



MICRO-CREDENTIAL

LAND MANAGEMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

7.- Theoretical Foundation of Land Resource Management

Land Management and Economy

LM-W07-V45



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From vast rangelands to arctic tundra, America's publicly managed lands are far more than scenic landscapes — they are engines of economic output, pillars of rural stability, and the foundation of thriving communities across the nation.

The Economic Output of BLM Lands (FY 2023)

Nearly One Million Jobs

The economic activity generated by BLM-managed lands supports approximately **one million jobs nationwide**, spanning industries from energy extraction and mining to recreation and tourism. These are real jobs in real communities that depend on responsible land stewardship.

Massive Economic Scale

Managed by the Bureau of Land Management, these lands generate one of the largest public-sector economic footprints in the United States — rivaling many Fortune 500 companies in total output.



BLM-managed lands encompass an extraordinary range of ecosystems — from sun-scorched desert basins and sprawling rangelands to dense mountain forests and remote arctic tundra. This diversity underpins a broad spectrum of economic uses and ensures that communities in nearly every region of the country benefit from responsible public land management.

245M

Acres Managed

Total public land under BLM stewardship

1/10

National Surface

Fraction of the nation's total land surface

1/3

Subsurface Minerals

Share of the nation's subsurface mineral
resources

Beyond Resource Extraction: A Multifaceted Economic Engine

The economic contributions of BLM lands extend far beyond traditional resource extraction. A wide array of authorized uses — combined with BLM's own operational expenditures — creates a layered, resilient economic engine.



Energy & Minerals

Oil, gas, coal, and renewable energy leases generate billions in revenue annually, supporting both federal coffers and state budgets.



Recreation & Tourism

Hunting, fishing, hiking, and off-road recreation drive significant visitor spending in gateway communities across the West.



Revenue Distribution

Significant portions of BLM-generated revenue are transferred directly to the U.S. Treasury and to state governments for public services.



Grazing & Agriculture

Livestock grazing on BLM lands underpins rural agricultural economies and sustains multi-generational ranching traditions.



"America's Public Lands: An Economic Powerhouse"

Across 245 million acres, BLM-managed landscapes provide the raw materials, open spaces, and natural resources that fuel communities, industries, and livelihoods from coast to coast.

Conservation's Impact on Rural Economies



The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): More Than Just Ecology

What Is CRP?

The Conservation Reserve Program retires environmentally sensitive cropland from active production in exchange for annual rental payments to landowners. Launched in the 1980s, it has become one of the nation's largest private-land conservation initiatives.

Why It Matters Economically

While the ecological benefits of CRP — including soil conservation, water quality improvement, and wildlife habitat — are widely recognized, the program's **socioeconomic impacts on rural communities** are equally critical to policy debates. Understanding these effects is essential for crafting land management strategies that serve both people and ecosystems.

One of CRP's most tangible economic contributions is its measurable effect on nearby residential real estate. Conservation landscapes generate genuine, quantifiable amenity value for surrounding communities.

0.5–0.7% Value Gain

A **10-hectare increase** in CRP land within 1 km of a property raises residential values by 0.5–0.7% on average.

~2% for Tree Cover

Tree-cover CRP parcels yield **greater value gains**, approximately 2%, driven by aesthetic appeal and improved wildlife habitat.

\$3 Billion Nationwide

Localized amenity gains from CRP add an estimated **\$3 billion** to residential real estate values across the United States.

"CRP: Enhancing Rural Lifestyles and Property Values"

Conservation is not just about protecting nature — it is an investment in the quality of life and economic assets of the people who live alongside these landscapes.

The economic benefits of CRP extend well beyond property values. Peer-reviewed research consistently finds small but meaningful positive effects on rural employment and business activity in counties with significant CRP enrollment.

+0.06% Employment Per Year

A **1,000-acre increase** in county CRP enrollment raises rural employment by approximately 0.06% per year over the first three years of enrollment — a modest but consistent and statistically significant finding.

8 Jobs Per 1,000 Acres

Translating the employment effect into concrete terms: CRP enrollment generates approximately **8 additional rural jobs** for every 1,000 acres enrolled. Scaled across millions of enrolled acres nationally, this is a substantial contribution to rural labor markets.

Consistent Positive Trend

Unlike some agricultural policy interventions that produce mixed or offsetting effects, CRP's employment impacts are **small but consistently positive** across diverse rural geographies and time periods studied.





