



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

## FACT SHEET: Public Lands Rule

The Public Lands Rule helps ensure conservation is a key component of 21<sup>st</sup> century public lands management, helping BLM protect our best and healthiest lands and waters, restore those that need it, and make informed management and development decisions based on the best available science and data, including Indigenous Knowledge.

Americans rely on public lands for our way of life. We hunt, fish, and play on our public lands. They provide the energy that lights our homes, the wood we build with, and the places where we camp, hike, and make family memories. But our public lands are threatened as the impacts of climate change on the landscape increase. As we guide responsible development, this rule puts conservation on equal footing with the other uses of the public lands. In short, this rule helps ensure we can meet our mission to protect the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for present and future generations of Americans.

### ***What does the Public Lands Rule do?***

#### **1. Promotes restoration of our public lands and water.**

- **Directs land managers to identify landscapes in need of restoration and develop plans to put restoration into action.**  
Restoration plans would prioritize places based on land and water health, partnership opportunities, and benefits to local communities. As always, the BLM would ensure opportunities for public input to inform where and how we do our work.
- **Creates a framework for restoration leases, a new tool for investment in the health of our public lands.**  
Under this provision, a third party can apply for a lease to help restore the health of public lands and waters. These leases will be issued at the discretion of BLM and must not conflict with valid existing rights or previously authorized uses. Restoration leases are designed to add to the toolbox of management options supporting multiple use and landscape health. For example, a non-profit organization or state fish and game agency could put people to work restoring mule deer or elk habitat and, through a restoration lease, be assured the work could take hold and flourish.
- **Creates a framework for mitigation leases, an important tool to offset the impacts of development on public lands.**  
Often, companies are required to offset their impacts by investing in restoration or protection of land, a process known as compensatory mitigation. Mitigation leases would, for the first time, create a clear and consistent mechanism for those investments to happen on BLM-managed public lands. They would be issued at the discretion of the BLM and must not conflict with valid existing rights or previously authorized uses.

The inclusion of mitigation leasing in the rule comes in part as a response to feedback from state, local, and industry partners who requested a reliable path to pursue compensatory mitigation on public lands to facilitate development projects.

## 2. Supports informed decision-making for balanced, responsible development.

- **Leverages science and data, including Indigenous Knowledge, to guide decision-making**  
The rule helps ensure BLM management decisions will continue to be guided by science and data. The BLM will use existing data collections and new information to identify trends in the health of our lands and waters and implement adaptive management strategies.
- **Emphasizes best management practices and public input**  
The rule broadens the use of land health standards, long used to support BLM's grazing program, to inform all of our work. Incorporating land health standards and guidelines into land management is a best practice employed by state and federal land management agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service. The BLM will also ensure more information on land health is available to the public as they provide input on potential management decisions.
- **Better information will inform better development decisions**  
By centering on land health and providing a consistent approach to integrating conservation decisions into the land management process, the rule enables the BLM to better work with local communities and developers to identify appropriate places to site projects. This can help avoid conflicts and provide certainty for development proposals.

## 3. Protects the best intact, healthy landscapes.

- **Conserves healthy public lands**  
The rule is pragmatic, directing the BLM to conserve land that is already in good shape. It calls on the BLM to maintain intact lands to help support wildlife, habitat connectivity, old-growth forests, and ecosystem function. The rule follows explicit direction in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to protect and preserve lands in their natural condition, where appropriate.
- **Supports locally-driven conservation**  
The rule supports locally-driven and locally-led conservation, enabling communities, through the land management planning process, to help identify lands for restoration and protection and to provide input on where development may be most appropriate.
- **Supports consistent management**  
The rule provides consistent and clear direction to help ensure the BLM is appropriately managing important historic, cultural, and scenic resources and complying with FLPMA's direction to prioritize protection and designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). Learn more about ACECs [here](#).

### ***How did the BLM include the public in the Public Lands Rule?***

In response to the substantive comments received from individuals, state, Tribal and local governments, industry groups, and advocacy organizations, the BLM clarified and refined concepts laid out in the proposed rule. Your feedback helped shape the final rule, including the frameworks for restoration and mitigation leasing, utilizing the fundamentals of land health, and the protection of ACECs.

The BLM will continue working with partners and stakeholders to put the final rule into action. In our endeavor to successfully manage our public lands, we cannot succeed without our stakeholders. It's up to all of us to work together to help ensure we pass along our public lands in as good or better shape than we found them.

To learn more about the Public Lands Rule, please visit <https://www.blm.gov/public-lands-rule>.