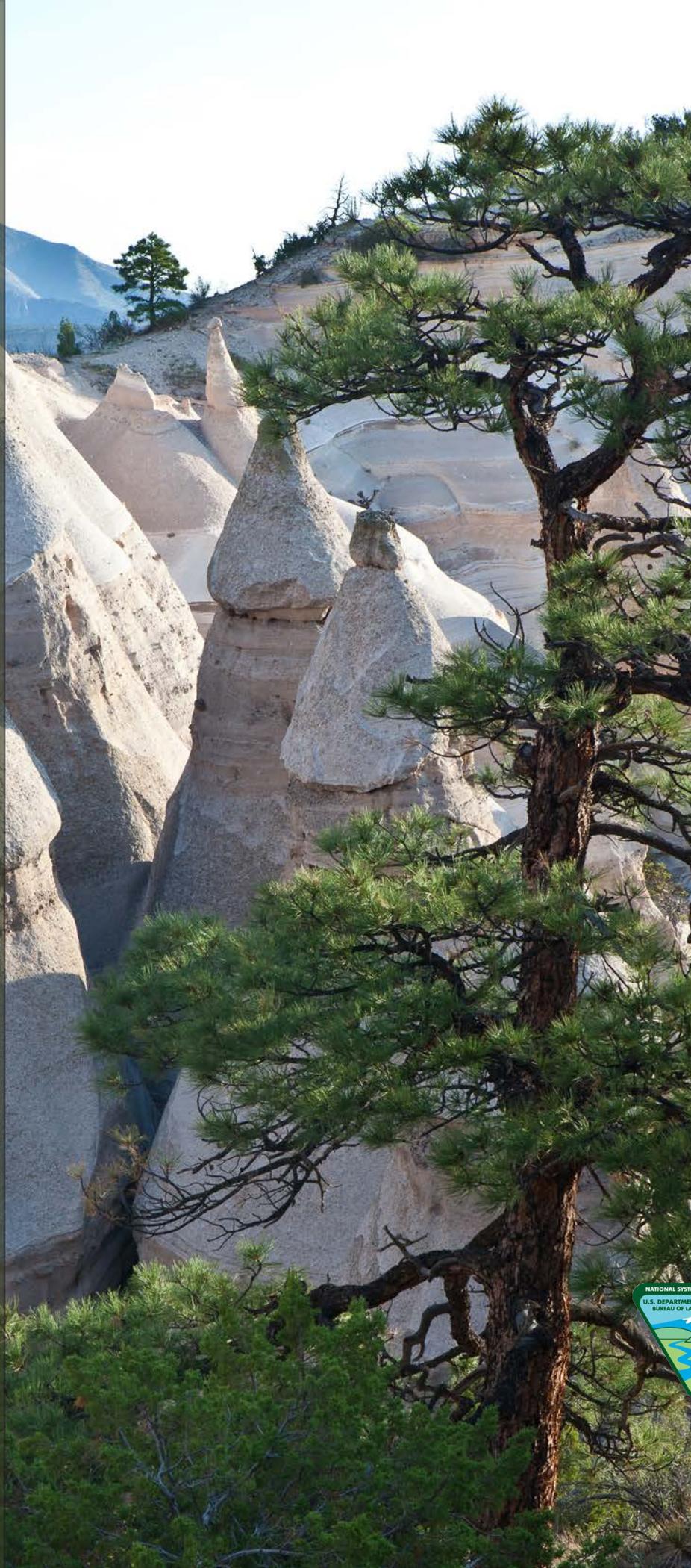


The National Conservation Lands

Implementing the National 15-Year Strategy in New Mexico

The Geography of Hope



Dear Friends of New Mexico,

As a multiple use agency, the Bureau of Land Management has a broad responsibility of assuring the public lands provide a variety of public benefits. The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) provides a special niche within BLM's larger mission. These National Conservation Lands inspire with their scenic beauty, provide unique sources for scientific study, and provide exceptional areas for recreation. These are the landscapes of the west, the landscapes which are an inspiration to all who come to know them.

