

DISCUSSION PAPER
Bureau of Land Management
Treasured Landscapes

Our Vision, Our Values

I. Introduction -- BLM's Vision for Treasured Landscapes in the 21st Century

Of the 264 million acres under BLM management, some 130- to 140-million acres are worthy of consideration as treasured lands. These areas, roughly equivalent in size to Colorado and Wyoming combined, are valuable for their unspoiled beauty; the critical role they play in habitat conservation; their historical, cultural, and paleontological significance; and their importance in maintaining the proper functioning of the larger ecosystems in which they exist.

In order to preserve these treasured landscapes for the 21st Century, the BLM proposes to manage them not as individual parcels, but as components of larger landscapes, ecosystems, airsheds, and watersheds. We now know that these large-scale ecosystems, watersheds, airsheds, and migratory pathways exist and function only at their natural scales, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. Therefore, in order to facilitate the transition from the current land management system, which is based on jurisdictional boundaries, to a modern landscape-level management system, the BLM proposes to "designate, rationalize, and manage-at-scale" its treasured landscape holdings.

Over the next 25 years, the BLM intends to: (1) finalize appropriate conservation designations and fully account for the ecosystem-services values of its lands; (2) rationalize and consolidate its fragmented landholdings; and (3) commit to planning and allocating resources and resource uses and at their natural scales, in effective coordination with other Federal, State, and Tribal governments. The BLM believes that together, the three components of this vision will allow us to utilize 21st century science to preserve our celebrated assets and guarantee that our treasured landscapes will be conserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

To achieve our Treasured Landscape objectives, the BLM will need to enlist the aid of the administration and Congress to ensure that we possess both the legal tools and financial means to make our vision of integrated landscape-level management a reality.

II. Background -- BLM's Treasured Lands: Vast, Varied, and Vital

The BLM's lands include fragile ecosystems essential to rare animal and plant species, cultural resources that date back to the beginning of America's Native populations, stunning paleontological resources that increase our understanding of the natural world, breathtaking vistas and recreational areas, and nationally significant historic sites and trails that tell the story of our growing Nation.

The bulk of the BLM's existing treasured lands have been arrayed, by Presidential declaration, legislative enactment, or administrative management, into four separate management categories, together amounting to nearly 130-million acres—about half of BLM's total land portfolio:

- **The National Landscape Conservation System:** The BLM's transition to public land management on a landscape scale began a decade ago when then-Secretary Babbitt created America's newest, permanently protected collection of public lands—the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). By statute, the NLCS now consists of all BLM-managed National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Outstanding Natural Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Conservation Lands within the California Desert—a set of public lands together comprising almost 27 million acres. These lands have been designated by Congress or Presidential proclamation to be specially managed to enhance their conservation values, while allowing for the continuation of certain multiple uses. The mission of the NLCS is to conserve, protect, and restore, for present and future generations, the nationally significant landscapes that have been recognized for their outstanding archaeological, geological, cultural, ecological, wilderness, recreation, and scientific values.
- **Special Areas identified and designated through the land use planning process:** Outside the NLCS, BLM land-use plans have designated about 75 million additional acres for the primary purpose of conservation and recreation. These areas include Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Special Recreation Management Areas, Globally Important Bird Areas, Significant Caves, Research Natural Areas, National Natural Landmarks, and others.
- **Areas that provide critical habitat for listed and sensitive wildlife and plant species:** Further, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated 25-million acres of BLM lands (not included in either of the two previous categories) as critical habitat for listed and sensitive wildlife and plant species.
- **Wild Horse Preserves:** Finally, as a result of the Secretary's October 2009 proposal to create a sustainable wild horse program, the BLM now has the opportunity to acquire preserves in the Midwest or East as part of the BLM's Treasured Landscapes initiative. America's iconic wild horses are powerful national symbols of the West, and adding federally owned wild-horse preserves to the BLM's Treasured Landscapes portfolio will provide an opportunity to expand appreciation of the BLM's conservation mission to new areas.

Because the BLM's vast landholdings hold such great promise for the Department's ambitious conservation objectives, the BLM's landscape-level preservation efforts should play a central role in the Department's Treasured Landscapes agenda.

