



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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Public Events and New Websites Commemorate BLM's Historic Roots

For Immediate Release

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The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today celebrated the 200th anniversary of the General Land Office (GLO) with a public tour of the vaults where millions of land records are stored. The BLM also launched a new history website and BLM offices around the United States scheduled commemorative events through the year.

The GLO was established April 25, 1812 to handle the business associated with the sale of public lands for private ownership, transforming wilderness to agricultural use, and generating income for the Federal government. The GLO, in fact, became the “Gateway to Land Ownership” for millions of people. In 1946, the GLO and the U.S. Grazing Service merged to create the BLM under the U.S. Department of the Interior to manage the public lands for the benefit of current and future generations.

“The BLM has played an important role over the course of our young nation’s history. Today we not only celebrate the past, but we also commend the BLM for their ongoing efforts to carry out their critical mission to protect and manage America’s natural resources and heritage,” said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

BLM Director Bob Abbey led the public tour of the vaults containing the land records, which are at the BLM-Eastern States Office in Springfield, Virginia. The tour also included a stop at the modern facility that scans and preserves the documents.

“With all these records and unique history available to us, the BLM also serves as a storyteller,” Abbey said. “These events will play a central role in helping us to understanding how important land stewardship is to America’s future.”

As part of the celebration, the BLM launched a companion website named [Our Heritage, Our Future](#). The site features essays from BLM employees around the United States who share their “living histories,” an interactive timeline of BLM history, and other features showcasing the BLM’s growing mission. The website also links to other BLM websites that commemorate the GLO and the 150th anniversary of the Homestead Act on May 20.

“These websites give people a chance to learn about the challenges of modern multiple-use management, especially considering the breadth and diversity of today’s public land resources and what they mean to the public,” Abbey said.

Over the coming months, the BLM will broaden the celebration of the GLO and the Homestead Act with regular updates to *Our Heritage, Our Future* and [two major public events](#).

In September, the Public Lands Foundation (PLF), the BLM, the Center of the American West, and the University of Colorado will host a symposium in Boulder, Colorado, to commemorate the GLO and the Homestead Act. Also in September, the PLF, the BLM, and the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona State University, will host a symposium in Phoenix, Arizona. That symposium, in addition to discussing the GLO and the Homestead Act, will include sessions about the 100th anniversary of Arizona's statehood.

Other BLM state offices are planning events marking the GLO and the Homestead Act. Information about those events can be found [here](#).

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land – the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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