



# POLICY HANDBOOK

UPDATED OCTOBER 2025





# A Message from Our Chief Executive Officer



## DEAR FRIENDS,

As of August 2025, the National Conservation Lands encompass over 38 million acres across 906 units—roughly 15 percent of the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) surface estate—and serve as a cornerstone of America’s public lands conservation legacy. The National Conservation Lands protect some of America’s most remarkable cultural and ecological treasures: biodiversity hotspots like those found in Oregon’s Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, home to over 120 species of butterflies and numerous endemic plants; culturally invaluable sites like those found in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado, which preserves the highest concentration of archaeological sites in the United States; and clean watersheds like the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area in Arizona, which protects the free-flowing San Pedro River, groundwater recharge, wildlife habitat, and community water resources. Open for all to enjoy, these lands form the backbone of our natural and cultural identity, while powering local economies and the \$1.2 trillion [outdoor recreation economy](#).<sup>1</sup>

This handbook provides a comprehensive overview of the legal, policy, and operational frameworks guiding the designation, management, and stewardship of the National Conservation Lands. It includes historical context, key policy achievements, a technical overview of various land designations, planning processes, and management practices. Importantly, this handbook also articulates our long-term vision to help guide the stewardship and expansion efforts of the National Conservation Lands for years to come.

## **Persistent and emerging threats remind us why a clear, forward-looking vision for the National Conservation Lands remains essential.**

agreement of its kind and formally recognizing Traditional Ecological Knowledge in resource management planning. Equally transformative was the historic Public Lands Rule, which marked a pivotal shift in Bureau of Land Management policy by ensuring conservation, climate resilience, cultural values, habitat connectivity, and recreation are on equal footing with extractive uses across 245 million acres of BLM-managed lands.

Since the system’s creation 25 years ago, we have celebrated landmark conservation accomplishments for the National Conservation Lands. Utah’s Bears Ears National Monument stands out as a groundbreaking example, featuring the first tribal co-management

Yet, as we look ahead, persistent and emerging threats remind us why a clear, forward looking vision for the National Conservation Lands remains essential. Shifts in federal leadership and congressional priorities have, at times, forced a pivot from proactive advocacy to defensive action. Policy decisions through executive actions, secretarial directives, or legislative efforts have aimed to expand extractive activities on public lands, reduce protections for national monuments, and undermine cornerstone conservation tools like the Antiquities Act. Steep funding cuts have also threatened the Bureau of Land Management’s capacity to effectively steward and manage the National Conservation Lands, while attempts to sell off public lands or mandate large-scale development have surfaced repeatedly.





Despite these ongoing challenges, there is opportunity. In partnership with our Friends Grassroots Network, the Conservation Lands Foundation continues to celebrate key milestones and galvanize support through both local and national campaigns that raise awareness and build public momentum for protecting these irreplaceable landscapes.

Through sustained organizing, we have helped secure critical funding increases for the Bureau of Land Management's conservation programs and built bipartisan support in Congress for protecting public lands. Since CLF launched its effort to adequately fund the BLM and the National Conservation Lands in 2017, CLF and the Friends Network have successfully pushed back attempts to significantly cut funding for the National Conservation Lands, and in the federal government's fiscal year 2023 budget, secured a 25% increase in this funding, the largest year-to-year increase in the history of the National Conservation Lands.

These reasons for hope underscore why we will continue to fight tirelessly for these landscapes and the values they represent.

**CLF was founded on the belief that National Conservation Lands are best managed when an active community of local people work together.**

As we reflect on the past 25 years of remarkable achievements for the National Conservation Lands, it becomes clear that successfully meeting the moment for the next 25 will require a bold, forward looking vision – a vision where these crown jewels

of America's public lands are resilient, ecologically robust, and widely supported across the political spectrum.

We envision a future where management incorporates Tribal leadership and collaborative stewardship, and where every American sees their values reflected in these landscapes. Growing awareness of the National Conservation Lands system must also translate into sustained, consistent funding that meets the needs of the system. A properly funded National Conservation Lands system will in turn enable expanded acreage, science-backed management, stories previously untold, and a further embrace of restoration practices.

This won't be easy. Achieving these goals will require investing in and broadening our Friends Network, cultivating bold congressional champions, embracing new tools and allies, and investing in our federal land management agencies.

CLF was founded on the belief that National Conservation Lands are best managed when an active community of local people work together. Through celebration, stewardship, and collaboration, CLF, our Friends Network partners, and advocates across the country will chart the course for a resilient and thriving National Conservation Lands system for years to come.

With appreciation.



**CHRIS HILL | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
CONSERVATION LANDS FOUNDATION**

**Cover photos:**

Red Cliffs National Conservation Area (UT) - Bob Wick  
Arctic Fox - Bob Wick  
Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CO)  
King Range National Conservation Area (CA) - Bob Wick  
Tangle Lake (AK) - BLM  
Great Bend of the Gila (AZ) - Dawn Kish

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# Introduction

## The Role of National Conservation Lands

National Conservation Lands, legally known as the National Landscape Conservation System, are among the most spectacular and ecologically significant public lands in the United States. These landscapes include National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), they protect diverse natural, cultural, and archaeological treasures while supporting responsible recreation and conservation.

In 2000, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt signed an administrative order creating the National Landscape Conservation System in order to “conserve, protect,

and restore these nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations.” The system was formally established through the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (OPLMA). Section 2002 of that law codified the National Landscape Conservation System within the BLM and articulated a clear conservation mandate that mirrored the language from the original administrative order by Secretary Babbitt. OPLMA’s legislative language strengthened the legal foundation of the system, reinforcing the conservation-focused management already required by the individual enabling acts or proclamations for each unit.



The BLM is generally directed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to manage public lands “under principles of multiple use and sustained yield.”<sup>2</sup> “Multiple use” involves managing lands and their resources—including recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife, fish, and natural scenic, scientific, and historical values—“so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.”<sup>3</sup> “Sustained yield” refers to achieving a “high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources... consistent with multiple use.”<sup>4</sup> As a result, the BLM must balance competing uses and consider long-term land health and productivity. However, FLPMA includes an important exception: lands dedicated to specific uses by other laws, such as the National Conservation Lands, are to be managed primarily according to their specific governing laws. This framework elevates conservation mandates to take precedence over general multiple-use management on National Conservation Lands.



Sandhill crane · Bob Wick

National Conservation Lands are some of the last places in the United States where visitors can experience true solitude, and they safeguard sites ranging from [sacred Native American cultural areas in Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument in Arizona](#) to the [Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail in Idaho showcasing the routes explored by Lewis and Clark](#). While primarily located in the western U.S., units like the [Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area in Florida](#) highlight the geographic diversity of the system. They are also biodiversity hotspots: for example, [Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River in California contains a type of low-elevation riparian and wetland habitat that is rare in the Sierra](#)

[Nevada](#). The creation of the National Conservation Lands system reflects an evolving understanding of public land stewardship, recognizing the importance of managing large, interconnected landscapes that encompass whole ecosystems and cultural regions, rather than isolated parcels vulnerable to development.

Unlike National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, or National Forests, which benefit from more uniform legislative mandates and funding structures, the National Conservation Lands are a patchwork of designations with varying goals and resource needs.

This diversity creates both a richness in purpose and a challenge for unified management and funding.

The BLM manages a vast portfolio—the largest of any federal land manager, overseeing about [one-tenth of the nation's land base and nearly 40% of federal public lands](#). As a result, BLM lands play a critical role in promoting climate resilience and protecting wildlife habitat. As of September 2025, National Conservation

