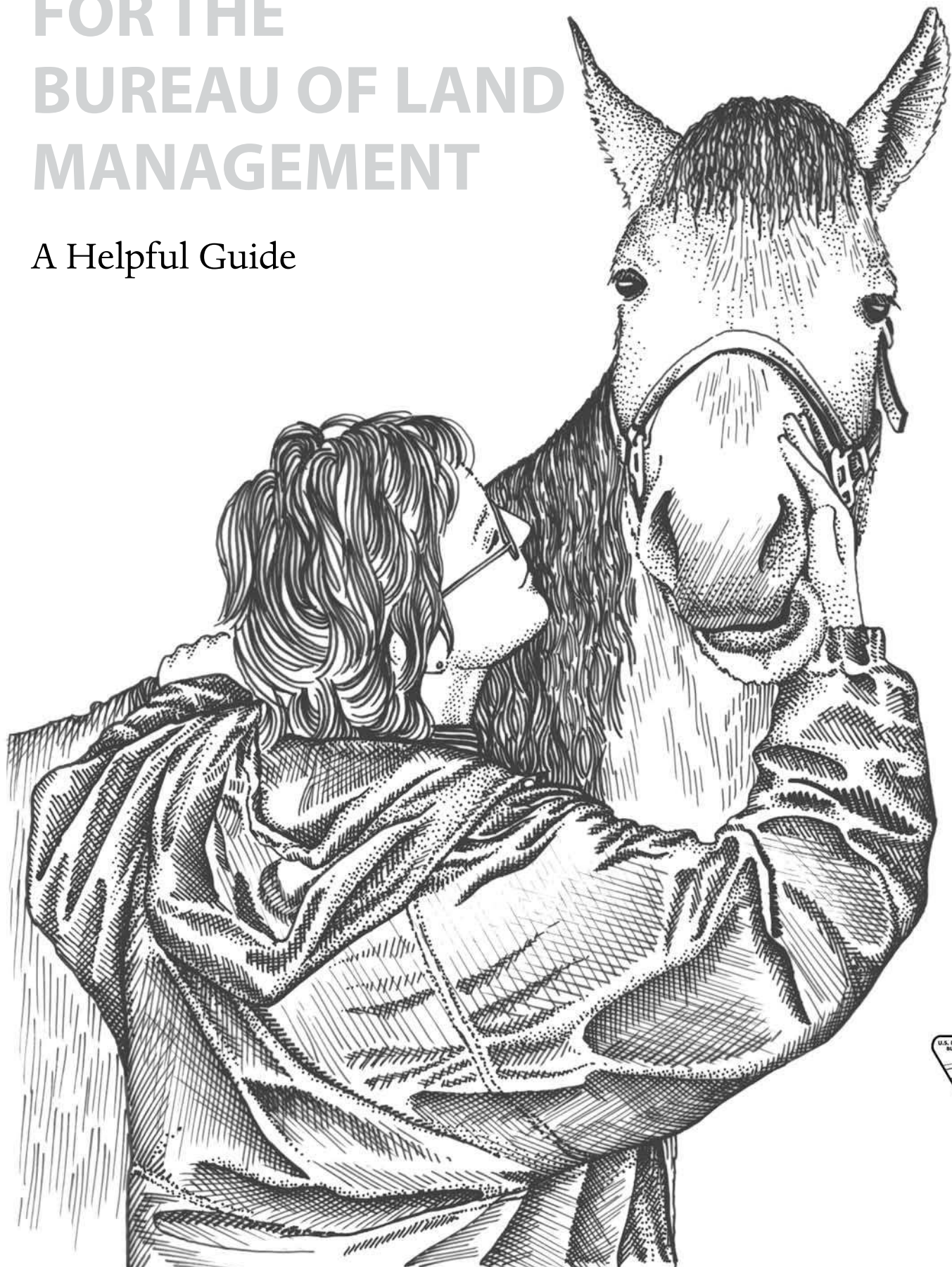


# VOLUNTEERING FOR THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

A Helpful Guide



The success of a society lies in the willingness of its citizens to give of themselves, to perform or give a service of their own free will. The only “gift” is a portion of thyself.