The BLM staff in New Mexico is honored by the trust instilled upon them by the American people to provide stewardship of these special places. From rivers to caves, forests to deserts, grasslands to badlands, recreational opportunities to historic vestiges of our past, New Mexico's National Conservation Lands are a diverse landscape treasured by today's generation and a heritage to be passed on to future generations. Our guiding philosophy is to assure these areas are in the best ecological condition possible, and that New Mexico communities receive the highest benefit from these areas.

A National Strategy was developed to clearly lay out the principles by which BLM will manage National Conservation Lands units. I am committed to advance that strategy in New Mexico by setting out the following implementation strategy. This strategy lays out the process by which my staff will evaluate our status, and prioritize our efforts in achieving our goals. In doing so, we will seek the input from our partners and stakeholders. Together we will make the NLCS all it can be.

I encourage you to visit the National Conservation Lands in New Mexico. I'm sure you will be as captivated as I am by these magnificent landscapes.

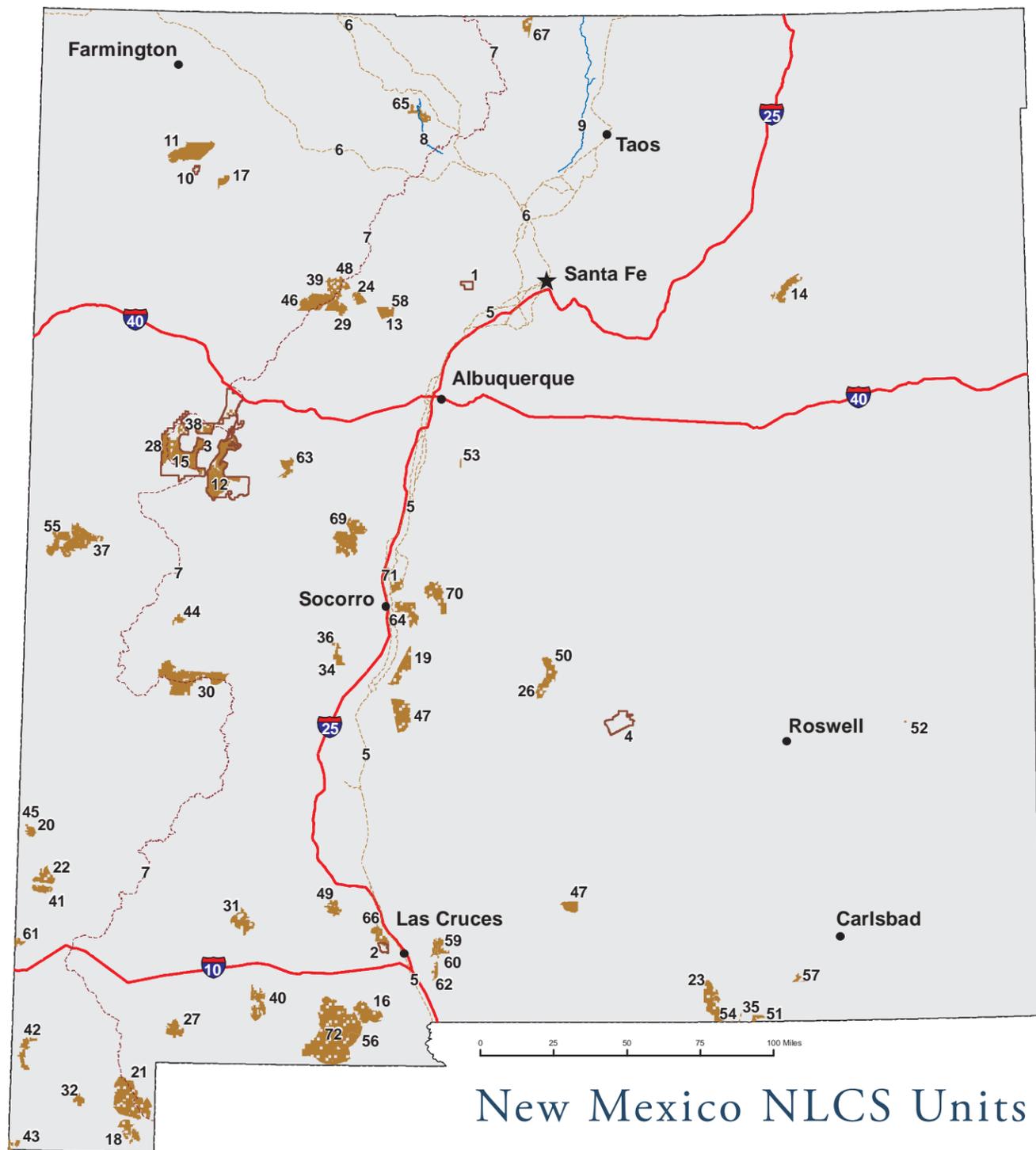
**Jesse Juen
State Director, BLM-New Mexico**

