

What do we mean by public lands?

Main Takeaways

Federal public lands belong to everyone.

United States public lands are managed under many different departments within the federal government.

Lands can be under different designations and managed according to different goals and objectives.

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What are public lands?

Public lands and waters are areas of land and water that are managed by government agencies with guidance and support from people residing in the United States. Public lands are different from private lands, which are owned by an individual, a business or another type of non-governmental organization. Most public lands are managed by the federal government, by a state or local government, or by a sovereign tribal nation. Other lands open for public use include conservation easements on private land that are managed by nonprofit land trusts and private lands that are accessible via special hunting and fishing permits.

This curriculum will focus primarily on public lands managed by the United States government. For the purposes of this curriculum, we generally use the term “public lands” to mean areas of land and water that are managed by one of eight federal land management agencies. These federal government agencies are tasked with managing these lands and waters in trust for all people. Not all federally managed lands are public. For example, public access is tightly restricted on military bases. However, across the country, there are more than 640 million acres of parks, forests, preserves, and historic sites that are open to the public.

In formulating our working definition of public lands, we recognize that the term has different meanings to different people. In particular, Indigenous Peoples think about public lands very differently. For Indigenous Peoples, both public and private lands across the United States were and continue to be ancestral homelands, migration routes, ceremonial grounds, and hunting and harvesting places of great significance. Because of this, Indigenous communities remain deeply connected to and reliant on these places even though their ancestors were forcibly removed from them.

From an Indigenous person’s perspective, public lands are stolen lands that were taken from Indigenous people and later transformed into the public parks, forests and refuges we know today.

To best protect these lands for future generations and prevent the deep racial injustices of the past from being repeated, the entire history of public lands must be acknowledged. No portion of this history should be forgotten or overlooked. In the later modules of this curriculum, we provide a more detailed review of public lands history and provide pathways for engagement with a fuller story of public lands. We offer this as a step forward, though we recognize that there are still gaps in our knowledge and we have not yet captured the complete story.

While we strive to deepen our knowledge, we should remember that people think about public lands in different ways and value public lands for different reasons. In order to fully engage people as advocates, activists and leaders in the public lands movement, we must embrace and respect all these viewpoints. Without that recognition and respect, the promise of public lands can never be fully realized.

How are public lands managed?

Some lands have special designations that protect them for recreation and conservation. Others are preserved for wildlife and the intrinsic value of the ecosystem. Others are managed for more intensive commercial uses such as mining, logging, grazing, and energy development. Still others are preserved for their cultural significance.

Different designations and agencies have different management mandates, which determine the specific approaches to administering and regulating public lands.

Who manages public lands?

Federal public lands are primarily managed within four executive departments of the federal government: the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Defense.

MOST FEDERAL LANDS ARE MANAGED BY THESE FOUR AGENCIES:

National Park Service (NPS)

MISSION: To preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

Forest Service (USFS)

MISSION: To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

MISSION: To work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

MISSION: To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

THESE AGENCIES ALSO MANAGE FEDERAL LAND:

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

MISSION: To enhance the quality of life, to promote economic opportunity, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives.

Bureau of Reclamation (BoR)

MISSION: To manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

MISSION: To conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

Army Corps of Engineers (ACoE)

MISSION: To deliver vital public and military engineering services; partnering in peace and war to strengthen our Nation's security, energize the economy and reduce risks from disasters.

Land designations include:

National Parks: managed by NPS to preserve the natural and cultural resources of an area and to provide for the enjoyment of the area and its resources for future generations.

National Forests and Grasslands: managed by USFS to provide for multiple uses and sustained yield of products and services, including timber, recreation, range, watersheds, and fish and wildlife.

National Wildlife Refuges: managed by USFWS for the conservation, management, and restoration of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats. Wildlife-dependent recreation in refuges is facilitated where compatible.

National Conservation Lands: managed by BLM and designated to conserve, protect, enhance, and manage public lands for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

National Historic Sites and Parks: managed by NPS to recognize an area of national historic significance.

National Marine Sanctuaries: managed by NOAA for the nation's system of marine protected areas, to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural legacy.

National Monuments: managed by NPS, USFWS, BLM, and/or USFS (in some cases, may be managed jointly). Designated by Congress or the President to protect objects or areas of natural, historic, or scientific interest.

National Recreation Areas: managed by NPS, BLM, or USFS for conservation and recreation purposes; designated for a specific purpose and may have other values that contribute to public enjoyment.

