

Places You Know, Places You've Never Imagined

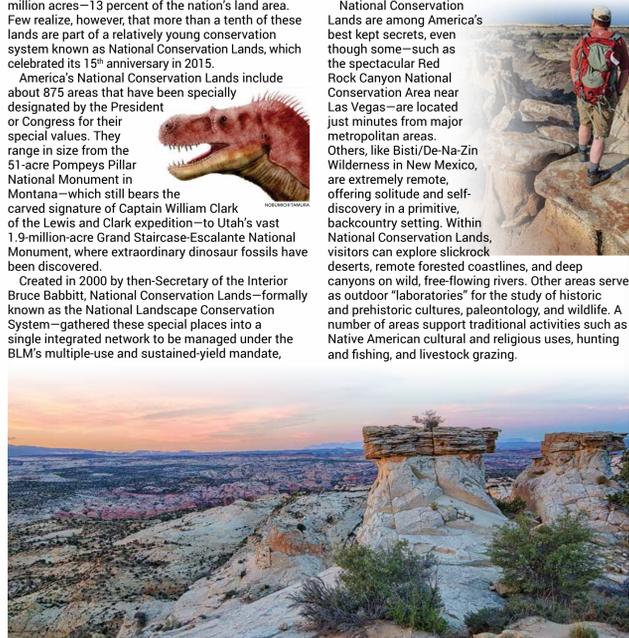
If there is such a thing as the "classic" western American landscape, it likely lies within the realm of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). An agency of the Department of the Interior, the BLM oversees more than 245 million acres—13 percent of the nation's land area. Few realize, however, that more than a tenth of these lands are part of a relatively young conservation system known as National Conservation Lands, which celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2015.

America's National Conservation Lands include about 875 areas that have been specially designated by the President or Congress for their special values. They range in size from the 51-acre Pompeys Pillar National Monument in Montana—which still bears the carved signature of Captain William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition—to Utah's vast 1.9-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, where extraordinary dinosaur fossils have been discovered.

Created in 2000 by then-Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, National Conservation Lands—formally known as the National Landscape Conservation System—gathered these special places into a single integrated network to be managed under the BLM's multiple-use and sustained-yield mandate,

with conservation as the overarching goal. National Conservation Lands are managed to conserve, protect, and restore the exceptional scientific, recreational, cultural, and ecological values for which they were designated.

National Conservation Lands are among America's best kept secrets, even though some—such as the spectacular Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area near Las Vegas—are located just minutes from major metropolitan areas. Others, like Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness in New Mexico, are extremely remote, offering solitude and self-discovery in a primitive, backcountry setting. Within National Conservation Lands, visitors can explore slickrock deserts, remote forested coastlines, and deep canyons on wild, free-flowing rivers. Other areas serve as outdoor "laboratories" for the study of historic and prehistoric cultures, paleontology, and wildlife. A number of areas support traditional activities such as Native American cultural and religious uses, hunting and fishing, and livestock grazing.



NATIONAL MONUMENTS – 5.6 million acres in 21 areas
From the gravity defying, sharp peaks of New Mexico's Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks to the dazzling sandstone waves of Arizona's Vermilion Cliffs, BLM national monuments protect some of the most significant resources found anywhere on public lands. The Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President the authority to designate national monuments in order to protect "objects of historic or scientific interest." Congress also occasionally establishes national monuments.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS – 2,423 miles of 69 rivers
Decades ago, as dams were being built around the nation for irrigation and flood control, Congress recognized the need to protect some of our most outstanding stream segments. On October 2, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act into law, protecting these free-flowing segments. From the crystal clear rapids of California's North Fork American River to the teeming grayling populations of Alaska's Gulkana River, wild and scenic rivers are in the "hall of fame" of America's waterways.

NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREAS AND SIMILAR DESIGNATIONS – 4.1 million acres in 21 areas
National conservation areas and similarly designated areas feature exceptional scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational values. They vary tremendously in landscape type and size, ranging from the steep river canyon of the Gunnison Gorge in Colorado to the rugged desert vistas of Nevada's 1.2-million-acre Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails.

Web sources:
A trip to BLM-managed lands takes some advance planning. Weather, road conditions, and the remote location of many sites are among the factors that should be considered. The web resources listed below provide valuable information to help prepare a safe, enjoyable, and fun experience. It is also a good idea to call or visit a BLM visitor center or office near your planned public lands destination. Each of these websites also links to social media pages that provide up-to-date, interesting images and information to help you discover these great American landscapes.

