



www.discoverNLCS.org

June 28, 2005

Honorable Kathleen Clarke
Director
Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Clarke:

This year marks the 5th Anniversary of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS or "System"). On behalf of our millions of collective members, we are writing to share with you our support for the NLCS as a system that is an integral part of the Western experience. We, the undersigned national, state, and local groups, which represent conservationists, archaeologists, hikers, kayakers, and hunters and anglers who use and value these landscapes, ask that you commit to protecting the System's important natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

In 2000, the Department of the Interior created the System to showcase and effectively manage the best of the BLM lands and waters for the conservation and preservation of significant natural and cultural resources. BLM's mission for the System was clear – "to conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural ecological and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations."

Today, the System's special places provide for unparalleled outstanding educational and recreational opportunities in the West. From the historic and scenic landscapes along the Upper Missouri River in Montana, to one of the most diverse assemblages of butterflies in the United States at Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, to the thousand year old prehistoric pueblo systems in Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, this System represents landscapes that offer an increasingly rare glimpse of the old West. Protecting these irreplaceable treasures, which are being lost to development and urban growth, should remain BLM's top priority.

Despite successes during the first five years, we remain concerned that many challenges, such as vandalism, development, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) abuse, still threaten the resources and landscapes the System was established to protect. For example, OHV use continues to grow at an alarming rate. In Arizona's Agua Fria National Monument, OHV use has jumped from 1,550 vehicles in 2000 to 16,000 vehicles in 2004. Such dramatic increases in OHV use are common throughout the System. Yet, there has not been an adequate commitment of resources to manage these uses.

We ask you to ensure that BLM will:

- Prioritize the conservation of the lands and waters of the NLCS in keeping with its mission. The System should be a showcase for the BLM, fostering public and Agency pride.
- Develop and implement management plans that protect wilderness quality lands, provide sustainable access to and protection of Wild and Scenic Rivers and National Historic and Scenic Trails, include sensible, safe transportation networks that adhere to the conservation mission of the NLCS, limit damage to cultural and natural resources, and rigorously enforce OHV/ORV regulations.
- Better protect the System's many thousands of known cultural and historic resources – and in particular the many thousands of yet-to-be-discovered resources – through more extensive and systematic inventories, monitoring, and stabilization of sites at risk. Less than 6 percent of all BLM lands have been inventoried for cultural resources, and inventories for many of the NLCS' monuments and conservation areas are even smaller.
- Increase the law enforcement and ranger presence in the NLCS. Only one-third of the System's 30 national monuments and conservation areas have more than one full-time ranger; several have only a half-time ranger.

We understand that the System operates on a constrained budget. However, we hope that you will advocate for an appropriate operating budget that recognizes the value and importance of the NLCS as an asset. For our part, we will continue to encourage Congress to adequately fund the System to ensure that BLM has the resources to preserve the NLCS' special qualities for future generations of Americans, as well as continue to seek new ways to partner with the BLM on projects aimed at protecting the System.

The NLCS' 5th Anniversary provides an ideal opportunity for the BLM to demonstrate its commitment to the stewardship of the hidden treasures of the American West. We hope to celebrate the System and enjoy its significant natural and cultural resources for many years to come. Thank you for your attention to this timely and important issue and for your future commitment to protect the NLCS for present and future generations.

Sincerely,

Acterra
Alabama Hiking Trail Society
Alaska Coalition
Amigos Bravos
American Discovery Trail Society
American Hiking Society
American Rivers
American Society of Landscape Architects
Arizona Archeological Council
Arizona PIRG
Arizona Trail Association
The Arizona Wilderness Coalition
Bay Area Headwaters Coalition
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
Californians for Western Wilderness
Campaign Earth
Campaign for America's Wilderness
Campaign for Old Growth
Carson Valley Trails Association
CDTA
Center for Biological Diversity
Clergy and Laity network
Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection,
which includes:

Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest
Arizona League of Conservation Voters
Education Fund
Arizona Native Plant Society
Buffers
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Connections
Center for Environmental Ethics
Defenders of Wildlife
Desert Watch
Drylands Institute
Environmental and Cultural Conservation
Organization
Environmental Law Society
Friends of Cabeza Prieta
Friends of Tortolita
Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association
Neighborhood Coalition of Greater Tucson
Northwest Coalition for Responsible
Development
Northwest Neighborhood Alliance
Oro Valley Neighborhood Coalition
Pima Farms/Scenic Drive Neighborhood
Association
Protect Land and Neighborhoods

Safford Peak Watershed Education Team
Save the Scenic Santa Ritas
Silverbell Mountain Alliance
Sky Island Alliance
Sky Island Watch
Society for Ecological Restoration
Sonoran Arthropod Studies Institute
Sonoran Permaculture Guild
Southwestern Biological Institute
Taxpayers for Smarter Growth
Tortolita Homeowners Association
Tucson Audubon Society
Tucson Herpetological Society
Tucson Mountains Association
The Wildlands Project
Wildlife Damage Review
Women for Sustainable Technologies

Colorado Mountain Club
Continental Divide Trail Alliance
Environment Colorado
Environmental Working Group
Forests Forever
Forest Guardians
Forestry Monitoring Project
Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument
Friends of Arizona Rivers
Friends of the Earth
Friends of Headwaters Forest
Friends of the River
Friends of the Missouri Breaks National
Monument
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of Sloan Canyon
Friends of Sonoran Desert National
Monument
Grand Canyon Wildlands Council
Grand Canyon Trust
Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Idaho Conservation League
Idaho Rivers United
Keystone Trails Association
Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail
Montana River Action
Montana Wilderness Association
Montana Wildlife Federation
National Coast Trail Association
National Outdoor Leadership School

National Parks Conservation Association
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Natural Trails and Waters Coalition
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
Oregon-California Trails Association
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Oregon Natural Resources Council
Oregon State Public Interest Research Group
The Partnership for the National Trails System, which includes:

Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
Appalachian National Scenic Trail
California National Historic Trail
Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail
Florida National Scenic Trail
Ice Age National Scenic Trail
Iditarod National Historic Trail
Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail
Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail
Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail
Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail
North Country National Scenic Trail
Old Spanish National Historic Trail
Oregon National Historic Trail
Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail
Pony Express National Historic Trail
Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
Santa Fe National Historic Trail
Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail
Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

Red Desert Audubon
Red Lodge Hiking Club
Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP America)
Rocky Mountain Field Institute
Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership, Inc.
Sagebrush Sea Campaign
San Juan Citizens Alliance
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Sierra Club
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Southwest Environmental Law Center
The Wilderness Society
Tucson Audubon Society
Tule River Conservancy
U.S. PIRG
Utah Rivers Council
Weber Pathways
Western Colorado Congress
Western resource advocates
Wildlands CPR
Winter Wildlands Alliance
World Wildlife Fund
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Wyoming Wildlife Federation

Cc: Hon. Gale Norton, Secretary, Department of the Interior
Hon. P. Lynn Scarlett, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget,
Department of the Interior
Hon. Rebecca W. Watson, Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral Management,
Department of the Interior
Hon. Jim Hughes, Deputy Director, Bureau of Land Management
Hon. Elena Daly, Assistant Director, National Landscape Conservation System, Bureau
of Land Management
Hon. Raul Grijalva
Hon. Mary Bono
Hon. Tom Udall
Hon. Rick Renzi
Hon. John McCain
Hon. Jeff Bingaman

Elaine Zielinski, BLM Arizona State Director
Henri Bisson, BLM Alaska State Director
Michael Pool, BLM California State Director
Ron Wenker, BLM Colorado State Director
K. Lynn Bennett, BLM Idaho State Director
Marty Ott, BLM Montana State Director
Linda Rundell, BLM New Mexico State Director
Robert V. Abbey, BLM Nevada State Director
Elaine Marquis-Brong, BLM Oregon State Director
Sally Wisely, BLM Utah State Director
Bob Bennett, BLM Wyoming State Director