

March 17, 2021

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

Thank you for increasing funding for key Bureau of Land Management (BLM) accounts in the FY2021 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. As you prepare the FY2022 Interior Appropriations bill, we encourage you to build on that important work by including at least \$21.131 million for BLM's cultural resources account and at least \$65.131 million for the National Conservation Lands.

The BLM manages the largest, most diverse, and most scientifically important body of cultural, historical, and paleontological resources of any federal land management agency. Yet only about 10 percent of BLM lands have been surveyed for cultural resources. We urge the Committee to provide at least \$21.131 million—an increase from FY2021 of \$1.5 million—for the BLM's cultural resources management account to help BLM fulfill its statutory requirements to inventory and protect cultural resources, manage paleontological resources, and improve government-to-government consultation with Indian tribes. This modest increase in funding would also support ongoing collaboration with state historic preservation officers in the West to standardize and integrate cultural resources data for BLM lands through the National Cultural Resources Information Management System (NCRIMS).

This effort is a significant and often overlooked preservation success story. It funds predictive modeling and data analysis, in partnership with state historic preservation offices, to support planning for large scale cross-jurisdictional and other projects. It promotes streamlined land-use planning by making better cultural resource data available early in the planning and project development process.

The BLM also needs increased funding for management of its system of National Conservation Lands, which is made up of nationally significant places designated by Congress or the President for their outstanding historic, cultural, ecological, and scientific values. The National Conservation Lands encompass more than 37 million acres of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas (NCAs) and similar designations, as well as Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs).

The National Conservation Lands have nearly doubled in size since its inception in 2000.¹ Since FY2006, when Congress provided BLM with \$65.131 million to manage the system, more than 100 units and 11 million acres have been added,² including millions of acres designated by Congress through the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11) and the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation,

¹ See Table 1

² See Table 2

Management and Recreation Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-9). Despite the dramatic growth of the system, annual appropriations to manage these important places has not kept pace, with the FY2021 appropriation being 10 percent less than FY2000 appropriation, and only 70 percent of the FY2006 appropriation.³

We urge you to consider the additional demands BLM is responsible for – and the increasing popularity of these lands – and provide a sharp increase in base funding for the National Conservation Lands. Remarkably, this increase would restore program funding to its FY2006 funding level. Such an increase is needed to properly administer the system’s expansion by 18 million acres since 2000, and will permit increased inventory, monitoring and protection of cultural resources, enhance proper management of all resources and provide a quality visitor experience. Such an increase also reflects the important role the National Conservation Lands will play in meeting President Biden’s goal to “conserv[e] at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.”⁴

Additional funding should be directed toward ensuring each unit of the National Conservation Lands is appropriately staffed with land managers, law enforcement, and cultural resources experts, as well as inventory and monitoring of cultural resources that contribute to the special designation of these places. We also recommend robust funding for National Scenic and Historic Trails, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, and wilderness areas that are part of the National Conservation Lands and funded through other areas of the BLM’s budget.

We appreciate the Committee’s concerns with the impacts of the Trump Administration’s reorganization of the BLM. We know that much work will be required to restore the agency’s capacity to fulfill its mission, including filling a remarkable number of staff vacancies. We encourage you to specifically address the long-standing vacancies in key cultural resources positions stipulated in the BLM Tribal Relations Manual, including the National Curator/NAGPRA Coordinator, National Tribal Coordinator, and 10 of the 12 state office Tribal Coordinator positions.

Our nation’s public lands contain remarkable and irreplaceable ecological, historical and cultural resources that reflect thousands of years of human connection to our lands. We thank you for your consideration of our request in the FY2022 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Conservation Lands Foundation

American Anthropological Association
American Hiking Society
American Society of Landscape Architects
Anza Trail Foundation
Coalition for American Heritage
Continental Divide Trail Coalition
Corazon Latino
Great Old Broads for Wilderness

³ See Table 1 and Graph A

⁴ [EO 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#), Section 216

GreenLatinos
Hispanic Access Foundation
Inland Ocean Coalition
Latinos in Heritage Conservation
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Pony Express Association
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Partnership for the National Trails System
Patagonia
Scenic America
Society for American Archaeology
Society for Historical Archaeology
Society of Vertebrate Paleontology
The Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society

Arizona

Archaeology Southwest
Arizona Heritage Alliance
Arizona Preservation Foundation
Arizona Trail Association
Cienega Watershed Partnership
Friends of Arizona Joshua Tree Forest
Friends of Ironwood Forest
Friends of the Agua Fria
Friends of the San Pedro River Inc.
Grand Canyon Trust
Keep Sedona Beautiful