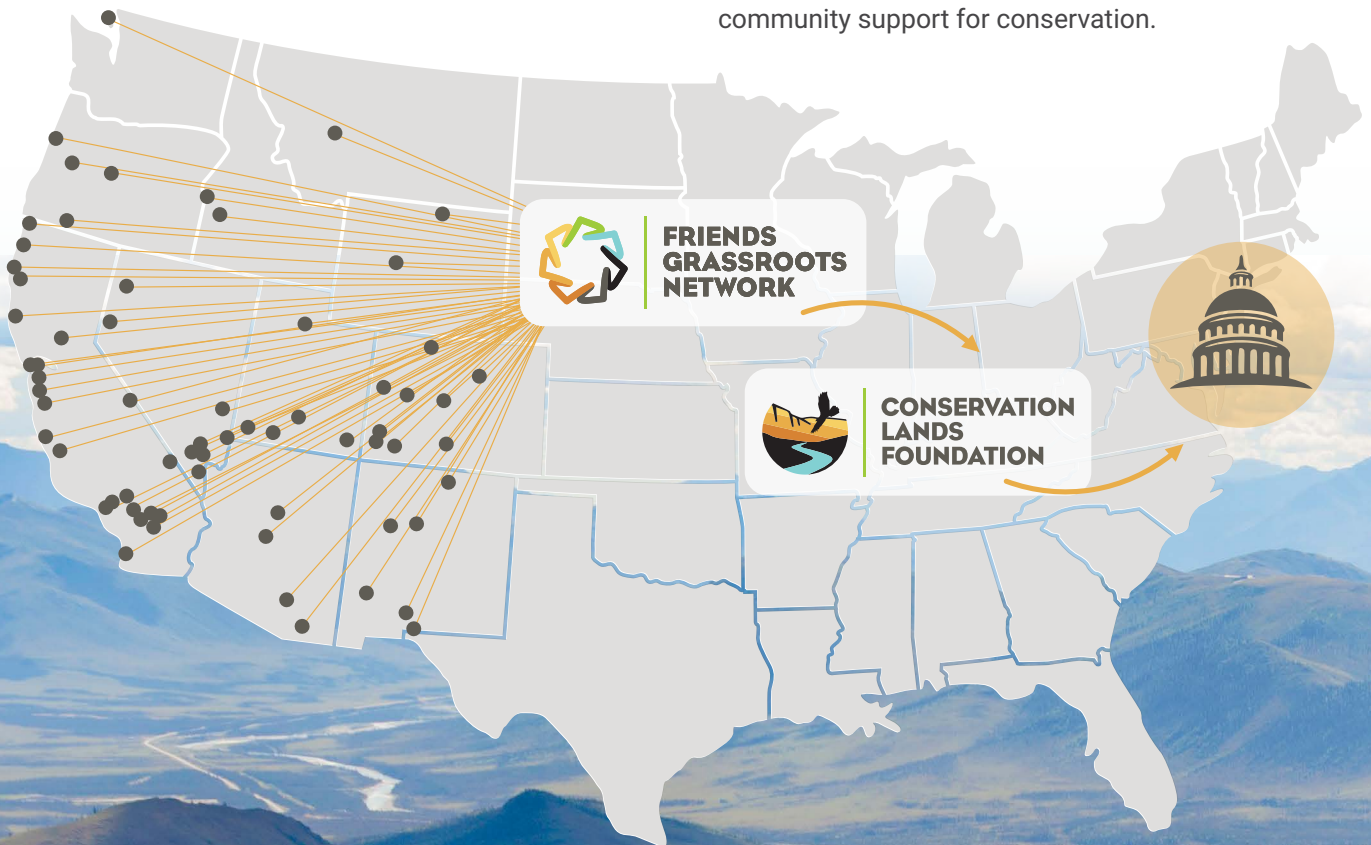
Lands span over [38 million acres across 906 units](#), accounting for approximately 15% of the [245 million surface acres managed by the BLM](#). Continued expansion and strengthening of this system will ensure enduring protection for America's exceptional landscapes and the communities and ecosystems they sustain.

# The Role of Conservation Lands Foundation and Friends Grassroots Network in Shaping Policy

A critical component of advancing stewardship of National Conservation Lands is the robust network of partner organizations supported by the Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF). In 2007, former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and environmental lawyer and advocate Ed Norton founded CLF to build a coordinated movement of local and national advocates dedicated to the protection, stewardship, and growth of the National Conservation Lands system. One of its founding goals was to rebalance the BLM's historic prioritization of land development by ensuring conservation was properly recognized as a central agency mission.

To achieve this, CLF invests in cultivating and sustaining community-led organizations rooted in a shared commitment to public lands, uniting a broad range of voices across the rural and urban West. Today, CLF remains the only national nonprofit solely focused on protecting, restoring, and expanding the National Conservation Lands. Its core partner network—the [Friends Grassroots Network](#)—includes more than 80 community-based groups working on the ground to safeguard these treasured places.

These Friends Network groups work locally to advocate for the protection and proper management of specific National Conservation Lands units, engage in stewardship activities (e.g., trail work, restoration, site monitoring), educate the public, and build community support for conservation.







The significant gap between the BLM's extensive land management duties, including the conservation-focused mandates for the expanding National Conservation Lands system and its available staffing and financial resources, poses a fundamental structural challenge. Compared to agencies like the National Park Service, the BLM operates with far fewer personnel and lower funding levels per acre, despite managing more land and adhering to a complex multiple-use mission that includes robust conservation requirements for National Conservation Lands. This disparity makes it difficult for the agency

to fully implement monitoring, restoration, recreation management, and enforcement activities essential for National Conservation Lands stewardship and BLM lands more broadly. The Conservation Lands Foundation and the Friends Network advocate through federal policy processes to secure additional funding, provide thousands of hours of on-the-ground stewardship, and work to build coalitions with unlikely partners to expand the base of supporters for the system.



# Key Events in the History of the

**1906**

## **Antiquities Act**

Congress passes and President Theodore Roosevelt signs the Antiquities Act, giving the President the authority to designate national monuments.



**1968**

## **National Trails System Act Wild and Scenic Rivers Act**

Congress enacts the National Trails System Act (NTSA) and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA).



**1976**  
**FLPMA**

Congress enacts the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).



**2000**

## **National Landscape Conservation System**

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt signs an administrative order creating the National Landscape Conservation System to "conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations."



**1964**

## **Wilderness Act**

Congress enacts the Wilderness Act.



**1970**

## **King Range Act**

Congress passes the King Range Act, designating the King Range National Conservation Area (NCA) in California, the first NCA that will later become part of the National Conservation Lands.



**1996**

## **1st national monument**

President Bill Clinton designates Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah, the first national monument to be managed by the BLM.



**2007**

## **Conservation Lands Foundation founded**

Former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and environmental lawyer and advocate Ed Norton founded the Conservation Lands Foundation to build a coordinated movement of local and national advocates dedicated to the protection, stewardship, and growth of the National Conservation Lands system.



1906: nps.gov | 1964: wildernesswatch.org | 1968:  
1970: King Range (CA) - Bob Wick | 1976: Dolores Canyon (CO) - Bob Wick  
1996: Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (UT) - Bob Wick



# National Conservation Lands

## 2009 National Conservation Lands system permanently established

President Barack Obama signs the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, which permanently establishes the National Conservation Lands system.



## 2011 Conservation as a focus

The BLM releases a 15-Year Strategic Plan for the National Conservation Lands, reinforcing conservation as the primary focus.



## 2014 National Conservation Lands branded

The National Landscape Conservation System is rebranded as the National Conservation Lands.



## 2021 Monuments restored

President Joe Biden restores Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments to their original boundaries.



## 2010 Conservation management

Secretary Ken Salazar issues Order No. 3308, emphasizing conservation management of the National Conservation Lands and establishing a new BLM directorate: National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnerships.



## 2012 Guiding management

The BLM releases Policy Manuals for the National Conservation Lands to guide management.



## 2017 Two National Monuments shrink

President Trump significantly reduces the size of Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in Utah, removing federal protections from more than 2 million acres of public land.



## 2024 Public Lands Rule

The Biden-Harris Administration finalizes the Public Lands Rule, strengthening conservation efforts on BLM-managed lands by prioritizing landscape health, expanding restoration and mitigation leases, and clarifying protections for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).



2009: Snake River (ID) - BLM | 2010: Dominguez Escalante National Conservation Area (CO) - BLM | 2011: Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River (AK) - Bob Wick | 2012: | 2014: | 2017: Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (UT) | 2021: Bears Ears National Monument (UT)



# Designations Within the National Conservation Lands

There are three primary ways that lands become part of the National Conservation Lands system:

**Executive designations** by presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act,

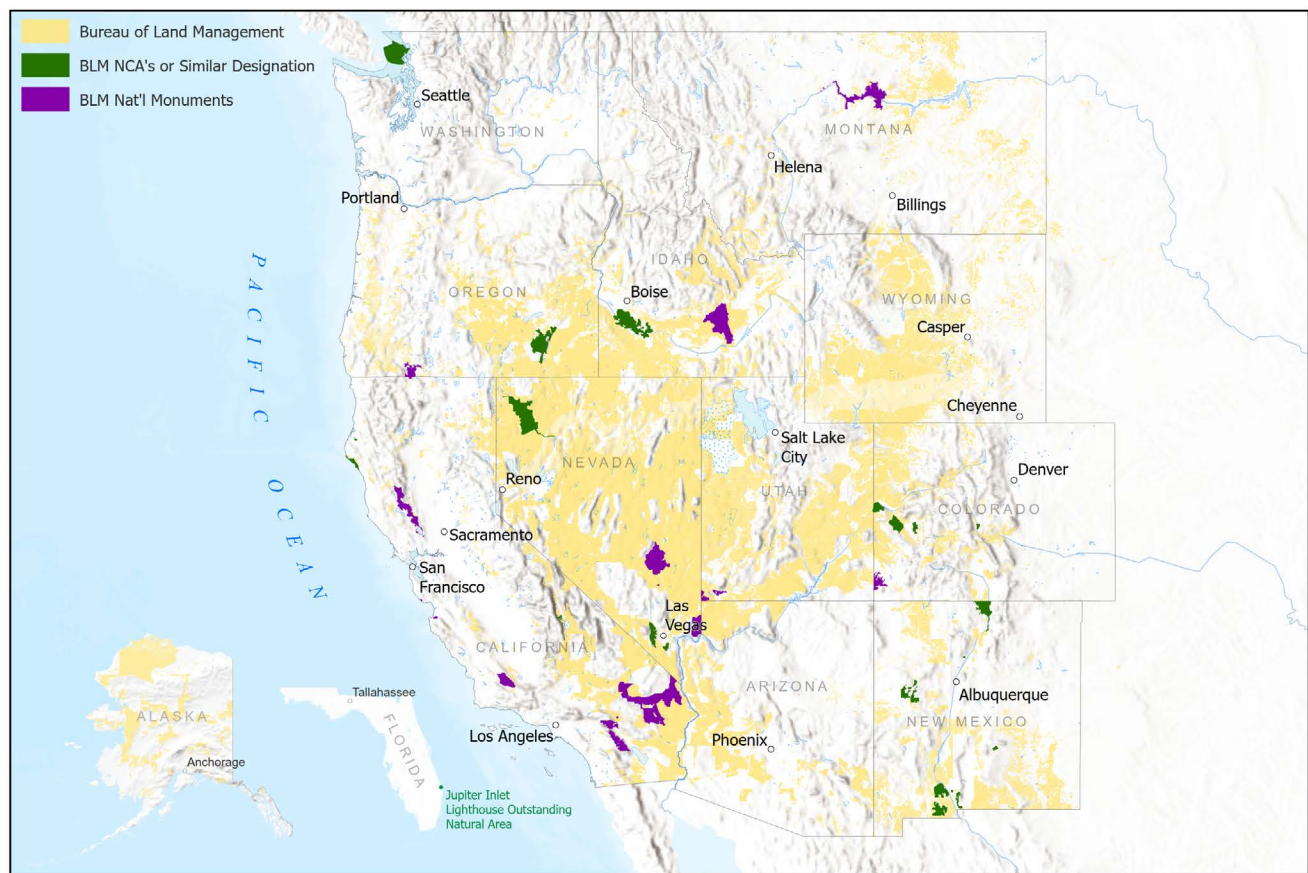
**Legislative designations** through Congressional action, and

