

**Statement of
Robert V. Abbey, Director
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Before the
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Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands**

**Hearing on the FY 2013 Budget Request
Of the Bureau of Land Management**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget request for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), is responsible for managing our National System of Public Lands, which are located primarily in 11 western States. The BLM administers over 245 million surface acres, more than any other Federal agency. The BLM also manages approximately 700 million acres of onshore subsurface mineral estate throughout the Nation. The BLM's unique multiple-use management of public lands includes activities as varied as energy production, mineral development, livestock grazing, outdoor recreation, and the conservation of natural, historical, cultural, and other important resources. The BLM is one of a handful of Federal agencies that generates more revenue than it spends.

Providing For Our Nation's Needs

The BLM's multiple-use management and protection of public land resources results in extraordinary economic and other benefits to local communities and to the Nation. The economic output associated with the public lands is considerable. Commodity, recreation, and conservation uses on the public lands generated an estimated combined economic output of more than \$120 billion nationwide and supported more than 550,000 American full and part-time jobs, according to the *Department of the Interior Economic Contributions* report of June 21, 2011.

One element of these economic benefits is the BLM's contribution to America's energy portfolio. During calendar year 2011, the BLM held 32 onshore oil and gas lease sales – covering nearly 4.4 million acres – which generated about \$256 million in revenue for American taxpayers. Onshore mineral leasing revenues are estimated to be \$4.4 billion in 2013. The 2011 lease sale revenues are 20 percent higher than those in calendar year 2010. There are currently over 38 million acres of oil and gas under lease, and since only about 32 percent of that acreage is currently in production, the BLM is working to provide greater incentives for lessees to make production a priority. In FY 2011, the Department of the Interior collected royalties on more than 97 million barrels of oil produced from onshore Federal minerals. Moreover, the production of nearly 3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas made it one of the most productive years on record. BLM-managed Federal coal leases, meanwhile, power more than 20 percent of the electricity generated in the United States.

The BLM also is leading the Nation on the new energy frontier, actively promoting solar, wind, and geothermal energy development. Under Secretary Salazar, BLM has approved permits for 29 commercial-scale renewable energy projects on public lands or the transmission associated with them since 2009. This includes 16 solar, five wind, and eight geothermal projects. Together, these projects represent more than 6,500 megawatts and 12,500 jobs, and when built will power about 1.3 million homes. In addition, the Department has identified more than 3,000 miles of transmission lines for expedited review. Enhanced development of wind power is a key component of our Nation's energy strategy for the future. There are currently 437 megawatts (MW) of installed wind power capacity on BLM-managed public lands, but there are 20 million acres of public lands with wind potential. Additionally, nearly half of U.S. geothermal energy production capacity is from Federal leases. The 2013 budget reflects a goal of permitting a total of 11,000 MW of clean renewable energy by the end of 2013.

The BLM contributes to local communities and the national economy in many ways other than energy production. The Department estimates that more than \$5 billion in annual economic benefits are estimated to result from timber- and grazing-related activities and non-energy mineral production from BLM-managed forest, range, and mineral estate lands. Conservation lands, meanwhile, are valued for their outstanding recreational opportunities as well as for their important scientific, cultural, and historic contributions. Protecting these places preserves the careful balance in management mandated by law, a balance that we need on our public lands. Public land recreational activities also provide major economic benefits to economies in nearby communities. Nearly 58 million recreational visits took place on BLM-managed lands in 2011 alone. In 2010, recreation on BLM lands supported an estimated 59,000 jobs and resulted in about \$7.4 billion in economic output. Recreational hunters, off-road vehicle enthusiasts, mountain bikers, backpackers, anglers, and photographers discover endless opportunities on BLM-managed lands. These and many other recreational opportunities are vital to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of the increasingly urbanized western states, as well as national and international visitors.

FY 2013 Budget Overview

The BLM's budget makes significant investments in America's economy, while making difficult choices to offset priority funding increases. Investments in this budget will promote America's energy production at home and grow America's outdoor economy. The budget request allows the BLM to advance a number of important initiatives, including America's Great Outdoors and the New Energy Frontier, and to implement a number of BLM priorities such as restoring landscapes and conserving habitat for sage grouse, expanding research into population controls for wild horses, and reforming hardrock mining on public lands.