III. The Vision: A Well-Managed System of Treasured and Protected Lands

The BLM believes that the successful management of its treasured landscapes over the next twenty-five years will require BLM to undertake three initiatives:

- First, so that lands are placed in appropriate management regimes and land-use decisions are well-informed, the BLM should ensure that its existing landholdings have received appropriate conservation designations and that the ecosystem-service values of its lands (including benefits such as carbon sequestration and air and water purification) have been adequately inventoried and considered.
- Second, to allow for more effective landscape-scale management, the BLM should aim to rationalize its land holdings by eliminating existing “checkerboard” land-holding patterns where possible, and by acquiring parcels adjacent to its current holdings, if important to preserve ecosystem integrity.
- Third, to ensure that BLM’s specific land-use decisions are properly situated in their broader contexts, the BLM should commit to managing its consolidated and expanded landholdings at their natural scales, and to coordinating with other federal, state, and tribal land owners for the purposes of maintaining healthy wildlife populations, ecosystems, airsheds, watersheds, and riparian areas.

A. Completing Conservation Designations and Accounting for Ecosystem-Service Values: Expanding the NLCS, Designating New National Monuments, and Managing for Conservation in the Land-Use Planning Process.

The first component of BLM’s treasured landscapes vision would ensure that the special lands already in BLM’s ownership are managed under the appropriately protective management regime.

BLM-managed public lands include rugged mountains, wild deserts, and America’s last vestiges of large, untamed landscapes. These landscapes first captured the pioneer spirit and cultivated America’s romantic ideals of the Wild West. In order to expand this network of treasured lands to include the diversity of landscapes currently managed by the BLM and to protect world-class ecological and cultural resources, the BLM believes that lands especially deserving of protection should be placed in the National Landscape Conservation System; that the administration should consider designating significant and immediately threatened lands as national monuments; and that the BLM’s land-use planning process should properly account for ecosystem-service values and manage for conservation values.

To that end, the BLM proposes that the Administration:

- I. Support Congressional efforts to expand the NLCS legislatively through the designation of new National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Historic Trails. Designation efforts should not be focused solely in the West, but should also include areas in the rest of the country that warrant such protection.

2. Consider use of the Antiquities Act to set aside new National Monuments where there are immediate threats to nationally significant natural or cultural resources on lands deserving NLCS status. However, the BLM recognizes that public support and acceptance of preservation status is best achieved when the public has an opportunity to participate in a land-use-planning or legislative process.
3. Use the BLM's land-use planning process to manage for conservation values. This will allow the BLM to protect lands that, while ineligible for Monument designation and/or unlikely to receive legislative protection in the near term, are nevertheless worthy of conservation.

The BLM estimates that approximately 35 million acres of its current land holdings, all of which have been identified by the public as worthy of special protection, should be considered for a new and/or heightened conservation designation.

1. **Supporting Congressional Expansion of the NLCS through Legislation Designating New Wilderness or National Conservation Areas, and Resolving the Status of BLM's existing Wilderness Study Areas.**

The BLM believes that the Secretary's Treasured Landscape initiative would benefit greatly from resolution of long-standing issues relating to wilderness designations on BLM-managed public land. Currently, the BLM manages more than 545 areas, amounting to nearly 12.7 million acres, that it has identified as potentially appropriate for wilderness designation. There are strongly held opinions on each side as to whether these lands, now termed "Wilderness Study Areas," should ultimately be designated as Wilderness or released for other uses. This contentious debate will continue until Congress makes a final determination as to the permanent status of these lands.

Further, the BLM recommends looking beyond its Wilderness Study Areas and building on the Secretary's expressed interest in the model of local leadership and cooperation exemplified in the recent congressional designations of Dominguez-Escalante National Monument in Colorado; Wilderness and Wild and Scenic rivers in Idaho; and National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, and Wild and Scenic Rivers in Utah. There are currently a number of locally driven proposals that would benefit from the Administration's support, including a proposal to designate New Mexico's Rio Grande del Norte as a National Conservation Area.

As a critical part of the BLM's conservation agenda, the BLM proposes working closely with the Administration and Congress to determine whether other public lands are suitable for management as National Conservation Areas. Attachment 3 contains a list of BLM-managed lands that may be appropriate for Wilderness or National Conservation Area designation.