**Administrative protections** established by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regulatory decisions.

These pathways form the strategic focus of the Conservation Lands Foundation's work: bringing community power to secure and defend protections at all three levels.

Units within the National Conservation Lands system are designated by enabling statutes or presidential proclamations, which set forth more detailed management priorities and serve as the governing authority for that respective unit. These management frameworks highlight conservation as the primary use within National Conservation Lands; uses that can negatively impact landscapes, such as oil and gas development, mining, livestock grazing, motorized vehicle use, and renewable energy infrastructure, are generally limited or prohibited and are evaluated under management plans. These uses are governed by specific enabling legislation, presidential proclamations, [Department of Interior manuals](#), [BLM policy manuals](#), and [BLM regulations](#) that outline allowable activities and restrictions designed to maintain the ecological integrity and values that justified the area's special designation.





## NATIONAL MONUMENTS, NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREAS, AND SIMILAR DESIGNATIONS

[These units](#) are designated to protect a wide variety of resources—ecological, geological, cultural, scenic, and scientific—and often reflect a mix of values within a single landscape. Management is primarily guided by the language of the enabling legislation or presidential proclamation, which may include unique protective standards, allowable uses, and specific implementation requirements.

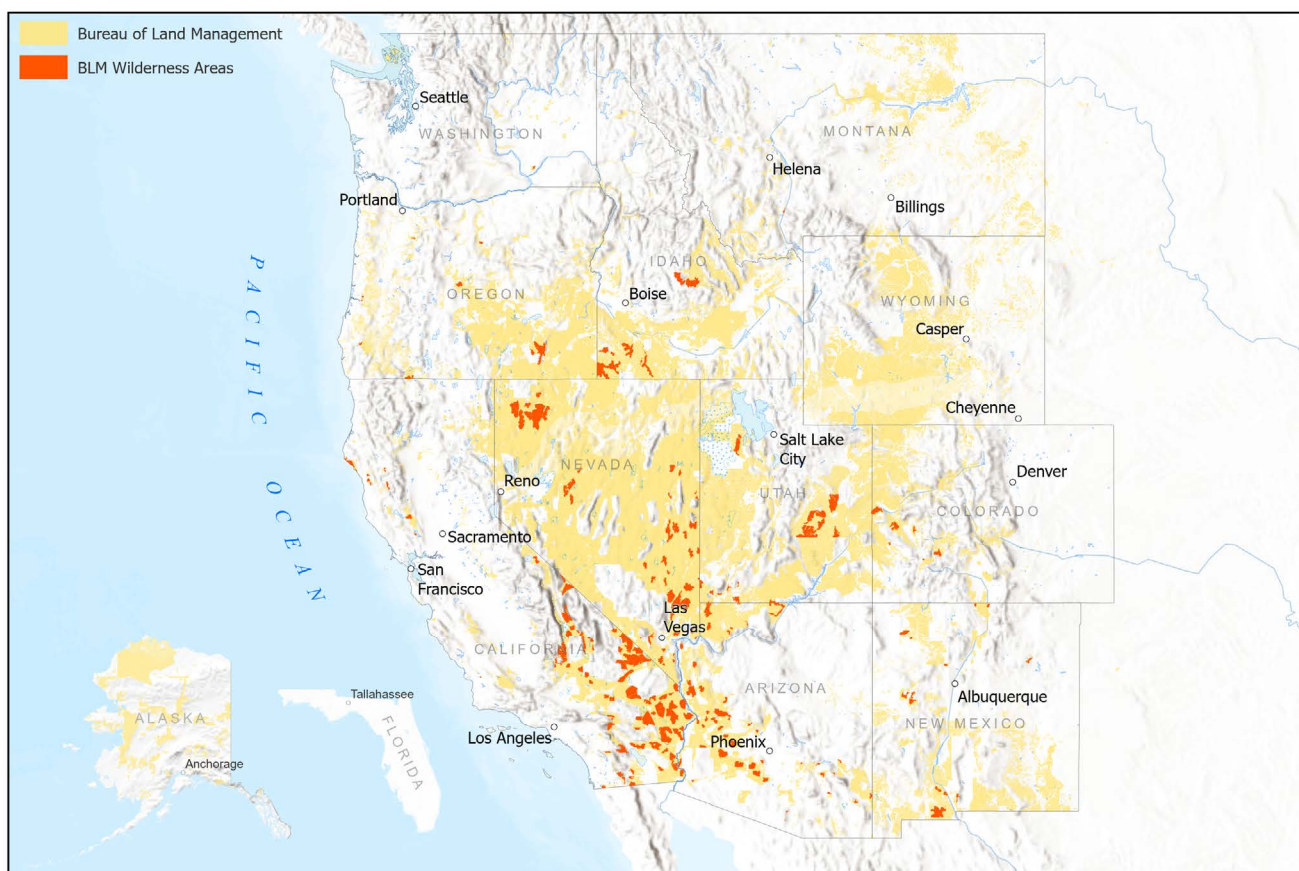
Many National Monuments are established under the Antiquities Act of 1906, which authorizes the President to designate areas to protect “historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.”<sup>5</sup> The specific terms of each proclamation dictate the scope of protection and allowable uses. Courts have consistently upheld the President’s discretion under the Antiquities Act, including the authority to protect large-scale landscapes when necessary. While not

as common, Congress also possesses the authority to designate National Monuments.

National Conservation Areas (NCAs) and similar designations including Outstanding Natural Areas, Cooperative Management and Protection Areas, Forest Reserves, and National Scenic Areas, by contrast, are only designated through site-specific Congressional legislation (e.g. Black Rock Desert–High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area Act of 2000), which defines the purpose of the designation and often outlines permitted and prohibited uses. Because each of these units are created by a unique statute, management decisions vary case by case.

[BLM Manual 6220](#) governs the management of National Monuments, NCAs and similar designations, offering guidance on interpreting designation language, evaluating use compatibility, and integrating designation-specific standards into land use planning, transportation, recreation, grazing, energy, and rights-of-way management.



