

National Landscape Conservation System BLM Colorado Implementation Strategy

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

National Emphasis:

- Policy Development
- Science
- Data Management

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.

1A: Prioritize efforts that demonstrate conservation, protection, and restoration, and illustrate their connection to BLM Strategic Goals for Resource Use and Protection.

State Level Actions:

- Work across program boundaries within the agency to highlight the breadth of resources conserved through NLCS status.
- Support cross-program dialogue with resource specialists to promote understanding of planning systems specific to NLCS.
- Ensure that statewide outreach carries the messaging of similarities and differences in management requirements for NLCS lands.
- Promote understanding and integration of new NLCS policy manuals.

Unit Level Actions:

- Underscore enabling legislation, objects, and values in Resource Management Plans (RMP), activity plans, business, and science plans.
- Ensure that RMP implementation strategy actions reinforce the NLCS conservation message.
- Frame initiatives within the context of objects and values, and track efficacy.
- Develop special stipulations that address region-specific needs (e.g., natural, cultural, recreational).

1B: Foster and promote scientific research within the NLCS.

State Level Actions:

- Develop geospatial data layers and maps for key resources in easy-to-interpret formats to facilitate unit-level assessments, decision making, and internal and external information sharing.

- Develop guidelines for research in wilderness and wilderness study areas.
- Facilitate the generation of protocols for professional-quality data collection through citizen science projects.
- Establish partnerships with research-focused organizations to support local research efforts through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).
- Incorporate monitoring in base workloads.
- Conduct statewide visitor preference and benefit attainment surveys for NLCS units.
- Develop a funding strategy to support research requirements.

Unit Level Actions:

- Maintain an interdisciplinary team involvement in the management of each unit to assure a full mix of resource management appropriate for the area.
- Develop and implement comprehensive weed-management programs for NLCS units.
- Implement BLM National Monitoring Strategy.
- Complete Landscape Health Assessments (LHAs) and improve landscape health within NLCS units by incorporating landscape health objectives into RMPs and activities.

1C: Establish better understanding for scientific decision-making regarding managing landscapes and significant resource values for conservation, protection, and restoration.

State Level Actions:

- Link field office (FO) and district office (DO) actions to national strategies in discussions and outreach efforts.
- Develop a program overview for science study areas. Create a toolkit for environmental education and interpretation programs.
- Identify and address resource and funding needs to implement the science strategy.
- Expedite processes for partnership MOUs and contracting.
- Foster a statewide culture encouraging academic involvement.
- Create and promote opportunities to research traditional science.

Unit Level Actions:

- Tier research activities from baseline data and integrate climate change models.
- Promote local awareness for ties between management actions and unit science plan.
- Develop partnerships, collaborative projects, and activities that result in specific conservation and restoration benefits.
- Develop and tie on-the-ground laboratories (learning landscapes, living classrooms, etc.) and science study areas to regional environmental education initiatives.
- Promote agency awareness of opportunities to use NLCS areas for focused research locations.
- Use interpretation to reveal the National Conservation Lands' relationship to the BLM's multiple-use mission.

1D: Build a scientific foundation with adaptive management strategies for decision-making processes.

State Level Actions:

- Identify and pursue key partnerships to support a comprehensive scientific perspective.
- Identify relevant research (accomplished or underway) relevant to NLCS units, and promote awareness; support individual landscape's science goals.

Unit Level Actions:

- Designate a science coordinator for each National Conservation Area (NCA) and National Monument (NM). This person will serve as the contact for science providers submitting research requests through the BLM Science Web Portal.
- Develop unit-specific science plans that identify and guide the unit's scientific mission and efforts; share plans, methods, and results, internally and externally; conduct comprehensive, cost-effective inventory and monitoring programs to identify ecosystems, unique values, and sensitive areas, and to track trends and changes in resource condition.
- Identify and address gaps in the data needed to support land-use plan implementation priorities; these gaps can serve as a basis for soliciting science providers and funding, as well as a way to highlight accomplishments.
- Complete grazing allotment monitoring, compliance, and evaluations, and implement meeting land health objectives.
- Acquire and coordinate baseline ecological information for NLCS areas with surrounding landscapes.

