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# BLM Press Release

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## Jouflas Family Has Trail As Namesake in Rabbit Valley

GRAND JUNCTION, CO — A family with long-standing roots as sheep ranchers in the Grand Valley now has a trail named after them in the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area. The Jouflas Horse Trail was dedicated in Rabbit Valley last week as a way to mark the cultural and historical significance of the Jouflas family and their contribution to the Bureau of Land Management's McInnis Canyons NCA. This trail was envisioned in 2006, when the BLM acquired 520 acres in Rabbit Valley from the Jouflas family.

The historic equestrian trail makes about an eight-mile loop, taking hikers and horseback riders to an area that looks down over the Black Rocks area of the Colorado River. It can be accessed from the main entrance to Rabbit Valley, south of Interstate 70 at the Rabbit Valley exit.

Steve Jouflas, son of Connie and Chris, has described the land around the area as sacred. In remarks made in 2006 at a land transfer dedication event, he said:

“For our family, its sacred nature encompasses our experience with the land. It is a place of connection. This is the place that sustained our sheep and thus sustained us. This is the place where we grew up and learned how to work, care for our animals and the land.”

The Jouflas family has been a significant partner to BLM, making many acres of previously private ranch lands available for public use. The Friends of McInnis Canyons, a non-profit group dedicated to supporting the NCA, has been working with the Jouflas family on an oral history project to ensure that the memories and folklore associated with these lands are available to those who enjoy these public lands today. Based on the value of the work they've already done with the Jouflas family, the Friends group has plans to expand this project in the future.

***Photo Caption:***

The Jouflas family at the dedication of the Jouflas Horse Trail in Rabbit Valley, including patriarch and matriarch Chris and Connie Jouflas; daughter Denise Lipp, son Pete Jouflas and his wife Kristy; son Steve Jouflas and his wife Carrie; and daughter Georgann Jouflas. Chris and Connie's grandchildren pictured include Karlie, Alex and Hadley Jouflas and Brady and Zoe Shanahan.

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