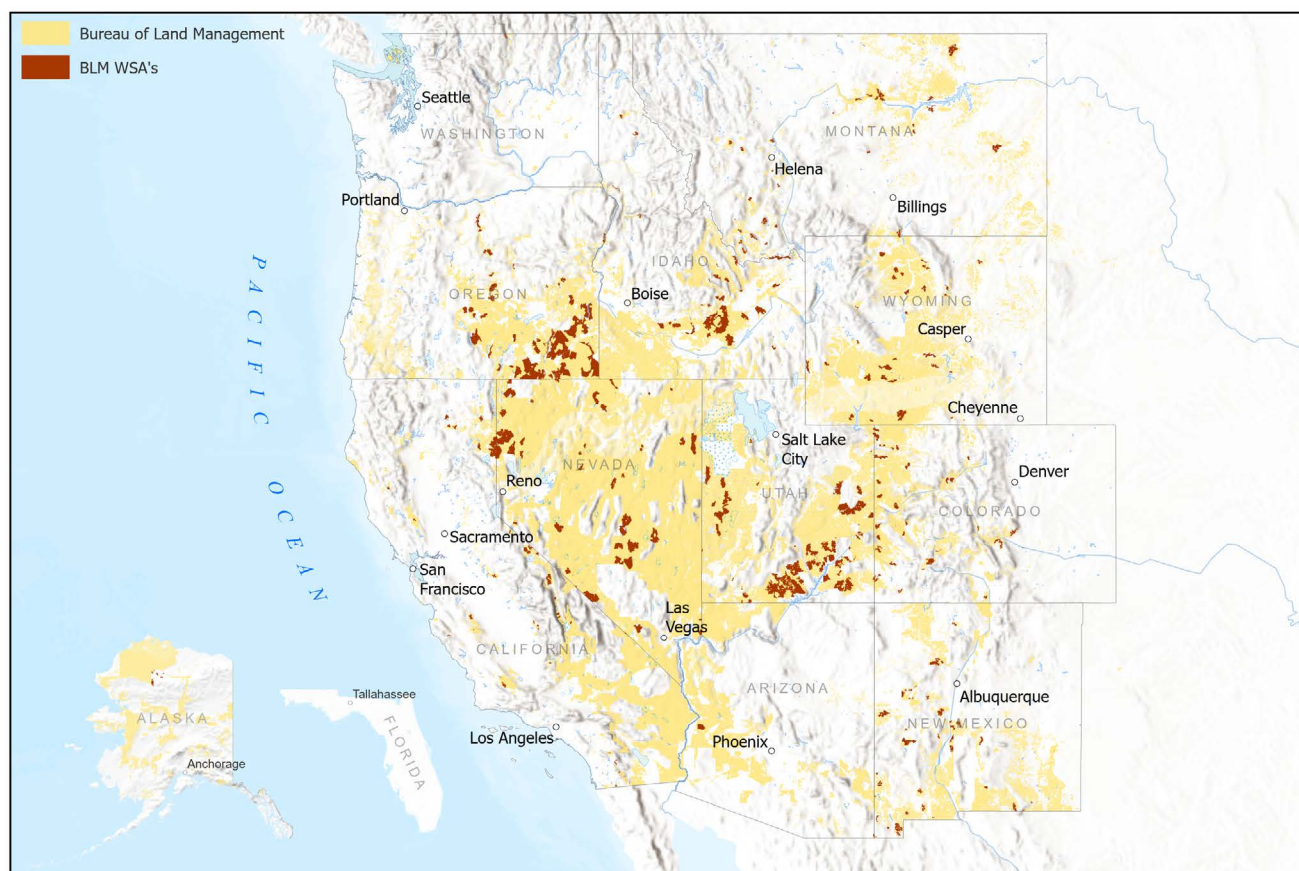


## WILDERNESS AREAS

[Wilderness Areas](#) are designated by Congress to preserve their “wilderness character,” a term defined by qualities such as being untrammeled, natural, undeveloped, and offering opportunities for solitude or primitive, unconfined recreation.<sup>6</sup> These areas are managed to limit human infrastructure and are subject to some of the most protective land use restrictions across federal public lands.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 provides the legal foundation for managing these areas. Section 4(c) of the Act imposes broad prohibitions on commercial enterprises, permanent or temporary roads, motorized vehicles and equipment, aircraft landings, mechanical transport (including bicycles), and the construction of structures and installations—except where necessary for administrative purposes or emergencies. Section 4(d) allows limited exceptions, including continued livestock grazing and certain mineral activities under strict conditions.

[BLM Manual 6340](#) (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas) outlines agency policy for implementing the Wilderness Act. It provides direction for preserving wilderness character, managing authorized uses, and conducting Minimum Requirements Analyses (MRA) to evaluate and justify any administrative actions that may otherwise be prohibited.



## WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

[Wilderness Study Areas \(WSAs\)](#) are roadless BLM-managed areas of 5,000 acres or more identified through the wilderness review process under Section 603 of FLPMA. Until Congress acts to either designate these areas as Wilderness or release them for other uses, the BLM must manage them to preserve their suitability for future designation under the non-impairment standard, which prohibits activities that would degrade wilderness character or limit designation potential.

While certain pre-FLPMA uses—such as livestock grazing, mining, and energy leases—may continue, new activities must be temporary, avoid permanent structures, and not impair wilderness values. [BLM Manual 6330](#) (Management of Wilderness Study Areas) provides detailed policy guidance for applying this standard, evaluating proposed uses, and managing grandfathered rights, emergency response, and scientific research.

Some WSAs are also designated through the land use planning process (as detailed in Section 202 of FLPMA). These areas are managed with virtually the same protection as Section 603 WSAs.



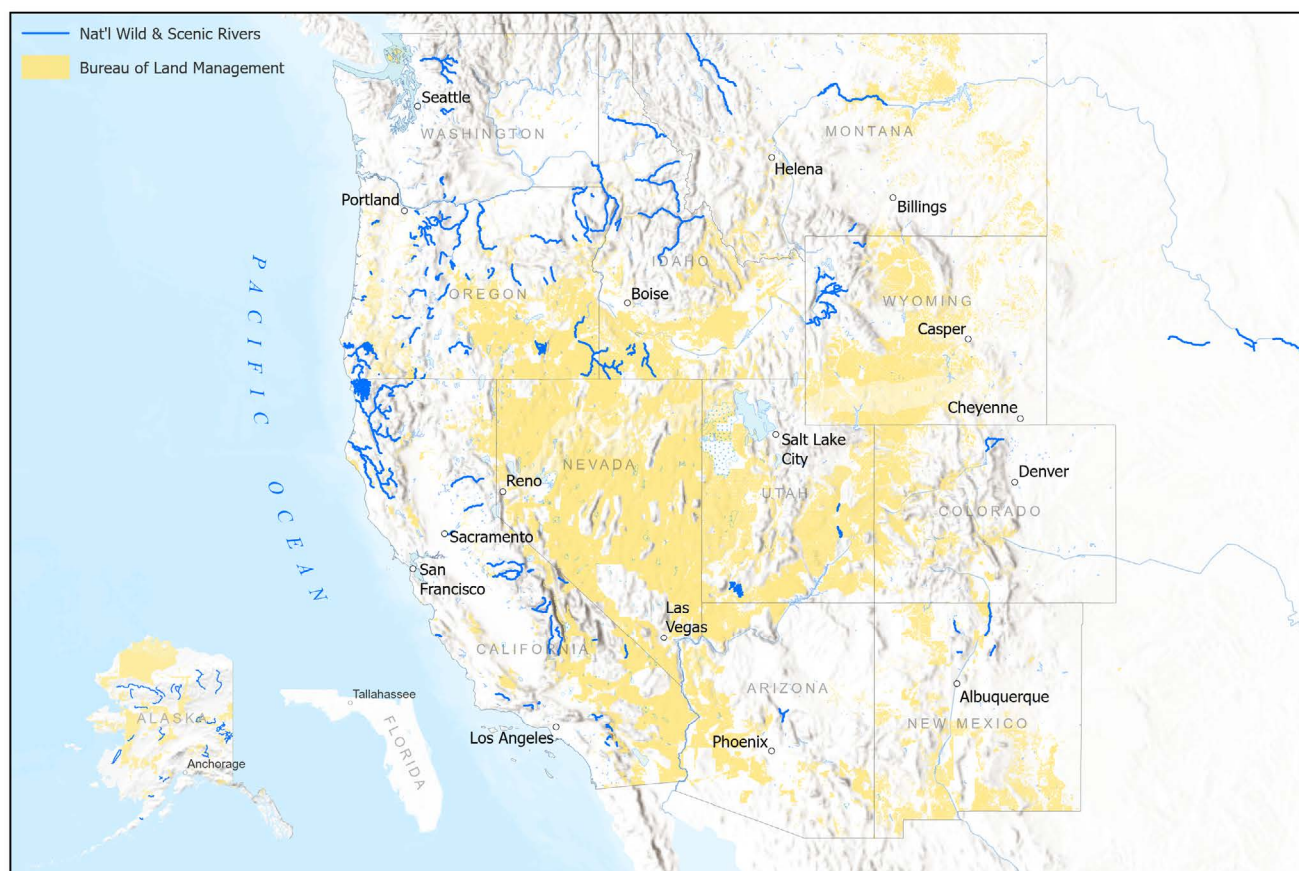


## NATIONAL SCENIC TRAILS AND NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS

[National Scenic Trails \(NSTs\)](#) and [National Historic Trails \(NHTs\)](#) are designated under the National Trails System Act (NTSA) of 1968 to commemorate significant historic routes or to provide continuous, long-distance recreation and conservation corridors. These linear units often span multiple land ownerships and management jurisdictions, requiring strong interagency coordination and partner engagement.

NSTs are designated to conserve scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational values along extended routes. NHTs focus on identifying, protecting, and interpreting historically significant routes and related sites. Section 7(c) of the NTSA generally prohibits motorized use on NSTs unless it was established prior to designation, and limits any use that would “substantially interfere with the nature and purposes of the trail.”<sup>7</sup> NHTs allow somewhat greater flexibility, provided that uses do not impair the character, interpretive value, or commemorative purpose of the trail.

[BLM Manual 6250](#) (National Scenic and Historic Trail Administration) outlines BLM’s policy for planning, developing, and managing national trails, including coordination with other agencies and stakeholders, development of trail-wide Comprehensive Plans, siting of interpretive infrastructure, and maintenance of visual integrity and user experience. [Manual 6280-1](#) supports this framework with guidance on inventorying and monitoring trail-associated resources, settings, and uses.



## WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

[Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers \(WSRs\)](#) are managed to preserve free-flowing conditions and protect Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) such as scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or geologic attributes. Management varies by classification—Wild, Scenic, or Recreational—depending on the level of existing shoreline development and accessibility at the time of designation.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) of 1968 prohibits dam construction and major water resource developments that would adversely affect designated segments. Under Section 7, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) may not license hydroelectric projects on or directly affecting designated segments, and federal agencies may not assist in water projects that would cause direct and adverse effects. Activities in upstream, downstream, or tributary areas are permitted only if they do not “unreasonably diminish” river values.<sup>8</sup>

[BLM Manual 6400](#) provides policy direction for administering WSRs, including identifying eligible and suitable segments, preparing Comprehensive River Management Plans (CRMPs), and applying the Section 7 determination process. The manual emphasizes protecting free-flowing character, enhancing water quality, and conserving ORVs over the long term.



# Planning

## Planning Tools

Robust and adaptive management practices are essential for translating laws and policies into action for the National Conservation Lands. The BLM utilizes several key planning tools to guide management decisions across these different land designations.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

FLPMA Section 202 mandates the development and maintenance of land use plans, known as Resource Management Plans (RMPs), for all BLM lands. These plans are the primary mechanism for implementing FLPMA's mandate and making specific land use allocation decisions. RMPs determine which lands are open or closed to various activities (e.g., mineral leasing, grazing, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use) and establish management objectives and prescriptions for different resource values, including those within National Conservation Lands units. Importantly, RMPs must also rely on an updated inventory of resources of the lands encompassed within the plan area. The planning process requires public participation and coordination with state, local, and Tribal governments in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



## NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires agencies to evaluate environmental impacts of major federal actions that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Sometimes referred to as a “look before you leap” law, NEPA does not require an agency to choose a certain action, but rather, requires that the BLM “consider every significant aspect of the environmental impact of a proposed action” and inform the public of those impacts.<sup>9</sup>

Depending on the expected level of impact, NEPA analyses can take different forms:

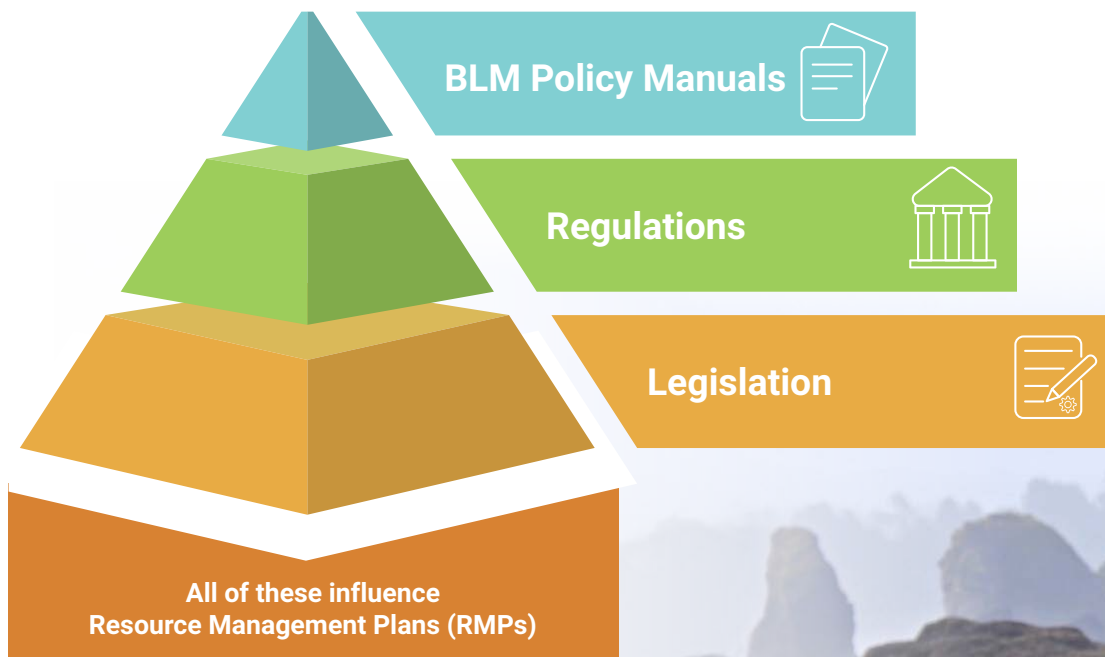
- **Categorical Exclusion (CX):** Utilized if the action fits within a category that the BLM has determined to not have significant impacts.
- **Environmental Assessment (EA):** Utilized if the impact of the proposed action is uncertain. Analysis of an EA results in either a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or the development of an EIS.
- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):** The BLM is required to conduct this analysis if the proposed action is anticipated to cause significant environmental impacts.



NEPA analysis is required for BLM actions such as approving RMPs or Amendments; issuing permits or leases (oil and gas, grazing, mining, or recreation); approving rights-of-way (pipelines, transmission lines, or roads); approving vegetation treatments, restoration projects, or fuels treatment; authorizing renewable energy projects (solar, wind, or geothermal); and land disposals, acquisitions, or exchanges.

**Reasonably Foreseeable Impacts:** NEPA requires the Bureau of Land Management to properly evaluate the “reasonably foreseeable” impacts of major federal actions.<sup>10</sup> To meet those goals, NEPA requires that the BLM “consider every significant aspect of the environmental impact of a proposed action” and inform the public of those impacts.<sup>11</sup> The BLM must take a “hard look” at the environmental effects before making any leasing

## POLICY AND PLANNING ARCHITECTURE



decisions, ensuring “that the agency, in reaching its decision, will have available, and will carefully consider, detailed information concerning significant environmental impacts.”<sup>12</sup> Environmental “[e]ffects are reasonably foreseeable if they are sufficiently likely to occur that a person of ordinary prudence would take [them] into account in reaching a decision.”<sup>13</sup>

**Range of Reasonable Alternatives:** Under NEPA, reasonable alternatives means a “reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, and meet the purpose and need for the proposed action.” At a minimum, an agency must carry forward one action alternative and the no-

action alternative. Courts have recognized that EAs have more latitude in alternative development as compared to EISs. Carrying forward just one action alternative has been proven to be sufficient when the agency makes it clear that other potential alternatives were considered, but then eliminated and explain why they were eliminated. “Although an agency must still give full and meaningful consideration to all reasonable alternatives in an environmental assessment, the agency’s obligation under NEPA to discuss alternatives is less than in an EIS.”<sup>14</sup>





**Public participation:** In each step of the NEPA process, the public must have the opportunity to make its voice heard. For BLM NEPA processes, public engagement occurs through the [ePlanning portal](https://eplanning.blm.gov) ([eplanning.blm.gov](https://eplanning.blm.gov)). ePlanning also serves as the online platform for public participation in land use planning by providing access to documents, maps, and comment opportunities.

The stages of the public engagement process are:

**1). Notice of Intent (NOI) and Scoping**

This initial stage announces the BLM's intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) and begins the scoping period, during which the public is invited to submit comments identifying issues, concerns, and alternatives to be considered in the planning process. Public meetings are often held to gather early input and explain the process.

**2). Draft RMP or Monument Management Plan (MMP) / Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

The Draft RMP or MMP/EIS outlines proposed management alternatives and analyzes their environmental impacts. A formal public comment period allows stakeholders to provide input on the draft. Public meetings or open houses are typically hosted to present the draft and facilitate feedback.

**3). Proposed RMP or MMP / Final EIS**

This stage presents the agency's proposed management alternative and responds to substantive public comments from the draft phase.

## THE STAGES OF THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

1

**Notice of Intent (NOI)  
and Scoping**

2

**Draft RMP or MMP /  
Draft Environmental  
Impact Statement (EIS)**

3

**Proposed RMP or  
MMP / Final EIS**



#### **4). *Protest Period***

A 30-day protest period following the release of the proposed RMP or MMP allows those who participated during earlier stages to file a formal protest if they believe the plan violates laws or regulations. Although no new general public comments are accepted, the protest process provides a final administrative recourse for stakeholders.

#### **5). *Governor's Consistency Review***

Concurrent with the protest period, the governor of the affected state has 60 days to review the proposed plan to ensure consistency with state policies and plans. While this is primarily a state-level review, some states may solicit informal input or comments from relevant agencies and stakeholders.

#### **6). *Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved RMP or MMP***

This final stage formally adopts the approved RMP or MMP and documents the agency's decision. The public is notified of the decision and may engage in implementation-level planning or future plan amendments.

4

**Protest Period**

5

**Governor's Consistency  
Review**

6

**Record of Decision  
(ROD) and Approved  
RMP or MMP**



## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT (APA)

The [APA](#) governs how federal agencies make rules, craft land use plans, issue permits, decide cases, and handle participation.

Whenever the BLM creates or revises regulations or plans, it must follow the APA's notice and comment process: 1) The proposed rule or plan must be published in the Federal Register, 2) Public comments must be allowed and considered, and 3) A final rule or plan must be published with an explanation. The BLM cannot skip over this process unless the change qualifies as an interpretive rule, general statement of policy, or procedural rule.

