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## **BLM REVERSES COURSE, MOVES HEADQUARTERS BACK TO D.C.**

Posted by [Jan Wondra](#) | Sep 20, 2021

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On Friday, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced its decision to move the bureau headquarters back to Washington D.C. The announcement made by Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and the Biden administration included the news that the BLM will keep and grow a Western Headquarters in Grand Junction Colorado; one of two official headquarters.



Sand Gulch Campground on BLM land, Shelf Road sites near Canon City, Colorado. Image courtesy Manic

Exploration/Pinterest

Governor Jared Polis has advocated for the BLM to remain in Colorado and urged President Biden to keep and expand that headquarters.

While the news that the Trump administration was moving the BLM headquarters out of Washington and to the west was initially greeted with enthusiasm, the actual move of leadership was less than successful. In the end, only three top administrators made the move west, and many top staffers left rather than move. It became in effect, a shell headquarters.

“The bottom line is that more senior BLM officials and decision-makers moving to the Grand Junction office is a good thing for Colorado and our country. The initial presence was far too small and now I’m finally hopeful that the office will grow,” said Governor Jared Polis. “Today’s announcement that the BLM National Headquarters in Grand Junction will be growing is great news for Mesa County, our thriving outdoor economy, our treasured public lands, and everyone who loves them.”

“A Western BLM Headquarters in Colorado will help ensure we have a fully functioning agency that understands the West,” said Senator John Hickenlooper. “We’ll keep working to secure jobs in Grand Junction, including senior leadership positions. To succeed, the Western HQ must be a strong, permanent presence that engages the community and adds a Western perspective and value to the BLM’s mission.”

“While I am disappointed that the national headquarters will be in Washington, I believe establishing and growing a permanent BLM Western Headquarters in Grand Junction should be a very positive development,” said Senator Michael Bennet. “I welcome the prospect of the BLM Western Headquarters exercising leadership with respect to managing our public lands, outdoor recreation, conservation, renewable energy, and engagement with stakeholders and Tribes.”

The Mountain Pact, an organization that works with local elected officials across the West on federal climate and public lands policies also endorsed the move.

“The Mountain Pact is grateful for the strong leadership and decision by the Department of Interior to return the Bureau of Land Management headquarters to Washington D.C. We saw so many skilled and senior leaders leave the BLM during the Trump administration because of the misguided and forced move to Grand Junction,” said The Mountain Pact Executive Director Anna Peterson. “This left the agency hollowed out with 87 percent of staff quitting. Today’s decision is a wonderful compromise.”

“Our vast great public lands enhance our Colorado way of life, support jobs, and are a refuge for wildlife and Coloradans. The BLM has committed to growing this headquarters, and we look forward to many more BLM staff joining those already in Grand Junction which is a natural home for the BLM,” added Polis, who is vice-chair of the Western Governors Association. “There is great value in being physically close to the lands under management and where decisions have impacts on the lives of Coloradans and our environment. I am glad President Biden, Secretary Haaland, and the administration are focused on the conservation and economic opportunities the Colorado growing presence of the BLM represents.”