Mike’s Public Lands, Parks, and Oceans Policy

America’s public lands are a national treasure. They are part of our shared heritage and identity: The U.S. pioneered the idea of national parks, and America’s protected landscapes and iconic wildlife are known around the world. They are also essential to the health of our environment and prized resources for recreation.

They are also under threat. Our natural areas – wetlands and forests from the Arctic wildlife refuge to the Florida Everglades – are in trouble: According to the United Nations, the planet is seeing an unprecedented global decline in nature, with a million species threatened by extinction. Yet the Trump administration is making the problem worse by repealing protections for land, water and endangered species and turning over public lands for oil and gas drilling. President Trump has carried out the greatest reduction of protected public lands in history – working to repeal or shrink national monuments, expand drilling by millions of acres, and eliminate funding for land conservation.

Mike Bloomberg will reverse the Trump administration’s assaults on our parks, public lands, and waters, act to make sure all Americans can access and benefit from our them, set ambitious goals to protect 30% of our lands and waters, manage lands to increase climate resilience, and support local economies in gateway communities. He’ll put a moratorium on new oil and gas leases and reform energy management to make public lands carbon-neutral, support local economies in communities near national parks, involve Native American tribes in managing lands to respect their rights, and ramp up funding for conservation and management of public lands.

1. **Reverse the Trump administration’s assaults on National Parks and public lands and waters.**

The Trump administration is implementing an agenda that stands to cause unprecedented damage to public lands. After President Obama thoroughly consulted stakeholders and developed a thoughtful plan to protect the pristine Bears Ears area as a national monument, sacred to multiple Native American tribes, President Trump stripped the protections, as well as those for the iconic Grand Staircase-Escalante monument created 20 years earlier. He has opened the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling, tried to remove safeguards against oil spills put in place after the Deepwater Horizon disaster, rolled back the Endangered Species Act, and is moving to roll back the National Environmental Policy Act. Mike will put a stop to these assaults and restore protections. He will:

- **Reverse Trump rollbacks of environmental rule across the board.** He will direct agencies to stop proceeding with anti-environmental rulemakings and to stop defending in court those that have already been finalized.

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2 Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, Open for Business: the Trump Revolution on America’s Public Lands, October 2019.
3 The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, accessed February 2020.
5 Washington Post, Trump rolls back safety rules meant to prevent another Deepwater Horizon spill, March 2019.
7 Politico, Trump aims to weaken prime environmental law, January 2020.
• **Reinstate monument protections for Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears.** He will also establish clear processes and standards, including local consultation and collaboration, for managing reinstated monuments and designating future ones.

• **Enact a moratorium on new leases for fossil fuel extraction on public lands and in offshore waters.** Trump has offered millions of acres of public lands for oil and gas production, including near the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Chaco Canyon National Historic Park, Grand Teton National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and Canyonlands National Park. He has proposed opening up waters off the coast of California, along the Eastern Seaboard and in the Arctic Ocean to new drilling. Mike will put a stop to it.

• **Reinstate methane pollution limits for oil and gas production on public lands.** The administration is working to repeal restrictions on methane emissions from oil and gas production on public lands. Methane is a powerful contributor to climate change, 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Mike will put in place stronger rules than Trump is repealing.

2. **Set new goals to manage public lands and waters, including oceans, for conservation, ecosystem restoration, climate resilience, and carbon sequestration.** Scientists around the world have recommended that, in order to protect ecosystems and limit climate change, governments protect 30% of the Earth’s land and oceans by 2030. Healthy ecosystems are critical for wildlife but also for communities: They provide clean air, clean water and resilience against the impacts of climate change. Healthy floodplains and wetlands protect against floods and drought; healthy forests protect against fire and store groundwater; and coastal marshes, sand dunes and barrier islands protect against storms and tidal flooding. Forests and grasslands can sequester carbon from the atmosphere, limiting global warming. About 12% of U.S. land area is currently protected. Though 26% of all U.S. ocean territory is protected, 97% of it is near remote Pacific islands, not off the mainland. The Forest Service estimates that 65-82 million acres need restoration, and the BLM has millions more. Mike will set goals to restore and protect our lands and oceans, and put in place management plans to achieve them. He will:

• **Set a target of conserving 30% of U.S. lands and waters, including oceans, by 2030, increase protection and restoration, and manage lands for increased natural climate change resilience and carbon sequestration.** The partnership Mike forged between New York City and the National Park Service for co-management at Jamaica Bay included plans for ecosystem restoration and research into increasing resilience in the coastal park. His philanthropy supported original research to identify a network of coral reefs that are most likely to survive climate change and help repopulate other areas.