RALPH WALDO EMERSON, POET AND PHILOSOPHER  
1803-1882

Produced by  
Bureau of Land Management  
Education & Volunteers Group &  
BLM Volunteer Program Adjunct Team  
*<http://www.blm.gov/volunteer>*

# CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM).....	1
ORIENTATION TO BLM.....	1
BLM'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.....	3
INTRODUCTION TO THE BLM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.....	3
BLM VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS.....	5
THE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT.....	5
SUPERVISOR'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	7
VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION AND UNIFORM COMPONENTS.....	7
VOLUNTEER EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENTS.....	9
LIMITATIONS ON VOLUNTEER DUTIES.....	9
TIME AND ATTENDANCE/VOLUNTEER RECORDS.....	9
TRAINING.....	11
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS.....	11
PROPERTY USE.....	11
USE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VEHICLES.....	13
SAFETY.....	13
INJURIES AND TORT CLAIMS.....	15
VOLUNTEER EVALUATIONS.....	15
IN CLOSING.....	15
APPENDIX A REFERENCES AND FORMS.....	17
APPENDIX B VOLUNTEER CONDUCT.....	19



 BLM-managed lands



# WELCOME TO THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)

Welcome to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)! We're glad that you have chosen to donate your time and skills to BLM. Exciting opportunities await you as a partner in the stewardship of America's public lands.

The primary objective of this handbook is to give volunteers an understanding of their role in helping BLM fulfill its mission of multiple-use resource management. Whether you're planting trees, erecting a fence, restoring a historic area, or answering public inquiries, we're confident that you will benefit from the experience of

caring for our nation's natural and cultural resources. We also know that we will benefit from your unique background and skills.

**We hope your volunteer experience enriches your life and provides an opportunity for service and learning.** Please contact your supervisor or your office volunteer coordinator if you have any questions or comments about any part of your work. Again, our sincere thanks for your help—and welcome aboard!

## ORIENTATION TO BLM

BLM is responsible for the use, protection, and development of resources under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. BLM administers 261 million acres of public lands primarily in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming (see the map on the left.) BLM also manages 700 million acres of Federally-owned mineral rights.

Most BLM-managed land consists of the remnants of public domain, the 1.5 billion acres of land that the nation acquired during its westward expansion in the 18th and 19th centuries. Much of the original public domain is now owned by private interests and local and State governments. The remainder of the land consists of national parks,

national forests, and national wildlife refuges; military bases; and other Federal government facilities.

BLM lands are managed for many uses. They supply natural resources, such as coal, oil, natural gas, and other minerals. They also provide habitat for plants and animals, and open spaces for people to enjoy. And they contain evidence of our country's past, too—from fossils to Indian artifacts to ghost towns.

BLM also is the custodian of the original patent and survey records for lands within 30 states, and is the final authority on survey matters involving land formerly or currently within the public domain.



# BLM'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

BLM's headquarters office is in Washington, D.C. In addition, there are 12 State Offices, each with its own field-level offices, and three Centers.

**Most on-the-ground work is accomplished in Field Offices, where staffing reflects the area's workload.** Responsibility for resource programs lies with such specialists as wildlife biologists, geologists, foresters, mining engineers, range conservationists, archaeologists, and recreation planners. These specialists formulate and implement plans for developing and/or protecting the area's resources, and assist with leasing and other types of permitting for resource use.

State Offices are responsible for BLM policy and budget matters, and provide a liaison between Field Offices and the Washington Office.

State Office resource specialists give technical guidance to field personnel. State Offices and most Field Offices also maintain "public rooms" to allow visitors to examine records for public land transactions, including rights-of-way, State land grants, oil and gas leases, and mining claims. Also maintained in the public rooms are public land survey records.