The total FY 2013 BLM budget request is \$1.1 billion in current authority, which is essentially level with the 2012 enacted level. The budget proposes \$952.0 million for the Management of Lands and Resources appropriation and \$112.0 million for the Oregon and California Grant Lands appropriation, the BLM's two main operating accounts. The budget makes strategic funding shifts to target high-priority initiatives, scales back on lower-priority programs, and sustains and expands energy program activities. The budget also includes several important legislative proposals linked to the uses of lands and resources, including proposals to fund the

remediation of abandoned hardrock mines; to provide a fair return to the taxpayer from the production of several hardrock minerals on Federal lands; to encourage diligent development of oil and gas leases; to repeal a prohibition on charging oil and gas permitting fees along with associated mandatory funds; and to reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act.

A crucial factor in the BLM's ability to fulfill its diverse mission and many responsibilities continues to be strong engagement with partner organizations and volunteers in the management of the public lands. Reciprocal partnerships and volunteer contributions are critical. Through partnerships with organizations and local communities, and through the generosity of volunteers, the BLM effectively leverages external resources, and expands its ability to meet public land management goals. Partnerships also foster an enhanced sense of stewardship and community for the people most closely connected to those lands.

Growing Our Outdoor Economy & Protecting Special Places – America's Great Outdoors

In the rapidly urbanizing west, over 40 million Americans living in more than 4,000 nearby cities and communities can access BLM-managed public lands right in their own backyards. Within a day's drive of 16 major urban areas there are over 100 million acres of BLM-managed public lands. Given the proximity of the public lands to these population centers, the BLM is in a unique position to contribute significantly in advancing the President's initiative to reconnect Americans and our youth to the great outdoors. The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative promotes the BLM's multiple-use mission by expanding opportunities for recreational activities – including hunting, fishing, and off-road vehicle use – while enhancing the conservation and protection of BLM-managed lands and resources. All of these activities have a place at the multiple-use table and strengthen the BLM's connection to western communities and to visitors to the public lands. The BLM's FY 2013 budget request includes \$6.3 million in program increases for various AGO-related programs in BLM's operating accounts. The 2013 budget also includes increases for programs funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a vital component of the America's Great Outdoors initiative. The BLM's total 2013 budget request for the LWCF land acquisition program is \$33.6 million, an increase of \$11.2 million over the 2012 enacted-funding level.

National Landscape Conservation System – Acts of Congress and/or Presidential proclamations have designated more than 27 million acres of public land into the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). These areas are managed to conserve, protect, and restore the conservation values for which they are designated, while allowing for appropriate multiple uses. National Monuments and National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails are all included as NLCS units. These areas are amazingly diverse, ranging from broad Alaskan tundra to red-rock deserts and from deep river canyons to rugged ocean coastlines. While some of these special places are surprisingly accessible, many others remain remote and wild.

The NLCS units include over 2,700 recreation sites and 22 visitor centers that serve some 13 million visitors annually. Approximately one-fourth of recreation use of BLM lands occurs within units of the NLCS. Thus, the NLCS contributes to the sustainability of economies in local communities in a variety of ways. Near Las Vegas, Nevada, for example, the extremely popular

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is visited by over 1 million people each year. In FY 2011, visitors to this NCA generated nearly \$2 million in recreation fees that were re-invested in the area, directly contributing to the regional tourist economy and supporting 50 private-sector jobs. The BLM also emphasizes the creation of recreation facilities in nearby communities outside of NLCS units. Finally, in addition to recreation, the NLCS supports opportunities for scientific research, the protection of critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, and the protection of nationally-significant cultural resources.

The BLM's 2013 proposed budget includes a \$3.0 million increase for National Monuments and National Conservation Areas. The increase will allow the BLM to increase a variety of activities, including enhancing law enforcement, enhancing visitor safety and experiences, and expanding interpretation programs and products.

Recreation Management – Visitors to BLM-managed lands enjoy a broad range of recreation opportunities such as hunting, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and shooting sports; many motorized activities such as boating and OHV riding; as well as extreme sports and special events. These activities are essential components of western communities' economies and quality of life. The BLM manages more than 600 Special Recreation Management Areas, along with 3,500 recreation sites, campgrounds, day-use areas and other facilities, and 40 major visitor centers and visitor contact stations. In addition, the agency provides recreation opportunities and protection of resource values on more than 10,000 miles of BLM-administered waterways, including over 2,400 miles in 69 designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. The BLM also manages 15,000 miles of recreation-use trails and another 98,000 miles of Back Country-Scenic Byways and public access roads and routes, and oversees 3,400 commercial and competitive use permits and concessions, supporting thousands of businesses and communities across the West. Most BLM-managed lands and recreational areas (over 95 percent) are free to the public.