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12 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fifth Assessment Report, Table 8.7*, 2013.
and invested in efforts to protect them. Mike will bring a similar science- and data-based effort to protecting the nation’s land and oceans. He will:

- **Establish a scientific commission to identify the ecosystems that require protection or restoration, and invite the public to recommend places they want to see restored or better protected.** Mike will call on the nation’s leading scientists to recommend paths to meeting the 30% conservation goal while providing for increased climate resilience and conservation. These lands could include intact ecosystems, others that need restoration, and working lands where uses are compatible with conservation goals. The recommendations would include strategies for protecting communities from floods, droughts, and storms, and for protecting wildlife in light of climate change, such as habitat connectivity. The public will be invited to respond to the scientists’ proposals and make recommendations of their own.

- **Work with Congress and federal agencies on plans to protect and restore lands and meet other land management goals.** Based on the recommendations of scientists and the public, and in consultation with tribes, states, local communities and other stakeholders, Mike will work with Congress and federal agencies to recommend protected status or other management approaches to meet conservation and other goals, considering a range of conservation management approaches, including incentives for conservation on private land.

- **Increase funding for land conservation and management.** Congress has spent less than half the funds allocated to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the nation’s primary program for conservation of public lands. Land restoration is key to improving ecosystems and reducing wildfire risk, but according to the GAO, federal agencies were able to treat only 3 million acres in fiscal year 2018, out of more than 100 million acres that need treatment. Mike will significantly increase funding for conservation and restoration. He will:

  - **Triple current Land and Water Conservation Fund spending to $1.5 billion per year, make funding mandatory,** and similarly increase federal support for species conservation, including state and tribal wildlife grants to protect endangered species, and protect species before they become endangered.

  - **Increase forest restoration funding to $5 billion per year,** ramping up the pace and scale of restoration work, consistent with his plan for wildfire protection. He will also explore innovative funding for land management and restoration, such as forest resilience bonds that engage private sector funding for the benefits that come with ecosystem restoration.

- **Reform energy and mineral management to make public lands carbon neutral.** Healthy forests and grasslands store carbon from the atmosphere. But poor management has reduced that capacity, and fossil fuel production on public lands creates six times more carbon emissions than the land absorbs. Meanwhile, leasing of lands for oil and gas production amounts to a major subsidy – royalty rates are

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below market value and the rates states charge; producers aren’t required to post adequate bonds for cleanup, and the industry is allowed to manipulate the auction process. 21 The 1872 Mining Law allows free prospecting for minerals on federal lands, $125/year fees to hold claims on lands, and $2.50-$5.00/acre mineral rights. 22 Mike will reform management to make federal lands carbon-neutral. He will:

- **Set a goal of 50 gigawatts of clean energy capacity on public lands, half of it offshore wind.** Mike will work with federal land agencies, experts, and public stakeholders to identify areas appropriate for clean energy development, such as already disturbed or developed areas, and include safeguards to protect wildlife and recreation opportunities.

- **Appoint a commission of scientists and land managers to define best practices for carbon sequestration measurement and management.**

- **Reform leasing processes and payments to reduce fossil fuel deference at the Department of Interior.** Mike will ensure that companies pay royalties and lease rates at least as high as what states and the private sector charge, plus sufficient payment to cover environmental damages, including climate damages.

- **Convene governors and local leaders to plan for long-term economic sustainability in areas that produce fossil fuels.** In areas that produce fossil fuels on public lands, the industry is often an important source of jobs, general economic support, and revenue for state and local governments. He will help leaders and communities diversify their economies and local government revenue streams (using strategies in his All-In Economy plan), and support workers and families, and ensure they aren’t left behind in the transition to clean energy. He will encourage clean energy development at fossil fuel sites, and connect fossil fuel workers to jobs in new energy or land restoration.

