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## News Release

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### **Salazar Outlines Broad Opportunities for Common Ground on Wilderness**

**Washington, DC** – In a [memo](#) to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director Bob Abbey, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today confirmed that, pursuant to the 2011 Continuing Resolution, the BLM will not designate any lands as “Wild Lands,” and outlined how the Department will work in collaboration with Members of Congress, states, tribes, and local communities to identify public lands that may be appropriate candidates for congressional protection under the Wilderness Act.

“The protection of America’s wilderness for hunting, fishing, and backcountry recreation should be a unifying issue that mobilizes us to a common purpose,” said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. “We will focus our effort on building consensus around locally-supported initiatives and working with Members to advance their priorities for wilderness designations in their states and districts. Together, we can advance America’s proud wilderness legacy for future generations.”

In the memo, Secretary Salazar directs Deputy Secretary David J. Hayes to work with the BLM and interested parties to develop recommendations regarding the management of public lands with wilderness characteristics.

Noting the longstanding and widespread support for the designation of wilderness areas, Salazar also directed Hayes to solicit input from members of Congress, state and local officials, tribes and federal land managers to identify BLM lands that may be appropriate candidates for Congressional protection under the Wilderness Act. Hayes will deliver a report to the Secretary and Congress regarding those areas.

In the memo, Salazar also confirmed that BLM must continue to meet its responsibilities under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), including the requirement that it maintain inventories of the public lands, their resources and other values that it manages.

The BLM currently manages 221 Wilderness Areas designated by Congress and 545 Wilderness Study Areas, comprising approximately 8.8 percent of the nearly 245 million acres managed by the BLM.

In December, 2010, Secretary Salazar issued Secretarial Order 3310, directing the BLM to use the public resource management planning process to gather public input and designate certain lands with wilderness characteristics as “Wild Lands.” On April 14, 2011, Congress passed the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act of 2011, which includes a provision that prohibits the use of appropriated funds to implement, administer, or enforce Secretarial Order 3310 in fiscal year 2011.

To read Secretary Salazar’s memo, click [here](#).

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