

Partners for Trails

Developing non-motorized trails within
a BLM Trails Program

Trails on the National Public Lands

Bureau of Land Management

Introduction

- The current state of trails on BLM-managed National Public Lands

Rob Perrin

Trails and Travel Management Program Lead

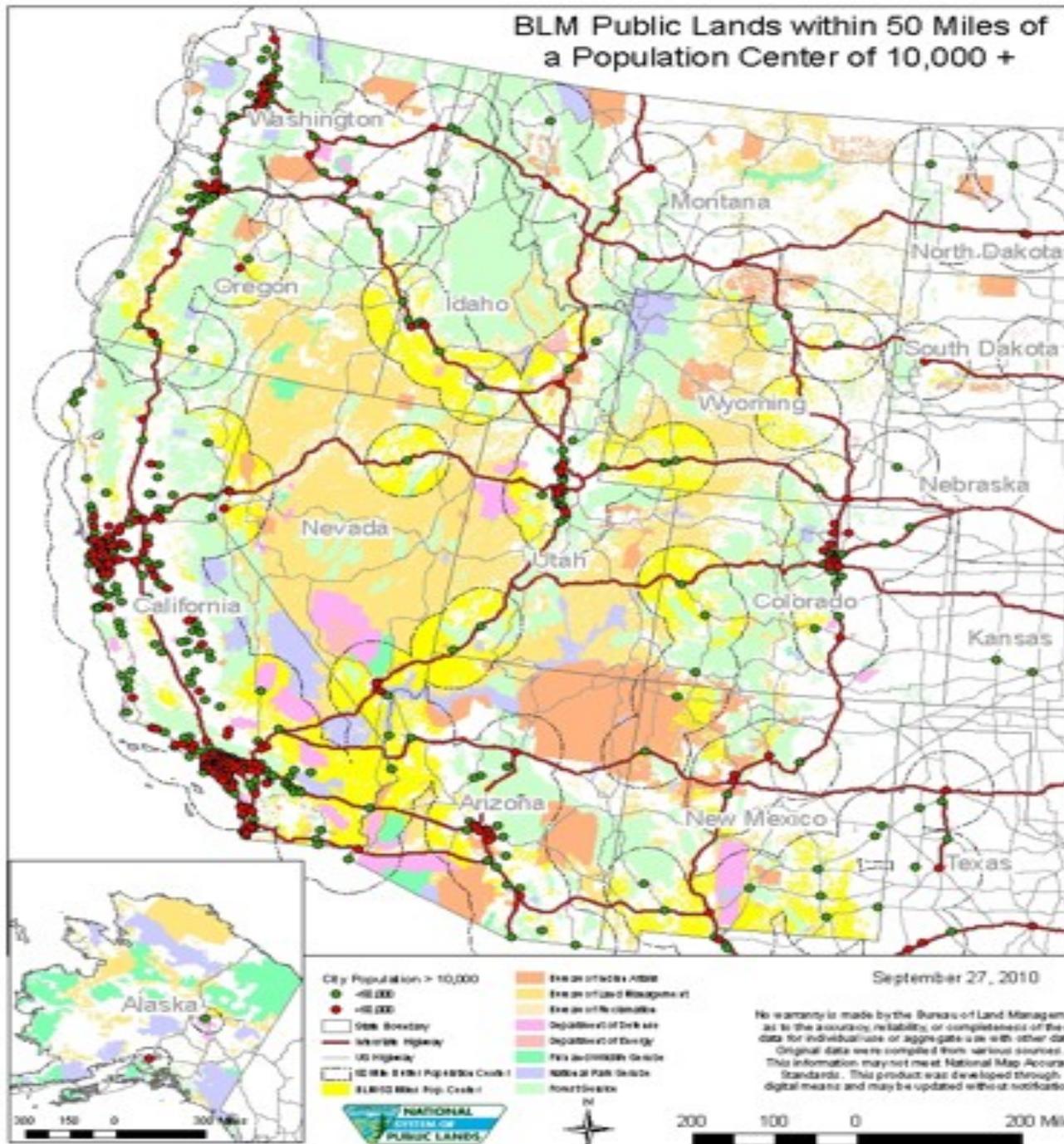
Bureau of Land Management

Washington, DC Office

What is the Bureau of Land Management?

