



Empowering all to enjoy, share, and preserve the hiking experience

U.S. Department of the Interior
Submitted via Federal eRulemaking Portal
[Docket ID: BLM-2023-0001-0001](#)

July 3, 2023

Re: Conservation and Landscape Health Proposed Rule (Public Lands Rule)

On behalf of American Hiking Society (AHS) and the 59.6 million strong hiking community we write in support of the proposed Public Lands Rule and thank the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the opportunity to submit comments. Most importantly, the proposed rule will place conservation on an equal footing with other BLM uses. This proposed rule will ensure that the conservation value of these places will be considered when BLM land use decisions are made and will provide an opportunity for hikers to have access to the over 13,000 miles of trails, including 6,000 miles of 19 designated National Scenic and Historic Trails protected by BLM, for generations to come.

American Hiking Society supports the comments submitted by our trail partners, including the Partnership for the National Trails System and the Pacific Crest Trail Association.¹ We provide the following additional comments below in specific support of conservation uses.

Subpart 6102—Conservation Use To Achieve Ecosystem Resilience

The proposed rule would “clarify that conservation is a use on par with other uses of public lands under FLPMA's [Federal Land Policy and Management Act] multiple use framework. FLPMA directs the BLM to manage the public lands in a manner that protects the quality of ecological, wildlife, recreation, scenic, environmental, scientific, air, and water resources, among other resources and values, and that protects certain public lands in their natural condition.”²

American Hiking Society supports this clarification under FLPMA which will serve to ensure that conservation decisions that impact hiking trails and public lands used by hikers will be on an equal footing with other land use decisions, including energy development. Without this equal conservation footing, hikers, anglers, hunters, campers, and all other permitted users could find their desired form of recreation impacted, including facing obstructed viewsheds on trails, and the impacts of noise and air pollution that are brought on when conservation is not taken into account.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. For additional information, please contact Tyler Ray, Senior Director for Programs and Advocacy, tray@americanhiking.org.

¹ See Partnership for the National Trails System Comments, <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/BLM-2023-0001-119020> and Pacific Crest Trails Association Comments, <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/BLM-2023-0001-72243>.

² Conservation and Landscape Health Proposed Rule at 8.