



# This Land is Your Land

Dave Saville, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy  
 Winter Outing at White Grass Ski Touring Center, January 30, 2011



Ownership of Land	In the US	In WV
Private	57%	90%
Public	41%	10%
Federal	34%	7.5%
State	6%	2.5%
County/City	1%	
Indian	2%	

## Federal Lands in West Virginia

### National Forests

**George Washington**, 105,504 acres in West Virginia, bulk of Forest is in Virginia

**Jefferson**, 9,648 acres in West Virginia, bulk of forest is in Virginia

**Monongahela**, 911,000 acres located, completely within 10 counties of West Virginia. 570 miles of roads, 825 miles of trails, 576 miles of trout streams, 23 campgrounds, 17 picnic areas, 0 ATV areas, 8 wilderness areas, 128,000 acres of Wilderness, 900 ft. to 4863 ft in elevation, 230 known species of birds, 75 species of trees.

### National Wildlife Refuges

**Ohio River Islands**, established in 1990, 22 islands along 362 miles of the Ohio River comprising 3354 acres.

**Canaan Valley**, Established in 1994 as nations 500<sup>th</sup> NWR, Currently ~ 16,000 acres, Over 6,000 acres of wetlands, Over 580 species of plants, Over 280 species of animals.

### National Parks

**Harpers Ferry National Historic Park**, designated a National Monument in 1944, then a National Historic Park in 1963, Over one million visitors annually, over 4,000 acres in three states. The site on which Thomas Jefferson once said, "The passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge is perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in Nature" after visiting the area in 1783.

**New River Gorge National River**, Established in 1978, 78,000 acres along 53 miles of the New River, provides some of the country's best whitewater paddling, most popular climbing spot in the east with over 1400 established climbs.

**Bluestone River National Scenic Area**, Protects 10.5 miles of the Bluestone River

**Gauley River National Recreation Area**, Protects 25 miles of the Gauley and 6 miles of the Meadow Rivers, Dropping more than 668 feet through 25 miles of rugged terrain it is considered among the best Whitewater Paddling streams in the country.

## State Lands in West Virginia

State Parks (35 parks ~ 75,000 acres) (WV DNR Parks & Rec. Section)

State Forests (9 forests ~ 78,000 acres) (WV Div. of Forestry)

Wildlife Management Areas (72 WMAs 200,000+ acres) (WV DNR Wildlife Resources Section)

# History of our Public Lands

## Frontier Period

- “Myth of Superabundance”
- Natural Resources were unlimited
- Waste, exploitation
- Conquering Nature
- Closing of the Frontier when the Census of 1890 declared no Frontier remaining

## Acquisition Period

- Lands acquired through war, purchase, treaty & cession
- The Romantic Period romanticized nature
- Transcendentalists such as Thoreau and Emerson, for whom “nature – attunement with it, contemplation of it, immersion in it – was thought to train the spirit”
- State Cessions 1781-1802      237 mil acres
- Louisiana Purchase 1803      530 mil acres
- Oregon Compromise 1846      183 mil acres
- Mexican Cession 1848      339 mil acres
- Alaska Purchase 1867      378 mil acres

## Transfer and Disposal Period

- Even as lands were being acquired, large parts of the public domain were being sold, granted or traded primarily to promote economic growth and settlement.
- Disposal to states      328 mil acres
- Homesteaders      288 mil acres
- Railroads      94 mil acres
- Veterans      61 mil acres
- Sold      36 mil acres

## Reservation Period

- Public Policy shift - Some of the public domain had unique or special values and should be set aside rather than disposed of.
- Creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872
- By 1934 two dozen National Parks created
- 1891 Forest Reserve Act

## History of our Public Lands continued

### Custodial Management Period

- Too little money, personnel or political will to effectively manage “reserved” lands.
- Creation of government agencies to manage them
- 1905 Bureau of Forestry (Forest Service)
- 1905 Bureau of Biological Survey (USF&WS)
- 1916 National Park Service
- 1946 Bureau of Land Management
- Depression Era Programs,
  - Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC),
  - Works Progress Administration (WPA)
- Continued growth of the Parks, Forests and Refuges the agencies managed.
- Management became less custodial and more intense as this period matured.
- Visitation increased, pressures mounted for competing uses such as timber, minerals, grazing and recreation.