If you wish to learn more about BLM and the BLM Volunteer Program, please refer to the BLM national website at <http://www.blm.gov>, the BLM Volunteer Program website at <http://www.blm.gov/volunteer>, and the Federal interagency Volunteer.gov website at <http://www.volunteer.gov>.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BLM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

As a BLM volunteer, you are part of a cadre of thousands who help BLM fulfill its mission. Some of the rewards of working with BLM include opportunities to learn new skills, meet interesting and highly motivated people, and test your ability to perform jobs that need to be done. It is our hope that your experience with BLM will enhance your awareness, understanding, and appreciation of our natural and cultural resources.

**The BLM Volunteer Program is an essential component of the agency's mission.** The many thousands of hours volunteers donate each year make it possible for BLM to complete unfunded work that would otherwise not be done.

You will have the opportunity to pursue your interests in beautiful and unique outdoor environments. Or you may

find a challenge in an office setting working with modern automation systems. There are also opportunities to share information with the public at BLM's education and interpretive centers. No matter what your interests are, you can gain valuable experience that will help you qualify for future jobs in the Federal government or private industry.

**A wide range of diverse experiences await you as a BLM volunteer. *Since the BLM Volunteer Program began, volunteers have:***

- improved habitat for fish and wildlife
- assisted recreational visitors to the public lands
- staffed visitor centers
- managed information and data
- used Geographic Information Systems to produce maps

- built and maintained trails and campgrounds
- documented archaeological resources
- planted trees and other vegetation
- improved watersheds
- performed research to support mineral and energy development
- surveyed lands
- and much more!

Your volunteer agreement (see Appendix A, “References and Forms”) describes your duties and responsibilities. You are considered a volunteer member of the BLM staff, and in some cases will wear a BLM volunteer uniform and/or volunteer nameplate. You may be recognized for

your services through local recognition events or national awards programs.

BLM will provide you the tools, materials, and training needed to perform your volunteer duties. Depending on the details of your job, you may have access to government vehicles, computers, office equipment, radios, and other necessary items.

Finally, you may be reimbursed for some of your incidental expenses. Expenses for which you are not reimbursed may be tax-deductible. (See Internal Revenue Service Publication 526 at <http://www.irs.gov> for information on charitable contributions).





# BLM VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

BLM is delighted to promote volunteer success stories and accomplishments whenever possible. For some of the most outstanding from the past decade, please see BLM's Volunteer Annual Reports (<http://www.blm.gov/volunteer/news/annreport/index.html>) and articles on our

annual "Making a Difference" National Volunteer Awards (<http://www.blm.gov/volunteer/feature/archive/index.html>). In addition, the interagency "Take Pride in America" program also recognizes volunteer accomplishments; see <http://www.tpia.gov> for information.

## THE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

During your orientation, you and your supervisor will review your volunteer agreement (BLM Form 1114-4 or 1114-5; see Appendix A, "References and Forms").

**The volunteer agreement is your contract with the Federal government, and it contains the following elements:**

- A description of the work that you agree to accomplish. Your duties will be summarized in a written description spelling out your assignments and responsibilities.
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the people that you wish to have notified in case of emergency.
- Assurance that you are protected from tort claims and eligible for compensation for injuries incurred while performing volunteer duties; this is the same coverage provided to BLM employees.
- Certification of your health and physical capability to perform the volunteer job.

***The volunteer agreement may also address the following:***

- Requirements for a background check and computer security training, if applicable (see "Training" and "Volunteer Identification and Uniform Components," below.)
- Reimbursement of expenses incidental to your volunteer work (see "Volunteer Expenses and Reimbursements," below).
- Provisions for official travel, if applicable.
- The way in which your work will be evaluated. If you believe you will need a detailed written evaluation to be used for future job applications, this should be stated in the volunteer agreement.
- Any additional requirements or criteria that you and your supervisor agree to.

**You and your supervisor should periodically review your volunteer agreement to ensure that it is accurate and up to date.** BLM policy states that longer-term volunteer agreements must be renewed at the beginning of each fiscal year; the renewal date provides a timely opportunity for a review of the elements in your agreement.

