

Bureau of Land Management
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BLM

BLM Announces New Guidance Enhancing the Protection and Recovery of Rare Species on 258 Million Acres of Federal Lands

Washington, D.C. - The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced new guidance for its management of federally threatened, endangered, or otherwise rare species and the ecosystems upon which they depend on BLM-administered lands.

After a two-year process, the BLM has completed a revision to its 6840 Manual for Management of Special Status Species, providing further policy and guidance for the conservation of BLM special status species and their habitats. Last updated in 2001, the Manual supports the BLM's broad conservation authorities and duties pertaining to fish, wildlife and plant conservation pursuant to multiple statutes including the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Sikes Act, and the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Special status species include those species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered under the ESA, as well as those designated by the BLM as "Bureau sensitive." Bureau sensitive species are designated by BLM State Directors in accordance with newly refined criteria provided in the Manual. By standardizing the criteria for designating a species as Bureau sensitive, the revised policies will assist the agency in focusing its efforts on those rare species where BLM actions can most effectively contribute to successful conservation. In addition to those species designated by the BLM as Bureau sensitive, the BLM will treat as Bureau sensitive all federally designated candidate species, as well as delisted species in the five years following their delisting.

The BLM's special status species policies set forth the procedures by which these species will be managed to ensure their recovery or promote their conservation so that protections afforded under the ESA or BLM policy are no longer warranted. The BLM is actively engaged in the conservation of many of the more than 300 listed species found on lands administered by the agency. In 2007, BLM reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expenditures of \$33.4 million pertaining to the conservation of listed species on its lands.

The Manual is intended for use by BLM managers, field staff, and other personnel to guide agency compliance with ESA and to ensure provisions for conservation of special status species are fully integrated into BLM land use decisions.

The Manual may be accessed through the BLM's website: www.blm.gov

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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