California

Amargosa Conservancy
API Forward Movement
Azul
BLU Educational Foundation
Brown Girl Surf
California Native Plant Society
California Wilderness Coalition
Californians for Western Wilderness
Carrizo Plain Conservancy
The Chaparral Lands Conservancy
Community Hiking Club
Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM)
Fort Ord Recreation Trails (FORT) Friends
Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve
Friends of Plumas Wilderness
Friends of Point Arena-Stornetta Lands
Friends of the Desert Mountains
Friends of the Dunes
Friends of the Inyo
Friends of the Lost Coast

King Range Alliance
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
Mattole Restoration Council
Mattole Salmon Group
Mojave Desert Land Trust
Native American Land Conservancy
Nature for All
Transition Habitat Conservancy
Trinidad Coastal Land Trust
Tuleyome
The Wildlands Conservancy

Colorado

Colorado Wildlands Projects
Dolores River Boating Advocates
Friends of the Yampa
Holly's Ride Guides
Moxiecran Media LLC
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance
Western Slope Conservation Center

Florida

Loxahatchee River Historical Society / Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum

Maryland

Preservation Maryland

Missouri

Missouri Chapter Trail of Tears Association

Montana

Friends of the Missouri Breaks Monument
Montana Preservation Alliance
Montana Wilderness Association

Nevada

Friends of Basin and Range National Monument
Friends of Gold Butte
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Friends of Red Rock Canyon
Friends of Sloan Canyon
Friends of Walking Box Ranch
Get Outdoors Nevada

New Mexico

Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks
New Mexico Archaeological Council
New Mexico Wild
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
The Archaeological Conservancy

The Nuestra Tierra Conservation Project
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance

Oregon

- Friends and Neighbors of Deschutes Canyon Area
- Friends of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument
- Friends of the Owyhee
- Oregon California Trail Association
- Oregon Natural Desert Association
- Soda Mountain Wilderness Council

Rhode Island

- Providence Preservation Society

Utah

- Amazing Earthfest
- Conserve Southwest Utah
- Friends of Cedar Mesa
- Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
- Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

Graph A

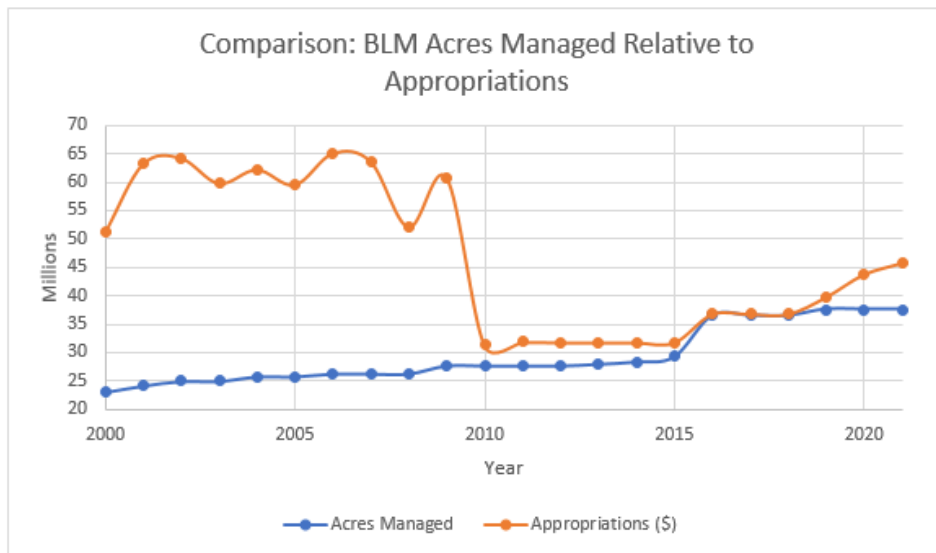


Table 1

Appropriations*			National Conservation Lands **
FY	Enacted (\$M)	+/-	New Acres Added
2021	\$45.819	+2	
2020	\$43.819	+4	
2019	\$39.819	+3	1,164,118
2018	\$36.819		
2017	\$36.819		47,624
2016	\$36.819	+5	7,189,857
2015	\$31.819		925,946
2014	\$31.819		443,547
2013	\$31.819		243,710
2012	\$31.819	-0.051	7,212
2011	\$31.870	+0.569	11,001
2010	\$31.301	-29.526	
2009	\$60.827	+8.687	1,419,424
2008	\$52.140	-11.557	106
2007^	\$63.697	-1.434	
2006	\$65.131	+5.542	471,559
2005	\$59.589	-2.687	11,823
2004	\$62.276	+2.437	780,806
2003	\$59.839	-4.450	
2002	\$64.289	+1.041	759,032
2001	\$63.248	+12.095	1,085,539
2000	\$51.153	+1.078	4,079,958
			18,641,262 added

*Source: Congressional Research Service

**Source: Bureau of Land Management

^Up until FY2007, funding for the National Landscape Conservation System was provided under Recreation Management.