- **Reform the 1872 Mining Law.** Mike supports allowing extraction of minerals and metals that are critical to clean energy technology and American competitiveness in manufacturing, provided such practices occur with environmental and labor protections. He supports reforming the 1872 Mining Law to require comprehensive environmental protections and to charge fair value for mineral extraction.

- **Develop new master leasing plans for energy production, including clean energy, consistent with the goal of carbon neutrality.**

3. **Make sure all Americans can access and benefit from parks and public lands.** All Americans have a stake in our public lands – national parks, national forests, fish and wildlife refuges, and national seashores are owned by all of us. Native American tribes have a relationship to these lands going back to time immemorial. They are a critical resource for recreation: Half of Americans report having visited a

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21 Center for American Progress, *Federal Oil and Gas Royalty and Revenue Reform*, June 2015.
And they are a source of economic support for rural communities. But the benefits are uneven. Visitors to national parks are disproportionately white and getting older. The Trump administration is allowing oil and gas drilling near sites sacred to Native Americans. Rural communities continue to struggle. Mike will improve management of our public lands to benefit all Americans. He will:

- **Respect Native Americans’ relationship to ancestral lands, treaty rights, and sovereignty.** Tribes have longstanding complaints about the federal government’s failure to consult with them in managing public lands to which they have treaty rights or other cultural and historical relationships, or which they use for traditional activities. Mike will engage in full and meaningful consultation with tribes on federal land management. He will:
  - **Invite tribes to identify lands that need management changes.** This could address access for ceremonial purposes; for hunting, fishing and harvesting; or for sustainable economic activity, and could include tribal management roles.
  - **Work with tribes to explore economic opportunities,** including jobs in land management and maintenance, and in cultural and educational programs.

- **Increase the use of national parks by diverse constituencies.** As mayor of New York, Mike partnered with the Obama administration to improve management and increase access to national parklands around Jamaica Bay in Brooklyn and Queens, increasing recreation opportunities while restoring the ecosystem. Mike will bring similar success to people across the country in cities that contain federal lands. He’ll increase diverse communities’ access to and use of national parks, bringing a special focus to connecting urban populations to national parks and public lands near or in cities. Mike will:
  - **Pilot “transit to trails”** to make it easier for people to get to outdoor and educational opportunities on public lands using public transportation.
  - **Triple interpretive and education budgets** to update programming and improve the experience for diverse communities, aligned with local small business and tourism initiatives.
  - **Increase the diversity of the public lands workforce** to create a more welcoming experience for Americans of all backgrounds.

- **Partner with cities, states and land trusts to expand and improve parks of all kinds, increasing access for Americans in every community.** Access to parks benefits mental and physical health, and

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25 NBC News, *Where are the people of color in national parks?*, August 2011.
encourages physical activity.\textsuperscript{31} As mayor, Mike expanded parks and recreational spaces, enabling 250,000 New Yorkers to reach a park in less than 10 minutes on foot.\textsuperscript{32} He also forged an agreement with the Secretary of the Interior to \textit{jointly manage} the network of city and state parklands around Jamaica Bay.\textsuperscript{33} As president, he will:

- \textbf{Work with cities and states to consider city, state, and national parks as a network}, and help expand and improve that network to increase access for urban and rural communities.

- \textbf{Triplet funding for state and city parks under the Land and Water Conservation Fund and pilot efforts to connect management among national, state and city lands.}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Ensure that national monuments and national parks tell the full story of American history.} National monuments and national parks include historical and cultural parks that, along with public lands, tell the story of American history and culture. Mike will make sure that they tell the full story, representing all Americans. He will:

- \textbf{Appoint a commission of historians to review the national monuments and historical and cultural parks to identify gaps in the historical narrative.}

- \textbf{Establish a national competition, inviting the public to nominate new parks and monuments} that fill out the story of U.S. history and culture, prioritizing proposals that bring communities together. His administration will designate new parks and monuments accordingly, and link them with existing sites to tell a broader narrative of U.S. history, as the Park Service does for linked sites like the \textit{Underground Railroad Network to Freedom}.

\item \textbf{Support local economies in gateway communities, including local tribal economies.} Parks and public lands are a big driver of economic development, supporting tourism and other industries. High levels of tourism can also put burdens on local communities, adding to traffic congestion and even increasing housing prices. Mike will find ways to maximize economic benefits to local communities.

