

PART 5

NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) encompass some of the last, great open spaces in the United States. They contain exceptional geologic formations; comparatively undisturbed native plant and animal communities; wilderness areas and wild and scenic rivers; national scenic and historic trails; and innumerable paleontological, archaeological, and historical sites. These resources are scientifically, ecologically, culturally, educationally, and recreationally important, representing a significant part of this Nation's natural and cultural heritage.

Congress has passed a variety of laws concerning the management and use of these heritage resources, including the Antiquities Act (1906), the Wilderness Act (1964), the National Historic Preservation Act (1966), the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968), the National Trails System Act (1968), the Sikes Act (1974), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990), and the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (2009).

Many of these laws establish procedures for formally recognizing areas that are unique or that contain significant scientific, educational, and recreational values. Some of these designations, including National Conservation Areas and National Monuments, require Congressional or Presidential action. Others, such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), are BLM designations established through land use planning or other administrative procedures. During the past 30 years, beginning with the designation of the King Range National Conservation Area, many extraordinary landscapes on our public lands have received protective designations either through an Act of Congress or through Presidential Proclamation.

National Landscape Conservation System

The BLM established the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) to provide a national framework for managing special areas on the public lands designated by Congress or the President. In 2009, Congress formally established the National Landscape Conservation System with the passage of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act. This system includes all of the BLM's National Conservation Areas and similar designations, including Wilderness, National Historic and Scenic Trails, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Monuments, Wilderness Study Areas, and Conservation Lands of the California Desert. Taken together, there are more than 886 BLM units encompassing more than 27 million acres of public land.

This system is a new model of conservation. Most visitor facilities are located in adjacent communities, providing local economic opportunities and minimizing new development in the special areas. Many traditional public land uses, such as livestock grazing, are permitted in these areas, and adjacent communities and interested public entities are encouraged to participate in the planning process and ongoing management activities.

The following tables provide statistics for the conservation units included in the NLCS:

- 5-1 National Landscape Conservation System: Number and Size of Designated Areas
- 5-2 National Monuments within the National Landscape Conservation System
- 5-3a National Conservation Areas within the National Landscape Conservation System
- 5-3b Other Conservation Units within the National Landscape Conservation System

- 5-4 Designated Wilderness within the National Landscape Conservation System
- 5-5 Wilderness Study Areas within the National Landscape Conservation System
- 5-6 BLM Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers
- 5-7 National Scenic and Historic Trails

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Administrative Natural and Cultural Heritage Designations

On all of America's public lands, the BLM, in addition to assuming the responsibilities previously noted, works to preserve and protect threatened and endangered species; wild free-roaming horses and burros; significant archaeological, paleontological, and historical sites; areas of critical environmental concern; and other outstanding natural areas. Some of those responsibilities are reflected/portrayed in the following tables.

Tables 5-8a, 5-8b, and 5-8c. Land acquisition through exchange, purchase, easement, or donation pursuant to Sections 205 and 206 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (Public

Law 94-579; 90 Stat. 2756), and various Acts of Congress is an important component of the BLM's land management strategy. The BLM acquires land and easements in land when it is in the public interest and consistent with publicly approved land use plans. The BLM's land acquisition program is designed to improve management of natural resources by consolidating Federal, State, and private lands; to increase recreational opportunities and preserve open space; to secure key property necessary to protect endangered species and promote biological diversity; and to preserve archaeological and historical resources.

Table 5-9. The BLM, other Federal agencies, and local governments in Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine counties as well as portions of Washoe County and Carson City, Nevada, use 85 percent of the revenue generated by land sales under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) of 1998 for parks, trails, and natural areas; capital improvements; conservation initiatives; development and implementation of a multispecies habitat conservation plan for Clark County, Nevada; environmentally sensitive land acquisitions; hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire prevention; Eastern Nevada Landscape Restoration projects; and Lake Tahoe restoration projects. Table 5-9 shows acquisitions, accomplishments, and funding levels. For additional information, visit the SNPLMA Web site at <http://www.blm.gov/snplma>.

Table 5-10. The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (Public Law 105-263) became law in October 1998. The Act provides for the orderly disposal of certain Federal land in Clark County, Nevada, and for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands in the State of Nevada. This table illustrates the number of acres sold and the number of acres acquired as a metric of the program's success.

Tables 5-12 and 5-13. The BLM administers the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195), which provides for the protection, management, and control of wild horses and burros on the public lands. A major responsibility under the Act is to preserve a thriving natural ecological balance on the range. To do so, it is necessary to remove excess wild horses and burros, which are then offered to the general public through the adoption program. Tables 5-12 and 5-13 portray wild horse and burro populations, removals, and adoptions.

Table 5-14. The BLM is steward for the Federal Government's largest, most culturally diverse, and most scientifically important body of cultural resources. To carry out this stewardship responsibility, the BLM's cultural resource management program is designed to inventory, evaluate, and manage cultural and paleontological resources on public lands under its jurisdiction. The BLM has inventoried more than 19.421 million acres for cultural resources and has recorded more than 328,311,306,399 properties.

Tables 5-15 and 5-16. The BLM provides special management prescriptions for public lands under a variety of special designations such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Research Natural Areas, and National Natural Landmarks. Table 5-15 lists the present Areas of Critical Environmental Concern managed by the BLM. Table 5-16 lists numerous types of areas on the public lands having special management designations that are not already encompassed by the NLCS.