

National Landscape Conservation System

BLM Colorado Implementation Strategy

Executive Summary

Colorado public lands inspire and challenge humanity through a broad spectrum of landscapes and opportunities. From 800-year old Ancestral Puebloan settlements situated in present day Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and industry and settlement support showcased on trade routes like the Old Spanish Trail, to today's busy hives of recreation in places like McInnis Canyon and Gunnison Gorge national conservation areas, our landscapes have embodied a vision of the possible. Colorado's residents recognize the value in our many diverse resources, ensuring these places retain their qualities for future generations while they serve us today. The National Landscapes Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) consists of presidential and congressionally-designated lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management as legacies to America's natural and cultural heritage. In Colorado, one-eighth of the agency's surface responsibilities have this special status, which were primarily designated through local community initiatives.

The National Conservation Lands mission is to conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes recognized for their outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values. In 2007, BLM Colorado worked with partners to create a statewide National Landscape Conservation System Strategic Plan, which focused primarily on the national monument and national conservation areas. The plan (available online) provided BLM Colorado with direction and management benchmarks. Now, five years later, following the transition of the management system to law, the BLM crafted a National Landscape Conservation System 15-year Strategy. This guidance is continued through the BLM's 2012 policy manuals for National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The time is right to reflect on the 2007 Colorado plan through the lens of the national strategy to ensure its relevance. This new document reflects the efforts of all of Colorado's field offices in coordination with our partners and our three Resource Advisory Committees. The Colorado implementation plan accommodates fluctuations in management resources and the needs of diverse landscapes. This plan will serve, to support the direction of our National Conservation Lands program at the state and local level for the next five years, and encourages communities to recognize opportunities for shared stewardship. This executive summary, like the implementation strategy, mirrors the national strategy document, but with ground level applications.

Throughout the plan "objects and values" are prioritized in management decisions. This language references the defining resources of the area that are called out for conservation, protection and restoration in the designating language for each National Conservation Land. For National Scenic and Historic Trails, the defining resources are referred to as "purpose and need"; for Wild and Scenic Rivers, "outstandingly remarkable values"; and for wilderness and WSAs, "wilderness characteristics". In this document those special resources for all areas are referenced as "objects and values". Designating language also identifies the manner in which grandfathered

uses are protected, a characteristic of National Conservation Lands that reinforces local stewardship and brings ties us to our history.

The four theme summaries below mirror the national strategy over the next five years to provide catalysts for innovation and stewardship. The existing Colorado Strategy maps the route to address National Conservation Lands goals. The summary reflects the overarching systems that are tied to local nuances within the larger Implementation Strategy.

Theme 1: Ensuring the Conservation, Protection, and Restoration of National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) Values

State Strategic Approach: Prioritize maintaining the healthy, wild, and open character of National Conservation Lands, guided by the purposes for which the landscapes were designated.

- Tier all actions through the hierarchical order from designation, resource management plan, science plan, and special stipulations to proceed with transparent commitments to on-the-ground actions.
- Tie landscape research to community partnerships, supporting inquiry-focused institutions and stewardship-oriented organizations' involvement in the ongoing generation of data for scientific decision-making.
- Ensure outreach and interpretation convey the balance of science within the multiple use mandate.
- Clearly define similarities and differences in the management of Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. Guide management of wilderness characteristics through monitoring, application of the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide, and the Keeping It Wild Interagency Strategy.

Theme 2: Collaboratively Managing the National Conservation Lands as Part of the Larger Landscape

State Strategic Approach: Establish management strategies that reflect protecting, conserving, and restoring significant resource values of National Conservation Lands within regional landscape ecosystems. Build stewardship among stakeholders across boundaries.

- Reflect management of National Conservation Lands as a part of the surrounding landscapes considering the socioeconomic goals of the community through planning.
- Participate in external planning efforts to preserve sustainable economic interests, protect and restore migratory corridors, and integrate climate change models and fire prevention adaptive management.
- Underscore the opportunities and benefits of partnering with educational institutions and streamline processes that promote collaboration.
- Support sustainable, high quality recreation experiences and quality of life outcomes for local communities and user groups through BLM Colorado's Recreation Strategy.

Theme 3: Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of the BLM's National Conservation Landscape System

State Strategic Approach: Promote safe and appropriate public access and foster visitor enjoyment, appreciation, and learning opportunities to provide for enriching and inspiring experiences. Improve internal and external information sharing and enhance the awareness and identity of the National Conservation Lands in Colorado.

- Consistently present facets of the BLM multiple use mandate and the significance of the National Conservation Lands through external communications.
- Ensure education and interpretation are part of recreation planning, communication of land health issues and protection strategies, and building youth participation in conservation practices.
- Explore opportunities to promote diverse participation, which is integral to outreach programs, recreation, and collaborative projects.
- Expand infrastructure to support volunteers and partners to further accomplishments through expanded stewardship.

Theme 4: Building on the BLM's Commitment to Conservation

State Strategic Approach: Commit to conserving, protecting, and restoring special values within Colorado's National Conservation Lands. Prioritize maintaining the healthy, wild, and open character of the landscapes. Provide sustainable funding and staffing necessary to appropriately manage National Conservation Lands in Colorado.

- Promote awareness that all resource disciplines are integral to addressing the scope of responsibilities associated with each area, recognizing best practices and publishing accomplishments such as research project conclusions and managers reports.
- Recognize and promote the National Landscape Conservation System's mission as an integral part of the broader BLM mission.
- Update internal mechanisms such as budget planning, intranet sites, and cadastral data to support multiple engagement and contribution to adaptive management.
- Efficiently use internal funding opportunities such as deferred maintenance and reimbursable accounts while exploring partnership opportunities to build capacity and accomplish stewardship projects.