In FY 2013, an increase of \$2.2 million in the Recreation Resources Management program is proposed to allow the BLM to continue to develop and implement more travel management plans (\$1.1 million) and also strengthen management of the National Scenic and Historic Trails (\$700,000) and the Wild and Scenic Rivers (\$400,000).

Cultural Resource Management – The FY 2013 budget proposes an increase of \$1.1 million for the inventory, protection, and interpretation of places of special meaning to the diverse communities of the American West, and will allow the BLM to conduct regional ethnogeographic landscape assessments; engage underrepresented groups in heritage resource stewardship; repatriate to Native Americans human remains and cultural items held in BLM collections; and implement the Paleontological Resources Preservation subtitle of the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009.

Land Acquisition – The 2013 Federal Land Acquisition program builds on efforts started in 2011 and 2012 to strategically invest in interagency landscape-scale conservation projects while continuing to meet agency-specific programmatic needs. The Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service collaborated extensively to develop a process to more effectively coordinate

land acquisitions with government and local community partners to achieve the highest priority shared conservation goals.

A portion of the funding allocated from the LWCF to each of the bureaus targets a collaborative effort to focus acquisition projects from each bureau in high-priority landscapes. This effort leverages acquisition funding for larger-scale goals of collaborative landscape management. The proposed budget funds two collaborative acquisition projects within the Department's high-priority landscape areas. The BLM's core acquisition program is aligned with the larger Departmental collaborative initiative; 97 percent of BLM's acquisitions in its core program in 2013 will occur in the Department-designated collaborative priority landscapes with two projects located in two of the three high-priority ecosystems. The budget funds 10 high-priority core land acquisition projects in seven states and includes \$2.5 million for acquisition of lands or interest in lands for hunting and fishing access on BLM lands. These projects will provide access to public lands; improve river and riparian conservation and restoration; conserve or protect wildlife habitat; preserve open spaces; provide for historic and cultural resources preservation; and create opportunities for public recreation at landscape or ecosystem levels.

Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act Reauthorization – The President's budget also includes a legislative proposal to reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA), which expired in July of 2011. Under the FLTFA, the BLM was able to sell public lands identified for disposal through the land use planning process prior to July 2000, and retain the proceeds from those sales in a special account in the Treasury. The BLM then used those funds to acquire, from willing sellers, environmentally sensitive land inholdings with exceptional resources. During FLTFA's 11-year history, the BLM sold approximately 27,000 acres under this authority and acquired approximately 18,000 acres of remarkable landscapes.

The 2013 budget includes a proposal to reinstate the FLTFA and allow lands identified as suitable for disposal in recent land use plans to be sold using the FLTFA authority. FLTFA sales revenues would continue to be used to fund the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands and the administrative costs associated with conducting sales. The Department strongly urges the Congress to reauthorize this important tool which provides for a rational process of land disposal that is anchored in public participation and sound land use planning, while providing for land acquisition to strengthen our Nation's most special places.

Promoting American Energy Production at Home

The Secretary's New Energy Frontier Initiative emphasizes the value of scientifically-based, environmentally-sound development of both renewable and conventional energy resources on the Nation's public lands. The BLM's proposed FY 2013 budget advances the goals of the initiative by including priority funding for both renewable and conventional energy development on public lands.

Renewable Energy – President Obama, Secretary Salazar, and the Congress have stressed the critical importance of renewable energy to the future of the United States. Success in attaining the Nation's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate climate change, and protect the global environment relies on sustained efforts to develop renewable energy resources.

Renewable energy production is vital to our Nation's long-term economic development and energy security. The development of renewable energy creates American jobs and promotes innovation in the United States while reducing the country's reliance on fossil fuels.

The BLM continues to make significant progress in promoting renewable energy development on the public lands in 2012, including working to approve additional large-scale solar energy projects and complete a draft Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to provide for landscape-scale siting of solar energy projects on public lands. The agency is working on wind development mitigation strategies with wind energy applicants and other Federal agencies, and is currently reviewing over 45 wind energy applications. Additionally, the transmission infrastructure required to deliver renewable energy from production facilities to major markets relies on corridors across BLM-managed lands.