Introduction

The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) contains some of the West's most spectacular landscapes. Wide open spaces and abundant wildlife characterize these lands. In New Mexico the system includes one Research Natural Area, one National Scenic Trail, two National Historic Trails, two National Monuments (NM), two National Conservation Areas (NCA), two Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR), five Wilderness areas, and 57 Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) (see www.blm.gov/nlcs). NLCS areas are part of an active, vibrant landscape where people live, work, and play. They offer exceptional opportunities for recreation, solitude, wildlife viewing, exploring history, scientific research, and other uses. Congress established the NLCS in 2009 through the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act and directed its management to "protect the values for which the components of the system were designated." Though the NLCS as a system was established by Congress in 2009, it is made up of areas that were recognized much earlier by Congress for their exceptional values. New Mexico's Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River is the nation's oldest system component, having been designated by Congress in 1968.

In 2011, the BLM developed a national strategy to manage the NLCS nationwide. The strategy is integrated and interdisciplinary in nature, and designed to help BLM select the work that is most important to fulfilling the management mandate laid out by Congress in 2009 (see the NLCS 15-Year Strategy). The New Mexico implementation strategy is a companion to the national strategy, laying out the process by which needs will be identified, workload priorities set, budgets allocated, and accomplishments tracked. The implementation strategy will facilitate and support the implementation of planning decisions at the unit level and ensure consistency with the national strategy.

This strategy will be used to identify, screen, implement, and rank projects on an annual basis.



New Mexico NLCS Units

National Monuments

- 1. Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks
- 2. Prehistoric Trackways

National Conservation Areas

- 3. El Malpais
- 4. Fort Stanton-Snowy River

National Historic Trails

- 5. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro
- 6. Old Spanish

National Scenic Trails

- 7. Continental Divide

Wild and Scenic Rivers

- 8. Rio Chama
- 9. Rio Grande

Research Natural Areas

- 10. Fossil Forest

Wilderness

- 11. Bisti/Da-Na-Zin
- 12. Cebolla
- 13. Ojito
- 14. Sabinoso
- 15. West Malpais

Wilderness Study Areas

- 16. Aden Lava Flow
- 17. Ah-shi-sle-pah

Wilderness Study Areas (continued)