2. **Considering New National Monument Designations under the Antiquities Act**

Should the legislative process not prove fruitful, or if a nationally significant natural or cultural land resource were to come under threat of imminent harm, BLM would recommend that the Administration consider using the Antiquities Act to designate new National Monuments by Presidential Proclamation.

The Antiquities Act allows the President to act quickly and decisively in defense of our natural and cultural treasures. Since President Theodore Roosevelt first used the Act, 15 Presidents have exercised their authority to protect nationally important places, including the Grand Tetons, Carlsbad Caverns, Mount Olympus (now Olympia National Park), Arizona's Petrified Forest, and Alaska's Denali.

For much of the history of the Act, lands designated as National Monuments were taken from the BLM and entrusted to the National Park Service. This changed in 1996, when President Clinton gave management jurisdiction over the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument to the BLM, reflecting a growing understanding that park-style management was not necessarily appropriate for all conservation lands. Fourteen of the 22 National Monuments created or expanded by President Clinton – totaling more than 4 million acres – remained under BLM stewardship. Today, these lands form the heart of the NLCS. BLM's management of these areas, without the trappings of visitor centers and other man-made improvements, has met with wide public support. These lands symbolize the American spirit, and their remoteness and solitude remain poignant reminders of a bygone era.

Attachment 4 contains a list of lands that may be appropriate for designation under the Antiquities Act.

3. Utilizing the Land-Use Planning Process to Account for Ecosystem-Service Values and to Protect Lands that are Ineligible for Monument Designation.

The final aspect of the first component of BLM's Treasured Landscapes vision recognizes that new conservation designations should not be the only – nor, perhaps, even the primary – means of managing for conservation on BLM's public lands. To that end, BLM also recommends emphasizing conservation values in its land-use planning process, with particular attention focused on two considerations: (a) accounting for the ecosystem-service values of BLM lands, and (b) the special legal context of conservation management in Wyoming and Alaska.

a. Accounting for Ecosystem-Service Values in the Land-Use Planning Process.

Consumptive or ground-disturbing uses of public lands often yield benefits that are readily quantifiable—BLM's timber-sale plans, for example, may be expected to yield a certain number of board feet, contribute to the creation of a definite number of jobs, and provide local communities with an estimable amount of economic activity. By contrast, non-consumptive and conserving uses of public lands have not historically been thought to yield values that are as readily quantifiable.

The modern interest in accounting for the "ecosystem services" value of lands aims to regress this imbalance. Better accounting for the value of public lands left in a condition closer to the land's natural state—whether measured in the amount of carbon sequestered by a stand of trees or native grasslands, by the economic value to local communities of undisturbed ecosystems, natural purification of air or water, or by the number of jobs retained as a result of recreational opportunities saved in an area closed to development—is designed to allow land-use decisionmakers to act with a fuller knowledge of the trade-offs involved in the choice to conserve an existing landscape, or permit new development.

Appreciating the conservation component of its multiple-use mission, the BLM proposes for its land-use planning process a new commitment to accounting for the value of the services provided by conserved ecosystems.

b. The Special Circumstance of Wyoming and Alaska

Last, it merits special mention that Congress has limited the President's authority to designate new national monuments in Wyoming and Alaska. Nevertheless, there are several landscapes in Wyoming and Alaska that contain critical ecological and cultural resources that deserve special attention and possibly enhanced protections.

The BLM therefore particularly proposes that the Administration use the BLM's land-use planning process to identify the management actions, including possible mineral withdrawals, necessary to protect sensitive resources in Wyoming and Alaska. The BLM also recommends that the Administration begin a dialogue with Congress to encourage the conservation of these areas.

Attachment 5 contains a list of areas that, though they are ineligible for Monument designation, merit protection.

B. Rationalizing BLM's Fragmented Lands: Consolidating the BLM's Checkboard-Pattern Landholdings and Enabling Landscape-Scale Ecosystem Management By Acquiring New Lands and Divesting Parcels Identified for Disposal

The second component of BLM's Treasured-Landscapes vision would involve changing the composition of BLM's public-lands portfolio.

The BLM manages what remains of the United States' once consolidated public domain. For much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the public domain passed into private ownership (or management by other Federal agencies) under public land laws that made no attempt to preserve ecosystem integrity. In some cases, large swaths of land were patented to railroad companies in a checkerboard pattern. The resulting pattern of alternating land tenures creates extreme management difficulties, habitat fragmentation and, increasingly, user conflicts. In addition, there are today roughly 128,800 acres of inholdings in BLM-managed National Conservation Areas (excluding the California Desert) and 283,857 acres of inholdings in BLM-Managed National Monuments.