National Scenic and Historic Trails: managed by BLM, NPS, and USFS as part of the National Trails System; National Historic Trails trace the routes of historically significant events, while National Scenic Trails are longer trails managed for recreation that pass through especially scenic and significant areas.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: managed by NPS, USFWS, BLM, or USFS to preserve outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values; protected in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Wilderness: managed by NPS, USFWS, BLM, or USFS based on the lack of noticeable human impact, outstanding recreation opportunities, and other historic, ecological, scientific, and education value of the land. Wilderness is designated by Congress and limits commercial activity, motorized equipment, and mechanized travel or tools, making it the most protective designation.

Wilderness Study Areas: land set aside for wilderness designation; managed to ensure the land is unimpaired for preservation until Congress designates it as wilderness or releases the land for other uses.

There are a number of protected parks and other lands that, though within the United States, are managed by a separate sovereign government. These are tribal parks and monuments, areas of land within tribal reservations that are managed and protected by the tribal government. One of the more famous examples is Monument Valley, a park managed by the Navajo tribal government.

What can you do on public lands?

The status and management designation of a particular area of public lands or waters determines the kinds of activities that are permissible in those areas. Some activities are generally permissible on all public lands, including designated Wilderness. However, they may be subject to limitations imposed by land managers in specific locations, during specific times of year, and during ceremonial use by Indigenous Peoples.

Other activities are only permissible in areas outside designated wilderness. Mining, logging, road building and energy development are generally only allowed in undesignated areas of the National Forests and Bureau of Land Management lands, although some exceptions exist. In general:

- **Hiking, fishing, ceremony and prayer, hunting, rock climbing, wildlife viewing, photography, horseback riding, kayaking, canoeing, rafting** are generally allowed on all public lands and waters, including Wilderness. As noted above, these activities may be limited in specific locations and at specific times. Livestock grazing can occur on all public lands, including Wilderness, subject to location-specific limitations.
- All activities allowed in Wilderness, plus **mountain biking, off-road vehicles, RVs, motor boats, and scenic driving** are generally allowed on public lands outside designated Wilderness, subject to location-specific limitations. Motorized and mechanized travel are prohibited in designated Wilderness.
- **Construction and road building, mining, logging, and energy development** also occur on public lands. However, they are generally limited to undesignated areas of the National Forests and BLM lands.

Generally allowed on all public lands and waters, including Wilderness:

Hiking
Fishing
Ceremony and prayer
Hunting
Rock climbing
Wildlife viewing
Photography
Horseback riding
Kayaking
Canoeing
Rafting
Livestock grazing

Generally allowed on public lands outside designated Wilderness:

All Wilderness activities

+

Mountain biking
Off-road vehicles
RVs
Motor boats
Scenic driving

Generally limited to undesignated National Forests and BLM lands:

Construction
Road building
Mining
Logging
Energy Development

In addition to these general rules, Congress sometimes grandfathered in non-conforming uses when designating a specific area. For example, a limited quantity of motorboats are allowed in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, and aircraft are allowed in certain Wilderness areas in the west. Always check local rules and respect closures when visiting an area.

Module

1

Lesson

1



Personal Connections to Public Lands

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Lesson at a Glance

Gallery Walk and Pair Share (15 min):

Participants will discuss how the outdoors has or has not shaped their lives by viewing and discussing visuals of outdoor places and public lands.

Brainstorm (15 min):

Participants will brainstorm ideas that come to mind with the words “public lands” and then discuss the definition of public lands.

Conclusion (5 min):

Material review and questions

Learner Outcomes

Participants will:

- Discuss the role of public lands in childhood and adult experiences.
- Have a basic understanding of the term “public lands” in a broad sense.

Getting Ready

Time: 35 minutes

Materials: Outdoor Spaces cards, butcher paper and pencil/markers

Preparation: Material collection, place public lands cards around instructional space

Location: Indoor or outdoor with room to sit in a circle and move around

Objective: To explore personal connections to public lands and develop a basic understanding of the definition of public lands.

Gallery Walk and Pair Share (15 min)

1. Distribute public lands visuals around the instructional space, with enough room for participants to gather in groups. Ensure that the images represent a wide variety of ways that people can connect with the outdoors, including urban and rural scenes and a variety of types of people doing different things. Ask the group to think quietly for a minute how the outdoors played a role in their childhood. Give the group 2 minutes to locate a visual that best describes their childhood experiences of being outside. Allow the small groups to discuss their choice with participants that chose the same visual or as a whole group, depending on group size.

