

Bureau of Land Management

10th Anniversary

National Landscape Conservation System

BLM



California 2010



The National Landscape Conservation System

The public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been referred to in many ways – “wildlands,” “resource lands,” “public domain,” “land reserve,” and even the “commons.” Each of these names captures a bit of what characterizes these lands. But within the millions of acres of public lands BLM administers are areas that transcend these titles because of their special values, setting them apart from other any place you’ve ever been.

Ten years ago, in 2000, by order of the Secretary of the Interior, these special public lands received an official status and a fitting title: the “National Landscape Conservation System.” The System was established “to conserve, protect and restore nationally significant landscapes recognized for their outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values.”

*“to conserve,
protect, and restore
nationally significant
landscapes”*

The System currently encompasses more than 880 special areas, and includes National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Historic and National Scenic Areas, Outstanding Natural Areas, and Forest Reserves. These diverse areas are characteristic of the diversity of the West itself – from coastal trails to mountain wilderness and from desert dunes to broad valleys.

Here in California, there are more public land units in the National Landscape Conservation System than any other State. That should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with California’s geographic diversity. In fact, these special places may have been among those the late Woody Guthrie was thinking about when he wrote, “This Land is Your Land” --

“This land is your land, this land is my land, from California...”

“From the redwood forest...”

“I saw below me a golden valley...”

“To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts...”

“The fog was lifting...”

All of these areas described are found on National Landscape Conservation System units administered by BLM in California:

- California Coastal National Monument’s internationally renowned vistas
- Headwaters Forest Reserve’s ancient redwood forest
- Carrizo Plain National Monument’s valley blanket of golden flowers
- California Desert Conservation Area’s diamond deserts
- King Range National Conservation Area’s foggy bluffs
- and more than 100 other special public land areas in California.

Conserving and managing these and other significant landscapes is a tremendous responsibility, and BLM-California is privileged to work with countless partners, friends groups, and volunteers to achieve these important goals.

As the song says, “This land was made for you and me” and together we can ensure these areas within the National Landscape Conservation System remain truly special places for our children and grandchildren to always enjoy.

Northern California



Cache Creek Wilderness Area

Hiking through the Cache Creek Wilderness, you're likely to see one of the many bald eagles that reside here, taking advantage of the abundant fish in Cache Creek, which bisects the area and forms rugged, steep-sided canyons. One of the newer additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System, designated in the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Act in 2006, the 27,200-acre area hosts diverse wildlife, including tule elk, black bear, river otters, pygmy owls and prairie falcons. Prehistoric remains of native habitation dating back 11,000 years dot the landscape, as well as historic sites left by early pioneers. But the overarching attraction is the area's scenic quality, which visitors and river rafters can take in from a number of observation points.

King Range National Conservation Area

In a dramatic meeting of land and sea, the King Range National Conservation Area along California's north coast offers the visitor a rare and scenic perspective: in less than a few miles, ancient forests and windswept golden prairies cascade 4,000 feet down to rugged black sand beaches sculpted by waves from the unrelenting Pacific Ocean. The 58,000-acre area was BLM's first and is the oldest National Conservation Area, designated in 1970. With 26 miles of undeveloped coastline, the area provides unusual recreation opportunities, such as hiking the entire length of the beach, climbing up to the top of King Peak, surfing at Big Flat, riding horses along the ridge, mountain biking on newly established trails, or camping in the newly refurbished campgrounds.



Headwaters Forest Reserve

If you were standing in the middle of the Headwaters Forest, you would likely feel that you were in the fabled "forest primeval." Looking up, you see thousand-year-old redwoods that seem to touch the sky and you're surrounded by tall ferns and enveloped in mist. This 7,500-acre area was acquired by BLM and the State of California in 1999 to preserve one of the last unprotected large stands of old-growth redwood forest. The forest is the "headwaters" for two major streams: Salmon Creek and the south fork of the Eel River, and the area provides crucial habitat for five federally listed fish species: coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, marbled murrelets (a seabird) and the northern spotted owl. Visitors can take hosted day hikes into the old-growth, and other recreation and environmental education opportunities are available in less sensitive areas.

Central California

Merced Wild & Scenic River

When you hit the whitewater at Split Rock Rapid (Class IV, very difficult) on the Merced River, you know you're on a wild river. When you look up to the steep granite canyons above you and catch a glimpse of the historic remnants of the Yosemite Valley Railroad, you know you're on both a wild and scenic river. Designated part of the National Wild and Scenic River System by Congress, the 12 mile stretch of Merced River administered by BLM's Folsom Field Office includes a visitor center at Briceburg at the entrance to Yosemite National Park and several campgrounds.



Piedras Blancas Light Station Outstanding Natural Area

If you're driving north up world-famous Highway 1 on the Pacific Coast near San Simeon, and you look out to the west, you'll see the historic Piedras Blancas Light Station, designated part of the National Landscape Conservation System by Congress in 2008. The Light Station, officially an Outstanding Natural Area, was named in Spanish for the adjacent "white rocks" off Point Piedras Blancas and is home to peregrine falcons, seabirds, and sea lions. Directly across the highway from Hearst Castle, a State Park, the station was completed in 1875 to fill a dangerous navigation gap between Point Conception and Point Sur. The BLM assumed management from the Coast Guard in 2001. A very successful community based partnership is restoring and stabilizing the site to reflect its original look and natural condition. The 19-acre Outstanding Natural Area is also an important research area and coastal attraction that the public is welcome to visit on weekly guided tours.