"CRP: A Catalyst for Rural Economic Vitality"

When farmers are supported and conservation land enhances local amenities, the entire rural economy benefits — from the hardware store to the family restaurant to the local outfitter.



Addressing Perceptions vs. Reality

A persistent concern among critics of CRP is that retiring productive cropland could accelerate rural depopulation by reducing agricultural employment and economic vitality. The research evidence tells a more nuanced and ultimately reassuring story.

No Sustained Depopulation

Contrary to common concerns, CRP does **not contribute to sustained rural depopulation**. Rigorous econometric analyses find no evidence that CRP accelerates out-migration or long-term population loss in enrolled counties.

Short-Run Reversal

A small, short-run reduction in net in-migration is detectable in the immediate years following enrollment, but this effect **reverses within three years** as the program's economic stabilization benefits take hold.

Net Zero Migration Effect

Over a five-year horizon, the program's **net effect on migration is essentially zero** — meaning CRP neither drains nor significantly boosts rural populations, but critically does not cause the depopulation critics fear.

Rather than destabilizing rural communities, CRP functions as a stabilizing economic anchor — providing a buffer against the volatility that characterizes modern agricultural markets.



Stabilized Farm Income

Annual CRP rental payments provide landowners with a predictable, guaranteed income stream that reduces exposure to commodity price swings, drought losses, and market volatility — keeping money flowing into rural communities year after year.



Land Management Labor

Enrolled CRP acres require ongoing management — seeding, invasive species control, habitat maintenance — generating direct employment for local contractors, farm workers, and conservation professionals.

Amenity-Driven Recreation

Improved wildlife habitat and enhanced natural landscapes attract hunters, anglers, birders, and outdoor enthusiasts whose spending on lodging, food, equipment, and guides injects significant revenue into rural local economies.

"Conservation: Sustaining Communities, Not Draining Them"



The data is clear: conservation programs like CRP do not come at the expense of rural community vitality. When designed thoughtfully, they are a net positive for the people who live and work on the land.

CHAPTER 4

The Future of Land Management and Economic Prosperity



The future of land management lies in recognizing that resource utilization and conservation are not competing forces — they are complementary strategies that, when balanced intelligently, maximize long-term economic and ecological value.

Resource Utilization

Energy, minerals, grazing, and timber provide immediate economic returns and support industries that employ millions.

Conservation Programs

CRP and similar programs protect sensitive ecosystems while generating measurable economic benefits for rural communities.