1E: Highlight opportunities to protect critical resources within the context of continued multiple-use activities.

State Level Actions:

- Continue to provide assistance for multiple-use management of National Conservation Lands through land-use planning and implementation for each area.
- Provide support, guidance, and outreach materials for complex issues such as valid existing rights in mining, grazing, and application of the Minimum Requirement Decision Guide for wilderness.
- Promote clarity regarding the differences in management between wilderness and wilderness study areas.
- Conduct outreach to underscore and illuminate multiple-use management in the NLCS.

Unit Level Actions:

- Limit discretionary uses to those compatible with the conservation, protection, and restoration of the values for which NLCS lands were designated.
- Recognize or create opportunities for incompatible uses in regions surrounding the National Conservation Lands.
- Close and rehabilitate unauthorized, user-created routes.

- Increase visitor access to site-specific information, contact with agency personnel and partners, and resource patrols to improve voluntary compliance with rules and regulations and to reduce illegal activities.
- Employ the use of non-law-enforcement personnel where appropriate to help achieve regulatory compliance and resource protection.

Theme 2: Collaboratively Managing the NLCS as Part of the Larger Landscape

National Emphasis:

- Ecosystem-based Management
- Conservation Values in Planning
- Communicating Collaboration Success Stories

State Strategic Approach:

Establish management strategies that reflect protecting, conserving, and restoring significant resource values of NLCS units, within regional landscape ecosystems. Build stewardship among stakeholders across boundaries.

2A: Emphasize protecting or restoring native species within their historic ranges, specified in proclamations and enabling legislation, with particular attention to key wildlife and plant species.

State Level Actions:

- Establish MOUs with land management agencies and adjacent landowners to work together on landscape/development planning.
- Promote public awareness to encourage landscape-level thinking and stewardship.
- Offer a clearinghouse of research projects and initiatives focused on large landscape research.
- Promote awareness for the role of wilderness in the landscape.

Unit Level Actions:

- Implement US Fish and Wildlife Service's threatened and endangered species biological conservation requirements relating to livestock grazing, managing invasive species, and protecting sensitive species in NLCS units.
- Work across agency, tribal, and local government boundaries in planning to preserve migratory corridors.
- Integrate climate change models and fire prevention with all levels of plans.

2B: Build and sustain relationships with communities of interest and communities of place to foster cooperative conservation and community stewardship.

State Level Actions:

- Support site-specific partnering efforts.

- Use the BLM Science Web Portal to inform science providers of research opportunities, track activities, and monitor research work to ensure it complies with laws, regulations, and land-use planning decisions.
- Support collaborative planning with a coordinated database.
- Facilitate opportunities for socioeconomic studies to augment planning resources.

Unit Level Actions:

- Build employee skills and redefine priority workloads to integrate community partnerships with day-to-day business.
- Support community science and traditional science initiatives.
- Partner with local libraries.
- Prioritize partnerships, collaborative projects, and activities that result in conservation and restoration benefits.
- Provide local leadership in conservation and preservation practices.
- Establish partnerships with local law enforcement through reimbursable agreements to provide highly-visible patrols within the NLCS units and to assist BLM law enforcement rangers.
- Expand the current law enforcement ranger program to maintain a focus on the diverse public uses within the NLCS management areas.
- Leverage funds through place-based partnerships to use external resources and revenue streams, as well as volunteer resources.

2C: Develop and initiate outreach programs in partnership with educational institutions to accomplish research and applied science, as well as communicate needs and successes.