Bureau of Land Management – www.blm.gov
BLM National Conservation Lands – www.blm.gov/nclcs
Education and Interpretation Resources – www.blm.gov/education
Recreational Information – www.blm.gov/recreation
Volunteering with BLM – www.blm.gov/volunteer
Leave No Trace – www.lnt.org

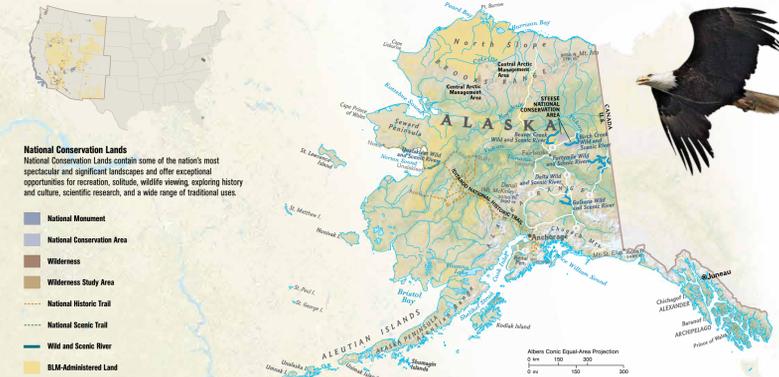
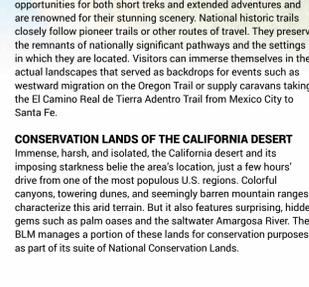
The Conservation Lands Foundation, an active supporter of the National Conservation Lands, facilitated the publication of this map.
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WILDERNESS – 8.7 million acres in 222 areas
Efforts to "tame" the wilderness and settle the frontier are an indelible part of America's pioneer heritage. However, early in the 20th century, people began to recognize the importance of this vanishing resource to our nation's heritage and our well-being. This led to a movement to protect some of America's wildest places. In wilderness areas, the earth and its community of life are allowed to take their own course and remain undisturbed. With no roads or development, wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for seclusion and self-guided recreational activities, including backpacking, horseback riding, hiking, hunting, and mountaineering. In places such as Bruneau-Jarvis Rivers Wilderness in Idaho and Mecca Hills Wilderness in California, one can find true escapes from civilization.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS – 12.7 million acres in 523 areas
The BLM has studied all lands under its jurisdiction and made recommendations to Congress regarding which areas have wilderness values. These lands—wilderness study areas—are protected until Congress makes a final decision regarding whether or not they should receive formal wilderness designation. Wilderness study areas include the 14,000-foot Handies Peak in Colorado and Grand Gulch in Utah with its prehistoric cultural riches and red rock canyons.

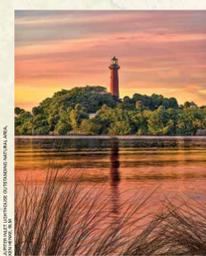
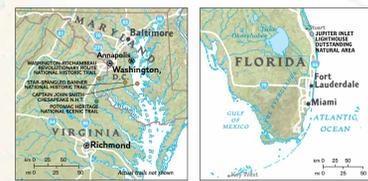
NATIONAL SCENIC AND HISTORIC TRAILS – 5,761 miles of 18 trails or segments
Recreationists might choose to backpack the spine of the Rockies on the Continental Divide or take a day hike to enjoy the beauty of the Pacific Crest—America's national scenic trails offer diverse opportunities for both short treks and extended adventures and are renowned for their stunning scenery. National historic trails closely follow pioneer trails or other routes of travel. They preserve the remnants of nationally significant pathways and the settings in which they are located. Visitors can immerse themselves in the actual landscapes that served as backdrops for events such as westward migration on the Oregon Trail or supply caravans taking the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail from Mexico City to Santa Fe.

CONSERVATION LANDS OF THE CALIFORNIA DESERT
Immense, harsh, and isolated, the California desert and its imposing starkness belie the area's location, just a few hours' drive from one of the most populous U.S. regions. Colorful canyons, towering dunes, and seemingly barren mountain ranges characterize this arid terrain. But it also features surprising, hidden gems such as palm oases and the saltwater Amargosa River. The BLM manages a portion of these lands for conservation purposes as part of its suite of National Conservation Lands.