- An agency within the Department of the Interior
- Manages over 249 million acres of public land mainly in the west and Alaska
- Has a multiple-use mandate that places emphasis on recreational activities along with other uses.
- Manages millions of acres of land close to the rapidly growing communities of the west.

BLM Public Lands within 50 Miles of a Population Center of 10,000 +



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- City Population > 10,000
- <10,000
- >10,000
- State Boundary
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- 10 Mile Buffer Population Center
- 50 Mile Buffer Population Center
- Division of Reclamation
- Department of Energy
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- BLM

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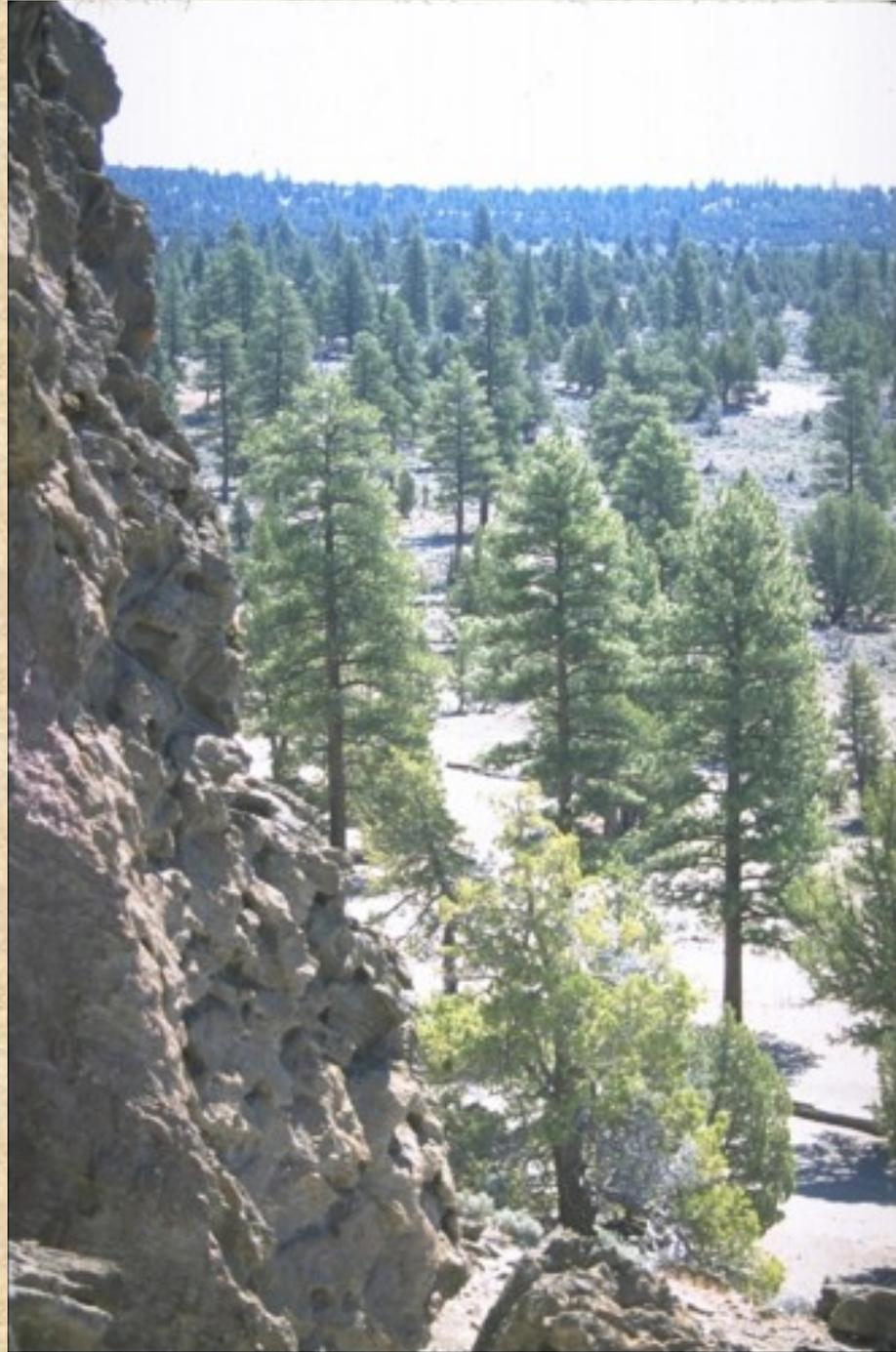






