

MEMORANDUM

To: Karen Budd-Falen
From: Laura C. Rowe
Re: National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS)
Date: February 11, 2011

Background:

The Office of the National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnerships was established in the Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”) in 2000. Legislation passed in January 2009 (Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009) essentially giving official Congressional recognition of that office and by order of Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar in November 2010 the office was elevated to the level of directorate within the BLM, changing the name to “National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnerships” (NLCS).

What is the NLCS?

The BLM is responsible for implementing the NLCS. Essentially, of the lands that the BLM currently manages, some of those lands will warrant inclusion within the NLCS. Those lands within the NLCS include “over 886 federally recognized areas and approximately 27 million acres of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Conservation Lands of the California Desert.”¹ The lands to be included have been characterized as the “crown jewels” of the BLM administered lands. The system is intended to contain “many . . . treasured landscapes, including scientific, historic and cultural resources, wilderness and wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, national monuments, national conservation areas, and scenic and historic trails, among others.”²

The stated goal of NLCS is to manage these lands:

as an integral part of the larger landscape, in collaboration with the neighboring landowners and surrounding communities. The management objectives are to maintain biodiversity and promote ecological connectivity and resilience in the face of climate change. When consistent with the values for which they were designated, lands in the system may allow

¹ Bureau of Land Management; National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS.html (accessed Feb. 11, 2011).

² BLM Press Release, Salazar Establishes New Directorate for National Landscape Conservation System, November 16, 2010, http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/newsroom/2010/november/NR_11_16_2010.html (accessed Feb. 11, 2011).

appropriate multiple uses, such as grazing, energy development and tourism.³

Management of the NLCS is intended to:

recognize the importance of a diversity of viewpoints when considering management options. These nationally important landscapes are managed from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing upon the expertise of specialists throughout the BLM, and in coordination with the tribes, other Federal, state, and local government agencies, interested local landowners, adjacent communities, and other public and private interests.⁴

³ Id.

⁴ Id.