Final agency decisions, such as a final RMP, oil and gas lease approval, or grazing permit approval, can be reviewed by courts under the APA.<sup>15</sup> Courts review BLM's NEPA compliance under the "arbitrary and capricious" standard of review under the APA. Here, courts determine whether the BLM explained its final decision and relied on the proper factors and information, and ensure that the BLM did not ignore or misconstrue evidence. Under the APA, courts will also review agency actions for procedural violations, such as determining whether the BLM followed procedures under NEPA or the Endangered Species Act. Courts can also use the APA to determine whether an agency acted outside the bounds of its statutory authority, such as FLPMA. Ultimately, the APA is the vehicle that opens the door to legal challenges against the BLM.

## AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN (ACECs)

FLPMA directs the BLM to give priority in land use planning to the designation and protection of [ACECs](#). ACECs are defined as areas requiring "special management attention...to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards." Designation requires meeting criteria of relevance and importance, and demonstrating the need for special

management beyond standard practices. ACECs provide a flexible tool to apply targeted protections within the RMP framework, potentially overlaying or complementing other National Conservation Lands designations. The 2024 Public Lands Rule strengthens the ACEC identification and designation process and clarifies their role in protecting landscape intactness and connectivity.



Slinkard Wilderness Study Area - Bob Wick

RMPs serve to integrate the specific National Conservation Lands mandates with other resource considerations for a given planning area, while ACECs offer a way to provide targeted, heightened protection to critical resources that might exist within an NCA, along a National Trail, or even outside any other formal National Conservation Lands designation, thereby enhancing the overall conservation network on BLM lands.

# BLM Management Standards for the National Conservation Lands

Unlike other BLM-managed lands, units of the National Conservation Lands are governed by a distinct conservation mandate that prioritizes the protection of nationally significant resources over multiple-use management. Section 302 of FLPMA clearly requires multiple use and sustained yield **except where a tract of public land has been dedicated to specific uses under another law.** This means that, for units of the National Conservation Lands, the establishing legislation or presidential proclamation takes precedence.

To ensure that the permanently protected National Conservation Lands are managed for conservation first, all units within the system have several basic conservation standards, including:

- Prescriptive language that requires the area to be managed for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of resources over other uses;
- A prohibition on discretionary uses that are not consistent with conservation and protection of these resources;
- A mineral withdrawal; and
- Restrictions on off-road vehicles and a travel management plan with restrictions necessary to protect the area.

These standards ensure that lands within the system are managed consistently for conservation and safeguarded for future generations, as required by the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009.

In 2012, BLM released two relevant Policy Manuals: 6100-National Landscape Conservation System Management; and 6220-National Monuments, Conservation Areas, and Similar Designations. These two manuals provided guidance to BLM

employees on the drafting of management plans and land use plan decisions as related to the National Conservation Lands.

BLM's policy manuals state that, in developing resource management plans, BLM must:

- Clearly identify Monument and NCA objects and values as described in the designating proclamation or legislation; where objects and values are described in the designation legislation or proclamation only in broad categories (e.g., scenic, ecological, etc.), identify the specific resources within the designating area that fall into those categories;
- Identify specific and measurable goals and objectives for each object and value, as well as generally for the Monument and NCA;
- Identify management actions, allowable uses, restrictions, management actions regarding any valid existing rights, and mitigation measures to ensure that the objects and values are protected;
- Provide, to the extent possible, a thorough quantitative analysis of the effects of all plan alternatives on the objects and values;
- Where a thorough quantitative analysis is not possible, provide a detailed qualitative analysis of the effects of all plan alternatives on the objects and values;
- Include a monitoring strategy that identifies indicators of change, methodologies, protocols, and time frames for determining whether desired outcomes are being achieved.



## SPECIFIC USES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

- **Rights-of-Way (ROW):** New ROW development is fundamentally incompatible with the conservation purposes of National Monuments or National Conservation Areas. BLM Policy Manual 6220 establishes a clear presumption against new ROW authorizations in units of the National Conservation Lands and directs the agency to avoid transportation and utility corridors through land use planning. To uphold this mandate, BLM should designate units of the system as ROW exclusion or avoidance zones and work with existing ROW holders to relocate infrastructure outside unit boundaries wherever feasible.
- **Facilities and Infrastructure:** Planning should prioritize locating visitor facilities and infrastructure outside of monument or conservation area boundaries to preserve natural and cultural values. Doing so supports the intent to manage these areas as part of a broader landscape, fosters collaboration with surrounding communities, and promotes ecological connectivity and climate resilience. This approach also ensures that local communities provide lodging, food, and services, aligning with the BLM's community-based management model.
- **Recreation Management:** Recreation is an important way to experience the National

Conservation Lands, but it must be carefully managed to protect the resources and values for which each unit was designated. Because recreation is not itself a protected object under most unit designations, recreational uses must be evaluated for their potential impacts. To ensure alignment with conservation goals, BLM should emphasize primitive and backcountry experiences, direct high-use activities to designated zones, and prohibit activities that threaten sensitive resources.

- **Renewable Energy Development:** While renewable energy development is critical to addressing the climate crisis, infrastructure and transmission projects are incompatible with the protection mandates of National Conservation Lands. These areas should be designated as renewable energy avoidance zones to safeguard their natural and cultural resources. Managing them as part of a broader landscape supports biodiversity, ecological connectivity, and climate resilience without compromising conservation values.
- **Travel Management:** Road development within units of the National Conservation Lands must be limited to a minimum network necessary for public safety, valid existing rights, or to further the area's designated purposes. Consistent with BLM policy, management plans should analyze and adopt this "minimum road network" to protect sensitive resources and values. Applying strict minimization criteria will reduce environmental harm, curb irresponsible OHV use, and ensure recreational access is balanced with conservation goals.





Pygmy rabbit - BLM

## Standard Language for Additions to the National Conservation Lands

All new legislated additions to the National Conservation Lands should include the following:

- A clear and detailed purposes section, outlining what is being established, the land included, the purpose of the designation, and references to related maps and legal descriptions. Purposes such as protecting rangeland, providing future energy rights-of-way, protecting non-native species and non-natural landscapes are not appropriate purposes for National Conservation Land designation and should not be included within the purpose section. Additional specificity regarding protecting site specific ecological and cultural resources should also be included whenever possible.
- A section requiring a robust management plan with specific prescriptions for protecting the unit's objects and values.
- A uses clause that ensures that permitted uses in the area are consistent with the purposes for which the designation was established.
- Language restricting off-road vehicles to designated roads. It is also possible to require the development of a travel management plan or direct BLM to address travel in the management planning process.
- Withdrawal language that withdraws the land from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the general land laws; location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and operation under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws.
- Language incorporating lands acquired by the United States within the boundary of the unit into the National Conservation Lands unit.
- Language that explicitly adds the area to the National Conservation Lands system.



# BLM Staffing and Resources

The National Conservation Lands represent vital ecological, cultural, and historical resources. However, their effective management faces persistent challenges rooted in the historical underfunding and understaffing of the BLM, the agency entrusted with their care. Decades of insufficient funding have led to significant staffing deficits within the BLM. This shortage hampers the agency’s ability to effectively manage the National Conservation Lands and fulfill its broader stewardship responsibilities under FLPMA.

Additionally, limited personnel capacity strains the agency’s capacity to conduct resource management planning, process necessary permits, and ensure safe and enjoyable experiences for the growing number of visitors to public lands.

The BLM manages the most extensive public land portfolio in the United States, encompassing 245 million acres of public lands and 700 million acres of mineral estate. Despite this vast responsibility and the multiple uses it oversees – including conservation, recreation, grazing, and energy production – the BLM has historically received less funding per acre and per visitor compared to other federal land management agencies.

## LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY ACREAGE AND FUNDING

LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY	ACRES	FY24 ~\$ PER ACRE	FY24	FY23	FY22	FY21
U.S. Forest Service	193M	~ \$48.28	\$9.31B	\$10.075B	\$10.847B	\$7.424B
National Park Service	84M	~ \$39.58	\$3.32B	\$3.475B	\$3.265B	\$3.123B
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	89M	~ \$19.36	\$1.72B	\$1.77B	\$1.646B	\$1.584B
Bureau of Land Management	245M	~ \$5.77	\$1.41B	\$1.494B	\$1.411B	\$1.31B