### Contemporary Period

- 1960s, social unrest, younger population, increasing political activism
- Outdoor Recreational Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) reported that it was a legitimate responsibility of the Federal government to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Issued in a new era of major legislation affecting public lands.
- Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act (MUSY)
- National Wilderness Preservation Act
- National Trails System Act
- National Wild And Scenic Rivers Act
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act
- National Forest Management Act (NFMA)
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)
- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act
- Public Participation - NEPA, passed in 1969, and other legislation, mandated public participation in Agency decisions affecting public lands.
- Confrontation - more specific requirements of new legislation has allowed citizens and special interest groups to file lawsuits challenging management decisions.
- Partnerships - as this period has progressed, partnerships between the public, private and non-profit sectors have increased.

# Federal Land Managing Agencies

## Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

- Originally 2.1 Billion Acres of open US lands
- 341 Million acres left over, “the lands nobody knows and nobody wants.”
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. FLPMA officially ended the policy of transferring lands from federal ownership
  - Established intent of Feds to retain land
  - Gave BLM authority to protect and manage its land
  - Established a multiple use management philosophy
  - Required Land Use Planning
  - Enabled qualified lands to become Wilderness



In 1946 the Grazing Service was merged with the General Land Office to establish the BLM “to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

## USDA Forest Service

- 155 National Forests and 20 National Grasslands
- 193 Millions acres 80% of it is in the West



"Caring for the land and serving people...to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people"

- Forest Reserve Act of 1891, "the President... may, from time to time, set apart and reserve, in any state or territory having public land and bearing forests... wholly or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations..."
- Organic Administrative Act of 1897, "no public forest reservation shall be established, except to improve and protect the forest within the reservation, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of citizens of the United States... , the Secretary of the Interior...may cause to be designated and appraised so much of the dead, matured, or large growth of trees... as may be compatible of the utilization of the forests thereon..."
- Forest Service Organic Act of 1905, transferred the Forest Reserves from Interior to the Department of Agriculture (where they currently reside), and created the U.S. Forest Service to administer them. Renamed the Forest Reserves "National Forests".
- Weeks Act of 1911, allowed the federal government to purchase cut over forest lands in the headwaters of navigable rivers east of the 100th meridian, thus creating the eastern National Forests including the Monongahela National Forest in 1915
- National Forest Management Act, 1976 - required the Forest Service to develop 10 year plans for each national forest, using an interdisciplinary approach and with public input throughout the planning process. Attempted to create more balance among the multiple uses, more protection for forest ecosystems, and maintenance of viable populations of native and otherwise valuable wildlife. Limited clear cuts in the east to 40 acres maximum

## National Park Service

- over 391 units, of which 58 are designated National Parks.
- 84.4 million acres
- 15,000 permanent Employees
- 5,000 seasonal employees
- Annual Budget\$2.256 billion (2006)



**1916 National Park Service Organic Act** "To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment for the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations"

## US Fish & Wildlife Service

- Over 520 Wildlife Refuges
- 66 fish hatcheries
- Over 96 million acres
- 8,000 employees



To provide, manage and safeguard a national network of lands and waters sufficient in size, diversity and location to make available, now and in the future, public benefits that are associated with wildlife over which the federal government has responsibility, particularly birds and endangered species.