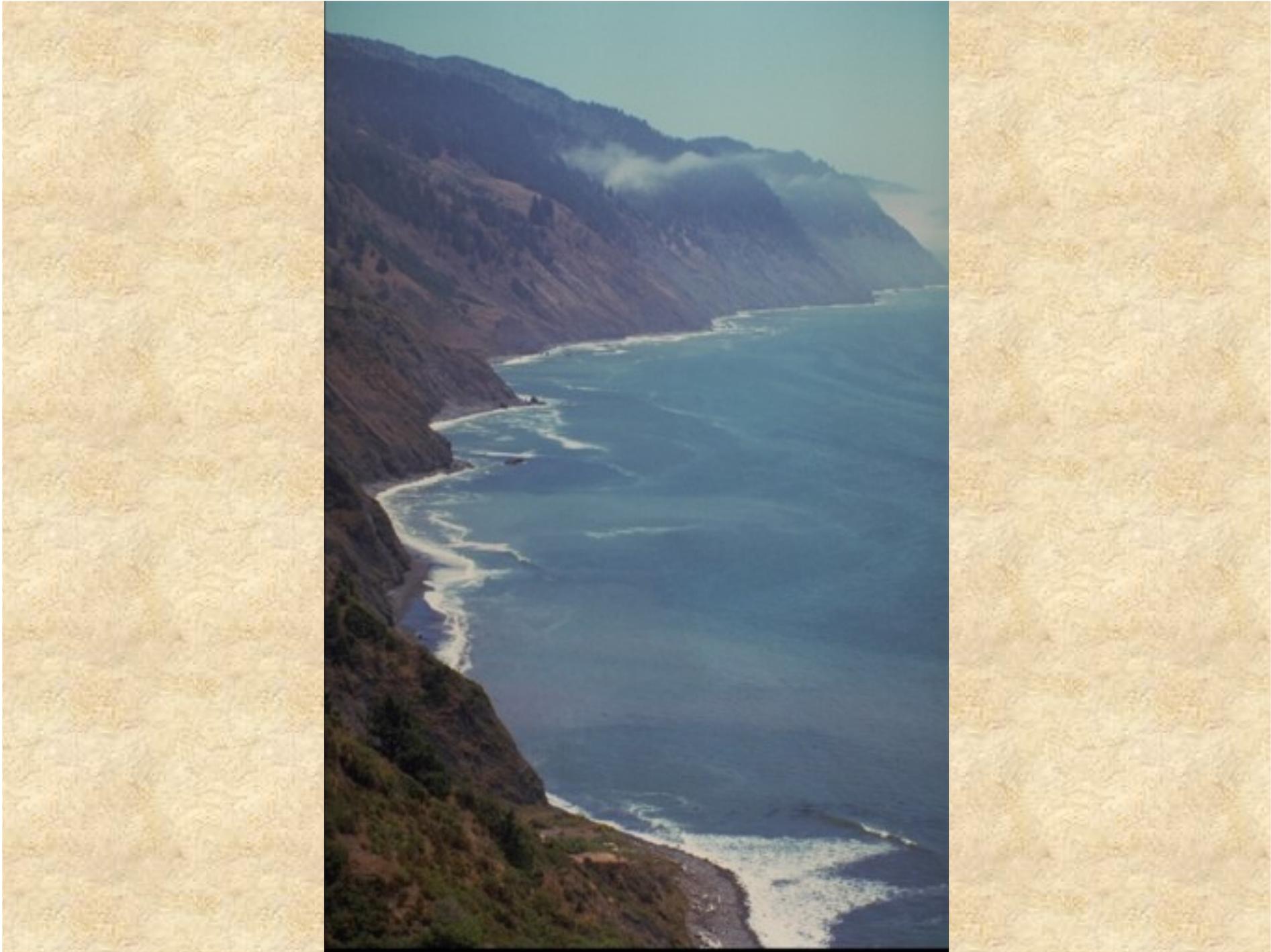










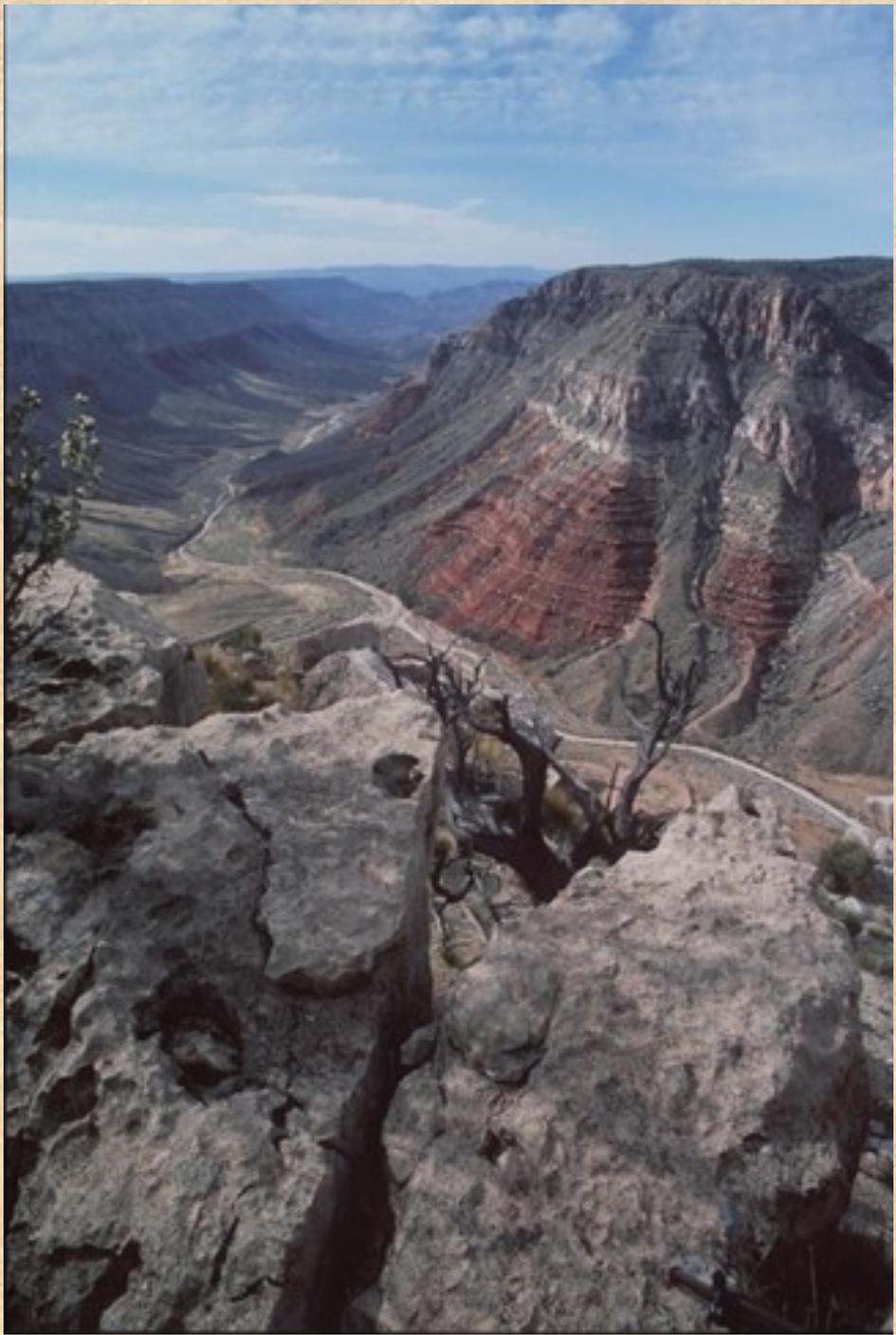
















How is the BLM organized?

- BLM-managed lands are organized by state boundaries then further into districts, field offices or special designations. There are over 150 management units.
- The field offices, National Conservation Areas, National Monuments or other areas with special designations are required to develop comprehensive land use plans known as resource management plans (RMP).
- They are also required, in most cases, to develop travel management plans (TMP).

Are there trails on BLM lands?

Yes, there are many miles of Congressionally designated National Scenic and Historic Trails such as the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and the Oregon Trail National Historic Trail.

There are also many other types of trails; motorcycle and ATV trails, mountain bike trails and horse and hiker trails.

An important question is:

Are the trails meeting the demands of visitors and are they being managed in a sustainable way?

- Many of the trails that do exist were never planned.
- Many non-motorized trails are actually former roads.
- Many of these legacy trails were never developed with sustainability in mind.

Another important question:

Is there demand for new trails on public land that is being unmet?

- Yes, there are many areas where there is an unmet demand for all types of trails – especially near the newly urbanizing towns and cities of the west.