- 18. Alamo Hueco Mountains
- 19. Antelope
- 20. Apache Box
- 21. Big Hatchet Mountains
- 22. Blue Creek
- 23. Brokeoff Mountains
- 24. Cabezon
- 25. Canyons
- 26. Carrizozo Lava Flow
- 27. Cedar Mountains
- 28. Chain of Craters
- 29. Chamisa
- 30. Continental Divide
- 31. Cooke's Range
- 32. Cowboy Spring
- 33. Culp Canyon
- 34. Devil's Backbone
- 35. Devil's Den Canyon
- 36. Devils Reach
- 37. Eagle Peak
- 38. El Malpais
- 39. Empedrado
- 40. Florida Mountains
- 41. Gila Lower Box
- 42. Gray Peak
- 43. Guadalupe Canyon
- 44. Horse Mountain
- 45. Hoverrocker
- 46. Ignacio Chavez
- 47. Jornada del Muerto
- 48. La Lena
- 49. Las Uvas Mountains
- 50. Little Black Peak
- 51. Lonesome Ridge
- 52. Mathers
- 53. Manzano

Wilderness Study Areas (continued)

- 54. McKittrick Canyon
- 55. Mesita Blanca
- 56. Mount Riley
- 57. Mudgetts
- 58. Ojito
- 59. Organ Mountains
- 60. Organ Needles
- 61. Peloncillo Mountains
- 62. Pena Blanca
- 63. Petaca Pinta
- 64. Presilla
- 65. Rio Chama
- 66. Robledo Mountains
- 67. San Antonio
- 68. Sierra de las Canas
- 69. Sierra Ladrones
- 70. Stallion
- 71. Veranito
- 72. West Potrillo Mountains



Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness, Farmington Field Office

Goals

Goal 1: Monitoring and Science

Expand the information and data important to effectively manage units in an ecologically sound manner.

El Camino Real National Historic Trail,
Socorro Field Office



Goal 2: Benefits

Ensure units are directly beneficial to communities, organizations, and visitors.

Goal 3:

Management Actions

Management is responsive to monitoring and science findings and to the needs of communities, organizations, and visitors.



Continental Divide National Scenic Trail,
Continental Divide Wilderness Study Area,
Socorro Field Office

Goal 4: Planning

Assure that all NLCS units have completed appropriate planning documents consistent with legislative mandates to help realize or improve Goals 1 - 3.



Lonesome Ridge Wilderness Study Area,
Carlsbad Field Office

Goal 5: Partnerships

Work with other entities where collaboration will help realize or improve Goals 1 - 4.



Fossil Forest Research Natural Area,
Farmington Field Office

Situation Analysis

Materials detailing management guidance, documenting existing conditions, and identifying management issues will be drawn upon to identify actions needed to further the National Strategy. These include:

Legislation

The legislation designating many NLCS units contains management requirements and action items. Regulations and manuals provide further clarification for broad based legislative requirements.

RMP

A Resource Management Plan (RMP) is a land use plan that describes broad multiple-use direction for managing public lands administered by the BLM. Decisions in land use plans allocate resources and guide future land management actions and site-specific implementation decisions. Independent RMP decisions are prepared for National Monuments and National Conservation Areas, whereas other units of the NLCS are addressed within Field Office wide RMPs.

Assure that RMPs under development or revision include decisions required for the appropriate management of NLCS units. Existing RMPs will be reviewed to identify decisions not yet implemented.

Activity Level Plans

These are plans that do not allocate resources but provide resource specific management guidance. Examples include Wilderness Management Plans, or Travel Management Plans. This type of planning is frequently integrated within RMPs for National Monuments and National Conservation Areas.

Assure that activity level plans under development include decisions required for the appropriate management of NLCS units. BLM policy requires the development of activity level plans under certain situations (for example, wilderness management plans or allotment management plans). Where warranted, preparation of activity level plans will be identified as workload action. Existing Activity plans will be reviewed to identify decisions not yet implemented.

Monitoring and Resource Assessments

BLM utilizes a variety of systems to determine the conditions of the public lands. For example, rangeland conditions are determined through upland health assessments, and wilderness areas are monitored through wilderness character monitoring. Understanding the condition of resources is an essential step before identifying workload.

Where monitoring or resource assessments identifies violations of law or regulations or conditions not within BLM established standards, action items will be identified to address those situations and given high priority. Action items may also be developed where monitoring or assessments identify conditions which could be improved but do not include a violation or conditions outside of established standards.

