A. The Field of Public Land Law

Professors George C. Coggins and Robert Glicksman’s three volume treatise, PUBLIC NATURAL RESOURCES LAW is a useful complement to this casebook, covering all the topics addressed here in comprehensive fashion. Their MODERN PUBLIC LAND LAW IN A NUTSHELL, is also a helpful companion to this casebook.

B. The Federal Lands and Resources

Climate Change: In May 2013, the GAO issued a report examining steps taken by the Forest Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management toward adaptation, which can be used to help manage the risks to vulnerable natural resources caused by climate change. U.S. GOV’T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, REP. NO. GAO-13-253, VARIOUS ADAPTATION EFFORTS ARE UNDER WAY AND KEY NATURAL MANAGEMENT AGENCIES (2013).

C. Management of Federal Lands

1. The National Forest System

The Forest Service, which falls within the U.S. Department of Agriculture was established in 1905 with the mission to “sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.” The standard source for understanding the agency’s early years is GIFFORD PINCHOT, BREAKING NEW GROUND (1947). An important secondary source for interpreting Pinchot’s biography is CHAR MILLER, GIFFORD PINCHOT AND THE MAKING OF MODERN ENVIRONMENTALISM (2001). On the mid-century Forest Service, the best source is GLEN O. ROBINSON, THE FOREST SERVICE (1975). On the important legislative and regulatory reforms of the 1970s and early 80s, the key sources are CHARLES F. WILKINSON & H. MICHAEL ANDERSON, LAND AND RESOURCE PLANNING IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS (1987), and DENNIS C. LE_MASTER, DECADE OF CHANGE: THE REMAKING OF FOREST SERVICE STATUTORY AUTHORITY DURING THE 1970s (1984). An excellent overview of the national forest history is SAMUEL P. HAYS, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THE NATIONAL FORESTS (2009).
2. The BLM Public Lands
The Bureau of Land Management’s mission directs it, among other things, to sustain the productivity of America’s public lands. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 sets out the BLM’s multiple-use mission, which mandates that public land resources are managed for a variety of uses. On the BLM see James R. Skillem, The Nation’s Largest Landlord: The Bureau of Land Management in the American West (2009).

3. The National Wildlife Refuge System

4. The National Park System
The first national park was created in 1872 when Congress reserved Yellowstone county in the Wyoming and Montana territories as a public park. Because there were no state governments in place to manage the park, it remained in the care of the Department of the Interior. However, it was not until 1916 that President Wilson approved legislation creating the National Park Service, directing it “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. Joseph Sax and Robert Keiter are the key modern legal scholars addressing national park management. Essential sources include Joseph L. Sax, Mountains Without Handrails (1980), and Robert B. Keiter, To Conserve Unimpaired (2013). Two other important sources on national park history are Alfred Runte, National Parks: The American Experience (2d ed. 1987), and Richard Sellars, Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History (1997).

5. The Preservation Lands and Other Special Categories
6. The Legal Offices

7. The United States Congress

8. The Special Case of Alaska
A helpful source for understanding the special case of Alaska is STEPHEN HAYCOX, FRIGID EMBRACE: POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENT IN ALASKA (2002).

D. Principles of Resource Allocation and Management

1. Solving the Tragedy of the Commons


2. Ecosystem Management
GARY K. MEFFE ET AL., ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT: ADAPTIVE, COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION (2002) is the definitive text on ecosystem management.

3. The Socio-Economics of Public-Land Communities in the West