National Conservation Lands
National Conservation Lands contain some of the nation's most spectacular and significant landscapes and offer exceptional opportunities for recreation, solitude, wildlife viewing, exploring history and culture, scientific research, and a wide range of traditional uses.

Legend:
National Monument
National Conservation Area
Wilderness
Wilderness Study Area
National Historic Trail
National Scenic Trail
Wild and Scenic River
BLM-Administered Land
Wilderness or Wilderness Study Area



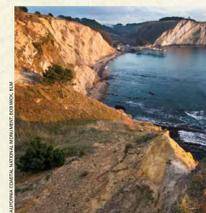
Preserving Our Past

A critical part of the BLM's mission in numerous National Conservation Lands is the study and preservation of thousands of archaeological sites from cultures that flourished long ago. The highest density of such sites in the nation lies in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in southwestern Colorado, where ancestral Puebloan people built thriving communities hundreds of years ago. The spectacular Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, located near the little-visited north rim of the Grand Canyon, has evidence of human habitation dating back 11,000 years. On the Florida coast, the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area celebrates more than 5,000 years of continuous human habitation, from the early Jeaga Indians to Civil War blockade runners.

Restoring the Land

In many areas, BLM staff and local volunteers work to restore the land to healthy conditions where native plants and animals can thrive. On the dramatic fault block mass of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area in southeastern Oregon, land exchanges with private ranches have created more than 100,000 acres of contiguous wilderness, along with the nation's first redbud trout reserve

to improve stream health and fish habitat. Members of the Pueblo de Cochiti are managing partners with the BLM at the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument in central New Mexico, maintaining trails and giving cultural tours to student groups that visit their ancestral homelands. The Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument in Montana have helped restore historic cabins and build "exlosures" to protect cottonwood seedlings along riparian areas. In California, hundreds of volunteer birders help the BLM collect critical data on seabird populations within the California Coastal National Monument.



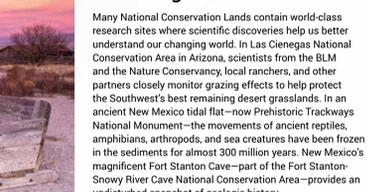
A Place for Wildlife

As urban areas, agriculture, roads, and water projects increasingly alter the geology and hydrology of our landscape, space for wildlife grows more and more scarce. That is why many areas in National Conservation Lands were established to protect and conserve vital wildlife habitat. The rugged cliffs above Idaho's Snake River, for example, provide nesting habitat for one of the densest concentrations of breeding raptors in the world. Each spring about 800 pairs of falcons, eagles, hawks, and owls return to the 465,000-acre Morley Nelson Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area to mate and raise their young. Other such areas include the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in southwestern Oregon, where more than 200 bird species and 70 species of butterflies have been sighted in the 52,900-acre monument. Farther south, the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness in Arizona is home to desert bighorn sheep and 11 species of bats. Up in Alaska, the 1.2-million-acre Steens National Conservation Area in the alpine tundra is a perfect place to spot grizzly bears, moose, and caribou.



Learning from the Land

Many National Conservation Lands contain world-class research sites where scientific discoveries help us better understand our changing world. In Las Cienegas National Conservation Area in Arizona, scientists from the BLM and the Nature Conservancy, local ranchers, and other partners closely monitor grazing effects to help protect the Southwest's best remaining desert grasslands. In an ancient New Mexico tidal flat—now Prehistoric Trackways National Monument—the movements of ancient reptiles, amphibians, arthropods, and sea creatures have been frozen in the sediments for almost 300 million years. New Mexico's magnificent Fort Stanton Cave—part of the Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area—provides an undisturbed snapshot of geologic history.



Yours to Explore

One of the greatest aspects of National Conservation Lands is that many are virtually unchanged from a time when our nation was new and these lands were wild frontier. They are yours to explore and discover on your own with top map or GPS in hand. Designated wilderness areas and wilderness study areas in particular are some of the most rugged and remote lands in the nation, offering adventurous visitors plentiful solitude and a rare escape from civilization. In the

nearly 270,000-acre Owyhee River Wilderness in southwestern Idaho, hikers and paddlers on the area's wild and scenic rivers can explore sinuous canyons carved into the high desert plateau. The trails of the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area in western Colorado lead hikers to numerous sandstone arches and Native American rock art; the Kokopelli Trail, which ends in Moab, Utah, offers mountain bikers a dramatic, single-track, 142-mile-long trail.

