

**Subcommittee Chair Debra Haaland  
NPFPL BLM and USFS Budget Hearing  
Statement and Questions  
April 10, 2019**

- **We are here today to examine the budget and priorities of the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service.**
- **From BLM, we are pleased to have Deputy Director Brian Steed before us today.**
- **From the Forest Service, I would like to welcome Chief Vicki Christiansen.**
- **Collectively, BLM and the Forest Service manage 438 million acres of national forests and public lands for the benefit of all Americas, and over 700 million acres of subsurface mineral rights.**
- **Americans need our public lands to support clean water, recreation, and wildlife, but your budgets prioritize oil, gas, mining and timber above all else.**
- **Although climate change is disproportionately impacting our public lands, the BLM and Forest Service budgets hardly mention this critical issue.**

- **Instead, they request that Congress cut investment in climate and science programs.**
- **The BLM and Forest Service budgets request zero funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund despite overwhelming bipartisan support for the recently enacted John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which included a permanent reauthorization of the fund.**
- **The Forest Service’s budget encourages more “Shared Stewardship,” yet cuts the very programs intended to support cooperation—financial and technical assistance to states—including eliminating funding for the successful Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration program.**
- **Looking back, it is also clear that the 35-day shutdown harmed our public lands.**
- **While the administration charged ahead with issuing oil and gas leases during the lapse, they effectively put a stop to the Forest Service’s important fire preparedness activities, including cancelling prescribed burning and delays in the hiring and training of wildland firefighters.**

- **On a positive note, FY20 is the first time BLM and the Forest Service will be able to fully deploy new wildfire suppression funding as provided by Congress in the FY18 Omnibus.**
- **I am pleased to see that BLM and the Forest Service have embraced this approach and made a full request for the new suppression cap adjustment.**
- **I hope to hear about your expectations for the upcoming fire season, and how you will be utilizing existing management authorities and prioritizing community safety.**
- **Before we hear today's testimony, I would like to say that thus far, I have been underwhelmed by the testimony of some of your colleagues at the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service.**
- **We are here today to talk about your proposed budgets and this administration's priorities. I need not be reminded that Congress has the power of the purse.**

**People in New Mexico cherish our public lands for clean water, recreation, and wildlife. Based on this budget, I'm not sure that this administration shares the same values.**

- **I see DOI moving at a breakneck pace to open new areas to oil and gas drilling all over the United States, including protected and culturally important areas like the Chaco Canyon, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the lands illegally stripped from Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments.**
- **The Forest Service is similarly being pressured under an extractive agenda that prioritizes timber targets over community safety and ecological restoration.**
- **In numerous states [Alaska and Utah], the Forest Service is considering costly and questionably motivated state roadless rules, putting millions of acres of protected lands on the chopping block.**
- **In places like Minnesota, the Forest Service and BLM are jointly responsible for putting valuable freshwater resources at risk from mining pollution.**
- **Our national parks, forests, and public lands should be managed for all Americans, not a wealthy few.**

- **I recognize that the BLM and Forest Service face many challenges when it comes to prioritizing funding, but I expect assurances that this administration's budget and priorities are not coming at the expense of future generations.**
- **Thank you for being here today to testify and for your leadership. I look forward to hearing your statements and your answers to our questions.**