



PUBLIC LANDS **(1967, R1992, R2000, R2001, R2010)**

Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that the primary purpose of public lands is ecosystem stewardship and biodiversity, while accommodating multiple uses of the land. This will ensure the greatest benefit to the present generation while sustaining the potential of public lands to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.

Stewardship of the public trust requires careful assessment to determine uses that are consistent with long-term sustainability. These assessments shall require both broad public participation and scientific knowledge in guiding public policy, in efforts to balance these multiple uses within their relative ecosystems over the short and long-term. The continual assessment of existing ecosystems is necessary to determine those that are in need of restoration and will also identify special lands of cultural or resource value that merit protection.

Rationale

Public land management has traditionally served multiple uses, though consumptive and resource extractive activities seem to have been favored over other interests. Mining, livestock grazing, forest harvesting, motorized recreation, and other damaging activities have resulted in adverse affects, such as excessive soil and stream flow depletion, watershed and wetland destruction, and fragmentation of habitat. As a result, extensive damage to essential ecosystems, and the loss of indigenous species -- both plant and animal-- in these lands have occurred.

Acknowledgment of this extensive damage has resulted in the need for holistic, sustainable practices, addressing the land's geology, hydrology, habitats, and species populations within and beyond the public land boundaries. This is necessary because the boundaries between public and private lands rarely coincide with those of their inherent ecosystems. Because natural systems traverse property lines, the policies of both public and private land management must work in tandem to affect positive results.

Land management should utilize a full range of tools to enact ecosystem-based management of public lands. The use of land trades, conservation easements upon, or acquisition of private lands can work to protect, enhance, and consolidate public lands and their ecosystems. Protection of lands with unique value can be achieved with special land designations, such as those within the National Monument or Wilderness Area classifications. The development of cost sharing and grant programs can work to fulfill needed enhancements and education programs. Implementing educational programs as a part of the increasing recreational opportunities these lands offer will garner a greater awareness of their value.

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS
636 EYE STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC
20001-3736

www.asla.org
1.888.999.ASLA
T 202.898.2444
F 202.898.1185