2. Ask the group to move to a visual that best describes their connection to the outdoors in the present and allow time for discussion.

3. Pose the following questions to the group or pair up to discuss:

Was your choice of visual different from your childhood to now?

How did your initial exposure to the outdoors affect how you view or experience the outdoors now?

Was there a moment, event, or place that changed your perspective on being outdoors, for better or worse?

Is there an outdoor space that brings on negative feelings or memories? Ask participants to share as they feel comfortable. Note that we all have different relationships to the outdoors and to land, rooted in negative and positive feelings based on our experiences and the experiences collectively of the groups that we identify with.

Has an outdoor space ever felt like home?

Have you ever felt so connected to a place that it felt like ‘yours’?

What made it special? A beach, tree fort, bench in a city park, waterfall or overlook, etc.

4. Ask the group to consider that even if your connection to the outdoors was forged in your backyard, farm or city park, federal public lands are for all people.

So what are ‘public lands’?

Public Lands Brainstorm (15 min)

1. Create small groups of 3-5 people and pass out butcher paper and markers to each group.
2. Pose the question to the group, “*What are public lands?*” Explain that we will be doing a group brainstorm, and their task is to think of words, images, people, places, and ideas that come to mind for “public lands.” There is no correct answer, and ideas may be written as words, phrases, or even doodles. Encourage participants to open their minds up and be creative. Allow 5 minutes.

3. Ask each group to post their brainstorm in a central location and allow the group to silently review each paper. After 2 minutes, pose the following questions:

Are there similarities?

Differences?

Remind participants that we all have a different relationship to public lands.

4. Review the following definition of public lands and waters: areas of land and water that today are owned collectively by U.S. citizens and managed by government agencies; some are governed by cities and counties, some by states, some by the federal government. Offer the following concepts for discussion:
 - a. Lands considered “public lands” are often ancestral homelands, migration routes, ceremonial grounds, hunting and harvesting places for Indigenous Peoples who were forcibly removed historically and currently. Although public lands are now considered to be owned collectively by U.S citizens, much of this land was stolen from Indigenous Peoples.
 - b. There are many types of land in the U.S. not owned or managed by the federal government that are open to the public, including state, regional, and local parks and greenways, and public use or conservation easements on private land that are managed by nonprofit land trusts, and private lands that are accessible via special hunting and fishing permits. Though it is important to know about all of these lands, this curriculum is focused on federally managed lands open to the public.
 - c. We say “United States citizens” because although undocumented people living in the U.S. and non-citizens have a connection to land and use public lands, because of their citizenship status, they are not included in the formal decision-making process through their right to vote. Certainly, undocumented advocates in the NGO or academic sectors can be influential in the public lands conversation.
 - d. Public lands are the result of specific and important history in the U.S. The ongoing protection of these lands by the federal government stemmed from a conscious decision to establish a network of land that is available to the public for a myriad of reasons; including recreation, natural resource extraction, hunting, preservation of cultural resources, and more.

Conclusion (5 min)

1. Review the definition of public lands and waters- areas of land and water that today are owned collectively by American citizens and managed by government agencies. These federal lands (and many of the other types of public lands) are yours and are available to the public for their use.
2. Time for questions.