Management of Land Boundary (MLB) Plans

These plans define and guide the management of BLM boundaries for NLCS units. These plans identify and assess the accuracy and precision of boundary delineation, the visibility of boundaries, the risk of intrusion across boundaries, and the monitoring of boundary status through time.

It is the goal of New Mexico to manage boundaries through Management of Land Boundary (MLB)

plans. A related consideration in BLM boundaries is the acquisition of easements and inholdings when property owners express interest in selling and acquisition is consistent with the purposes for which the unit was designated. The MLB plan for NLCS units will assist in preventing impacts and responding to boundary issues that arise, and will result in action items derived from the MLB planning efforts.

Annual Reports

Some, but not all BLM programs, prepare annual reports. For example, an annual report is prepared for NCAs and NMs. These reports may identify emerging issues or needs not identified elsewhere.

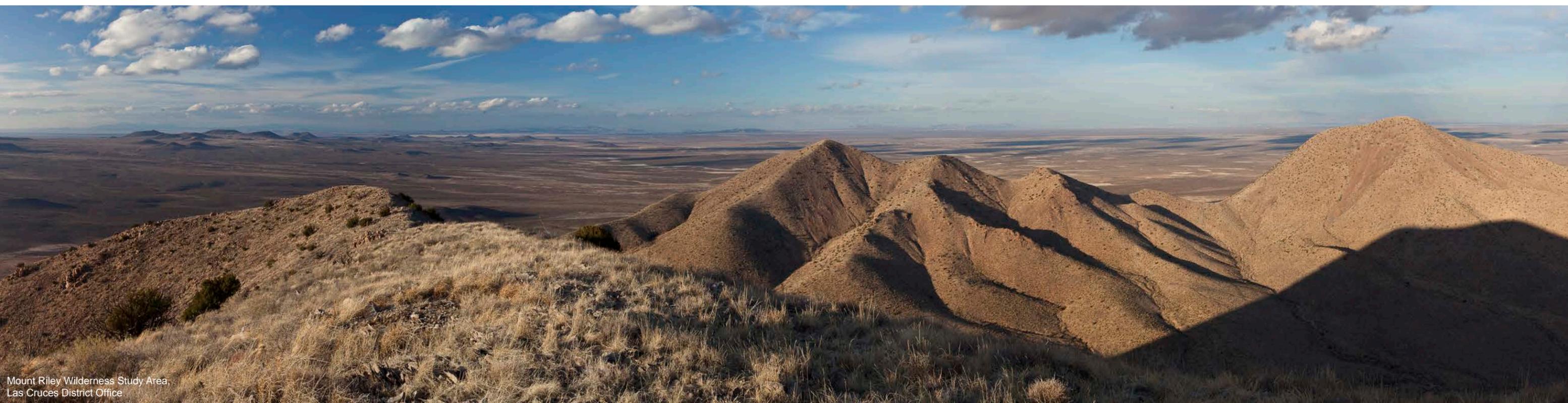
Staff Reports

Whether formally prepared or informal verbal reports, it is important to assure field staff observations are captured during annual workload development.

Communication Plans

Communication plans are developed to successfully capture the public's attention and interest in public land issues.

New Mexico will develop communication plans for NLCS units or groups of units, as appropriate, to



Annual Review

An annual work plan review and needs assessment will be conducted to maintain an up-to-date implementation plan for NLCS units. Field Office / District staff will review legislation, RMPs, activity level plans, monitoring reports, management of land boundary plans, resource assessments, annual reports, other staff reports, communication plans, education/interpretation plans, input provided by partners, and previous years reports annually to identify the most recent management situation and management needs. The purpose of the review will be to develop action items or implementation projects needed to maintain or improve NLCS resources. Action items may include decisions from planning documents not yet implemented, projects needed to respond to or improve a condition discovered during monitoring, or needs identified by the public or partner groups. An implementation plan will record action items in a table which will include a project title, brief description, explanation from what the item was generated (e.g. RMP decision), and which program an action item most relates (e.g. recreation).