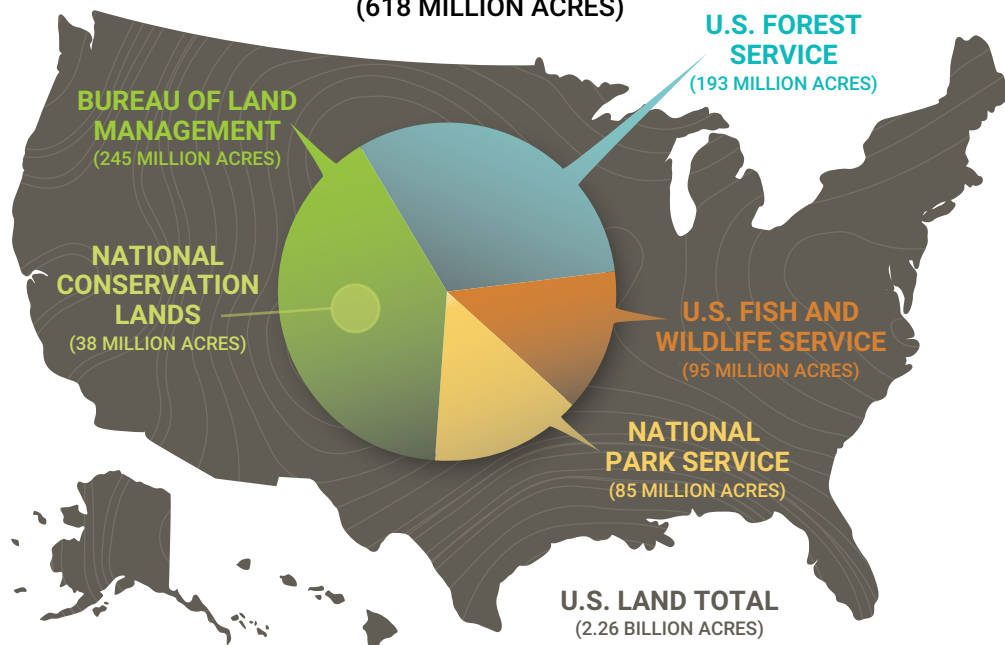
Source: Congressional Research Service

## LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY FUNDING PER VISITOR 10 YEAR AVERAGE (2012-2021)

LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY	ACRES	10 YEAR AVG PER VISITOR
U.S. Forest Service	193M	\$1.70
National Park Service	84M	\$5.20
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	89M	\$1.32
Bureau of Land Management	245M	\$0.79

Source: Bureau of Land Management

## FOUR MAJOR LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES MANAGE 27% OF ALL U.S. LANDS (618 MILLION ACRES)



*As of August 2025*

CLF has led the charge to call for significant budget increases to address the agency's long-standing resource needs, with adequate funding to ensure dedicated staffing for each unit, proper law enforcement, and up-to-date management planning being key priorities for Congress to consider in the annual appropriations process.

Funding for National Conservation Lands has not kept pace with the system's consistent growth. Since FY2006, when funding for National Conservation Lands reached its highest level, the system has expanded by 109 units and more than 14 million acres. Despite this substantial increase in managed lands and visitation, corresponding increases in funding have not been consistently provided.

Addressing the historical underfunding and staffing shortages within the BLM is crucial for realizing the full conservation potential of the National Conservation Lands. Increased investment would empower the agency to more effectively manage these significant landscapes for conservation, recreation, and the protection of their natural and cultural resources. Recognizing the economic significance of outdoor recreation, which generated \$1.2 trillion in economic output and supported 5 million jobs in the U.S. economy in 2023, adequate funding for the BLM is also vital for ensuring safe and enjoyable visitor experiences on public lands.





# Looking Ahead

## Vision for the Next 25 Years of the National Conservation Lands

As we celebrate the first 25 years of the National Conservation Lands system and look to the next 25 and beyond, the Conservation Lands Foundation envisions a bold future for the National Conservation Lands that will guide our efforts and collaboration with partners for years to come.

By 2050, we envision the National Conservation Lands as a permanently protected, diverse system of lands, widely recognized and celebrated as the crown jewels of America's public lands. National Conservation Lands will prioritize three fundamental pillars: cultural respect, functioning ecosystems, and ecological restoration. Most importantly, they will be places where every visitor can see their cultural background, history, and experiences reflected in the landscapes.

A reinvisioned BLM will manage the National Conservation Lands primarily for conservation, protection, and restoration. Tribal nations and local stakeholders will play integral roles in management decisions, honoring Indigenous knowledge and community connections, including recreation, to these lands.

Meanwhile, new National Conservation Lands and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern will safeguard vital habitat corridors across the West, ensuring critical connectivity for wildlife species. In the Western Arctic — the largest contiguous block of public lands in the United States and crucial habitat for millions of migratory birds that travel to all 50 states — extraordinary and biologically-rich preserves managed by the BLM will remain intact and thriving.



At the community level, well-resourced Friends Network groups, community advocates, and an emerging public lands service corps will power on-the-ground stewardship efforts. Innovative funding models will fuel economic partnerships focused on long-term landscape health rather than short-term extraction. This expanded coalition will create a bigger tent where leaders and community members from all walks of life and across the political spectrum resonate with the system's conservation emphasis and develop deep connections to public lands that translate into meaningful action and support.

Reaching these goals requires deep, strategic investment. CLF, our partners, and the broader community will play integral roles by:

- **Building community capacity:** Funneling resources, training, and tools to community-based groups; cultivating and expanding a youth movement dedicated to hands-on stewardship and restoration of landscapes.
- **Broadening support:** Ensuring a diversity of voices in the West and beyond rally around place-based campaigns and landscape level planning processes at all levels.
- **Advancing policy:** Developing nimble policy and congressional advocacy that builds support in Congress and secures robust, resilient conservation funding for the system.

By combining bold advocacy in the halls of Washington, D.C. with on-the-ground action, we will continue building an inclusive, permanently protected National Conservation Lands system for generations to come.





# FRIENDS GRASSROOTS NETWORK

As of August 2025

## ARIZONA

### [\(AZ\)LAND](#)

[azlnd.org](#)

### [Archaeology Southwest](#)

[archaeologysouthwest.org](#)

### [Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection](#)

[sonorandesert.org](#)

### [Friends of Agua Fria National Monument](#)

[friendsoftheaguafranationalmonument.wildapricot.org](#)

### [Friends of Ironwood Forest](#)

[ironwoodforest.org](#)

### [Friends of the San Pedro River](#)

[sanpedroriver.orgwpfspr](#)

### [Keep Sedona Beautiful](#)

[keepsedonabeautiful.org](#)

## CALIFORNIA

### [Amah Mutsun Land Trust](#)

[amahmutsunlandtrust.org](#)

### [Amargosa Conservancy](#)

[amargosaconservancy.org](#)

### [BLU Educational Foundation](#)

[bluedfoundation.org](#)

### [CactusToCloud](#)

[cactustocloud.org](#)

### [Carrizo Plain Conservancy](#)

[carrizoplainconservancy.org](#)

### [COFEM](#)

[cofem.org](#)

### [FORT Friends](#)

[fortordfriends.org](#)

### [Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve](#)

[bigmorongo.org](#)

### [Friends of Headwaters](#)

[redwoodparksconservancy.org](#)

### [Friends of Point Arena-Stornetta Lands](#)

[pointarenastornetta.org](#)

### [Friends of the Amargosa Basin](#)

[friendsoftheamargosabasin.org](#)

### [Friends of the Carrizo Plain](#)

[carrizo.org](#)

### [Friends of the Desert Mountains](#)

[desertmountains.org](#)

### [Friends of the Inyo](#)

[friendsoftheinyo.org](#)

### [Friends of the Lost Coast](#)

[lostcoast.org](#)

### [Latino Outdoors](#)

[latinooutdoors.org](#)

### [Mattole Restoration Council](#)

[mattole.org](#)

### [Mattole Salmon Group](#)

[mattolesalmon.org](#)

### [Mojave Desert Land Trust](#)

[mdlt.org](#)

### [Native American Land Conservancy](#)

[nativeamericanland.org](#)

### [Outdoor Outreach](#)

[outdooroutreach.org](#)

### [Outward Bound Adventures](#)

[obainc.org](#)

### [Piedras Blancas Light Station Association](#)

[piedrasblancas.org](#)

### [Redwood Parks Conservancy](#)

[redwoodparksconservancy.org](#)

### [Sanctuary Forest](#)

[sanctuaryforest.org](#)

### [Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship](#)

[santacruztrails.org](#)

### [Sempervirens Fund](#)

[sempervirens.org](#)

### [The California Wilderness Coalition](#)

[calwild.org](#)

### [Transition Habitat Conservancy](#)

[transitionhabitat.org](#)

### [Trinidad Coastal Land Trust](#)

[trinidadcoastallandtrust.org](#)

### [Tuleyome](#)

[tuleyome.org](#)

## COLORADO

### [Colorado Canyons Association](#)

[coloradocanyonsassociation.org](#)

### [Camping To Connect](#)

[campingtoconnect.com](#)

### [Colorado Wildlands Project](#)

[cowildlands.org](#)

### [Dolores River Boating Advocates](#)

[doloresriverboating.org](#)

[Friends of Browns Canyon](#)

[\*browncanyon.org/about-friends-of-browns-canyon/\*](http://brownscanyon.org/about-friends-of-browns-canyon/)

[Friends of the Yampa](#)

[\*friendsoftheyampa.com\*](http://friendsoftheyampa.com)

[San Juan Citizens Alliance](#)

[\*sanjuancitizens.org\*](http://sanjuancitizens.org)

[San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council](#)

[\*slvec.org\*](http://slvec.org)

[Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance](#)

[\*swcocanyons.org\*](http://swcocanyons.org)

[Western Slope Conservation Center](#)

[\*westernslopeconservation.org\*](http://westernslopeconservation.org)

## IDAHO

[Birds of Prey NCA Partnership](#)

[\*birdsofpreyncapartnership.org\*](http://birdsofpreyncapartnership.org)

## MONTANA

[Wild Montana](#)

[\*wildmontana.org\*](http://wildmontana.org)

## NEVADA

[Blacks In Nature, a project of Together We Can](#)

[\*blacksinnature.com\*](http://blacksinnature.com)

[Friends of Avi Kwa Ame National Monument](#)

[\*friendsofamikwaame.org\*](http://friendsofamikwaame.org)