The 2013 budget request includes a total program increase of \$7.0 million in the Renewable Energy Management program, including \$5.0 million in new funding. This will support additional environmental studies to accelerate the identification of prime areas for utility-scale renewable energy project development. It will also enable the BLM to continue ongoing program management responsibilities associated with geothermal energy development by replacing mandatory funding previously provided by the Geothermal Steam Act Implementation Fund, for which new deposits have ceased. The remaining \$2.0 million increase is a transfer of geothermal funds from the oil and gas management program to the BLM's renewable energy program.

Conventional Energy – Secretary Salazar has emphasized that conventional energy resources on BLM-managed lands continue to play a critical role in meeting the Nation's energy needs. Conventional energy development from public lands produces 41 percent of the Nation's coal, 13 percent of the natural gas, and 5 percent of the domestically-produced oil. The Department's balanced approach to responsible conventional energy development combines onshore oil and gas policy reforms with effective budgeting to provide appropriate planning and support for conventional energy development.

The President's FY 2013 budget proposes \$13.0 million in oil and gas program increases to provide industry with timely access to Federal oil and gas resources, backed by the certainty of defensible environmental analysis. Of that increase, a \$5.0 million program increase will restore the BLM's leasing and oversight capacity to the 2011 enacted level. An additional \$3.0 million will be used for large, regional-scale studies and environmental impact statements for oil and gas leasing and development issues. Finally, an additional \$5.0 million programmatic increase will allow the BLM to fully implement its leasing reform strategy without sacrificing other important program goals.

An additional \$10 million, to be offset by new industry fees, is requested to ensure that oil and gas production is carried out in a responsible manner as a primary BLM commitment. The BLM conducts inspections to confirm that lessees meet environmental, safety, and production reporting requirements. The BLM recently initiated a program using a risk-based inspection protocol for production inspections, based on production levels and histories. Success realized in

this program will support expansion of this risk-based strategy to the other types of inspections the BLM performs. The risk-based strategy will maximize the use of inspection staff to better meet BLM inspection goals and requirements in the future.

The 2013 budget proposes to expand and strengthen the BLM's oil and gas inspection capability through new fee collections from industry, similar to the fees now charged for offshore inspections. The fee schedule included in the budget is estimated to generate \$48.0 million in collections, which would offset a proposed reduction of \$38.0 million in BLM's appropriated funds, while providing for a net increase of \$10.0 million in funds available for this critical BLM management responsibility. The increased funding is aimed at correcting deficiencies identified by the Government Accountability Office in its February 2011 report, which designated Federal management of oil and gas resources including production and revenue collection as high risk. The \$10.0 million increase will help BLM achieve the high priority goal of increasing the completion of inspections of Federal and Indian high risk oil and gas cases by nine percent over 2011 levels. The BLM will also complete more environmental inspections to ensure environmental requirements are being followed in all phases of development. Fee levels will be based on the number of oil and gas wells per lease so that costs are shared equitably across the industry.

To encourage diligent development of new oil and gas leases, the Administration is proposing a per-acre fee on each nonproducing lease issued after enactment of the proposal. The \$4-per-acre fee on non-producing Federal leases (onshore and offshore) would provide a financial incentive for oil and gas companies to either put their leases into production or relinquish them so that tracts can be re-leased and developed by new parties.

Sage-Grouse Conservation

The 2013 BLM budget proposal includes an increase of \$15.0 million to implement broad-scale sage-grouse conservation activities to ensure the long-term sustainability of sage-grouse and to help prevent the future listing of this species for protection under the Endangered Species Act. The BLM – which manages more habitat for the Greater sage-grouse than any other Federal agency – has been working proactively on this issue on a number of fronts, including issuing guidance to its field offices that calls for expanding the use of new science and mapping technologies to improve land-use planning. With the increase, the BLM will strengthen its regulatory mechanisms for managing the sage grouse habitat. The increase will also support monitoring and restoration efforts. To better focus its sage-grouse habitat conservation efforts, BLM has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Agricultural Research Service, and State fish and wildlife agencies to share information and develop better management strategies.