Everyone can be great because anyone can serve.  
You don't have to have a college degree to serve.  
You don't even have to make your subject and  
your verb agree to serve. You only need a heart  
full of grace. A soul generated by love.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,  
AMERICAN MINISTER AND CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER  
1929-1968

# SUPERVISOR'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*Similar to those of employee supervisors, the roles and responsibilities of volunteer supervisors include the following:*

- Participate in resource project planning and volunteer recruitment and selection.
- Conduct or participate in volunteer orientation and training.
- Provide guidance and advice to volunteers.
- Oversee and evaluate volunteer performance.
- Ensure accuracy of volunteer agreements and job descriptions; update as necessary.
- Acknowledge volunteer accomplishments and recommend formal recognition and awards for outstanding service.
- Maintain records of volunteer work hours, estimate the value of the work, and estimate the funds expended by the Federal government in support of volunteers' service.
- Ensure that volunteer rights are respected, and assist volunteers in carrying out their responsibilities and performing their duties.

# VOLUNTEER IDENTIFICATION AND UNIFORM COMPONENTS

Under some circumstances (e.g., service of more than 180 days), **volunteers may be subject to the requirements of Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12)**, which include background checks and the issuance of “smart” cards, which function as both identification and facility access cards. Volunteers who are not issued “smart” cards may use BLM Form 1114-2, “Volunteer Identification/Rights and Responsibilities Card” for identification (see Appendix A, “References and Forms”).

If your work involves public contact, you may be authorized to wear a uniform. Your supervisor will determine which items you need, if any, and whether the items

issued must be returned at the end of your term of service for use by future volunteers. The procedures by which volunteers obtain uniform components are the same as for employees; your supervisor will explain these to you.

***Volunteer uniforms may include the following BLM-customized components:***

- volunteer shoulder patch
- generic or personalized volunteer nameplate
- volunteer indoor/outdoor vest
- volunteer cap
- volunteer polo or t-shirt



# VOLUNTEER EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENTS

**Subject to the discretion of the volunteer supervisor, you may be reimbursed for incidental expenses** such as meals and transportation/mileage to and from the work-site. Lodging costs incurred while on assignment may be covered in some cases, as may temporary-duty, official travel costs. In some positions, volunteers may even be lodged in government quarters.

If the volunteer supervisor opts to provide for reimbursement of your expenses, the specific terms must be detailed in your volunteer agreement. Reimbursements for incidental expenses are effected through the use of Form SF-1164, "Claim for Reimbursement of Expenditures on Official Business" (see Appendix A, "References and Forms").

# LIMITATIONS ON VOLUNTEER DUTIES

*The following are jobs that volunteers may not perform for BLM:*

- Law enforcement work, carrying firearms in support of law enforcement tasks, or issuing citations
- Maintenance of range improvements where the permittee/lessee has maintenance responsibility.
- Hazardous work, such as firefighting, hazardous materials removal, or riding in aircraft (except in Alaska, where point-to-point air travel by volunteers is permitted)
- Search-and-rescue work on behalf of BLM
- Policymaking
- Any job that displaces a salaried BLM employee