[Friends of Basin and Range National Monument](#)

[\*friendsofbasinandrange.com\*](http://friendsofbasinandrange.com)

[Friends of Black Rock High Rock](#)

[\*blackrockdesert.org\*](http://blackrockdesert.org)

[Friends of Gold Butte](#)

[\*friendsofgoldbutte.org\*](http://friendsofgoldbutte.org)

[Friends of Nevada Wilderness](#)

[\*nevadawilderness.org\*](http://nevadawilderness.org)

[Friends of Red Rock Canyon](#)

[\*friendsredrock.org\*](http://friendsredrock.org)

[Friends of Sloan Canyon](#)

[\*friendsofsloan.org\*](http://friendsofsloan.org)

[Get Outdoors Nevada](#)

[\*getoutdoorsnevada.org\*](http://getoutdoorsnevada.org)

[Indigenous Voices of Nevada](#)

[\*linktr.ee/IV\\_Nevada\*](http://linktr.ee/IV_Nevada)

[Save Red Rock](#)

[\*saveredrock.com\*](http://saveredrock.com)

[Trails Access Project](#)

[\*trailaccessproject.org\*](http://trailaccessproject.org)

## NEW MEXICO

[Ancestral Lands Corp](#)

[\*ancestrallands.org\*](http://ancestrallands.org)

[Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks](#)

[\*organmountainsdesertpeaks.org\*](http://organmountainsdesertpeaks.org)

[Friends of Rio Grande del Norte](#)

[\*riograndefriends.org\*](http://riograndefriends.org)

[Native Land Institute](#)

[\*native-lands.org\*](http://native-lands.org)

[New Mexico Wild](#)

[\*nmwild.org\*](http://nmwild.org)

[New Mexico Wildlife Federation](#)

[\*nmwildlife.org\*](http://nmwildlife.org)

[Upper Gila Watershed Alliance](#)

[\*gilawatershed.org\*](http://gilawatershed.org)

## OREGON

[Friends of Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument](#)

[\*cascadesiskiyou.org\*](http://cascadesiskiyou.org)

[Friends of the Owyhee](#)

[\*friendsoftheowyhee.org\*](http://friendsoftheowyhee.org)

[Friends of Yaquina Lighthouses](#)

[\*yaquinalights.org\*](http://yaquinalights.org)

[Oregon Natural Desert Association](#)

[\*onda.org\*](http://onda.org)

[Willamette Resources and Educational Network \(WREN\)](#)

[\*wewetlands.org\*](http://wewetlands.org)

## TEXAS

[Frontera Land Alliance](#)

[\*fronteralandalliance.org\*](http://fronteralandalliance.org)

## UTAH

[Bears Ears Partnership](#)

[\*bears earspartnership.org\*](http://bears earspartnership.org)

[Conserve Southwest Utah](#)

[\*conserveswu.org\*](http://conserveswu.org)

[Grand Staircase Escalante Partners](#)

[\*gsenm.org\*](http://gsenm.org)

[Grand Staircase Regional Guides Association](#)

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[Utah Diné Bikéyah](#)

[\*utahdinebikeyah.org\*](http://utahdinebikeyah.org)

## WASHINGTON

[Islanders for the San Juan National Monument](#)

[\*sanjuanislandsnm.org\*](http://sanjuanislandsnm.org)

## WYOMING

[Wyoming Outdoor Council](#)

[\*wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org\*](http://wyomingoutdoorcouncil.org)

[Wyoming Wilderness Association](#)

[\*wildwyo.org\*](http://wildwyo.org)



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<sup>1</sup> (Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, New Data Shows Outdoor Recreation Is a \$1.2 Trillion Economic Engine Supporting 5 Million American Jobs (Nov. 20, 2024), <https://recreationroundtable.org/news/new-data-shows-outdoor-recreation-is-a-1-2-trillion-economic-engine-supporting-5-million-american-jobs/>).

<sup>2</sup> See 43 U.S.C. § 1732(a) (2018) (“The Secretary shall manage the public lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with the land use plans developed under section 1712 of this title...”).

<sup>3</sup> See 43 U.S.C. § 1702(c) (2018) (“‘Multiple use’ means the management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people; making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources...”).

<sup>4</sup> See 43 U.S.C. § 1702(h) (2018) (“‘Sustained yield’ means the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the public lands consistent with multiple use”).

<sup>5</sup> Antiquities Act of 1906 § 2, 54 U.S.C. § 320301(a) (2018).

<sup>6</sup> Wilderness Act of 1964 § 2(c), 16 U.S.C. § 1131(c) (2018).

<sup>7</sup> National Trails System Act § 7(c), 16 U.S.C. § 1246(c) (2018).

<sup>8</sup> Wild and Scenic Rivers Act § 10(a), 16 U.S.C. § 1281(a) (2018).

<sup>9</sup> While the NEPA process is in flux under the current administration, the Conservation Lands Foundation will continue to advocate for robust public engagement—an essential component of NEPA that has been successfully upheld and implemented under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

<sup>10</sup> National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 § 102(2)(C), 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C) (2018).

<sup>11</sup> National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 § 102(2)(C), 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C) (2018); see also *Dep’t of Transp. v. Pub. Citizen*, 541 U.S. 752, 768 (2004).

<sup>12</sup> National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 § 102(2)(C), 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C) (2018); see also *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 349 (1989).

<sup>13</sup> See *Sierra Club v. Marsh*, 976 F.2d 763, 767 (1st Cir. 1992).

<sup>14</sup> National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 § 102(2)(C)(iii), 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C)(iii) (2018); see also *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 551 (1978).

<sup>15</sup> Administrative Procedure Act § 706(2)(A), 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A) (2018).



# Appendix: Acronym Reference Guide

## **ACEC**

Area of Critical Environmental Concern

- BLM planning designation for areas requiring special management attention.

## **APA**

Administrative Procedure Act

- Governs how federal agencies make rules and how courts review agency actions.

## **BLM**

Bureau of Land Management

- Interior agency responsible for managing 245 million surface acres of public lands.

## **CE / CX**

Categorical Exclusion

- NEPA review category for actions determined to have no significant impact.

## **CEQ**

Council on Environmental Quality

- Executive Office body that oversees NEPA regulations.

## **CLF**

Conservation Lands Foundation

## **CRMP**

Comprehensive River Management Plan

- Required plan guiding management of designated Wild & Scenic Rivers.

## **DOI**

U.S. Department of the Interior

- Cabinet agency overseeing BLM, NPS, FWS, and other bureaus.

## **EA**

Environmental Assessment

- NEPA review document used to determine if impacts are significant.

## **EIS**

Environmental Impact Statement

- NEPA's most rigorous review for major federal actions with significant impacts.

## **FGN**

Friends Grassroots Network

## **FLPMA**

Federal Land Policy and Management Act

- 1976 statute establishing BLM's multiple-use and sustained-yield mandate.

## **FONSI**

Finding of No Significant Impact

- Issued after an EA when impacts are not significant, avoiding an EIS.

## **MMP**

Monument Management Plan

- BLM land use plan for a National Monument.

## **NCA**

National Conservation Area

- Congressional designation within the National Conservation Lands system.

## **NCL**

National Conservation Lands

## **NEPA**

National Environmental Policy Act

- 1970 law requiring federal agencies to analyze environmental impacts of major actions.

## **NHPA**

National Historic Preservation Act

- Requires consultation on impacts to historic and cultural resources.

## **NHT**

National Historic Trail

- Trails designated for their historic significance under the NTSA.

## **NM**

National Monument

- Areas designated under the Antiquities Act or by Congress for cultural or natural significance.

## **NOI**

Notice of Intent

- Federal Register notice signaling the start of a NEPA/EIS process.

## **NPS**

National Park Service

- Interior bureau managing the National Park System.

## **NPR-A**

National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska

- BLM-managed planning and leasing area in Alaska's Western Arctic.

## **NST**

National Scenic Trail

- Long-distance recreation and conservation trails designated under the NTSA.

## **NTSA**

National Trails System Act

- 1968 law creating the National Scenic and Historic Trails system.

## **OPLMA**

Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009

- Permanently established the National Conservation Lands.

## **ORV / ORVs**

Outstandingly Remarkable Values

- Scenic, cultural, or natural values protected by the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

## **RMP**

Resource Management Plan

- BLM's core land use plan for allocating uses and protections.

## **ROD**

Record of Decision

- Formal decision document concluding an EIS.

## **ROW**

Right-of-Way

- Authorization for infrastructure such as roads, pipelines, and transmission lines.

## **TEK**

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Indigenous knowledge incorporated into land management decisions.

## **USFS**

U.S. Forest Service

- Agency within USDA managing the National Forest System.

## **USFWS / FWS**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Interior bureau managing National Wildlife Refuges and implementing the ESA.

## **VRM**

Visual Resource Management

- BLM system for evaluating and managing scenic quality.

## **WSA**

Wilderness Study Area

- Areas managed to preserve wilderness character until Congress decides their status.

## **WSRA**

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

- 1968 law protecting free-flowing rivers with designated values.

## **WSR**

Wild and Scenic River

- River segment designated for permanent protection under WSRA.








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Black Rock High Rock (NV) - Bob Wick