Two-thirds (\$10.0 million) of the requested increase will support regulatory certainty for future land-use planning. Through 2015, the BLM will put in place the necessary mechanisms, through the agency's land-use planning process, to address conservation of sage-grouse. This will require the incorporation of conservation measures into as many as 98 land use plans in 68 planning areas within the range of sage-grouse to designate priority sage-grouse habitat. Within these priority areas, the BLM will set disturbance thresholds for energy and mineral

development, develop and implement specific best management practices for livestock grazing, establish restrictions for OHV use and other recreational activities, and implement aggressive fire suppression and post-fire restoration tactics. Amending these land use plans will provide the regulatory certainty requested by the FWS and will involve the following actions: land-use plan amendments (\$6.5 million); landscape-level project environmental assessments (\$2.0 million); travel management planning (\$1.0 million); and candidate conservation agreement development (\$500,000), for a total of \$10.0 million. The remaining \$5.0 million would be spent in the following manner: \$2.5 million for habitat restoration and improvement projects and \$2.5 million for habitat mapping, assessment, and monitoring. The BLM will implement monitoring activities to ascertain the effectiveness of habitat management and the effect of various land-use authorizations. This new broad-scale monitoring effort will fill critical data and information gaps necessary for sage-grouse habitat protection and restoration. Conservation efforts implemented on BLM-managed land will be of limited benefit if conservation practices are not monitored and applied uniformly across jurisdictional boundaries.

Managing Across Landscapes – Cooperative Landscape Conservation Initiative

Unprecedented, widespread environmental and human influences are shaping ecological conditions across the public lands. Major large scale stressors include the effects of climate change, catastrophic wildland fire, invasive species, population growth, and conventional and renewable energy development. The Secretary recognizes the need to understand the changing conditions of BLM-managed landscapes on a broad level and continues to promote the Cooperative Landscape Conservation initiative. Working with State, Federal, and non-governmental partners, the BLM is developing a landscape approach to better understand these challenges and support balanced stewardship of the public lands. The BLM is coordinating its efforts with other DOI bureaus and partners through its participation in the network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs).

The BLM's FY 2013 budget request of \$17.5 million, while unchanged from the 2012 enacted level, continues to support the work of its resource managers through the LCCs. Funding will enable managers to conduct additional eco-regional assessments to provide a better understanding of adverse impacts to the health of BLM lands and the larger western landscapes of which they are a part, and to implement various land health treatments to help combat the effects of these impacts. A landscape approach fosters broader understanding of the environment to inform, focus, and integrate the BLM's national and local resource management efforts. This offers a framework for integrating science with management; for coordinating management efforts and directing resources where they are most needed; and for adapting management strategies and actions to changing conditions and new information. It also provides an important foundation for developing coordinated management strategies with partner agencies, stakeholders, and American Indian Tribes.

Other Priority Increases

Wild Horse & Burro Program – Reforming BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Management program to make it fiscally sustainable is one of Secretary Salazar's and the BLM's top priorities. To that end, the 2013 budget includes a program increase of \$2.0 million over the 2012 enacted level for efforts to research and improve herd fertility control. The goal of the

research will be to develop additional methods to minimize wild horse population growth and maintain herd health. The increase, a result of the tough choices made in the 2013 budget, invests in R&D to protect the health and environment of the Nation.

In FY 2013, the BLM intends to remove 7,600 animals from the range, consistent with FY 2012, and to continue to pursue public-private partnerships to hold excess horses gathered from Western public rangelands. The current strategy also aims to significantly increase the number of mares treated with fertility control, from 500 in 2009 to a target of 2,000 in 2012 and in 2013, and to remove additional mares to adjust herd sex ratios in favor of males. The long-term goal is to slow the annual population growth rate for wild horses, while at the same time maintaining herd health, in order to decrease or eliminate the need to remove excess animals. The BLM is awaiting the results of a study by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review previous wild horse management studies and make recommendations on how the BLM should proceed in light of the latest scientific research. The NAS expects to provide its report in early 2013. Congress has asked the BLM to find ways to manage these much-loved symbols of the West in a cost-effective, humane manner, and the Bureau is committed to accomplishing this goal.

Resource Management Planning – The BLM’s FY 2013 budget proposal includes an increase of \$4.4 million to support high-priority land-use planning efforts, including the initiation of several new plan revisions in 2013. The planning process encourages collaboration and partnerships which help the BLM determine how to manage public lands to balance the needs of adjacent communities with the needs of the nation.

Secretary’s Western Oregon Strategy – The 2013 budget proposal also includes an increase of \$1.5 million in the O&C Forest Management program to increase the volume of timber offered for sale through support of timber sale planning, layout and design, engineering, and sale appraisal; support key resource management planning objectives; increase surveying for rare, uncommon, or endangered species; provide for landscape-level timber sale project environmental analysis; and facilitate joint development and implementation of a revised recovery plan for the northern spotted owl.

