

PUBLIC LANDS
(1967, R1992, R2000, R2001, R2010, R2016)



Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that public lands are irreplaceable ecological reserves of biological diversity and can contain cultural, historical, and natural resources that enhance the public's quality of life. These lands are designated for, and held by the people, and managed by the government. Careful resource management consistent with long-term ecosystem and biodiversity sustainability will insure the greatest benefit to the present generation while sustaining the potential of public lands to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.

Proper assessments shall require both broad public participation, cultural understanding, and scientific knowledge in guiding public policy, in efforts to balance multiple uses within relative ecosystems over the short and long-term. The continual assessment of the health of public lands, and investment in the care of these lands, is necessary to determine need of restoration, propose change in usage policy, and identify special lands of cultural or resource value that merit protection.

Rationale

Mining, livestock grazing, forest harvesting, motorized recreation, intensive public use, and other damaging activities have resulted in adverse effects, such as erosion, 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 some of these lands have occurred. In order to continue to provide benefits to the public, retention of public ownership and proper management of resources is crucial.

This extensive damage has resulted in the need for holistic, sustainable practices, addressing the land's cultural history, geology, hydrology, habitats, and species populations within and beyond the public land boundaries as well as methodologies to provide for the sustained public use and value. Because natural systems are not bound by property lines, the policies of both public and private land management must be considered to work in tandem to effect positive results.