Adapt the Lesson

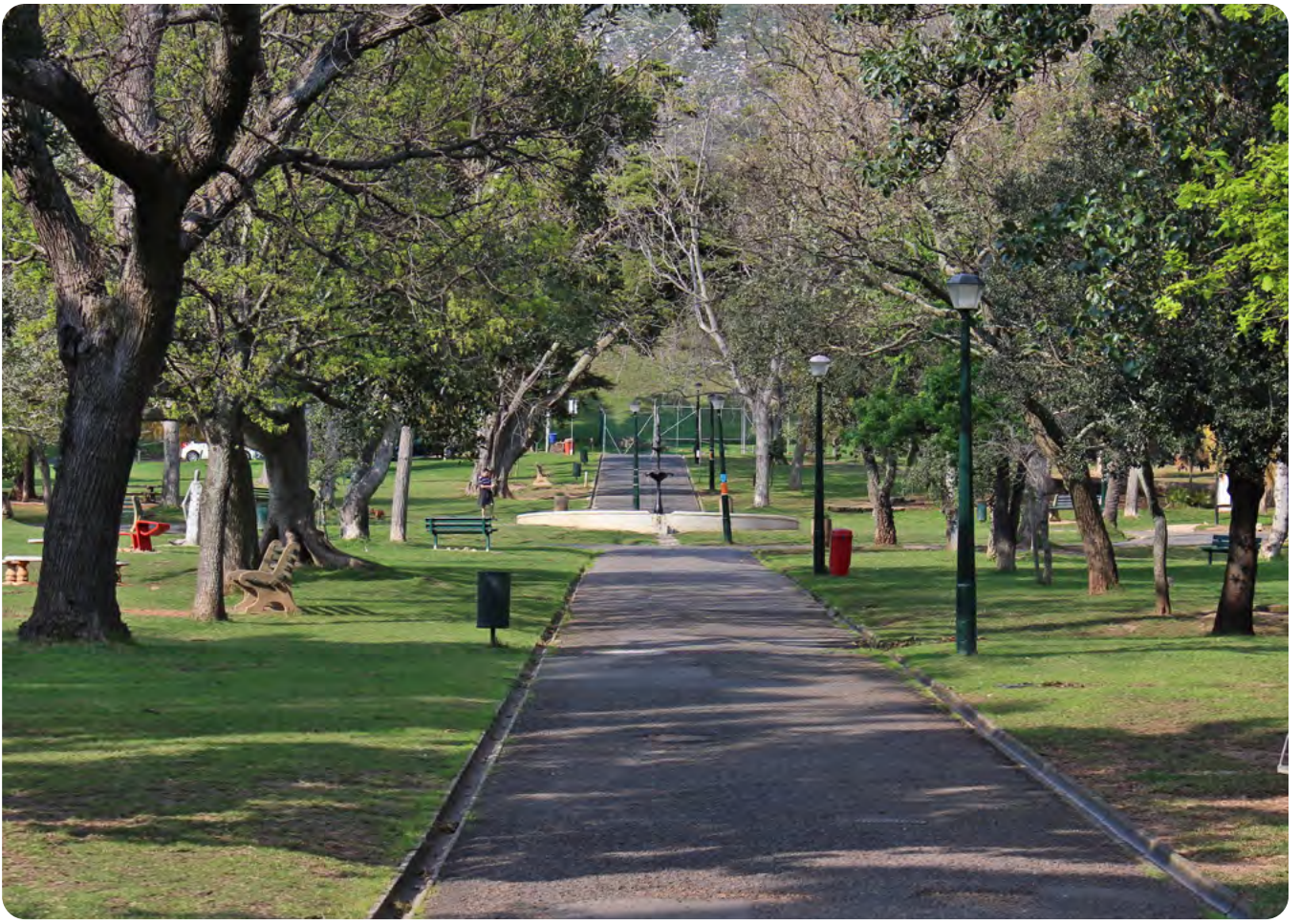
Create public lands visuals that reflect the green spaces in and around the instructional location.

Consider adding in a group contract discussion to promote respect and emotional safety within the group, especially around the discussion of negative experiences in the outdoors.





















Outdoor Spaces Cards



Module 1 | Lesson 1 Materials











Management and Uses of Public Lands

© John McCarthy

Lesson at a Glance

Rapid Fire Brainstorm (5 min):

Participants will collectively create a list of the different types of public lands.

Each One Teach One Activity (25 min):

Participants will teach about the map of public lands, federal land designations, and activities on different types of public lands.

Current Event Case Studies (25 min):

Participants will explore case studies and discuss issues associated with multiple use on public lands.

Conclusion (5 min): Round robin or pair share and report out. Questions.

Learner Outcomes

Participants will:

- Explore maps of federal public lands.
- Learn about the different agencies within the federal government that manage public lands.
- Learn about the different designations for public lands and recognize Wilderness as the most protective type of land designation.
- Understand the different uses for public lands and their potential conflicts.

Getting Ready

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Each One Teach One fact sheets, print out of federal lands map, agency logos and missions, print out of organizational chart and designations cards, print out of land use icons, printouts of case studies

Preparation: Examples of land designations relevant to the audience and location

Location: Indoor or outdoor with room to sit in a circle and move around

Objective: To understand public lands distribution, how federal public lands are managed, different designations, and how uses differ depending on that designation.

Rapid Fire Brainstorm (5 min)

1. Divide participants into groups of 3-5 people. Assign a scribe and piece of butcher paper to each group. Give the groups 3 minutes to brainstorm different types of public lands found in the US. Note that examples could include federal, state, and private lands.
2. After 3 minutes, have each group put a star by each of the examples of federally managed public lands. Mention that the focus of the lesson will be on federally managed public lands.