Table 2

Additions to National Conservation Lands Since 2006*			
Year	NCL Unit	State	BLM Acres
2019	John Wesley Powell National Conservation Area	UT	29,868
	Jurassic National Monument	UT	850
	Alabama Hills National Scenic Area	CA	18,610
	Aden Lava Flow Wilderness	NM	27,673
	Ah-Shi-Sle-Pah Wilderness	NM	7,242
	Avawatz Mountains Wilderness	CA	89,500
	Big Wild Horse Mesa Wilderness	UT	18,192
	Broad Canyon Wilderness	NM	13,902
	Buzzards Peak Wilderness	CA	11,840
	Cinder Cone Wilderness	NM	16,935
	Cold Wash Wilderness	UT	11,001
	Desolation Canyon Wilderness	UT	142,996

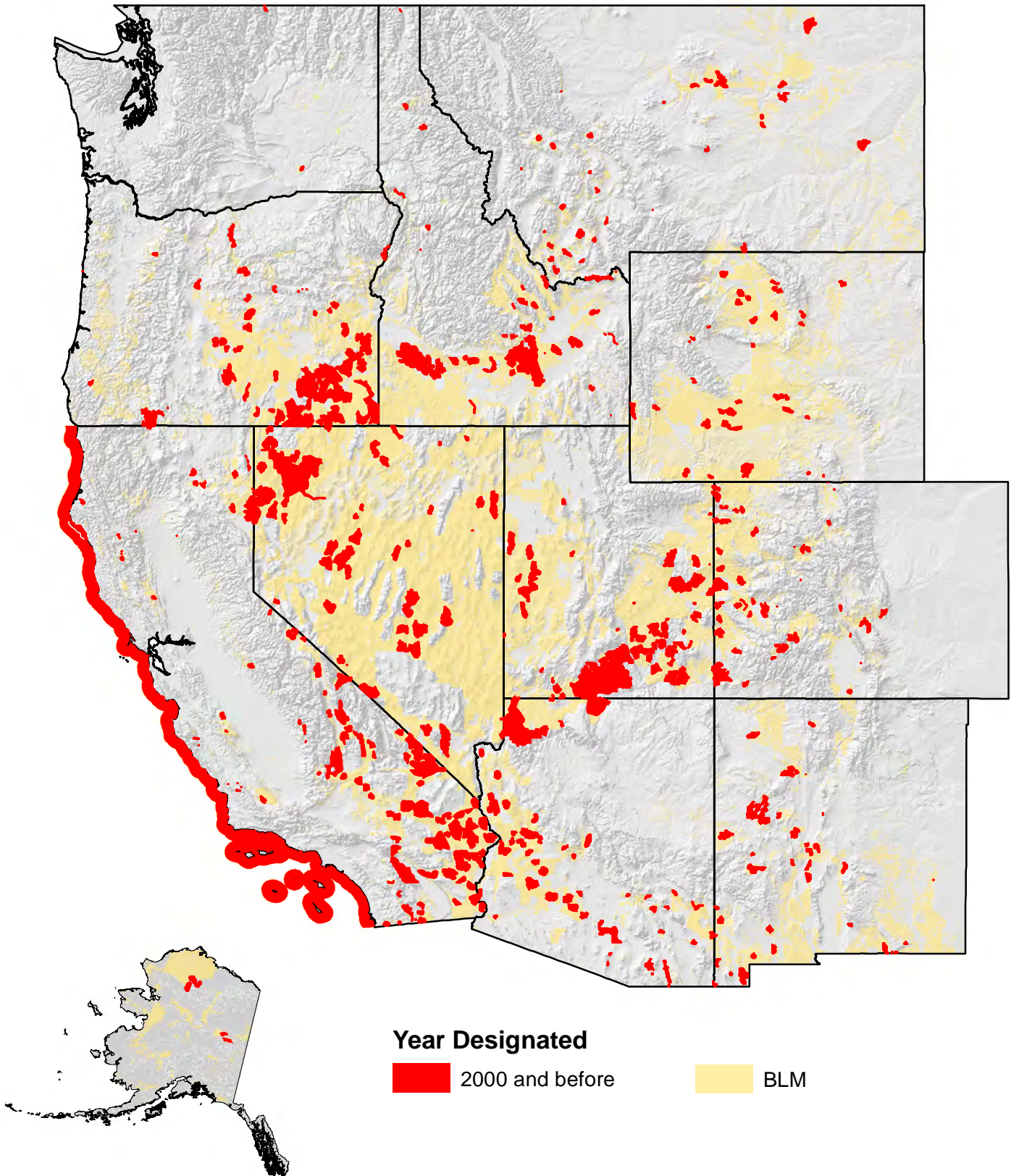
	Devils Canyon Wilderness	UT	8,675
	Devil's Staircase Wilderness	OR	8,600
	Eagle Canyon Wilderness	UT	13,832
	East Potrillo Mountains Wilderness	NM	12,155
	Great Falls Basin Wilderness	CA	7,810
	Horse Valley Wilderness	UT	12,201
	Labyrinth Canyon Wilderness	UT	54,643
	Little Ocean Draw Wilderness	UT	20,660
	Lower Last Chance Wilderness	UT	19,339
	Mexican Mountain Wilderness	UT	76,413
	Middle Wild Horse Mesa Wilderness	UT	16,343
	Milpitas Wash Wilderness	CA	17,250
	Mount Riley Wilderness	NM	8,382
	Muddy Creek Wilderness	UT	98,023
	Organ Mountains Wilderness	NM	19,916
	Potrillo Mountains Wilderness	NM	105,085
	Reds Canyon Wilderness	UT	17,325
	Robledo Mountains Wilderness	NM	16,776
	San Rafael Reef Wilderness	UT	60,442
	Sid's Mountain Wilderness	UT	49,130
	Sierra de las Uvas Wilderness	NM	111,114
	Turtle Canyon Wilderness	UT	29,029
	Whitethorn Wilderness	NM	9,616
2017	Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument	OR/CA	47,624
2016	Bears Ears National Monument	UT	1,063,000
	Castle Mountains National Monument	CA	20,920
	Gold Butte National Monument	NV	296,937
	Mojave Trails National Monument	CA	1,600,000
	Sand to Snow National Monument	CA	8,300
	California Desert Conservation Lands	CA	4,200,000
2015	Basin and Range National Monument	NV	703,585
	Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument	CA	110,000
	Browns Canyon National Monument	CO	21,586
	Cecil D. Andrus-White Clouds Wilderness	ID	90,775
2014	Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument	NM	496,330
	Pine Forest Range Wilderness	NV	24,015
2013	Rio Grande del Norte National Monument	NM	242,710
	San Juan Islands National Monument	WA	1,000
2012	Fort Ord National Monument	CA	7,212
2011	Elkhorn Ridge Wilderness	CA	11,001
2009	Prehistoric Trackways National Monument	NM	5,280
	Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Area	UT	63,478
	Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area	CO	210,149
	Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area	NM	24,876
	Red Cliffs National Conservation Area	UT	44,859
	Beartrap Canyon Wilderness	UT	40
	Beauty Mountain Wilderness	CA	15,627
	Big Jacks Creek Wilderness	ID	52,000
	Blackridge Wilderness	UT	13,108