# TIME AND ATTENDANCE / VOLUNTEER RECORDS

## Work Schedule

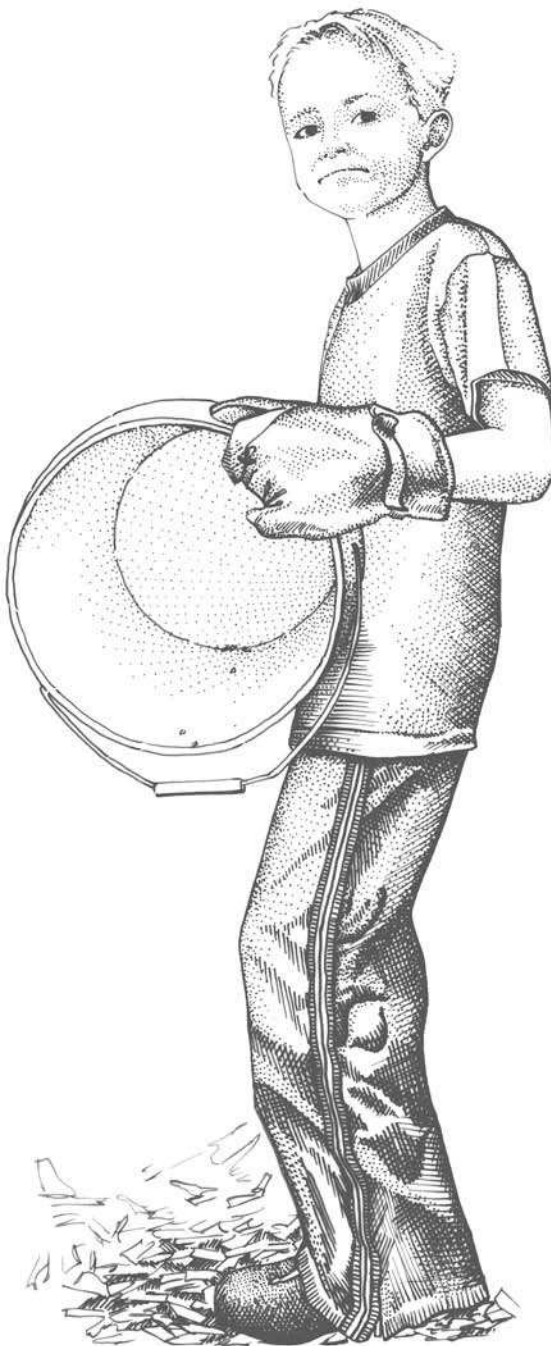
You and your supervisor will negotiate your work schedule, which must be documented on the volunteer agreement or on an attached job description. Your work schedule can be very specific or flexible, depending upon the work you will be performing according to your agree-

ment. Work with your supervisor to adjust your schedule if for any reason you cannot report to your job at the agreed-upon time or when changes in your schedule are necessary. **Note: The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or State labor laws may limit the hours of service a juvenile volunteer can contribute during the school year.**

## Recordkeeping

Your supervisor will keep your completed volunteer agreement in a locked cabinet.

For reimbursements and Volunteer Program reporting purposes, your supervisor or your office volunteer coordinator may ask you to keep records of your activities, hours, and expenses (see Appendix A, “References and Forms”).



# TRAINING

If your job requires you to access the BLM computer network, you will be required to complete Department of the Interior computer security training. Likewise, there are also training requirements for volunteers who will handle BLM funds. Defensive driving training is required for all BLM motor vehicle operators, including volunteers. Your supervisor will inform you of these or any other mandatory training courses associated with your duties.

**BLM also offers many discretionary training opportunities**—related to job skills, health, safety, and other areas—to volunteers. You should discuss your interests with your volunteer supervisor and incorporate plans for training into your volunteer agreement.

# ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Communications are especially important for volunteers working in remote locations. Please be sure that you and your supervisor or project coordinator agree on how and when these communications will take place. Volunteers may be issued handheld radios and/or mobile phones and be given e-mail access (if computer security training has been completed).

You will be given a list of important telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. Federal government communication systems are generally to be used for official business only. Your supervisor can explain local telephone and e-mail policies during your orientation.

# PROPERTY USE

As a volunteer, you may be issued tools, equipment, vehicles, or other Federal government property to use in the performance of your work. When you use BLM property, you are required to follow the same property regulations and procedures followed by BLM employees, which your supervisor will explain. You may be required to complete a receipt for property assigned to you. If, through your negligence, you lose or damage equipment, you may be required to pay for the loss or damage.

You may be permitted to use personal property during your volunteer service. If your supervisor allows you to use your own tools or other personal property as part of a volunteer project, this permission should be noted in your volunteer agreement. Compensation may be authorized in the event of on-the-job loss or damage to personal property designated for use in the performance of your duties.