As the second component of its Treasured Landscape initiative, the BLM proposes to rationalize its existing public land holdings. Through consolidation of its protected land base and reduced fragmentation, the BLM will be better able to mitigate adverse impacts on wildlife habitat, recreation, vegetation, cultural resources, and other values. To that end, the BLM will (1) pursue a program of land consolidation to address its checkerboarded lands—particularly in Nevada, Oregon, California, Wyoming, and Utah, where the problem is most acute, (2) seek to acquire properties adjacent to its current holdings, if needed to preserve ecosystem integrity, and (3) attempt to divest itself of the scattered and low-value landholdings that it has identified for disposal through a land-use planning process.

To achieve these objectives, the BLM will rely on its land-exchange and land-acquisition programs and depend on the availability and vitality of three critical management tools: (1) the Land and Water Conservation Fund, (2) the Federal Land Transfer Facilitation Act; and (3) a new program of renewable energy offsets.

4. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides a primary means for BLM to acquire lands worthy of long-term protection. LWCF funds may be used to acquire privately owned lands and waters that are adjacent to or within BLM special areas, including National Conservation Areas, National Historic and Scenic Trails, National Wild and Scenic River corridors, Wilderness, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Special Recreation Management Areas.

The President's budget for 2010 includes a total of \$419.9 million for LWCF programs, including \$25 million for BLM; \$65 million for USFWS; \$68 million for NPS; and \$12.1 million for appraisal services.

In FY 2010, the BLM requested LWCF funding to acquire 52,500 acres in 37 areas, with an estimated value of \$58 million. In FY 2011, the BLM requested LWCF funding to acquire 47,100 acres in 40 areas, with an estimated value of \$82 million. The outyear funding estimates for LWCF needs are based on a number of recent land acquisition opportunities. The majority of these monies would be used to acquire land for the NLCS and other BLM Treasured Landscapes. See Attachment 1 for more detailed LWCF funding information.

5. The Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA)

The BLM is the lead agency for administering the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA). Prior to the passage of FLTFA, funds generated by BLM land sales were deposited directly into the U.S. Treasury, providing no direct conservation value to the nation.

FLTFA established the Federal Land Disposal Account that allows the BLM to sell lands with low conservation values to generate funds for the purchase of lands with high conservation

values. Since passage of FLTPA, the sale of low-conservation value lands in the Western States has generated more than \$108 million.

The BLM carefully prioritizes limited land acquisition funds to ensure every dollar is spent on only the most important and well-planned conservation projects. Typically, the BLM takes a phased approach to ensure that larger acquisitions can be completed despite temporal funding limitations. The BLM undertakes land acquisition projects within and/or contiguous to units of the NLCS and within and/or contiguous to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

The FLTPA expires on July 24, 2010; reauthorization legislation has been introduced by the House (H.R. 3339) and the Senate (S. 1787). To continue to allow the revenues generated from BLM's sales of isolated and difficult-to-manage public-land tracts to be an important source of funding for the acquisition of environmentally and culturally significant lands, BLM encourages the administration to strongly support the reauthorization of FLTPA. See Attachment 2 for more information regarding FLTPA disposals and approvals.

3. Using Proceeds from Renewable Energy Projects to Acquire and Protect Treasured Landscapes.

Last, as a greater amount of BLM lands are dedicated to renewable-energy projects, the BLM recommends that the administration work with Congress to enable BLM to dedicate a portion of renewable-energy proceeds to the protection and acquisition of treasured lands. In particular, BLM proposes that the administration work with Congress to (a) to require developers of renewable-energy projects to contribute to "mitigation funds," the proceeds of which would be made available to the BLM to protect public lands and mitigate the effects of development, and (b) mandate that a portion of any royalties collected from renewable-energy projects on public lands be made available to BLM to acquire additional conservation tracts.

C. Managing Problems and Ecosystems at Scale: Increasing the Use of Eco-Regional Assessments and Coordinating with other Federal, State, and Tribal Governments to manage Wildlife, Watersheds, Airsheds, and Ecosystems.