Balanced Stewardship

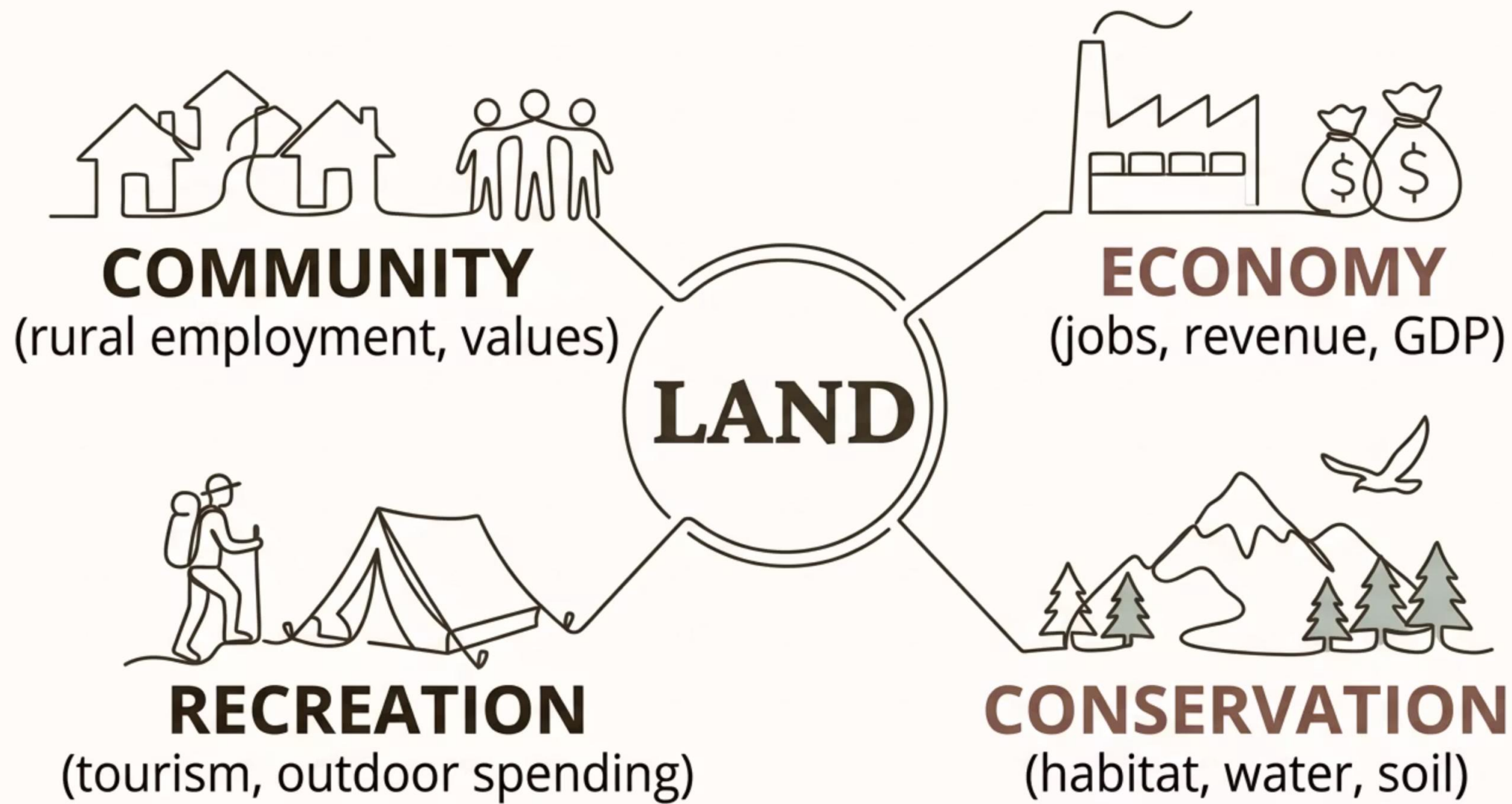
Integrated management strategies ensure public lands deliver sustained economic output, healthy ecosystems, and thriving communities for generations to come.

Why Data Matters

Sound land management policy cannot be built on ideology alone. Rigorous socioeconomic analysis — including BLM's annual output reports and CRP impact assessments — provides the empirical foundation policymakers need to make decisions that serve both economic and environmental goals.

From Insights to Action

The BLM's socioeconomic reporting framework tracks job creation, revenue generation, and community impacts across all authorized land uses. CRP impact assessments measure property value effects, employment changes, and migration patterns. Together, these tools ensure that **land management strategies are accountable, transparent, and optimized** for maximum public benefit — economically and environmentally.





Stewardship That Delivers

The BLM's management of 245 million acres generates **\$252.1 billion in annual economic output** and supports nearly one million jobs — demonstrating that responsible stewardship

Conservation as Investment

Programs like CRP prove that investing in conservation is investing in rural communities. Property values rise, employment stabilizes, local businesses flourish, and rural populations are sustained — all while delivering lasting ecological benefits.

Conservation and community well-being go hand-in-hand.

"Investing in Our Lands, Investing in Our Future"



Every dollar invested in responsible land management returns value many times over — in jobs created, communities strengthened, ecosystems preserved, and a shared natural heritage protected for generations to come.

Land Management: A Foundation for a Thriving Economy and Resilient Communities

The evidence is compelling and consistent: America's public lands — managed wisely and with a commitment to balanced stewardship — are among the nation's most powerful economic assets.

\$252.1 Billion in Annual Output

BLM-managed lands generate extraordinary economic value, supporting nearly one million American jobs across diverse industries.

Data-Driven Policy Is the Path Forward

Rigorous socioeconomic analysis must guide land management decisions to ensure that strategies serve both long-term prosperity and environmental health.

Stewardship and Prosperity Are Inseparable

The future of American economic vitality and community resilience is grounded in how we manage, protect, and invest in our shared public lands today.

Conservation Builds, Not Burdens, Rural Economies

CRP demonstrates measurable gains in property values, employment, and local business activity — disproving the narrative that conservation comes at economic cost.



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