

## NCLS 15-year Strategy Doug Herrema – Theme 1

Marlo: Let's turn things over to Doug and get an overview of Theme 1. Doug?

>> D. Herrema: Thank you, Marlo. Again, it's a privilege to be here and to be able to speak with all of you today about how the BLM is poised to manage the conservation lands into the next 15 years.

The first theme of the conservation system's strategy is ensuring the conservation, protection and restoration of NCLS values.

The conservation lands are designated by the Congress or the president for their outstanding resources, values and objects, for the benefit of current and future generations.

BLM's organic act, the FLPMA, mandates within certain tracts of public lands are dedicated to specific uses according to law, and that the BLM shall manage those public lands according to those laws.

The units of the conservation system are all examples of those kinds of public lands, our monuments, conservation areas, outstanding natural areas, rivers, trails, wilderness and so on, are all tracts of public land that have been dedicated to specific uses under the law.

As such, the BLM has an overarching and explicit commitment to conserving and protecting resources within these areas.

In this theme, we'll focus on ensuring that BLM's management of the conservation lands is guided by the purposes for which the lands were designated, using science to further the purposes of those designations, and providing opportunities for compatible public use and enjoyment.

>> M. Draper: So, can you tell us a little bit about the laws that designate units, how are they similar and different?

>> D. Herrema: Yes, definitely. All units of the conservation system are designated by the president or Congress. When Congress passes a law, it can be a standalone law in the case of a national conservation area, meaning there is no overarching law like the Wilderness Act that would guide all conservation areas. So for the 16 different NCA's we have, there's 16 different laws that apply to them.

For wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, national scenic and historic trails they have an overarching act that directs how those units are to be managed and protected.

For presidential proclamations, those are issued under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906, but they -- even though they're issued by the president they still have the force of law. The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 in Section 2002 lists the types of units that are included in the conservation system.

And it goes on to mention Congress in its discretion may add either additional units or additional types of units to the system. These laws all have certain commonalities and certain differences.

The commonalities include mandating resource protection within specific geographic area, naming the resources, objects and values to be protected, providing management prescriptions, providing direction on the effect that the law may have on many of the activities that we manage, such as livestock grazing, motorized recreation, mining, wildlife management and so on.

The differences, though, are really as diverse as the lands themselves and the resources that are

found on them, and this is as a result of the -- kind of the unique nature of the objects of value that are out there, the different kinds of communities and the needs those communities have, partnerships, uses and the history of the places where these units exist.

>> M. Draper: Let me ask you, how does the BLM plan to both ensure conservation, protection and restoration as well as provide opportunities for use and enjoyment?

>> D. Herrema: We have several goals. The first goal of the theme is to clearly communicate that conservation, protection and restoration of values is the highest priority in the BLM for the NLCS in terms of planning and management consistent with the units designating authorities.

This is because it's mandated by FLPMA, mandated by the Omnibus designate the individual units themselves and land use plans prepared to help guide management of the units.

To do this, we'll do many things, including issuing formal policy, providing guidance and comments on land use plans, NEPA documents, conducting periodic management evaluations of national monuments and national conservation areas, coordinating funding across the Bureau, promoting NLCS as an outdoor laboratory for innovative business practices and management and establishing conservation priorities for each NLCS unit.

>> Marlo: Given that, what does it mean for conservation, protection, restoration to be the highest priority? What does that mean for multiple use?

>> Doug: That is a really great question. The second goal I wanted to talk about speaks to that. As part of the BLM, the conservation lands are managed under the principles of multiple use

and sustained yield and within that framework their primary purpose is protection of objects and values.

To achieve that, as it applies to managing use, the BLM will limit discretionary uses to those compatible with the conservation, protection and restoration of the values for which the units of the conservation system were designated.

This echoes many of the establishing authorities will be -- will mandate that only such uses that further the purpose of the designation will be allowed.

We understand this may be new or uncomfortable. In short, while conservation is the primary objective, many of the uses of the conservation lands are compatible with protecting objects and values, some of which are included in the establishing authorities themselves as objects and values or are listed in other places, other laws or perhaps the laws themselves as being compatible, per se. Couple good examples are hunting, fishing, nonmotorized recreation, livestock grazing and honoring existing rights.