Each One Teach One Activity (25 min)

Divide participants into 3 groups and provide a fact sheet for each topic and associated teaching materials. Give the groups 15 minutes to plan their lesson to the group, 4 minutes to present. Have groups present in the order listed below. As each group is presenting, the participants should write down 3-5 main takeaway points to share at the close of each presentation.

1. Public Lands Distribution

What percentage of the country is public lands?

How many acres are federal public lands in the US?

Poll the group for their thoughts before giving the correct answer. Who was closest? Are the numbers surprising?

(Answer: 640 million acres, 26% - in all 50 states!)

Present the map of federal public lands to the group. Ask the group to make observations about the distribution of public lands in the country.

Is it surprising? Why do you think it is that way?

As the country expanded westward, the government claimed ownership of land across the country. Through dispossession, genocide, and relocation, many Indigenous people were removed from these lands (although some still live on their aboriginal lands). Most of these lands were then transferred to individuals through grants and homestead acts. Other lands became state land when states entered the Union. However, the federal government retained ownership of some parts. In the East, the government had to purchase and acquire land later on, specifically for the purpose of conservation, not for expansion. This was done through Acts of Congress (i.e. Forest Reserve Act of 1891, Weeks Act of 1911).

Look at the key and mention the different agencies that manage public lands. Ask participants why they think multiple agencies are involved. Ask the participants to locate some public lands near to where they live and point them out on the map- answers could include city parks, privately owned conservation land, state parks, or federally-managed lands. Present the following questions:

How do you or your community use the land?

How did you find out about it?

Do you have a good story to share that happened at that place or any of the lands identified on the map of federal lands?

Who lived there before you did and where are those people now?

2. Federal Land Designations

Present the Land Management Agency organizational chart. Note that under each agency are different ways that lands are designated within that agency (in green).

Pass out the designation cards and have each person read out their card. Note that some of the designations may be managed by multiple agencies. Pose the following questions to the group:

Can you think of an example of your type of designation?

Be prepared with relevant examples to your group and location.

What challenges are there if one type of designation is managed by multiple agencies?

For example, National Monuments are managed by NPS, USFWS, BLM, and USFS. The potentially competing missions of these agencies might cause inconsistencies in management.

What is the most protective type of designation?

What is (are) the least?

(Answer: Wilderness is the most protective. Undesignated areas of National Forests and BLM land are the least protective.)

3. Federal Land Uses

The designation of a particular area of federal lands or water generally determines what activities can and cannot take place in those areas. The general rules are described below. However, activities may be subject to limitations imposed by land managers in specific locations, during specific times of year, and during ceremonial use by Indigenous Peoples.

Review the allowed activities using the land use icon cards.

a. Hiking, fishing, ceremony and prayer, hunting, rock climbing, wildlife viewing, photography, horseback riding, kayaking, canoeing, rafting are

generally allowed on all public lands and waters, including Wilderness. As noted earlier, these activities may be limited in specific locations and at specific times. Livestock grazing can occur on all public lands, including Wilderness, subject to location-specific limitations.

b. The above activities plus mountain biking, off-road vehicles, RVs, motor boats, and scenic driving are generally allowed on public lands outside designated Wilderness, subject to location-specific limitations. Motorized and mechanized travel are prohibited in designated Wilderness.

c. Construction and road building, mining, logging, and energy development also occur on public lands. However, they are generally limited to undesignated areas of the National Forests and BLM lands.

Ask each person to choose two activities that may potentially come into conflict and take 1 minute to think about why and ways to mitigate the conflict. Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts. Example: Tribes work through conflict with federal management to protect their sacred sites, sacred landscapes and areas of traditional ecological knowledge.

Case Studies (25 min)

Divide students into small groups and assign case studies. Ask each group to read each case study, together or separately, and individually take note of 2-3 takeaways from the article before discussing as a group.

Discussion Questions:

- *What designation applies to the land in this case?*
- *Who are the stakeholders in the case you read? (define “stakeholders” for the group if needed)*
- *What did each stakeholder want the outcome of the case to be?*
 - *Why?*
 - *How would that outcome affect the other groups involved?*
- *Would anything about this case have been different if the land designation were different? (think about designations that are more protective or less protective).*
- *Think about the opposing interests of the stakeholders in the case you read. Can you think of a situation where similar groups might be on the same side?*
- *What solution would you propose for this conflict? Why?*

Ask each group to share their takeaways from the article and their solution to the conflict.

