

PRESS ADVISORY--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Westerners Respond to Congressional Efforts to Eliminate all funding for 27 million acres of protected public lands

CONTACT: Danielle Murray, Conservation Lands Foundation (970) 247-0807 ext.12

WHAT: Leaders of conservation and archeological organizations respond to a Congressional amendment offered by Rob Bishop (R-UT) to gut National Landscape Conservation System

WHEN: 3pm Eastern Time, 1pm Mountain, Wednesday Feb. 16th.

WHERE: Call – in 303-248-0285 passcode 2470807

WHO: Brian O'Donnell, Executive Director, Conservation Lands Foundation, Durango, CO

Pat Williams, Community Outreach, Friends of Red Rock Canyon NCA, NV

Marshall Pendergrass, President Trout Unlimited Gunnison Chapter & Gunnison Gorge River Guide, CO

Deborah J. Gangloff, Ph.D., President & CEO, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, CO

Joe Neuhof, Director, Colorado Canyons Association, CO

Thomas Hulen, Executive Director, Friends of the Sonoran Desert National Monument, AZ

WHY: - Today the United States House of Representatives is debating an amendment that would completely defund the National Landscape Conservation System -27 million acres of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) most prized lands. The National Landscape Conservation System, the nation's newest conservation system, stands alongside the National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System as the pinnacles of our nation's public lands.

The BLM estimates that up to 1/3 of all visitors-tens of millions of Americans-to BLM lands are to places within the National Landscape Conservation System. Defunding the system would devastate access, tourism and hurt the economy of western communities adjacent to these beautiful places.

Places like Red Rock National Conservation Area, just outside of Las Vegas would have to shut its doors. Over a million Americans visited last year. Restoration projects that maintain incredible cultural sites at Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado, containing the highest number of known cultural sites in the country, would be stopped.

The National Landscape Conservation System is widely supported by local communities. In FY 2009, BLM reported that volunteers contributed 447,177 hours to the National Landscape Conservation System, returning approximately \$21.19 for every \$1 of taxpayer dollars spent.

This amendment puts local economies at risk, by preventing the opportunity for all American to access their public lands.