Independent reviews will occur for each NCA, NM, WSR, and Wilderness. The WSAs of a Field Office will be reviewed as a group. National Trails will be reviewed as a whole by key staff from each Field Office through which it passes.

Field offices may hold a meeting(s) at the local level, as interest warrants, to allow for partner groups and other interested parties the opportunity to discuss issues and present needs prior to developing the implementation plan.

Field offices will prioritize action items using the guidance in the following section. Field offices will meet with the State Office to discuss the situation analysis and implementation plan. As needed, a statewide committee will be formed to prioritize project funding on a statewide basis.



Cebolla Wilderness,
El Malpais National Conservation Area,
Rio Puerco Field Office

increase the understanding of the NLCS within New Mexico. These plans will include identification of the target audience(s), key messages, and strategies for how to reach the audience. It is the goal of New Mexico to develop a statewide communication plan to address broader themes, and to develop site specific communication plans at the Field Office level as needed for local outreach. It is also the goal of New Mexico to maintain sign plans providing consistent statewide identification of NLCS features and boundaries. Action items will result from communication plans.

Education/Interpretation Plans

These plans are similar to communication plans except they are focused on enriching the visitors understanding and appreciation of a unit.

It is the goal of New Mexico to have education/interpretation plans developed for each of the units which receive significant visitation (these are typically units for which there is an associated visitor center). Action items will be developed to implement education/interpretation plans.

Input Provided by Partners or the Public

Processes to incorporate friends groups, volunteers, or partnerships with other agencies include

Memorandums Of Understanding, assistance agreements, and volunteer agreements.

The New Mexico BLM will seek opportunities to establish or enhance partnerships with organizations and the general public to work collaboratively with BLM in achieving the goals of NLCS. Furthermore, to foster regional landscape approaches to land management, New Mexico BLM will seek opportunities for coordinated management actions with adjoining local, state, and federal agencies, or similar non-governmental groups.

New Mexico BLM will develop opportunities in which partner organizations or the public may provide findings regarding the public lands and identify needs or emerging issues to the BLM.

Integration of the NLCS within BLM

Achieving the goals listed above will require approaching the NLCS as an integrated part of all functional areas in BLM. This includes making information about NLCS goals and objectives more available internally and assuring that all staff play a role in accomplishing those goals and objectives. Training, presentations, and organized field visits to address policy, issues, goals, and opportunities will be utilized as practicable.

Prioritization Guidelines

To be identified for funding, an identified need, action item or implementation project must be consistent with the legislative authorities which apply to the unit and meet at least one criterion, but more criteria that apply will result in a higher prioritization. Criteria:

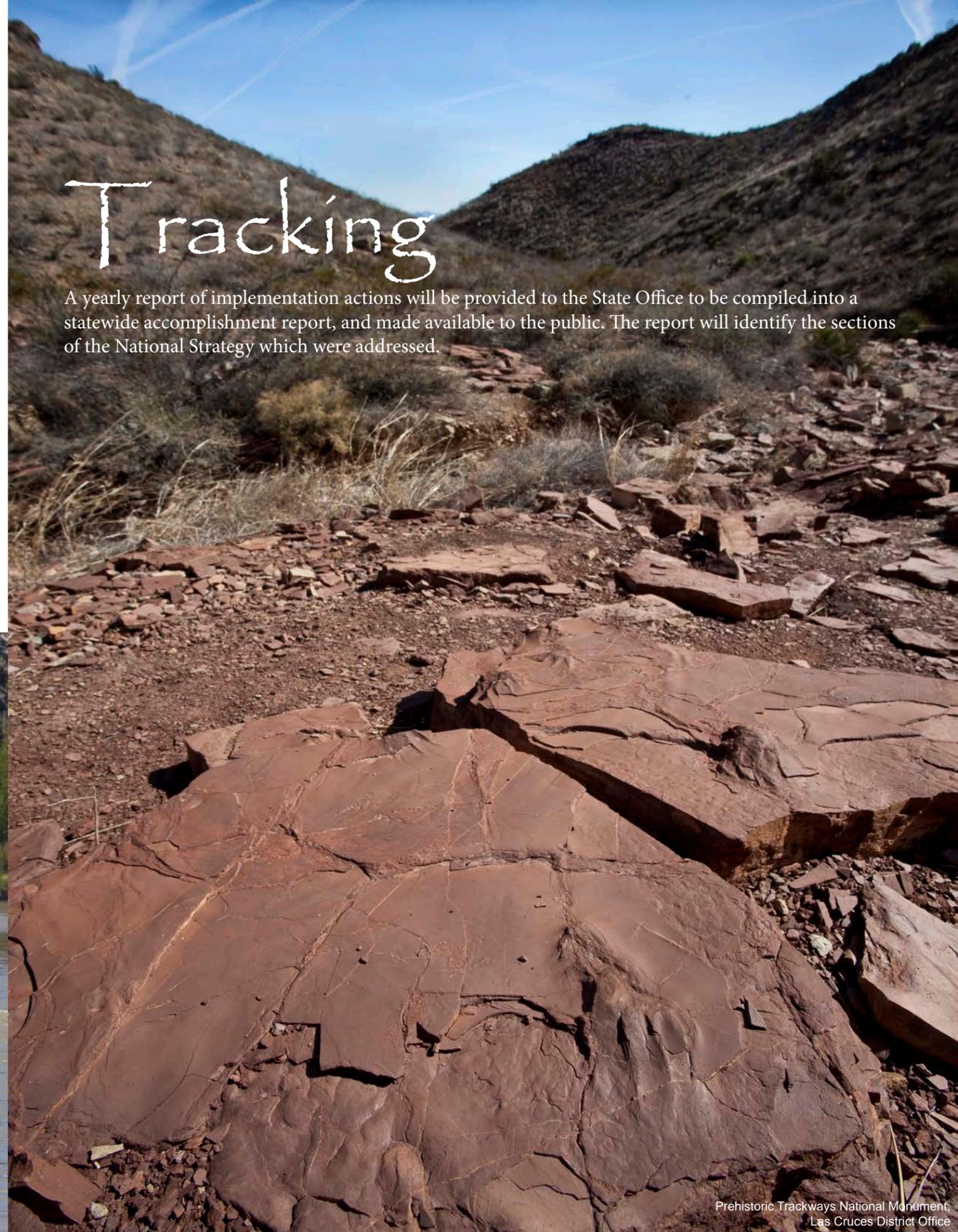
- I. Meets/fulfills a specific decision found in an RMP or activity plan.
- II. Number of elements the project addresses in the national 15 year strategy.
- III. Projects that further the State Director's priorities:
 - a. NLCS units are in top ecological condition
 - b. Interpretive and or educational opportunities are present
 - c. Communities gain value from the NLCS units around them
- IV. Meets any general decision in the RMP/activity plan.
 - a. Response to a violation or requirement of law or policy
 - b. Proactive work to further the purpose of the unit
 - c. Response to a need identified through monitoring or assessment
 - d. Response to resource issue that may quickly degrade if not addressed
 - e. Time sensitivity, an opportunity has arisen that is unlikely to repeat itself

Tracking

A yearly report of implementation actions will be provided to the State Office to be compiled into a statewide accomplishment report, and made available to the public. The report will identify the sections of the National Strategy which were addressed.



Rio Chama Wild and Scenic River
Rio Chama Wilderness Study Area
Taos Field Office



Prehistoric Trackways National Monument
Las Cruces District Office



Chamisa Wilderness Study Area, Rio Puerco Field Office

www.blm.gov/nm/nlcs



Cover Photo: Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, Rio Puerco Field Office