

CHANGING LANDSCAPES

In Partnership with:

Engaging Diverse Communities in Public Lands Advocacy



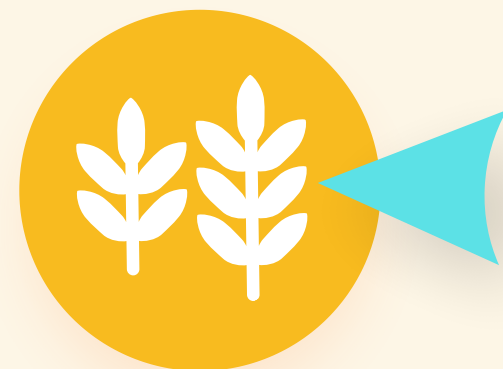
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Supporting broad community representation and diversity in public lands conservation advocacy

NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Conservation Land (NCL) designation was created in 2000 with the mission to "conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes." The impetus came from BLM values shifting away from extractive industries towards conservation. There are eleven federal conservation designations including **National Monuments** and **Wilderness Areas**. NCL cover 35-million-acres of public land, or 10% of total BLM lands.

BACKGROUND



Why Do Public Lands Matter?

Encompassing nearly one-third of the entire U.S. land area, federally-managed lands are owned by all Americans. The value of public lands range from outdoor recreation to maintaining ecosystem biodiversity to mitigating impacts of climate change.



Why is Conservation Advocacy Important?

Public lands are threatened by climate change, resource extraction, industrial development, and changing policy priorities between Administrations. Empowering communities to speak up, collaborate, and act for the stewardship of the lands closest to them is valuable to their long-term protection.



What is the Impact of Demographic Change?

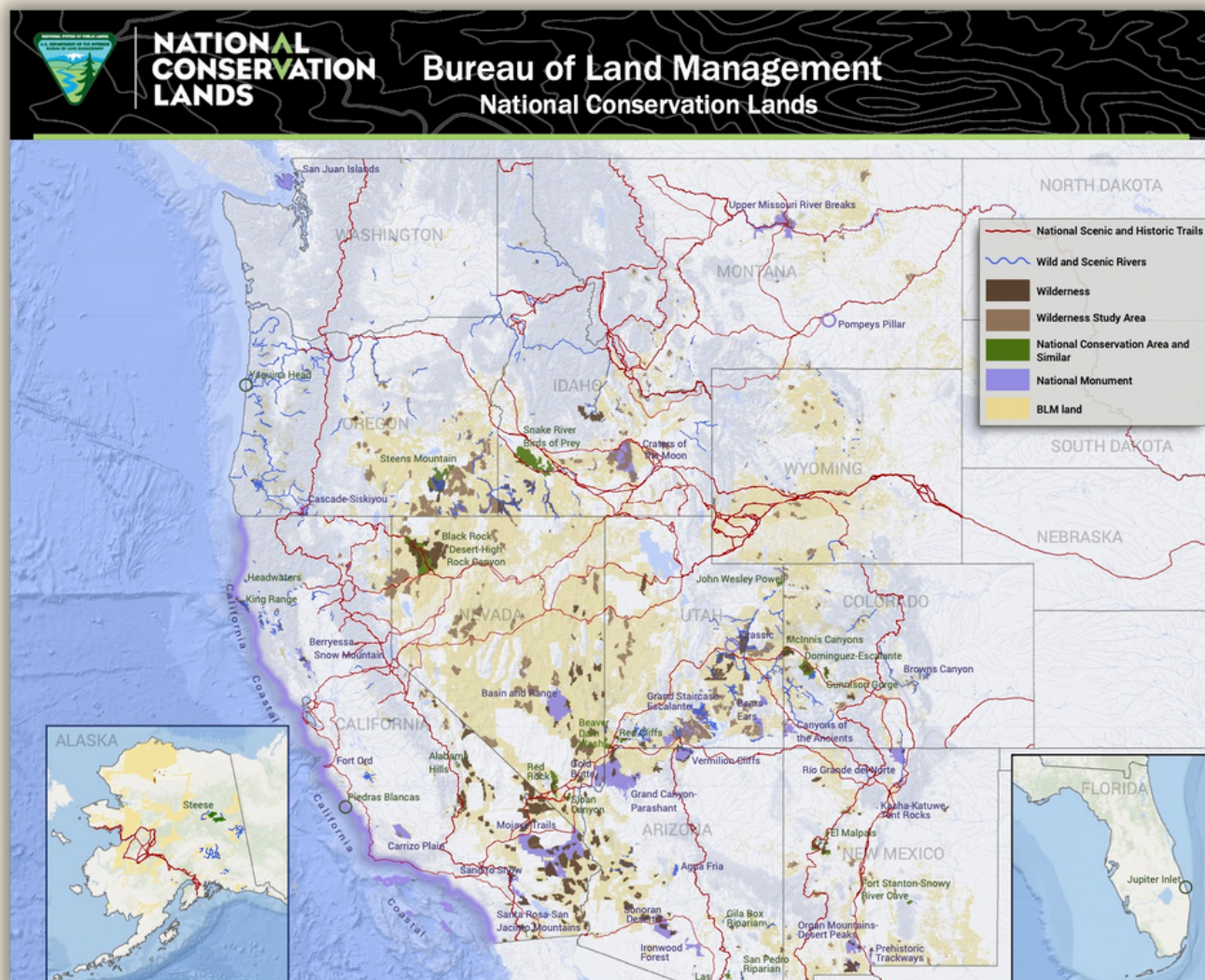
The U.S. population is changing. It is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, there is population growth and decline in different areas, the population is aging, and politics are polarized. Ensuring that the grassroots land advocacy movement is inclusive and representative is important to connecting communities to their landscapes.

Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF) empowers community-based advocates to channel their passion and protect public lands working through their Friends Grassroots Network (FGN).



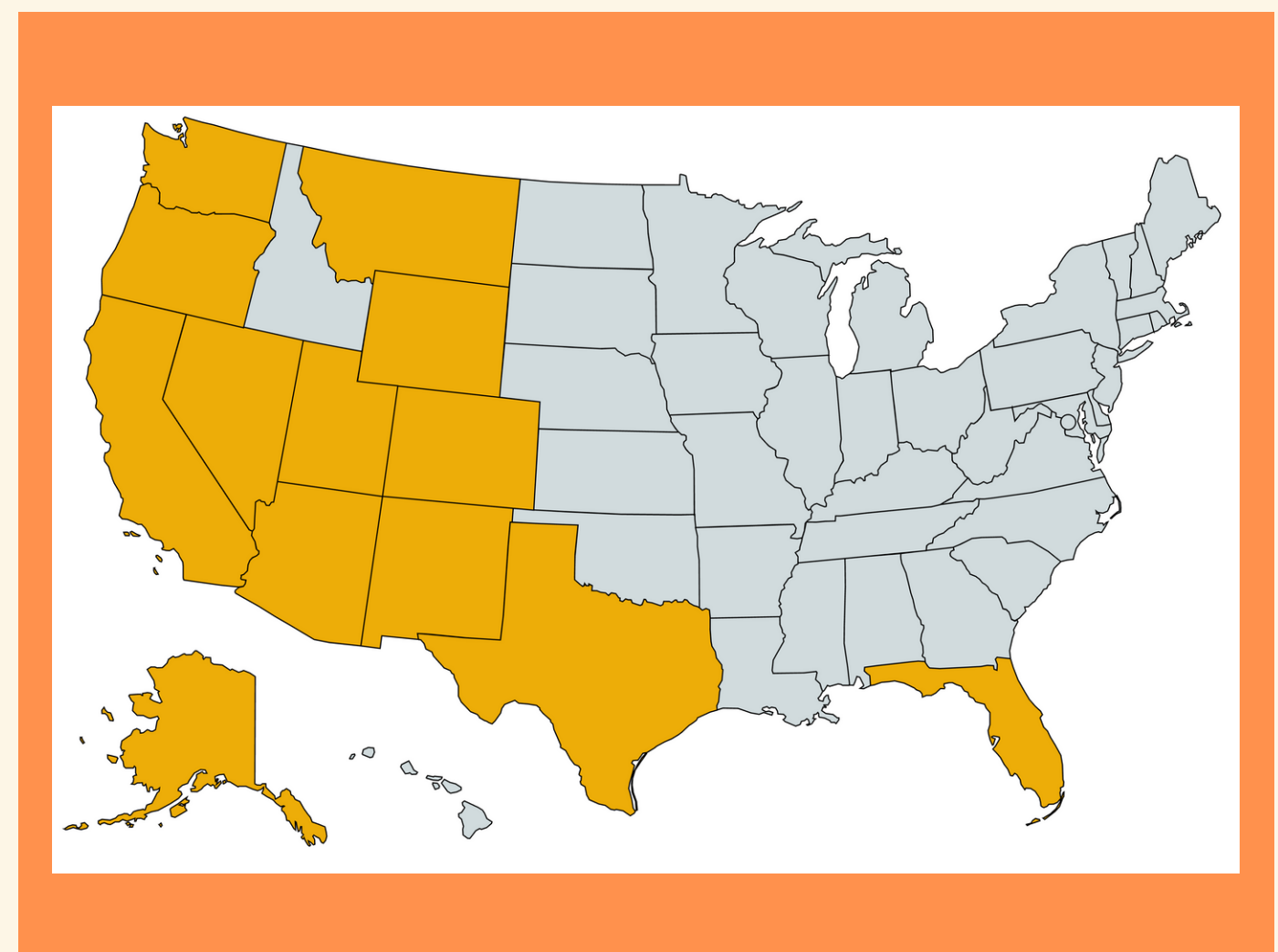
FRIENDS GRASSROOTS NETWORK

The Friends Grassroots Network (FGN) is a group of about 80 grassroots conservation organizations spread across 11 Western States, Alaska, and Florida. These Friends Groups (FG) work to protect, steward, and educate members of the public about NCLs. The network represents a wide array of communities, ecosystems, and recreational-use types. Many organizations are associated with a specific NCL unit while others coalesce around a region or certain type of ecosystem that needs protection and stewardship.



LOCATION OF NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

STATES WHERE CLF FRIENDS GROUPS ARE LOCATED



Purpose This project aims to assist members of the FGN in engaging more diverse communities in public lands advocacy through analysis of demographic change in communities across the Western US. These organizations work in disparate locations, yet many are dealing with similar shifts in the make-up of their communities. A spreadsheet, comprehensive report, and case-study booklet provide evidence and overview of these demographic changes in the counties where they work. With this information, each group is able to gain insight into the specific demographic makeup of their county, to place this information within the larger context of available research, and to use this information to make strategic decisions that assist in connecting communities to landscapes.

Methods

Data Collection - Data from the Decennial Census, American Community Survey, 2021 Vintage Numbers, MIT Election Data, and Data USA was collected and compiled in a spreadsheet.

Literature Review - Multiple search iterations allowed us to consolidate important information on relevant demographic trends.

Case-Studies - Five FGs were selected as case studies. Information on these groups was gathered at the FGN Summit, as well as through interviews and a site visit to Saint George, Utah.

Census Data Collected:

- Counties Analyzed: 58**
- Total Population** - 2021, 2020, 2010
- Square Mileage** - 2020 boundaries
- Median Age** - 2020, 2010
- Population Under 18** - 2021, 2020
- Population Under 19** - 2020, 2010
- Population Over 65** - 2020, 2010