- \textbf{He will look for ways to change contracting and hiring in order to connect local residents to jobs and local small businesses to contracts} in land management and restoration, maintenance, and concessions. This could include helping local guides work in parks or even connecting visitors to local culture by letting local artisans sell goods.

- \textbf{He will support using federal funds for local transportation infrastructure}, with support for transit service and road maintenance, and to address other impacts, such as housing prices.

- \textbf{He will create jobs in land restoration for rural communities}, including by establishing a thousands-strong Wildfire Corps that restores forest and rangeland health to reduce wildfire risk.

\item \textbf{Support outdoor recreation and other sustainable uses.} Americans use their public lands for a variety of purposes. They are a prime destination for outdoor recreation, from backpacking and horseback riding

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\textsuperscript{32} City of New York, \textit{PlaNYC Update}, April 2011

to hunting and fishing. They are also a resource for timber and grazing land. But nearly 10 million acres of public lands are surrounded by private lands and inaccessible to the public.\textsuperscript{34} The Park Service has a $12\textsuperscript{35} billion maintenance backlog,\textsuperscript{35} and the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Fish and Wildlife Service had backlogs totaling $7.7 billion\textsuperscript{36} in FY2016.\textsuperscript{36} Visitor levels are up at national parks, but staffing levels are down.\textsuperscript{37} Mike will ensure that public lands can be used in sustainable ways, consistent with protecting wildlife and ecosystems. He will:

- Increase funding for the federal lands agencies to address the maintenance backlog\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{36}} within 10 years, increase staffing, and make sure that visitor facilities, trails, and other infrastructure are in good shape.

- Manage more BLM lands for wildlife habitat, to protect species and support hunting and fishing.

- Invite recreation and other user groups to recommend priorities and changes in management. He will look for ways to connect local economic opportunities to public lands initiatives – for example, by making sure material generated by forest restoration work can be used to manufacture mass timber products that lower carbon in building construction.

- Increase funding for parks and public lands, including for recreation and habitat conservation, and to support fishing and hunting. He will use increased funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to expand access for recreation, maintain funding for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Duck Stamps program, and experiment with new ways of raising revenue, including by charging foreign visitors higher fees as many countries do.

- Support implementation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and science-based, conservation-based approaches to fisheries management that includes consultation with fishing communities.

4. Reform management to break down silos between federal agencies, encourage collaboration with stakeholders, and streamline bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{34}} Management of federal lands is divided among multiple agencies. The Forest Service, Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service have different organizational cultures and missions, and are each responsible for tens of millions of acres of land, often neighboring each other. The situation often results in inconsistencies and frustrates stakeholders. Land management can also be controversial: Public lands are in the backyards of diverse communities yet they belong to everyone, and people have individual, strongly held views on how they should be managed. Mike will reform management to address these challenges, and prioritize on-the-ground collaboration with as many stakeholders as possible. He will:

- Convene a National Lands sub-cabinet to coordinate federal land management. The White House will convene the Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife

\textsuperscript{34} Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, \textit{Off Limits, But Within Reach}, 2018.

\textsuperscript{35} National Park Service, \textit{What is Deferred Maintenance}, October 2019.


\textsuperscript{37} National Park Service, \textit{Budget Justifications and Performance Information Fiscal Year 2018}, 2017.
Service regularly to coordinate management strategies. The structure will be replicated at the regional and local level.

- **Organize and fund local collaborative structures involving tribes, state and local communities, and conservation and user groups, to help develop evidence-based, cross-agency management plans.** Collaborative approaches involving stakeholders with diverse viewpoints have produced successful results, including the Clinton administration’s Resource Advisory Councils and the sage-grouse conservation plan. The Trump administration has undermined this progress, failing to support Resource Advisory Councils\(^{38}\) and repealing protections\(^{39}\) for sage grouse habitat. Mike will support local collaborative approaches to manage public lands.

- **Review contracting, hiring and permitting rules and fees** to reduce barriers to hiring local experts and contractors, allow tribal-led education and interpretation, permit local cultural and educational activities, and allow public-private partnerships to support infrastructure maintenance.