# USE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

***If you are authorized to use a Federal government vehicle in your volunteer work, you must have a valid, current driver's license; you may be subject to a driving record background check; you must complete defensive driving training; and you must follow the same policies and procedures as BLM employees:***

- Always use your seatbelt. Aside from the obvious safety considerations, personal injury and/or vehicle damage may not be covered by the Federal government if you are injured in an accident and found not to be wearing your seatbelt.
- Do not use Federal government vehicles for personal use or transport unauthorized passengers.
- Obey speed limits and all traffic laws, and drive defensively.

## SAFETY

***Safety is “no accident.” A job done right is a job done safely:***

- Become familiar with BLM office safety plans, and determine where first-aid kits are kept.
- Become familiar with BLM office “continuity of operations” and evacuation/ emergency plans, if available.
- Where possible, reduce obstacles and safety hazards in your work environment.
- When you are hiking in remote country, carry a personal first-aid kit and other emergency supplies.
- Carry enough water with you when you travel in the desert or high country.
- Learn how to operate BLM’s two-way radios.
- When going into the field, be sure to sign out with the radio dispatcher, receptionist or other appropriate BLM

employee. Note where you are going, the vehicle you will be driving, and when you expect to return. Be sure to sign in when you return.

- Learn proper lifting techniques.
- Be aware of restrictions on BLM volunteer duties (see “Limitations on Volunteer Duties,” above).
- As required on your volunteer agreement, provide BLM with accurate information concerning your health and physical condition and your ability to perform specific types of work, especially under adverse conditions.

For safety guidelines related to BLM field work, you may consult BLM’s *Handbook on Safety and Health for Field Operations* (see Appendix A, “References and Forms”).

I was a “thousand points of light” long before volunteerism lighted up the sky and had an official name. I had my lights short-circuited, burned at both ends, and occasionally punched out. I hang in there because generally volunteerism is a dazzling galaxy of gems that streak across the sky and illuminate the world when it falters and cannot find its way.

ERMA BOMBECK, AMERICAN HUMORIST AND WRITER  
1927-1996

# INJURIES AND TORT CLAIMS

As a volunteer, you may receive first aid and medical care for on-the-job injuries. You have the same coverage as BLM employees under the Federal Workers' Compensation Program, with one exception: you cannot receive continuation of pay for up to 45 days after an on-the-job injury, since you are not salaried.

Disguising or keeping a medical problem secret may compromise your health or endanger your life or the lives of others. As an example, if you are allergic to bees or other insects, telling your supervisor in advance could end up saving your life.

**Immediately report any accidents and injuries, no matter how small,** to your supervisor. Common field

injuries include scratches, small cuts, and puncture wounds from sticks. If you are injured, your supervisor will help you fill out the proper forms to protect you in case complications develop later from the injury.

Also, as a BLM volunteer you are protected from liability claims. From time to time, property losses or damages, personal injury, or deaths are claimed to have resulted from negligent or wrongful acts or omissions of BLM employees in the course of their duties. BLM volunteers receive the same protections as employees in the event of such tort claims.

# VOLUNTEER EVALUATIONS

You and your supervisor should review your volunteer agreement annually to ensure that it is accurate and up to date. More complex volunteer jobs may warrant a formal, written evaluation of your performance.

**Evaluations are a two-way street: upon completion of your assignment, you are encouraged to assess your BLM experience.**

# IN CLOSING . . .

This handbook provides an overview of information you need to know to maximize your volunteer experience with BLM. Of course, please don't hesitate to ask questions if you find you need additional clarification.

**BLM values its volunteers and their achievements.** The BLM staff with whom you serve are committed to making your volunteer experience meaningful, enjoyable, and productive. Again, welcome to BLM!

