



# News Release

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For immediate release

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## **BLM Announces Leadership Teams in DC, Alaska, and Idaho**

*New Deputy Director, State Directors in Alaska and Idaho Will Help Lead Agency Forward*

**WASHINGTON** – The Bureau of Land Management today announced leadership appointments at the agency’s headquarters and in its Alaska and Idaho state offices. New Deputy Director for Operations Michael Nedd, Alaska State Director Chad Padgett, and Idaho State Director John Ruhs all bring decades of experience and leadership in public land management that will serve to advance the BLM’s mission and activities in the years ahead.

In making the announcement, BLM Deputy Director for Policy and Programs Brian Steed praised the trio’s extensive record of public service and their ability to motivate and manage employees, and to work with partners, elected officials and local communities. “Mike, Chad and John are exceptional leaders who will immeasurably improve our ability to effectively and efficiently manage public lands for the benefit of current and future generations of Americans,” **Steed said**. “As public land users themselves, they understand what’s at stake for the communities where the BLM operates, and how important it is for our agency to be a good neighbor.”

As Deputy Director for Operations, Michael Nedd will oversee the BLM’s daily activities, initiatives and management of more than 9,000 federal employees, most of them located in 14 Western states. Prior to being named Deputy Director, Nedd served as Assistant Director for Energy, Minerals & Realty Management. In this capacity, he provided vision and leadership for developing and implementing programmatic policies, guidance, and human and fiscal resources for the BLM’s renewable energy, fluid and solid minerals, lands and realty, and cadastral survey programs. In addition to these roles, Nedd has held numerous leadership positions within the BLM, including Acting Director, State Director, Associate State Director, Deputy Chief Information Officer and Deputy Assistant Director.

Prior to joining BLM, Nedd worked for the National Park Service, the State of South Carolina, and several private organizations. He also spent more than eight years on active duty in the U.S. military as an officer and enlisted soldier, in several highly specialized units. Nedd holds a Master’s Degree in Information and Systems Management from Strayer University. He has also earned undergraduate degrees in Information and Systems Management and Business Administration.

As the BLM's Alaska State Director, Chad Padgett will oversee management of 72 million acres of public land across the state, including spectacular mountains, wetlands, and tundra. Padgett has served for the past 10 years as the Alaska State Director to Congressman Don Young of Alaska, and has a broad range of knowledge on Alaska issues. From 2001 to 2009, Padgett served as Alaska State Executive Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency, where he played a key role in developing policies and the budget for Alaska, and in planning, organizing, administering, and directing programs and management activities for the state. He also served for two years in a dual role as acting State Director for USDA Rural Development, where he was responsible for managing rural housing programs, community facilities, business and cooperative programs, and rural utilities programs throughout the state.

Earlier in his career, Padgett worked in Congressman Young's state office for seven years, including six as Deputy District Director. As Deputy Director, he oversaw the operation of five offices based in Alaska, while also working closely with many Federal agencies, including the BLM. Padgett has a bachelor's degree in political science and international relations from Boise State University.

John Ruhs, a resident of Boise and a veteran BLM land manager with more than three decades of experience across many BLM programs, will leave his current position as Assistant Director for Fire and Aviation at the National Interagency Fire Center in mid-March to become State Director in Idaho. The BLM manages approximately 12 million acres of public land in Idaho for multiple uses, including livestock grazing, mining, conservation and recreation.

Ruhs began his federal career as a seasonal Range Technician in Vale, Oregon, in the 1980s. Since that time, he has worked in various resource management and leadership roles at BLM offices in Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, and Washington, D.C., where he served as Acting BLM Deputy Director for Operations overseeing many of the day-to-day operations of the agency. He also served as State Director in Nevada and for the Eastern States Office, which covers lands in states along and east of the Mississippi River. His experience includes extensive work in management of fire programs, range and grazing, wild horses and burros and mineral leasing. Ruhs received a bachelor of science degree in animal science from the University of Idaho. He also served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Deputy Director for Policy and Programs Brian Steed will continue to oversee policy and to exercise the authority of the Director until a permanent Director is nominated and confirmed.

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