

**Bureau of Land Management**  
**San Luis Valley – Taos Plateau**  
**Level IV Ecoregion**  
**Landscape Assessment**  
**Fact Sheet**

Increasingly, the land management challenges facing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) require the agency to work on large-scale issues, such as utility-scale solar energy development that creates impacts across traditional administrative boundaries. The BLM San Luis Valley- Taos Plateau Ecoregion Landscape Assessment is one tool the agency is using to help manage across these boundaries – and to engage other federal, state, and local government partners in cooperative conservation efforts.

In line with the BLM’s multiple-use mandate, the Ecoregion Landscape Assessment is aimed at sustaining the health and productivity of America’s public lands. It uses existing scientific information to identify resource conditions and trends within the San Luis Valley – Taos Plateau ecoregion, which is a large geographic area that shares similar ecological characteristics. This large-scale approach is designed to help us identify patterns of environmental change across the landscape.

The Ecoregion Landscape Assessment highlights and maps areas of both high and low ecological values. Lands with relatively high ecological values can be managed to ensure that their natural resources are properly conserved. It contains important tools for identifying areas that are not ecologically intact or readily restorable and where development activities, such as siting transmission lines or other large-scale projects, may best be directed. The assessment also explores the potential risks to these lands from key environmental “change agents”: climate change, wildfires, invasive species, and human development.

The Ecoregion Landscape Assessment uses information about the natural resources of all the lands within an ecoregion, not just lands managed by the BLM. In this way, it provides a foundation for formulating coordinated strategies to respond more effectively to environmental challenges that transcend land management boundaries. Including all the lands in an ecoregion also helps us understand how important wildlife habitats are connected and identify opportunities to strengthen or maintain existing habitats. In short, the study can help us identify key areas for conservation and restoration.

The Ecoregion Landscape Assessment provides science-based information and tools for land managers and stakeholders to consider in subsequent resource planning and decision-making processes, such as Resource Management Plans and Environmental Impact Statements. The Ecoregion Landscape Assessment does not contain findings and recommendations, nor does it make management decisions or allocate resource uses.

Several other groups, including the Western Governors’ Association, are working on region-wide assessments. The BLM encourages people who use the REAs to consider the results of these other assessments at the same time.

The Ecoregion Landscape Assessment, and all the data we used to develop them, is available to the public through the BLM website at: <http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/slvfo/solar.html>