State Level Actions:

- Tie statewide initiatives to higher education networks and extensions; build relationships, cooperate, and collaborate with education in outreach efforts.
- Identify existing national, state and local partnerships to leverage financial and personnel resources and to broaden public awareness of the NLCS.
- Establish MOUs with key conservation organizations in support of FO relationships with chapters.
- Fund collaborative efforts, partnership development, and maintenance costs within base.

Unit Level Actions:

- Engage academia in developing Best Management Practices, restoration projects, and seeking cooperative research funding.
- Assist and support local education institutions in designing and developing curriculum.
- Seek opportunities to partner with regional and international institutions researching similar issues.
- Use science plans as catalysts for landscape-level discussions.
- Expand “Keeping it Wild” methodologies to interested private landowners and other land management entities.

2D: Implement Colorado's Recreation Strategy objectives to ensure sustainable high-quality recreation experiences and quality of life outcomes for individuals, communities, economies, and the environment.

State Level Actions:

- Include website information for the recreation audience.
- Use symbol standards in mapping and establish a branded image for all NLCS outreach materials.
- Link NLCS science program activities to education, interpretive activities, outreach efforts, and national BLM projects.
- Promote awareness of wilderness and wilderness study areas.
- Establish a clearinghouse of current education and interpretation products.
- Complete travel management planning and implementation.
- Develop an interpretive toolbox for field application.
- Build capacity for foreign travelers through targeted messaging.

Unit Level Actions:

- Develop, maintain, and nurture sustainable travel/tourism partnerships with gateway communities to ensure accurate and beneficial marketing of NLCS recreation opportunities.
- Build on partners' recreation efforts as appropriate.
- Develop interpretive plans and outreach materials for all NLCS units to highlight each area's unique cultural, paleontological, historical, geological, and natural resources.
- Support local visitor centers and museums with BLM exhibits and share opportunities for outreach.
- Work with local special interest groups on creative endeavors to supplement programming with volunteers devoted to these areas.
- Train front-line workers in providing user information about NLCS units,
- Integrating the multiple-use mandate with designation purposes; improve and maintain signing, mapping, travel information, and education for NLCS visitors.
- Make effective use of web opportunities for front-line contact.
- Identify family-friendly recreation opportunities.
- Conduct periodic visitor-use and satisfaction surveys to monitor visitation, enhance recreation experiences, and protect resources.
- Improve on-the-ground maintenance programs and coordinate with BLM engineering staff to conduct recreation-site and facility-condition assessments to ensure funding is directed to the highest priority sites and facilities.
- Meet public health standards and complete necessary improvements to critical public drinking water and sewer systems.
- Provide safety training for employees and volunteers with field public contact responsibilities; focus training on risk management and hazard/safety awareness.
- Emphasize personal responsibility and build stewardship for protecting cultural resources.

- Establish a monitoring strategy to detect illegal activities and establish action plans to reduce or eliminate inappropriate activity.

Theme 3: Raising Awareness of the Value and Benefits of the BLM's NLCS

National Emphasis:

- Communication and Outreach
- Develop Program Strategies
- Engage and Employ Veterans
- Engage and Employ Youth

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 NLCS in Colorado.

3A: Create a strong and consistent identity for Colorado NLCS areas through signage, information, and outreach initiatives.

State Level Actions:

- Coordinate NLCS websites, brochures, maps, and other recreation information to ensure consistency in messages and content.
- Support coordinated information dissemination at the DO and FO levels.
- Include youth on the production team for outreach materials.
- Create a Colorado NLCS web page that provides news and updates on issues and accomplishments.
- Build a visual and audio library of NLCS resources.
- Create a quarterly newsletter to highlight success stories and share research accomplishments with the public.
- Identify and highlight specific and distinct recreational opportunities, experiences, and benefits for each NLCS unit in Colorado in conjunction with the field.
- Update and implement an external communications plan, including media outreach packets, to open channels among national, regional, state, and local interest groups.
- Develop and implement a wilderness interpretive plan in coordination with other agencies and partners.
- Develop a Colorado NLCS communications toolkit (brochure, fact sheets, postcards, posters, videos, etc.) that highlights all National Conservation Lands and provides specific user information about each area.
- Present economic studies that document the local, regional, and national benefits of NLCS-related management and activities.
- Continue supporting special outreach projects, as well as major state and national initiatives, including National Public Lands Day, National Trails Day, etc.

