

## *Federal Employees*

Bureau of Land Management Plans to Cut 1,000 Jobs in FY 2018

# **Bureau of Land Management Plans to Cut 1,000 Jobs in FY 2018**

- Plan is to make cuts through attrition, but BLM may offer buyouts, early retirements
- Employees told to track internal job opportunities created by restrictions on outside hiring

By [Louis C. LaBrecque](#)

The Bureau of Land Management plans to cut as many as 1,000 positions in fiscal year 2018, Acting Director Michael Nedd told employees in an [email](#).

The cuts are necessary because President Donald Trump's FY 2018 budget request to Congress calls for a 13 percent funding cut for the Interior Department--the BLM's parent agency--from its current operating levels, Nedd said.

"We remain hopeful that the BLM can handle reducing the size of our workforce through normal attrition, retirements, and smart, selective hiring with an emphasis on trying to fill our critical vacancies from within our current workforce," Nedd wrote June 16 in an email that was publicly disclosed June 21. "To accelerate attrition, the Department may also seek authority from the Office of Personnel Management to offer early retirement and voluntary separation incentives later this year,"

### **Track Job Listings, Employees Told**

BLM employees should use a new internal website to learn about "job details, temporary promotions, and lateral reassignment opportunities" at the agency, Nedd added.

These positions are being created because hiring restrictions are making it tough for the agency to recruit new employees, according to a separate question-and-answer [document](#) from the BLM on its "leadership priorities" under Trump.

The BLM will keep employees informed in the weeks ahead about its workforce planning and organizational review efforts through "an internal communication campaign," the document said. The campaign will include the development of a "special intranet site" that agency workers can visit for updates, the agency said.

## **Are Layoffs Ahead?**

Nedd's email and the BLM's description of its leadership priorities were obtained by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a Washington-based nonprofit that says it represents government workers who are "dedicated to upholding environmental laws and values." PEER released the documents June 21.

Jeff Ruch, the group's executive director, told Bloomberg BNA June 21 he's concerned that the BLM and other federal agencies may turn to involuntary employee separations--known in the federal government as reductions in force--to implement spending cuts in Trump's proposed budget.

It will be hard for the BLM to cut more than about 200 jobs in FY 2018 based only on attrition and less hiring, Ruch said. Early retirement offers and buyouts could persuade more employees to leave the agency, but Congress would need to provide additional funds if the agency is to make significant cuts using these methods, he said.

Ruch noted that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke told a Senate panel June 20 that the department was looking to cut 4,000 positions in FY 2018. This means that the agency would absorb about a quarter of the cuts sought by the department, Ruch said.

The BLM already has far fewer employees than it once did, making it tough for the agency's workforce to carry out its mission, Ruch said.

In FY 2015, the BLM had 7,656 employees, compared with 9,685 in FY 2010, he said. These figures come from the Partnership for Public Service's 2016 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government [report](#).

## **BLM Has 'Adequate Resources'**

Derrick Henry, a spokesman for the agency, told Blomberg BNA June 21 that Trump and Zinke "have both put forth a plan to save tax dollars and improve government inefficiencies while carrying out the Department's mission."

"The BLM has adequate resources at our disposal and we look forward to building a staff and organization for the future in a way that carries out the bureau's multiple-use mission on behalf of all Americans," Henry said in an email.

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