The final component of the BLM's Treasured-Landscapes vision emphasizes connectivity, and BLM's commitment to manage at a level appropriate to the issues under consideration.

The BLM recognizes that many problems and ecosystem considerations have a natural scale, and that its land-management decisions have ramifications beyond their immediate effect on BLM lands. Certain issues (such as the quality of air in a particular airshed, or the decline of a sage grouse populations in a particular region) may be best assessed, not within the confines of an artificial planning boundary, but on scales that are suggested by the physical or biological features of the issue (at the airshed, or regional sage grouse habitat levels, for example). The BLM is just beginning to use and rely on a set of "eco-regional assessments" that are designed, in part, to enable the BLM to meaningfully engage with problems and ecosystems that cross planning-boundary lines. As the BLM looks to the next quarter century, it proposes to make increasing use of its eco-regional assessments tool.

Further, the BLM, with its extensive experience in public participation and land-use planning, coupled with the breadth of the public lands and their critical resources, stands ready with the expertise and the unparalleled capacity to coordinate with other Federal, State and Tribal Governments to tackle initiatives on a national (and even international) scale. In particular, ongoing global climate change has elevated the importance of nascent efforts to focus on cross-jurisdictional landscape connectivity and to create extensive wildlife-habitat corridors. The BLM hopes to participate fully in the effort, and to help lead the charge.

IV. Necessary Funding: Preliminary Cost Estimates

Implementing BLM's three-part Treasured Landscapes vision will require an increased investment of resources.

Over the past 10 years, funding to protect and manage lands with natural and cultural resources for use and enjoyment by current and future generations has generally remained flat when adjusted for inflation. At the same time, the West is rapidly urbanizing and the public and local governments increasingly view BLM-administered public lands as an extension of their backyards. BLM lands contribute significantly to the quality of life in the West. Taking into account the increased demands on the public lands, the BLM believes the full cost of managing Treasured Landscapes at a level commensurate with public expectations and need for conservation would be in the range of \$2 to \$4 per acre.

The BLM manages NLCS units for \$2.21 per acre and the rest of the public lands at \$1.70 per acre, totaling \$59.7 million for NLCS units and \$187.4 million for other Treasured Landscapes in 2010. The BLM has demonstrated that the NLCS model for conservation is significantly cost efficient in protecting landscape level resources. For example, the National Park Service operates and manages units comparatively for an average of \$9.57 per acre management cost. At \$4 per acre, existing and potential NLCS units could be funded for a total of \$248 million by the year 2015. Other specially designated areas and habitat vital for species recovery within the BLM could be managed at \$2 per acre, totaling \$150.4 million by the year 2015.

The BLM recommends that any major funding increases be phased in over a five-year period to allow the BLM time to build capacity (e.g. hiring staff, developing partnerships, and processing requisitions) in order to accomplish the increased workload. This would include increased law enforcement and protection activities, expanded resource restoration and conservation activities, improved visitor services, information, education and interpretation and other activities needed to meet the increasing public demand and expectations for conservation. By the year 2015, funding for Treasured Landscapes would total \$398.4 million. Projected funding needs for managing both the NLCS and the other lands comprising the BLM's Treasured Landscapes are presented in the table below by subactivity.

Proposed Funding for Treasured Landscapes showing incremental increases by Subactivity



Soil, Water, Air	58,621,000	30,242,829	33,139,019	33,615,208	39,847,588
Range Mgmt	73,493,000	38,699,615	42,405,665	43,015,011	50,990,148
PD Forestry	10,443,000	3,326,711	3,645,292	3,697,673	4,383,235
Riparian	22,518,000	12,784,058	14,008,317	14,209,608	16,844,120
Cultural	15,631,000	8,874,128	9,723,954	9,863,682	11,692,444
Wildlife	35,447,000	17,099,906	18,737,470	19,006,717	22,530,631
Fisheries	13,640,000	5,068,860	5,554,277	5,634,089	6,678,669
T&B Species	22,112,000	12,553,561	13,755,746	13,953,409	16,540,421
Wilderness	18,221,000	21,169,980	23,197,313	23,530,646	27,893,311
Recreation	49,471,000	28,301,239	31,011,494	31,457,112	37,289,373
Planning	48,961,000	27,796,440	30,458,353	30,896,023	36,624,255
Law Enforcement	27,957,000	12,847,637	14,077,985	14,280,278	16,927,892
NMs & NCAs	28,801,000	31,754,970	34,795,970	35,295,969	41,839,967
Challenge Cost State	9,500,000	5,393,398	5,909,895	5,994,817	7,106,277
O&C Forest Mgmt	31,584,000	14,906,780	16,334,320	16,569,036	19,640,994
O&C Reforestation	24,155,000	10,689,142	11,712,783	11,881,089	14,083,885
O&C Other Resources	37,544,000	18,290,428	20,042,002	20,329,994	24,099,248
O&C Planning	3,769,000	1,534,903	1,681,893	1,706,060	2,022,370
O&C NMs&NCAs	833,000	967,771	1,060,449	1,075,687	1,278,123
TOTAL	532,701,000	302,428,290	331,390,187	336,152,084	398,475,878