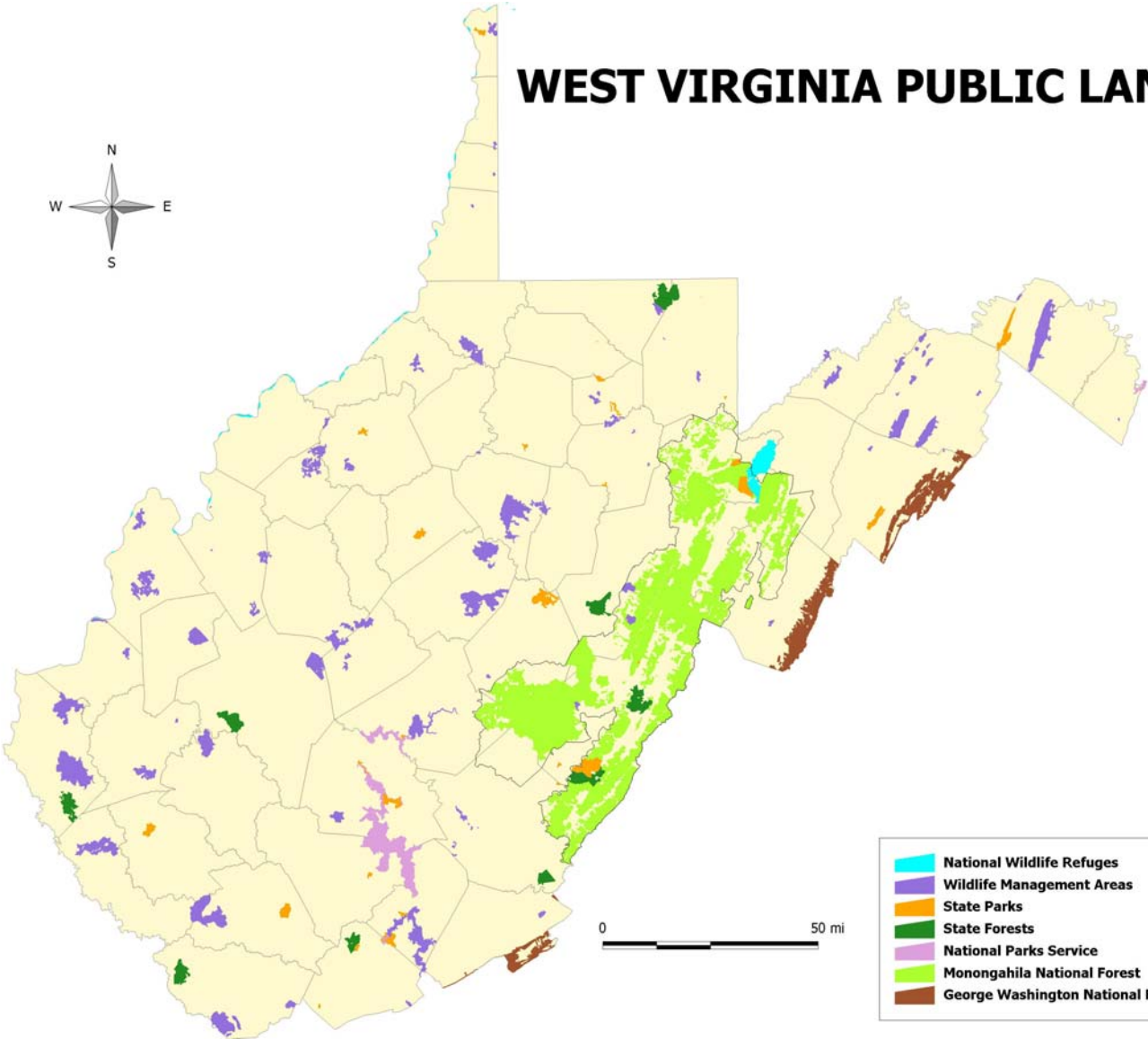
Began as the U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries (later known as the Bureau of Fisheries) in the Department of Commerce and as the Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy (later known as the Bureau of Biological Survey) in the Department of Agriculture. It took its present form in 1939 when these Bureaus were transferred to the Department of the Interior and were merged.

