

To Teachers and Parents

This booklet is designed to introduce you and your children to America's public lands. These lands belong to the American people, but they are also home to over 3,000 species of fish and wildlife, as well as a diversity of plant species. Historic and archaeological sites, as well as scenic wonders, abound. In this activity book, you and the children in your life will learn about some of the many natural and cultural resources that can be found on public lands and how you can enjoy them. You'll also learn about the importance of protecting these special places.

Several departments of the United States government manage public lands for us. So do state and local governments. This booklet focuses on lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior. Created more than 50 years ago, the BLM is a little agency with a big job. It has a full-time staff of only 8,700 employees—fewer people than the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico public school district employs. In spite of this, the BLM is responsible for nearly one-eighth of the land in the entire U.S.—107 million hectares (264 million acres) located mainly in the western states and Alaska.

Today, these lands represent a priceless legacy that must be conserved for future generations—an ever more challenging task as the population of the West continues to grow. To help meet this challenge, the BLM recently established the National Landscape Conservation System, which includes National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, and other specially designated areas. These are some of the most remarkable and rugged landscapes in the United States.

BLM lands offer a rich array of recreational, educational, and volunteer opportunities. For more information about what to see and do on BLM lands, you can contact a BLM office near you. There is a list of state offices in the Appendices of this booklet, and more information can be found at the BLM websites (see addresses at right). You can also check the Blue Pages of your local telephone directory for the BLM office nearest you.

—BLM on the Web—

BLM National Website: www.blm.gov

BLM Environmental Education Resources:

www.blm.gov/education

BLM Volunteer Program:

www.blm.gov/volunteer

Recreational Opportunities on Public Lands:

www.recreation.gov

Whether they're managed by the BLM, another Federal agency, your state, or your local community, public lands really do belong to you and to all Americans. Visit your public lands and get to know them—their sights, their sounds, their smells. By doing so, you will develop a personal connection and a commitment to preserving America's big backyard.

Standards of Learning

Information and activities in this booklet have been prepared for children primarily in third through fifth grades. They apply to the following standards of learning:

Benchmarks for Science Literacy (American Association for the Advancement of Science)

- 4. The Physical Setting
 - C. Processes That Shape the Earth
- 5. The Living Environment
 - A. Diversity of Life
 - D. Interdependence of Life
 - E. Flow of Matter and Energy

National Geography Standards (National Council for Geographic Education)

- Standard 4. The Physical and Human Characteristics of Places
- Standard 7. The Physical Processes That Shape the Patterns of Earth's Surface
- Standard 8. The Characteristics and Spatial Distribution of Ecosystems on Earth's Surface
- Standard 14. How Human Actions Modify the Physical Environment
- Standard 16. The Changes That Occur in the Meaning, Use, Distribution, and Importance of Resources
- Standard 17. How to Apply Geography to Interpret the Past
- Standard 18. How to Apply Geography to Interpret the Present and Plan for the Future

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (National Council for the Social Studies)

- Strand 3. People, Places, and Environment
- Strand 10. Civic Ideals and Practices

Excellence in EE—Guidelines for Learning K-12 (North American Association for Environmental Education)

- Strand 2.1A Processes That Shape the Earth
- Strand 2.2A Organisms, Populations, and Communities
- Strand 2.2C Systems and Connections
- Strand 2.2D Flow of Matter and Energy
- Strand 2.4A Human/Environment Interactions
- Strand 2.4B Places
- Strand 2.4C Resources
- Strand 4B Recognizing Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities
- Strand 4D Accepting Personal Responsibility

While the above standards are strongly emphasized in the classroom, reinforcement of these topics at home (and on visits to public lands!) should help your child in school by adding to his or her understanding of key concepts related to science, geography, social studies, and the environment.