In addition to the funding increases necessary to support its proposed treasured-landscape management and planning functions, BLM has also prepared a series of discrete cost estimates for its highest priority landholding rationalization efforts. They are presented in attachment 6.

V. Conclusion - Making the Vision Real

Today's Bureau of Land Management holds great promise and untapped opportunity to reflect the values of the American people. More than ever before, the public is communicating that it values healthy habitats, clean air and water, an improved quality of life, cleaner energy, and the BLM's role in supporting local economies. With the appropriate vision, the BLM can rededicate itself to the preservation of the irreplaceable cultural and historic resources in its charge, and to the effective management and conservation its treasured public lands. In doing so, it will honor the values of today's public and inspire the hopes of future generations.

Attachment 1
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

**Historic BLM Funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund
Congressional Appropriations**

FY 2000s
FY2000: \$48,750,000
FY2001: \$56,670,000
FY2002: \$49,920,000
FY2003: \$33,450,000
FY2004: \$18,600,000
FY2005: \$9,850,000
FY2006: \$8,622,000
FY2007: \$8,634,000
FY2008: \$8,939,336
FY2009: \$14,775,000

Future Anticipated BLM Funding Needs from the Land and Water Conservation Fund

FY 2010s
FY 2010: \$25,029,000 (President's Budget Request)
FY 2011: \$32,479,000 (President's Budget Request) ¹
FY 2012: \$60,000,000 +
FY 2013: \$75,000,000 +
FY 2014: \$75,000,000 +
FY 2015: \$75,000,000 +
FY 2016: \$75,000,000 +
FY 2017: \$75,000,000 +
FY 2018: \$75,000,000 +
FY 2019: \$75,000,000 +
FY 2020: \$75,000,000 +

¹Tentative

**Attachment 2
The Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA)**

FLTFA Receipts for BLM Land Disposals

FY 2000s	
FY 2001:	\$1,206,528.98
FY 2002:	\$2,343,807.37
FY 2003:	\$1,078,316.45
FY 2004:	\$15,759,647.48
FY 2005:	\$10,549,206.27
FY 2006:	\$57,468,523.49
FY 2007:	\$7,063,674.63
FY 2008:	\$11,555,099.52
FY 2009:	\$1,880,238.23
Total:	\$108,905,042.42

FLTFA Acquisition Approvals

FY 2000s	BLM	FWS	NPS	RS
FY 2007	\$10,150,000	\$1,780,000	\$2,600,000	\$3,500,000
FY 2008	\$16,473,000	\$0	\$0	\$13,086,950
FY 2009	\$5,935,000	\$800,000	\$1,080,000	\$1,665,250
FY 2010 ¹	\$14,335,000	\$502,000	\$0	\$10,357,000

¹Pending Secretarial Approval

Attachment 3

Conservation Designations:

Introduced and Expected Wilderness and National Conservation Area Legislation

El Rio Grande Del Norte, NM

On April 23rd, 2009, Senator Jeff Bingaman introduced legislation that would protect more than 300,000 acres of wild public land in northern New Mexico. The bill is cosponsored by Senator Tom Udall. S.874, the "El Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act" would protect approximately 235,980 acres of BLM-managed public land. On June 17, 2009, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Ned Farquhar testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in support of S.874. Creation of the National Conservation Area and Wilderness areas would give local communities a natural attraction and resources to use as part of a long-term sustainable economic development plan. The area is also the Rio Grande Migratory Flyway – one of the great migratory routes in the world. Eagles, falcons and hawks make the basalt walls of the Gorge their nesting homes.