Help students understand that while different land designations allow or prevent different types of land use, this does not mean that all stakeholders will agree on what the land should be used for. Point out that some designations allow for multiple uses that sometimes conflict with one another (such as BLM land, which allows for recreation as well as cattle grazing, for example). When one stakeholder claims that another’s use of an area of public land interferes with their right to use that land, the case often has to be decided in a court of law.

Conclusion (5 min)

1. Ask students to take 2 minutes to write a reflection on what they have learned- pose the following questions: Why are public lands so complicated to manage? Do the challenges associated with managing public lands relate to anything in your life? Ask for volunteers to share their responses.

Adapt the lesson:

Instructors are encouraged to provide local maps and locally relevant case studies in addition to or in place of the ones provided.

Facilitators can rework the case studies into role play scenarios, having students each represent stakeholders in each conflict. With this lesson adaptation, please ensure respectful dialogue, being careful that students do not use stereotypes to represent different identities.

Reference the following article for tips on how to powerfully teach using role plays: <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/how-to-teach-role-plays/>.

Case Study: Mountain Biking in the Boulder-White Clouds Wilderness

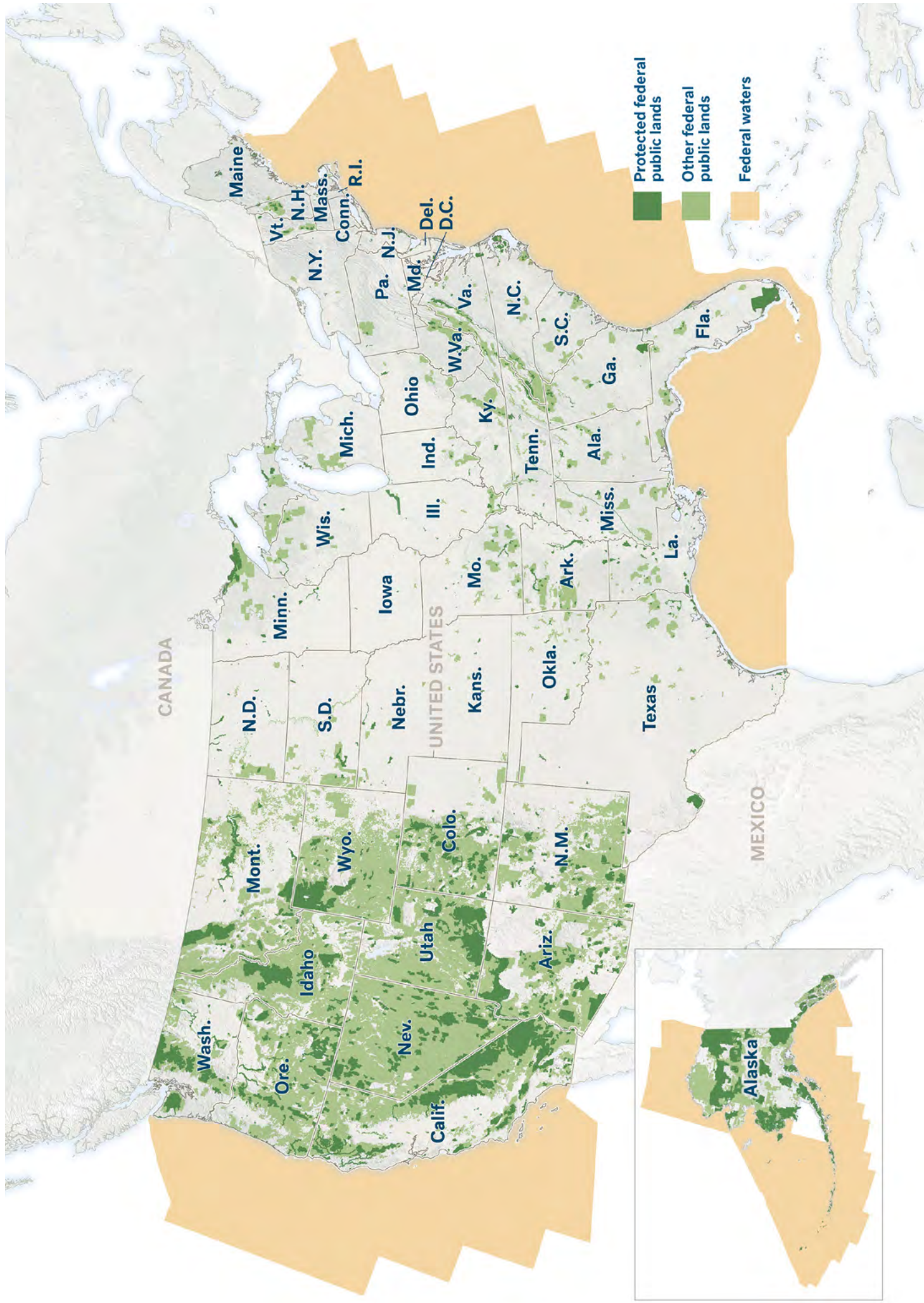
The White Cloud mountains in Idaho are a highly scenic and well loved place for many people. Over the years, this area has faced multiple threats from private industries who want to use the land to extract resources. For decades, the local conservation community has been advocating for the area, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, to be designated as a Wilderness area, which would make it off-limits for most types of travel that is not done on foot - including mountain biking. This designation would also ensure that the area would be permanently protected from uses that threaten the local ecosystem, such as mining. For many years, the area has been home to what some regard as the most beautiful mountain biking trails in the region. The mountain bike community argues that designating the area as a National Monument would protect the ecosystem while allowing them to continue using the land for mountain biking.