	Bruneau-Jarbridge Rivers Wilderness	ID	90,000
	Canaan Mountains Wilderness	UT	44,531
	Cottonwood Canyon Wilderness	UT	11,667
	Cougar Canyon Wilderness	UT	10,409
	Deep Creek and Deep Creek North Wilderness	UT	4,262
	Doc's Pass Wilderness	UT	17,294
	Dominguez Canyon Wilderness	CO	66,280
	Goose Creek Wilderness	UT	98
	Granite Mountain Wilderness	CA	9,808
	La Verkin Creek Wilderness	UT	445
	Little Jacks Creek Wilderness	ID	51,000
	Lower White River Wilderness	OR	2,806
	North Fork Owyhee Wilderness	ID	43,000
	Oregon Badlands Wilderness	OR	29,000
	Owyhee River Wilderness	ID	267,000
	Pinto Mountains Wilderness	CA	25,000
	Pole Creek Wilderness	ID	12,530
	Red Butte Wilderness	UT	1,537
	Red Mountain Wilderness	UT	18,729
	Sabinoso Wilderness	NM	19,625
	Slaughter Creek Wilderness	UT	3,901
	Soda Mountain Wilderness	OR/CA	24,700
	Spring Basin Wilderness	OR	6,400
	Taylor Creek Wilderness	UT	32
	White Mountains Wilderness	CA	229,953
2008	Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area	FL	86
	Piedras Blancas Light Station Outstanding Natural Area	CA	20
2006	Becky Peak Wilderness	NV	18,189
	Bristlecone Wilderness	NV	14,095
	Cache Creek Wilderness	CA	27,296
	Cedar Mountain Wilderness	UT	100,000
	Cedar Roughs Wilderness	CA	6,287
	Goshute Canyon Wilderness	NV	42,544
	Government Peak Wilderness	NV	6,313
	Highland Ridge Wilderness	NV	68,627
	King Range Wilderness	CA	42,694
	Mount Grafton Wilderness	NV	78,754
	Rocks and Islands Wilderness	CA	6
	South Fork Eel River Wilderness	CA	12,867
	Yuki Wilderness	CA	53,887

