

**Submitted by S. Kay Gandy, Ed. D.**

**Title:** *The Superheroes of Public Land Management*

**Overview:** With the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 Congress established as policy to retain public lands in public ownership, to identify and inventory their resources, to provide for multiple and sustainable uses. The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to public land management agencies and their missions. Students will research a management agency and design a superhero to represent the agency.

**Connections to the Curriculum:** Geography, Language Arts

**Connections to the National Geography Standards:**

14. How human actions modify the physical environment
16. The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources

**Time:** several class periods

**Materials Required:**

- Internet connection
- Drawing materials

**Objectives:** Students will

- collect information about a public land management agency
- design a superhero to represent the agency
- describe the skills and training needed to manage public lands

**Geographic Skills:**

Asking geographic questions

Acquiring geographic information

Organizing geographic information

Answering geographic questions

**Suggested Procedures:**

*Opening:* Ask students questions such as: What makes a hero? Who are your heroes? Public lands belong to all American people, but they are also home to over 3000 species of fish and wildlife, and a diversity of plant species. Historic and archaeological sites, as well as scenic wonders, are a part of the many natural and cultural resources that can be found on public lands. Several departments of the United States government manage public lands for us. These lands represent a priceless legacy that must be conserved for future generations. We truly need superheroes to preserve America's backyard.

*Development:* Assign students the task of researching a land management agency and designing a superhero to represent that agency. Students would need to include the symbol for the agency somewhere on the costume of the superhero, and incorporate facts

about the agency into the design. Some descriptions of land management agencies are included below.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, administers 262 million acres of America's public lands, located primarily in 12 Western States. The BLM sustains the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The USDA Forest Service is a Federal agency that manages public lands in national forests and grasslands. The Forest Service is also the largest forestry research organization in the world, and provides technical and financial assistance to state and private forestry agencies.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a bureau within the Department of the Interior. Their mission is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), a bureau of the Department of the Interior, provides reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

*Closing:* Have students share their superheroes with the class. The designs could be posted on a bulletin board. Ask students to share ideas of skills and training needed to be a land manager. What are some challenges that land management agencies face? (endangered species, growing population, environmental conditions, fires)

**Suggested Student Assessment:**

The completed project can be assessed through a rubric.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The design depicts important facts about a land management agency (3 pts)
- \_\_\_\_\_ The design displays a symbol of the land management agency (3 pts)
- \_\_\_\_\_ The design is creative (3 pts)
- \_\_\_\_\_ The design is turned in on time (1 pts)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Total (10 pts)

**Extending the Lesson:**

1. Research the various uses of public lands (mining, farming, forestry, camping, etc.)
2. Research invasive species and the problems they cause on public lands (<http://www.invasivespecies.gov/>).
3. Debate issues concerning the use of Off-highway Vehicles (OHVs), such as motorcycles, trail bikes, snowmobiles, or ATVs, on public lands.

**Resources:**

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) <http://www.blm.gov/nhp/index.htm>

USDA <http://www.fs.fed.us/>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service <http://www.fws.gov/>

National Park Service <http://www.nps.gov/>

USGS <http://www.usgs.gov/>

Bureau of Reclamation <http://www.usbr.gov/main/index.html>