Gold Butte, NV

Northeast of Las Vegas, Gold Butte is named for a historic mining town and tent city of 1,000 miners in the early 1900's. Gold Butte is much more than remnants of early mining. It is 360,000 acres of rugged mountains, Joshua tree and Mojave yucca forests, outcroppings of sandstone, and braided washes that turn into slot canyons. Gold Butte is important to numerous wildlife species, including desert tortoise, desert bighorn sheep, the banded Gila monster, great horned owls and a great variety of reptiles, birds and mammals. Gold Butte has abundant archaeological resources, including rock art, caves, agave roasting pits and camp sites dating back at least 3,000 years, and notable historical resources that deserve conservation, including Spanish and pioneer mining camps dating back to the 1700s. Legislation was introduced in the 110th Congress by Representative Shelley Berkley and similar legislation may be introduced later this year.

Organ Mountains and adjacent Wilderness, NM

Senator Bingaman has been working with community leaders and individuals in Dona Ana County in Southern New Mexico have endorsed a plan to protect 330,000 acres as wilderness and another 100,000 as a National Conservation Area in New Mexico's Organ Mountains. The mountains are home to a variety of grasses, mixed desert shrubs, piñon-juniper woodland, mixed mountain shrubs, and ponderosa pines. One of the steepest mountain ranges in the West, the Organ Mountains encompass extremely rugged terrain with steep-sided crevices, canyons, and spires.

John Day Basin, OR

The 500 mile-long John Day is the second longest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states. The river is prime habitat for wild steelhead, Chinook salmon, and bull and west slope cutthroat trout.

(all protected under the Endangered Species Act). In March 2009, a bill sponsored by Senator Ron Wyden passed Congress that establishes 10,000 acres of new wilderness in the Spring Basin area of the John Day. There is potential for significant additional public land designations along this river, which would enhance recreational activities, as well as enhance habitat for one of the last strongholds for wild salmon and steelhead in the lower 48 states.

Dolores River Basin, CO

The Dolores River carves one of America's premier wild river canyons on the east side of the Colorado Plateau. The spectacular scenic landscape hosts remote wilderness, sheer-walled canyons, and magnificent stands of old-growth ponderosa pine. There is potential for up to 500,000 acres of protected public lands in this river basin. In July 2009, Representative John Salazar unveiled a proposal to establish more than 63,000 acres of wilderness and special management areas in the headwaters of this basin.

Hidden Gems (CO)

Support is being developed for legislation in north-central Colorado that would contain more than 400,000 acres of Forest Service and BLM wilderness. The areas are contained within Rep. Polis's (D-CO) and Rep. Salazar's (D-CO) districts.

Mojave Desert/Sand to Snow, CA

Located in the southern California Desert, this area includes desert tortoise habitat, critical wildlife corridors and pristine desert landscapes that have captured the imagination of Americans for decades. Senator Dianne Feinstein plans to introduce the California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act to create two new National Monuments and numerous wilderness designations.

San Diego County Wilderness, CA

This legislation would add additional acreage to the Beauty Mountain Wilderness Area in San Diego County, designated in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act. Legislation may be introduced this fall.

Utah Wilderness

Following the success of the Washington County, UT, legislation (as part of the Omnibus Public Land Act), several Utah counties including Emery, Grand, Wayne, Beaver, and Piute, have expressed interest in wilderness legislation. No county has developed legislation to date, but one or more may be developed in the 111th Congress.

Attachment 4
Prospective Conservation Designation:
National Monument Designations under the Antiquities Act

Many nationally significant landscapes are worthy of inclusion in the NLCS. The areas listed below may be good candidates for National Monument designation under the Antiquities Act; however, further evaluations should be completed prior to any final decision, including an assessment of public and Congressional support.

San Rafael Swell, UT

Located in South-Central Utah, the San Rafael Swell is a 75 by 40 mile giant dome made of sandstone, shale and limestone – one of the most spectacular displays of geology in the country. The Swell is surrounded by canyons, gorges, mesas and buttes, and is home to eight rare plant species, desert big horns, coyotes, bobcats, cottontail rabbits, badgers, gray and kit fox, and the golden eagle. Visitors to the area can find ancient Indian rock art and explore a landscape with geographic features resembling those found on Mars.