Case Study: Snowbowl

The San Francisco Peaks mountain range in Arizona has been a sacred site to the Hopi tribe since Time Immemorial. Hopi leaders say that the Peaks are home to spiritual beings who bring rain and snow to the Hopi reservation. In 1938 the U.S. Forest Service, who owns the land, made a deal with a private company to develop a ski resort. For the past 80 years, Snowbowl has been one of four ski areas in the state, and the closest to a major city, Flagstaff. Recently, the Hopi tribe has taken Snowbowl to court to contest their right to make artificial snow for use at the ski resort. The snow is made using reclaimed wastewater - otherwise known as treated sewage. The Hopi say that this practice is sacrilegious and an insult to the sacred mountains and the role they play in Hopi spirituality. Snowbowl says that making the artificial snow out of wastewater is their right, and that it is necessary to keep the resort open in light of the shorter and warmer winters that Arizona is experiencing.

Case Study: The Bundy Standoff

Nevada is one of many states in the west that contains a large amount of federally owned public lands that are managed by the BLM. Supporters of federal public lands say that keeping land under federal control is the best way to keep it out of the hands of private industries who may exploit and damage the land for their own gain. Critics of federal public lands say that local governments should decide what to do with public lands. The BLM allows for many different uses of the public lands that they manage, including cattle grazing, for which they require ranchers to pay fees. The Bundys are a family of ranchers who have been grazing their cattle on federally owned BLM land near their property in Nevada for several generations. When the Bundys failed to pay their fees to the BLM for use of the land they graze their cattle on for several years in a row, the federal government stepped in to seize the cattle. This action was met with protest from the Bundys and their supporters, many of whom showed up carrying guns. The Bundys say that they do not have to pay the fees because they claim that they inherited the right to use the BLM land for cattle grazing, without paying fees, through generations of use. The BLM points out that no laws grant ranchers the right to not pay grazing fees based on their family's historical use of that area, and says that the Bundys have to pay their fees just like everyone else who uses the land.



Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)



Mission:

Enhance the quality of life, to promote economic opportunity, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes and Alaska Natives.

Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)



Mission:

Manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

National Park Service (NPS)



Mission:

Preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

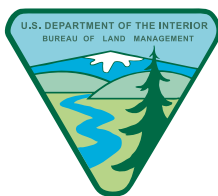
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)



Mission:

Work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)



Mission:

Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS)



Mission:

Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)



Mission:

