisory Council (RAC) category specifically for the sportsmen group - separate from the existing three categories of: 1) commercial/commodity interests; 2) environmental/historical groups; and 3) State and local government, Indian tribes, and the public at large. The BLM’s leadership discussed this proposal and felt that the existing categories adequately covered the sportsmen’s interests. The BLM has 29 FACA-chartered RACs in the western states to provide advice on the management of public lands and resources. Each RAC consists of 12 to 15 members from diverse interests in local communities, including ranchers, environmental groups, tribes, State and local government officials, academics, and other public land users. Each year, about one-third of the positions on BLM’s statewide and regional RACs come up for nomination. In 2013, an analysis of 99 recent applicants to the BLM RACs showed that 27 self-identified with hunting, fishing and recreational shooting in their applications.
- In 2013, the WHHCC requested the BLM and USFS to establish a national policy for motorized big game retrieval. The BLM responded by explaining it does not have a national, one-size-fits-all policy for this issue. Motorized big game retrieval is addressed either at the statewide level or in individual resource management plans in part because of varying resource conditions, policies set by state fish and wildlife agencies, and for consistency with other land management agencies and is analyzed in the context of trying to balance the goals and objectives for the wide variety of resources involved. For example, the BLM recognizes the State of Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s Disabled Hunter Permits that allow access for game retrieval to certain areas that are otherwise closed to motorized vehicle access. While there is no national policy prescribing a particular approach for motorized big game retrieval, the BLM encourages its state and field offices to make motorized big game retrieval decisions in coordination with other state and Federal agencies.