- Develop a statewide NLCS traveling exhibit highlighting science, partnerships, and accomplishments in the Colorado NLCS units; showcase how BLM Colorado recruits and maintains partnerships.
- Incorporate BLM guidelines for Quality Built Environments in all NLCS units.
- Use current technology, including social networking, as appropriate and authorized.

Unit Level Actions:

- Develop and conduct field trips to educate the public, key decision-makers, and the media about the importance of protecting Colorado NLCS areas, and inspire individuals to participate in supporting these areas.
- Complete an annual report to highlight success stories and share monitoring information with the public.
- Continue working with Take It Outside partners, friends groups, and other partners.
- Work with the local Chambers of Commerce, Visitor and Convention Bureaus, and other tourism providers to create web links between their web pages and NLCS unit web pages.

3B: Communicate that public involvement is critical to ensuring NLCS resources exist for future generations.

State Level Actions:

- Strengthen and celebrate existing relationships with volunteers and partners.
- Support volunteer and nongovernmental initiatives at the state level through funding and administrative efforts.
- Sponsor alternative funding education opportunities for FO and DOs.

Unit Level Actions:

- Develop partnerships, collaborative projects, and activities that result in specific conservation and restoration benefits; build on existing partner program successes.
- Enhance nature experiences and recreation opportunities specific to families.
- Expand services to international travelers and non-English speaking audiences.

3C: Increase capacity for managing volunteers, partners, outside funding sources, and relationships by increasing skills internally and using skills available in the community.

State Level Actions:

- Develop standard assistance agreements, MOUs, and other required documents to make it easier for partners to work with NLCS units.
- Build FO capacity with education opportunities.

Unit Level Actions:

- Work proactively with the State Office to streamline the agreements process.
- Dedicate resources to employee skill-building.

3D: Communicate landscape health issues, special values, and protection strategies, and showcase management within NLCS units.

State Level Actions:

- Establish a network for relevant education and interpretation products and programs for Colorado's NLCS units, supporting outdoor ethics and stewardship.
- Manage a coordinated outreach strategy through collaboration with the field.
- Develop and implement a statewide Junior Ranger Program in participation with all NLCS units.

Unit Level Actions:

- Promote awareness for the objects and values of each NLCS unit.
- Expand Hands on the Land sites with one site tied to each NM or NCA.
- Develop interpretive plans and outreach materials specific to each NLCS unit, incorporating science and research project information.
- Increase volunteer support and community stewardship by diversifying opportunities and creating innovative partnerships on NLCS lands.
- Address the significance of cultural resources in context through interpretation.
- Build capacity for sustainable travel/tourism partnerships with gateway communities to ensure accurate and beneficial marketing of NLCS recreation opportunities.

Goal 3E: Promote youth stewardship.

State Level Actions:

- Develop and fund youth engagement and employment opportunities for the NLCS units.
- Target partnerships with tribes to preserve traditional sciences.
- Build awareness for desired experiences among diverse groups.
- Coordinate NLCS websites, brochures, maps, and other recreation information to ensure consistency in messages and content.

Unit Level Actions:

- Provide outstanding recreational settings and opportunities for visitors and residents that allow them to explore, learn about, appreciate, feel connected to, and derive targeted physical and social benefits and desired outcomes from these special areas.
- Practice and highlight benefits-based management practices.
- Include career messages in education and interpretation outreach.