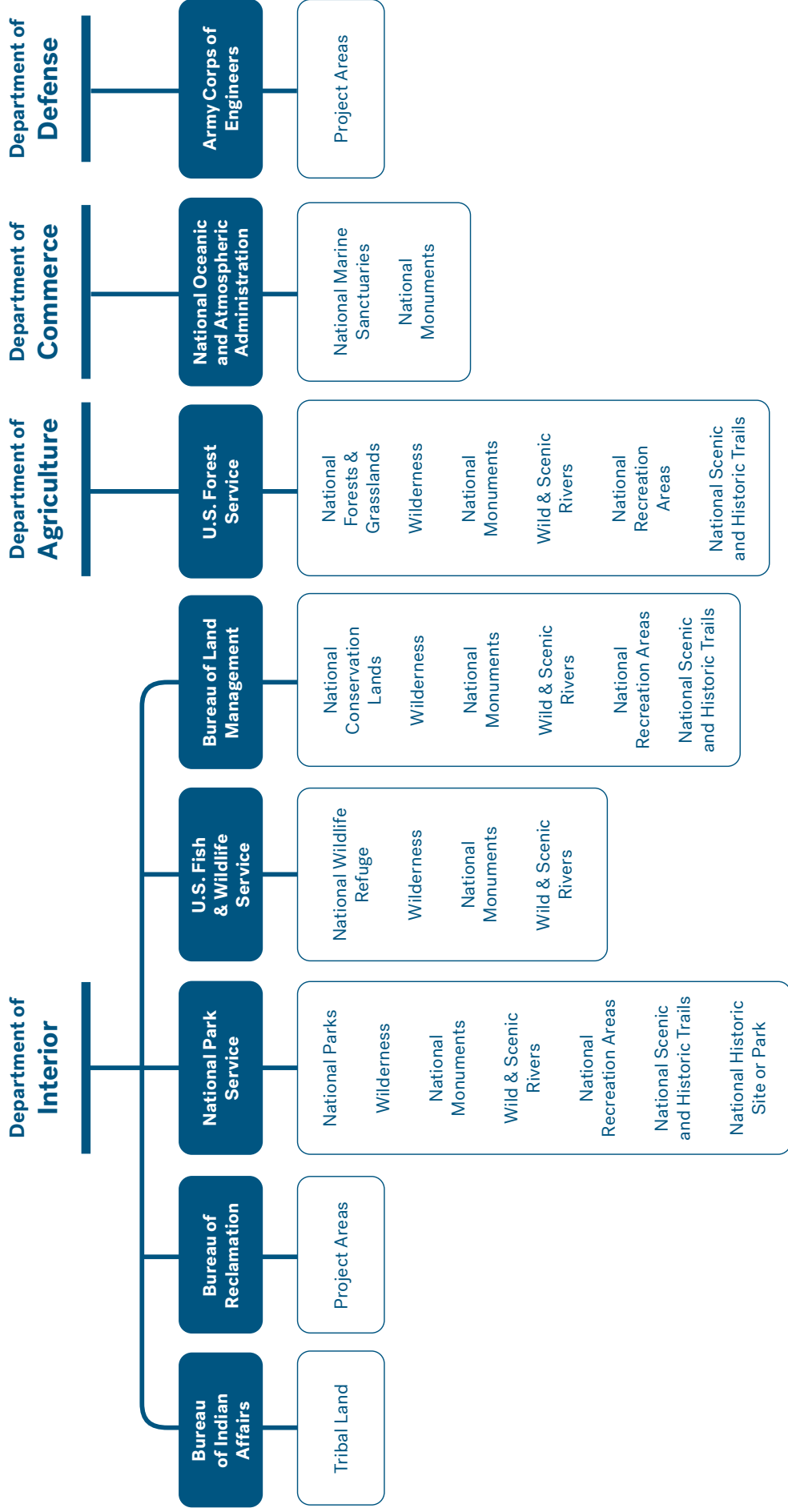
Understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, to share that knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)



Mission:

Provide vital public engineering services in peace and war to strengthen our Nation's security, energize the economy, and reduce risks from disasters.



National Parks

Managed by NPS

Mission:

Preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

Wild & Scenic Rivers

Managed by one of four agencies
(depending on the river)

Mission:

Designated to preserve outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values; protected in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

National Conservation Lands

Managed by BLM

Mission:

Designated to conserve, protect, enhance, and manage public lands for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Other BLM Land

Managed by BLM

Mission:

Designated to conserve, protect, enhance, and manage public lands for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

National Marine Sanctuaries

Managed by NOAA

Mission:

For the Nation's system of marine-protected areas, to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity, and cultural legacy.

National Wildlife Refuges

Managed by USFWS

Mission:

For the conservation, management, and restoration (where appropriate) of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats. Wildlife-dependent recreation in refuges is facilitated where compatible.

National Recreational Areas

Managed by one of three agencies
(depending on the area)

Mission:

For conservation and recreation purposes; designated for a specific purpose, and may have other values that contribute to public enjoyment.

National Monuments

Managed by one of four agencies
(depending on the monument)

Mission:

Designated by Congress or the President to protect objects or areas of historic or scientific interest.

National Forests & Grasslands

Managed by USFS

Mission:

Provides for multiple use and sustained yield of products and services, including timber, recreation, range, watersheds, and fish and wildlife.

Wilderness

Managed by one of four agencies
(depending on the wilderness area)

Mission:

Wilderness is the most protective type of land designation and limits commercial activity, motorized equipment, and mechanized travel or tools.

