

For Immediate Release
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Volunteers sought for National Public Lands Day 2004

PORTLAND- The Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is looking for volunteers to participate in the 11th annual National Public Lands Day (NPLD) on Saturday, September 18, 2004. In what has become the largest volunteer hands-on effort of its kind in the country, participants will come together to lend a hand to the very lands they use to hike, bike, climb, fish, swim, explore, picnic, or just plain relax.

In celebration of NPLD, Interior Secretary Gale Norton has once again designated Saturday, September 18, 2004 as a "fee-free" day for the visiting public at Interior-agency recreation and visitor sites nationwide. Site entrance and individual day-use fees will be waived on that day; however, other fees, such as those for group day use, overnight camping, and cabin rentals, will remain in effect.

Individuals, families, and community groups of all ages are encouraged to come together to give something back to their public lands. T-shirts, lunches, and environmental education activities will be provided for the volunteers at each of the project sites. All tools, safety equipment, and materials needed for the projects will be furnished by the BLM.

In addition, for the first time, all volunteers who pitch in on National Public Lands Day will be rewarded with a coupon good for a "fee-free" entry day during the next year at any public land site managed by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

Volunteers who pitched in last year on NPLD helped improve and preserve habitats for a rich diversity of animals, birds, and plants. The volunteers installed bird boxes at Jenny Creek near Medford... removed large appliances, household garbage and construction debris close to the Deschutes River... eradicated invasive weeds and planted native vegetation and seedlings in Roseburg.

"We are calling on volunteers to help restore, beautify, and improve the habitats and recreation areas that we all benefit from and enjoy", said Elaine Brong, BLM State Director. "The BLM is committed to promoting awareness about citizen stewardship and increasing volunteer opportunities for the public."

NPLD is a unique public-private partnership involving many federal, state, and local land agencies. These agencies work closely with business partners such as Toyota, and numerous non-profit organizations. For the second year, SOLV is partnering with the BLM to help sponsor NPLD events throughout Oregon. SOLV's mission is to help individuals and groups organize volunteer projects to "build community through volunteer action to preserve this treasure called Oregon."

Volunteers range from Girl Scouts and senior citizens to corporate executives and Members of Congress -- they all have one thing in common: enjoyment and appreciation for our public lands. For more information, volunteers are encouraged to contact their local BLM office or visit www.npld.com - Remember....."It's your land, lend a hand."

Editor's Note: An Audio PSA on this news release is available at 1-866-294-2975 or 503-808-6030. The story will run from 8/31/2004 to 9/18/2004

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