- In many cases this unmet demand is leading to user created trails.

Why? What are the roadblocks to more and better trails?

- The BLM has no funds dedicated specifically to trails.
- The Bureau's recreation management staff are, most often, generalists needing to manage a wide range of programs leaving little time to master trail specific planning and management skills.
- Managers are busy overseeing many programs in the multiple-use context and trails are most likely a minor aspect of just one program they are responsible for.

Why? What are the roadblocks to more and better trails?

- Local trail stakeholders often lack the resources to effectively engage with the BLM through the resource management planning process.
- The BLM often lacks the staff required to adequately plan, implement, and manage projects to improve or develop trails.

Are there any success stories?

- Yes, there are numerous examples of where sustainable trails have been developed that provide high quality recreation opportunities.

How did these successes happen?

- There was an active local stakeholder group that provided effective support for the project.
- Active support from local government and organizations.
- The BLM had adequate staff and skills.
- BLM management actively supported the project.
- A combination of BLM and other funding was available.

How can the trails community more effectively engage with the BLM to create more, high quality trail opportunities on National Public Lands?

Gregory Miller, Ph.D.

President, American Hiking Society

Expectations for Quality Recreation Experience – non-motorized users

- Trail Access & appropriate use
- Natural Conditions: Quiet, natural sounds, viewshed
- Freedom to Explore
- Information: marked trails, maps, user basics
- Interpretation: rangers, organized activities

Ingredients for Successful BLM non-motorized Trails Program

- Sustainable Trails for non-motorized users
- America's Great Outdoors Initiative
- Let's Move Outside! Health and Outdoors
- Stakeholder engagement – early and often
- Gateway Communities
- Volunteerism – management & recruitment

Ben Pendergrass

Legislative Director, American Horse Council

Anne Merwin

Public Lands Policy Advisor,
The Wilderness Society

Jerry Keir

Executive Director, The Great Basin Institute

Question for the audience:

What do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities for a non-motorized component of a BLM trails program?

The image features a central piece of aged, textured paper with a dark green background. The paper has a mottled, fibrous appearance and slightly irregular edges. Centered on the paper is the text "Join us for our roundtable discussion" in a white, serif font. Below this, the time "10:15 - 11:30" is also centered in the same white, serif font.

Join us for our
roundtable discussion

10:15 - 11:30