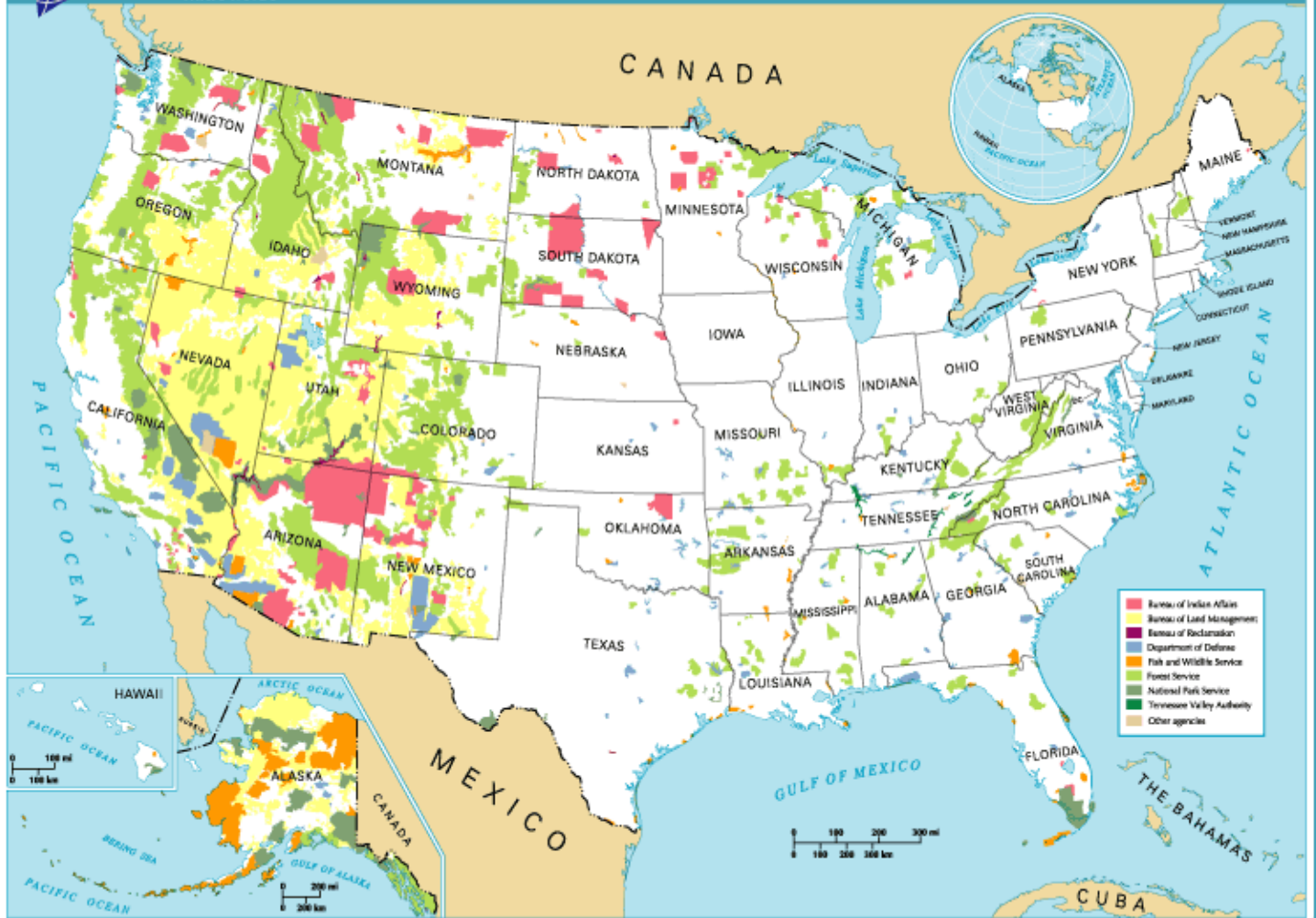
Wildlife Refuges are managed to protect the wildlife resources the Refuge was created to protect and to allow compatible wildlife dependant recreational activities.



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# WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC LANDS





U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey

The National Atlas of the United States of America®