Carrizo Plain National Monument

Visitors today see the Central Valley in California as highly developed, both for longstanding agricultural development and more modern urban expansion. But 300 years ago and beyond, you would have seen vast grasslands, populated with herds of elk and antelope, and in the spring, a swath of colorful wildflowers blanketing the landscape. Today, a remnant of that vision still exists in the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The 204,000-acre area is home to many rare plants and animals, including the kit fox and giant kangaroo rat. The area is an outdoor museum of cultural history, with many sites revered by Native Americans. It is a focus for geological studies, with the San Andreas Fault carving visible landscape shifts right through the Monument's center.

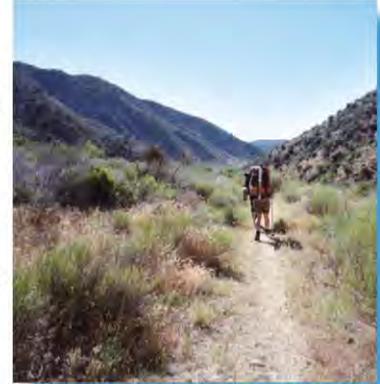


California Desert

The California Desert Conservation Area, designated by Congress in 1976 for special management, includes a large number of Conservation System units within its 11 million-acre expanse, including Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, a National Monument, National Trails and other areas managed for conservation purposes.

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

Zigzagging its way from Mexico to Canada, the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail was designated as a National Scenic Trail by Congress in 1968. The BLM manages 180 miles of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, primarily in the south half of the state. This trail boasts some of the greatest elevation changes in the National Scenic Trail System and is popular with thousands of hiker and equestrian users. Whether you visit for a few hours or for a few weeks, you'll surely find a uniquely Californian scene that will rejuvenate, inspire and surprise you.



Wilderness

Congress defined wilderness as being an “area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man...” When you think of California, “untrammelled” is probably not your first image, but rather high-rise buildings in busy cities, elevated freeways, and stretches of suburban houses. In reality, there are large swaths of areas in the State that are still primitive, natural and roadless. In a State with 38 million people, ensuring these wild places remain for present and future generations is important. Congress

has designated 82 areas covering 3.7 million acres of public lands in California as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. These represent some of the system’s most spectacular units, ranging from desert sand dunes to the Pacific coastline and from river canyons to mountain peaks. The BLM also manages 1.3 million acres of Wilderness Study Areas to maintain their wilderness qualities until a decision is made by Congress.

Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

Tourists flock to the Palm Springs and surrounding communities in the Coachella Valley for many reasons, but mostly for the climate and scenery. Forming the scenic mountain backdrop for this world-class destination is the Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Here, the mountains rise abruptly from the valley floor, below sea level, to 11,000 feet. Within this dramatic and transitional landscape are magnificent palm oases, snow-capped mountains, a national scenic trail and wilderness areas. Designated by Congress in 2000, and expanded in 2009, the Monument is jointly managed by the BLM and the Forest Service, in cooperation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the California Department of Fish and Game, both landowners in the Monument.



National Landscape Conservation System

Wilderness Areas	Wilderness Study Areas	Wild & Scenic Rivers	Scenic & Historic Trails	NCA's & National Monuments	Reserves, ONAs, & Other
87 areas	72 areas	8 rivers	4 trails	1 NCA 3 monuments	1 Reserve 1 ONA 1 Other*
3.8 million acres	1.1 million acres	100 miles	580 miles	360,000 acres	7,500+ acres

The totals above do not match the totals below due to rounding and overlaps

*+ Those portions of the California Desert Conservation Area managed for conservation purposes per P.L. 111-11

Northern California

Wilderness:

7 areas, 85,000 acres

Wilderness Study Areas:

20 areas, 641,000 acres

Wild & Scenic Rivers:

Eel (middle fork), 12 miles
Eel (south fork), 7 miles
Klamath, 1 mile
Trinity, 16 miles

Scenic & Historic Trails:

Pacific Crest, 2 miles
California, 75 miles
California (Nobles) 38 miles

National Monuments:

California Coastal

National Conservation Areas:

King Range, 57,288 acres

Reserves:

Headwaters Forest, 7,400 acres

Central California

Wilderness:

12 areas, 257,000 acres

Wilderness Study Areas:

38 areas, 289,000 acres

Wild & Scenic Rivers:

American (north fork), 13 miles
Merced, 20 miles
Tuolumne, 3 miles

Scenic & Historic Trails:

DeAnza, 10 miles
Pacific Crest, 41 miles

National Monuments:

California Coastal
Carrizo Plain, 204,107 acres

Outstanding Natural Areas:

Piedras Blancas Light Station, 19 acres

California Desert

Wilderness:

72 areas, 3,480,000 acres

Wilderness Study Areas:

14 areas, 170,000 acres

Wild & Scenic Rivers:

Amargosa, 26 miles
Cottonwood, 4 miles

Scenic & Historic Trails:

Pacific Crest, 130 miles
Old Spanish, 223 miles
DeAnza, 50 miles

National Monuments:

California Coastal
Santa Rosa & San Jacinto, 94,900 acres

Other:

Those portions of the California Desert Conservation Area managed for conservation purposes per P.L. 111-11

The California Coastal National Monument stretches along the entire coast and includes 20,000 rocks, islands, pinnacles and reefs.



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