One thing I know: the only ones among you  
who will be really happy are those who will  
have sought and found how to serve.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER, GERMAN PHYSICIAN AND HUMANITARIAN  
1875-1965

# APPENDIX A

## REFERENCES AND FORMS

*(Note: Web addresses containing “web.blm.gov” are internal BLM sites, which are accessible only from within the BLM computer network; see “Training” section of this guide for more information)*

The **BLM NATIONAL EXTERNAL WEBSITE** is at <http://www.blm.gov>.

The **BLM NATIONAL INTERNAL WEBSITE** is at <http://web.blm.gov>.

The **BLM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM EXTERNAL WEBSITE** is at <http://www.blm.gov/volunteer>.

The **BLM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM INTERNAL WEBSITE** is at <http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-600/envired.html>.

Selected **BLM MANUALS** available online at <http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-500/directives/dir-manu/manu-dir.html> include:

- **BLM Manual Section 1114, “Volunteers”**
- **BLM Manual Section 1103, “Uniforms”**
- **BLM Manual Section 1112, “Safety”**

Selected **BLM HANDBOOKS** available online at <http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-500/directives/dir-hdbk/hdbk-dir.html> include:

- **BLM Handbook H-1112-2, “Safety and Health for Field Operations”**

**BLM ELECTRONIC FORMS** for the **Volunteer Program** are available online at [http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-600/00\\_wo650\\_vol/index.html](http://web.blm.gov/internal/wo-600/00_wo650_vol/index.html).

**BLM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORTS** are available online at <http://www.blm.gov/volunteer/news/annreport/index.html>.

Information on the **DEPARTMENT’S “TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA” AWARDS** is available online at <http://www.takepride.gov/awards/>.

The **VOLUNTEER.GOV/GOV** interagency volunteer recruitment website is at <http://www.volunteer.gov/gov>.



Even if you're on the right track,  
you'll get run over if you just sit there.

WILL ROGERS, AMERICAN HUMORIST  
1879-1935

# APPENDIX B

## VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

- Volunteers are required to maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct in the course of, or in relation to, their volunteer service (43 CFR 20.735.2(b)).
- Volunteers are expected to be courteous, considerate, and prompt when dealing with and serving the public (43 CFR 20.735(b)).
- Volunteers must comply with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations issued by the Department of the Interior and/or Bureau of Land Management (43 CFR 20.735.2(b)).
- Volunteers must comply with any lawful regulations, orders, policies, and appropriate requests issued by the supervisor or other government officials having jurisdiction over the work or projects involved (43 CFR 20.735.2(d)).
- In the course of, or in relation to their volunteer service, volunteers shall adhere to the policy of the Federal government that there shall be no discrimination in service based on factors of race, creed, or religion, color, national origin, political affiliation, physical disability, sex, age, and similar matters not related to merit and fitness (43 CFR 20.735.2(c)).
- Volunteers should consult with their supervisors on general questions they may have regarding the applicability of various regulations which may pertain to their service (43 CFR 20.735.2(g)).
- Volunteers shall be held accountable for government property and monies entrusted to them in connection with their volunteer service. It is each volunteer's responsibility to protect and conserve government property and to use it for official purposes only (43 CFR 20.735.15(a)).
- Volunteers shall not use or authorize the use of a government-owned or -leased motor vehicle other than for official purposes (43 CFR 20.735.15(b)).
- Volunteers shall not sexually harass other volunteers, government employees, or members of the public having business with the Department (43 CFR 20.735.17(a)).
- Volunteers shall not participate in gambling while on government-owned or -leased property, or while on duty for the government (43 CFR 20.735.17(d)).
- Volunteers are prohibited from using alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty, as described in the volunteer agreement. A volunteer who uses intoxicants while on duty is subject to dismissal and cancellation of his/her agreement (43 CFR 20.735.17(g)).
- The carrying or transportation of firearms in a government vehicle or while on duty is prohibited. The authority to carry a firearm will be given only in a circumstance where a BLM employee would also require a firearm (excluding law enforcement) for safety reasons (e.g., bear count assignment).