Montana's Northern Prairie, MT

The Northern Montana Prairie contains some of the largest unplowed areas of grasslands in the world and some of the best habitat regions in all the Great Plains. Unfortunately, we are losing our grasslands and northern prairies at alarming rates, and few opportunities exist to conserve grassland ecosystems and their native biota on large scales. If protected, Montana's Northern Prairie would connect more than 2.5 million acres of protected grasslands bordering Bitter Creek Wilderness Study Area and Grasslands National Park in Canada. This cross-boundary conservation unit would provide an opportunity to restore prairie wildlife and the possibility of establishing a new national bison range. This landscape conservation opportunity would require conservation easements, willing seller acquisitions, and withdrawal from the public domain.

Lesser Prairie Chicken Preserve, NM

This 58,000-acre Preserve is prime habitat for both the lesser prairie chicken and the sand dune lizard. This area of sand dunes and tall bluestem grasses is ideal habitat for both species. The Preserve contains more than 30 percent of the occupied lesser prairie chicken habitat in southeastern New Mexico. Recent monitoring of the area concluded that this habitat is in good to excellent condition. Protection of this area offers the best opportunity to avoid the necessity of listing either of these species as threatened or endangered.

Berryessa Snow Mountains, CA

The public lands of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region stretch from the lowlands of Putah Creek below Lake Berryessa, across remote stretches of Cache Creek, and up to the peaks of Goat Mountain and Snow Mountain. This vast expanse—nearly 500,000 acres in the wild heart of California's inner Coast Ranges—provides habitat and critical long-term movement corridors for many species of wildlife and an unusually rich part of the California Floristic Province, a biological hotspot of global importance.

Heart of the Great Basin, NV

The Heart of the Great Basin contains Nevada's wild heart – a globally unique assemblage of cultural, wildlife, and historical values. Here, Toiyabe, Toiyabe, and Monitor peaks tower to 12,000 feet. Thousands of petroglyphs and stone artifacts provide insight to the area's inhabitants from as long as 12,000 years ago. The region contains varied ecosystems including alpine tundra, rushing creeks, aspen groves, and high desert sage grouse habitat. The area is also a center of climate change scientific research, (e.g., Great Basin Pika is a keystone species for climate research), and one of North America's least appreciated wildland mosaics.

Otero Mesa, NM

Stretching over 1.2 million acres, Otero Mesa is home to more than 1,000 native wildlife species, including black-tailed prairie dogs, mountain lions, desert mule deer, and the only genetically pure herd of pronghorn antelope in New Mexico. These vast desert grasslands of Otero Mesa, once found throughout the region, have disappeared or been reduced to small patches unable to support native wildlife. Otero Mesa is one of the last remaining vestiges of grasslands – America's most endangered ecosystem.

Northwest Sonoran Desert, AZ

The Sonoran Desert is the most biologically diverse of all North American deserts. This area west of Phoenix is largely remote and undeveloped, with a high concentration of pristine desert wilderness landscapes. There is potential for up to 500,000 acres of new wilderness and National Conservation Area designations.

Owyhee Desert, OR/NV

Last year, Congress protected a significant portion of the Owyhee Canyonlands region in Idaho. However, a significant portion of the Owyhee region in Oregon and Nevada remains unprotected. The Owyhee Desert is one of the most remote areas in the continental United States, characterized by juniper covered deserts, natural arches, mountains and ancient lava flows. The many branching forks of the Owyhee River form deep, sheer-walled canyons between desert wilderness and entice river runners from around the Nation. The Owyhees are home to the world's largest herd of California bighorn sheep, elk, deer, cougar, Redband trout, sage-grouse and raptors.

Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, CA (expansion)

In 2000, Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument was established to protect the extraordinary biodiversity and vegetation found in southwestern Oregon. Unfortunately, because of political constraints, the Monument's southern boundary was artificially established at the California State line. Therefore, the Monument does not include the ecologically important Klamath River tributaries and cuts out sections of important eco-regions from protection. Connectivity of landscapes is essential to protect and maintain healthy wildlife populations especially in the face of global climate change. In addition, this expansion could connect Cascade-Siskiyou with the proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument. Expansions on the Oregon side may also be worth consideration.