Theme 4: Building on BLM's Commitment to Conservation

National Emphasis:

- Communicate Internally
- Coordinate Policy Across BLM
- Implement National and State NLCS Strategies
- Coordinate Budget

State Strategic Approach:

Commit to conserving, protecting, and restoring special values within Colorado NLCS units. Prioritize maintaining the healthy, wild, and open character of the landscapes. Provide sustainable funding and staffing necessary to appropriately manage NLCS units in Colorado.

4A: Develop an internal Colorado communication plan to enhance information sharing within the BLM (nationally and statewide) and emphasize the NLCS' potential to enhance the BLM as a whole.

State Level Actions:

- Complete an annual report to highlight Colorado NLCS success stories and share with BLM employees, partners, and the public.
- Reinforce objects and values for which NLCS units have been designated in messaging.

Unit Level Actions:

- Highlight staff work done in NLCS units at staff meetings, through awards, on the internet, in reports, media, etc.
- Involve FO permanent and seasonal staff in NLCS units in special projects, events, field trips, and other outreach efforts.
- Build ownership for units throughout FOs with special event days on NLCS lands for BLM employees and families.

4B: Highlight opportunities to protect critical resources within the context of continued multiple-use activities.

State Level Actions:

- Provide public affairs support to NLCS units to develop and conduct field trips to educate the public, key decision makers, and the media about the importance of protecting Colorado NLCS areas as part of BLM's multiple use mission, and inspire individuals to participate in supporting these areas.
- Ensure that law enforcement monitoring and enforcement activities place high emphasis on protecting each unit's special resources and make substantial progress toward eliminating or mitigating threats to those values.

Unit Level Actions:

- Highlight multiple-use management in interpretive exhibits as a way of demonstrating the NLCS' contribution to the BLM's mission.
- Continue to manage compatible uses and valid existing rights consistent with protection of the values for which each area was designated.

4C: Manage NLCS units as directed by legislation and proclamation.

State Level Actions:

- Reinforce ties to other relevant resource specialists and programs.
- Use internal budgeting opportunities, including revenue, reimbursable accounts, construction and deferred maintenance funding, etc.
- Continue sharing staff specialists with FOs and explore new ways to jointly fund other necessary positions between NLCS units.
- Implement and showcase examples of best management practices, cooperative conservation, and restoration projects that have wider landscape-level applicability and demonstrate accomplishment of strategic performance goals.
- Ensure statewide cadastral support for FOs developing NLCS Land and Water Conservation Fund packages for BLM Washington Office submission.
- Promote employee and partner education opportunities.

Unit Level Actions:

- Define and implement high management standards in cultural, natural, wilderness, recreation, and paleontological resource stewardship, protection, and restoration; identify adequate core staff, specialist support, skill mix, and base operating costs necessary to meet our legal mandates, achieve “high level” standards, and implement RMPs, wilderness plans, etc.
- Develop comprehensive recreation visitation, economic impact measurements, and monitoring and reporting program(s) applicable to all NLCS units.
- Develop and implement interpretive plans that incorporate NLCS signing mandates and consistent and clear user information.
- Identify NLCS targets on employee performance evaluations.

4D: Define high standards of management in cultural, natural, wilderness, recreation, and paleontological resource stewardship, protection, and restoration as well as how these standards can be met by coordinating budgets with other BLM programs.

State Level Actions:

- Develop an internal, statewide prioritized plan for NLCS funding.
- Seek partnerships with regional, national, and international scale interest groups; streamline the agreements process.
- Explore opportunities to fund site maintenance and increase visitor services under Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and other national initiatives/programs.

Unit Level Actions:

- Assure adequate across-the-board funding to support the necessary interdisciplinary management.
- Develop and enhance partnerships with Friends Groups and cooperating associations.
- Maintain interdisciplinary team involvement in managing each unit to assure a full mix of resource management as appropriate for the area.
- Use internal funding opportunities, including revenue, reimbursable accounts, construction, deferred maintenance funding, etc.

- Continue and expand opportunities for place-based partnerships with friends groups, counties, tourism groups, etc.

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