- Hispanic Population** - 2021, 2020, 2010
- Population by Race, non-Hispanic** - 2021, 2020, 2010
- Diversity Index** - 2020, 2010



Case-studies & Counties:

- Friends of the Inyo**
 - Mono County, CA
- Conserve Southwest Utah**
 - Washington County, UT
- Colorado Canyons Association**
 - Mesa County, CO
- Dolores River Boating Advocates**
 - Montezuma County, CO
- Friends of Organ-Mountain Desert-Peaks**
 - Doña Ana County, NM

Demographic Trends

- **Racial diversity** is increasing in almost every county that we looked at. Every county saw a decreasing proportion of the **white population** and all but one saw an increasing proportion of the **Hispanic population**.
- The population is getting **older**. The **median age** increased in all but 5 counties, while the proportion **over 65** increased everywhere.

Key Findings



Themes from the Case Studies

- **Engaging with diverse stakeholders.** Whether talking across the political aisle or making sure that tribes are at the decision-making table, engaging diverse stakeholder benefits public lands.
- **Meeting people where they are.** Some groups need extra outreach, such as writing pamphlets in Spanish and to engaging kids in schools.

Deliverables

FGN Demographic Spreadsheet

- Consists of information and Census data from 81 FG distilled into the 58 counties where they are located
- Shows raw data of demographic change over time from 2010-2020 as well as counties ranked from greatest to least change across 14 demographic categories

Comprehensive Report

- Compiles the literature review on changing demographics occurring in the West and their relation to public lands.
- Identifies trends occurring across FGN counties
- Incorporates case-studies and interviews with five FG

Case-Study Booklet

- Outlines trends found in FGN spreadsheet and report
- Showcases data from our five case-studies in a visual format
- Displays in-depth data and observations from five counties near NCL lands

Outcomes

The materials created through this Capstone Project will be shared with CLF's FGN to help them investigate changes in their respective counties with the goal of engaging a broader coalition of grassroots advocates within their community. We hope that this project leads to rapid, substantial, and effective changes in the ways that the environmental community represents their communities and helps build more effective management strategies for National Conservation Lands.