Abandoned Mine Lands & Hardrock Mining Reform Proposals

The budget includes legislative proposals to address abandoned mine land (AML) hazards on both public and private lands and to provide a fair return to the taxpayer from hardrock production on Federal lands. The first component addresses abandoned hardrock mines across the country through a new AML fee on hardrock production. Just as the coal industry is held responsible for abandoned coal sites, the Administration proposes to hold the hardrock mining industry responsible for abandoned hardrock mines. The proposal will levy an AML fee on all uranium and metallic mines on both public and private lands that will be charged on the volume of material displaced after January 1, 2013. The receipts will be distributed by BLM through a competitive grant program to restore the Nation’s most hazardous hardrock AML sites on both public and private lands using an advisory council comprising of representatives of Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and non-government organizations. The advisory council will recommend objective criteria to rank AML projects to allocate funds for remediation to the sites with the most urgent environmental and safety hazards. The proposed hardrock AML fee and

reclamation program would operate in parallel to the coal AML reclamation program, as two parts of a larger effort to ensure that the Nation's most dangerous coal and hardrock AML sites are addressed by the industries that created the problems.

The budget also includes a legislative proposal to institute a leasing process under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 for certain minerals (gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, uranium, and molybdenum) currently covered by the General Mining Law of 1872. After enactment, mining for these metals on Federal lands would be governed by a leasing process and subject to annual rental payments and a royalty of not less than five percent of gross proceeds. Half of the royalty receipts would be distributed to the states in which the leases are located and the remaining half would be deposited in the Treasury. Pre-existing mining claims would be exempt from the change to a leasing system, but would be subject to increases in the annual maintenance fees under the General Mining Law of 1872. However, holders of pre-existing mining claims for these minerals could voluntarily convert their claims to leases. The Office of Natural Resources Revenue in the Department of the Interior will collect, account for, and disburse the hardrock royalty receipts.

Grazing Administrative Processing Fee

The Budget includes proposed appropriations bill language authorizing a three-year pilot project to allow BLM to recover some of the costs of issuing grazing permits/leases on BLM lands. BLM would charge a fee of \$1 per animal unit month, which would be collected along with current grazing fees. The budget estimates the fee will generate \$6.5 million in 2013, and that it will assist the BLM in processing pending applications for grazing permit renewals. During the period of the pilot, BLM would work through the process of promulgating regulations for the continuation of the grazing administrative fee as a cost recovery fee after the pilot expires.

Reductions

The BLM's FY 2013 budget proposal reflects many difficult choices in order to support priority initiatives and needs. The following are among the program reductions in the proposed budget:

- ***Rangeland Management Program*** – A \$15.8 million decrease in funding is proposed to be partially offset by a 3-year pilot program to recover some of the costs of issuing grazing permits/leases permit and lease renewals through a \$1 per animal unit month administrative processing fee levied upon grazing permittees.
- ***Alaska Land Conveyance Program*** – A reduction of \$12.4 million is proposed in an effort to reevaluate and streamline the Alaska land conveyance process. Interim or final conveyance is complete for approximately 96 percent of the original 150 million acres, and the BLM continues to explore opportunities to further streamline the program and to focus applicable resources on completing the final transfers.
- ***Public Domain Forestry*** – A general program decrease of \$3.3 million would reduce lower-priority activities and an additional reduction of \$150,000 is proposed for healthy landscapes restoration projects in lower priority public domain forested areas.

- ***O&C Reforestation*** – A general program decrease of \$1.2 million would reduce lower priority forest vegetation inventories, reforestation treatments, stand maintenance and improvement treatments, monitoring, and inventory for the presence of noxious or invasive weed species. The reduction would not affect the Secretary’s Western Oregon Strategy for forest management.
- ***Abandoned Mine Lands*** – In 2013, the BLM is requesting a decrease of \$2.0 million for its abandoned mine lands program. The BLM will continue to fund the highest priority sites, as determined through its ongoing ranking process. Red Devil Mine reclamation activities remain a high priority.

Conclusion

The BLM’s Fiscal Year 2013 budget request provides funding for the bureau’s highest priority initiatives, and reflects the need to make tough choices at a time when Federal spending must be restrained. Our public lands and resources play an important role in American lives, economies, and communities and include some of our Nation’s greatest assets. Under this budget proposal, the BLM is targeting investments to advance the bureau’s mission of protecting these lands for multiple uses, including recreation, conservation, and safe and responsible energy development.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony on the proposed FY 2013 BLM budget.