*Source: Bureau of Land Management

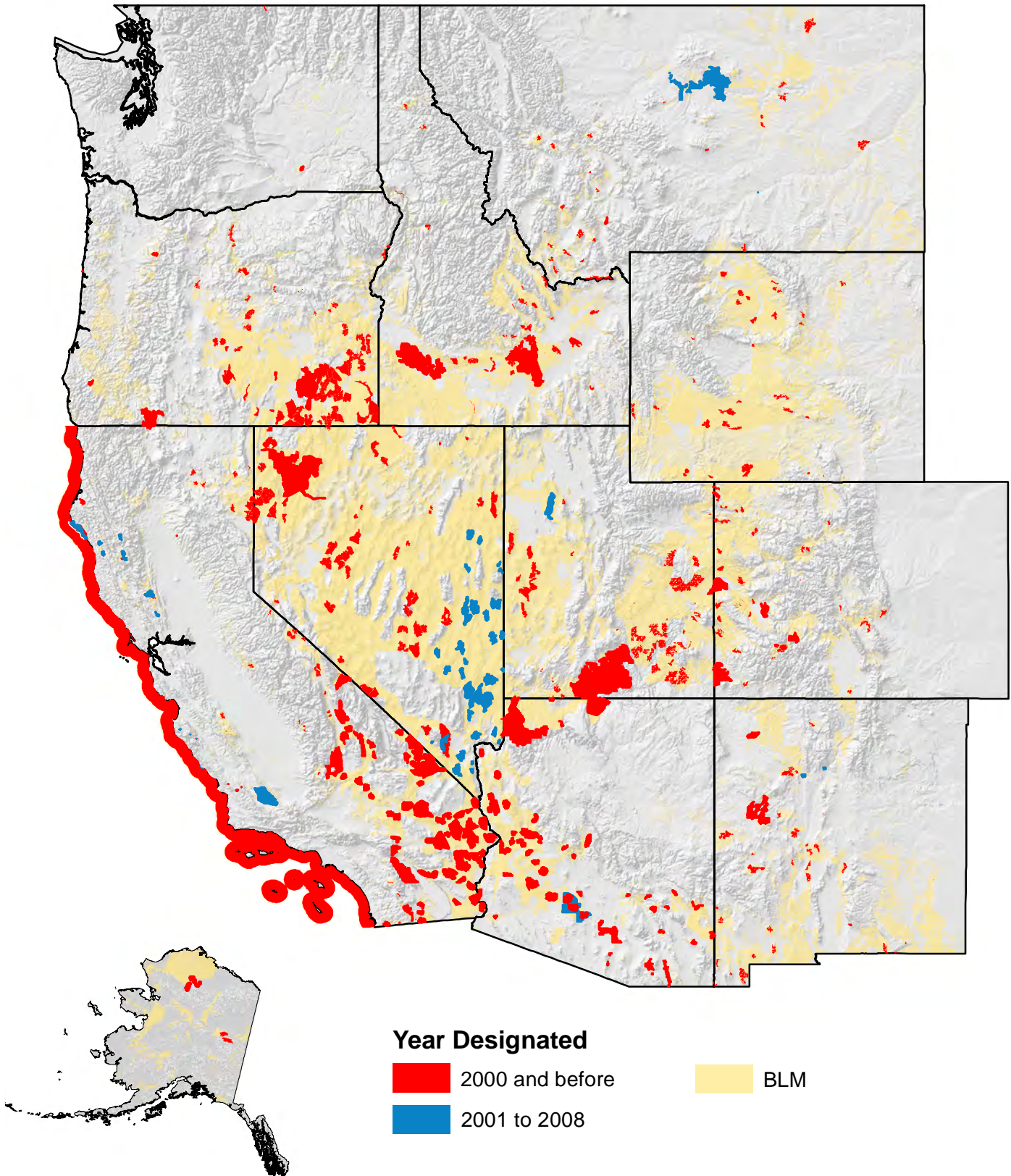
Expansion of the BLM National Conservation Lands

National Monuments, National Conservation Areas,
Wilderness Areas & Wilderness Study Areas



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