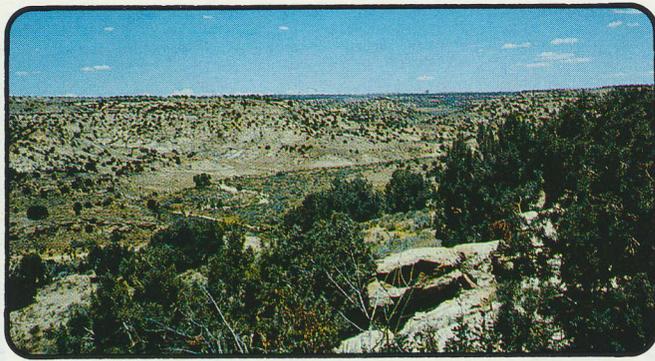




Colorado Natural History Program

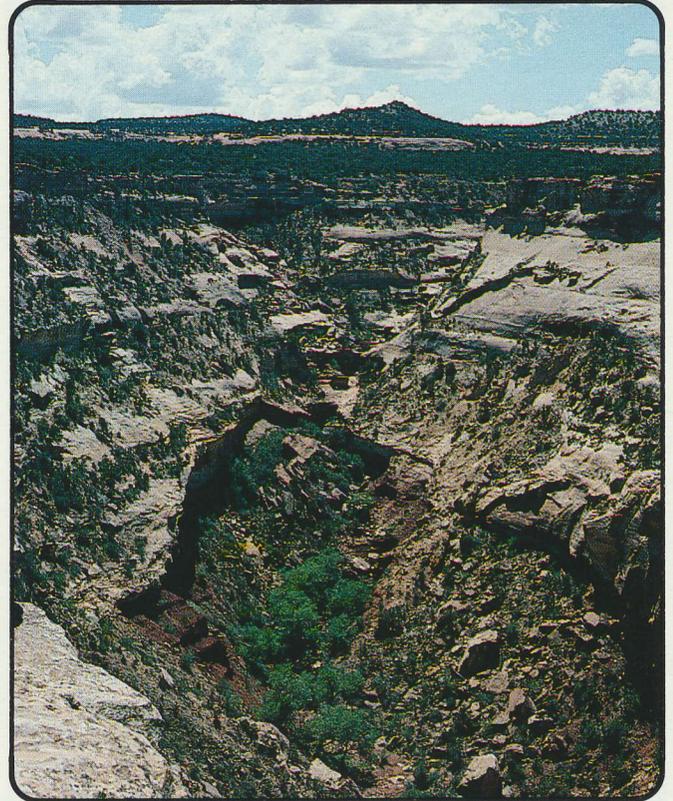




The U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is responsible for administering more than 300 million acres of public land ranging from the North Slope of Alaska to the southern tip of Florida, including 8 million acres in Colorado. The magnitude and diversity of natural resources on these lands make them invaluable for a considerable variety of current and future human uses. BLM also manages the public lands to provide opportunities for natural science research and educational uses, and, where appropriate, to protect certain public lands in their natural condition.



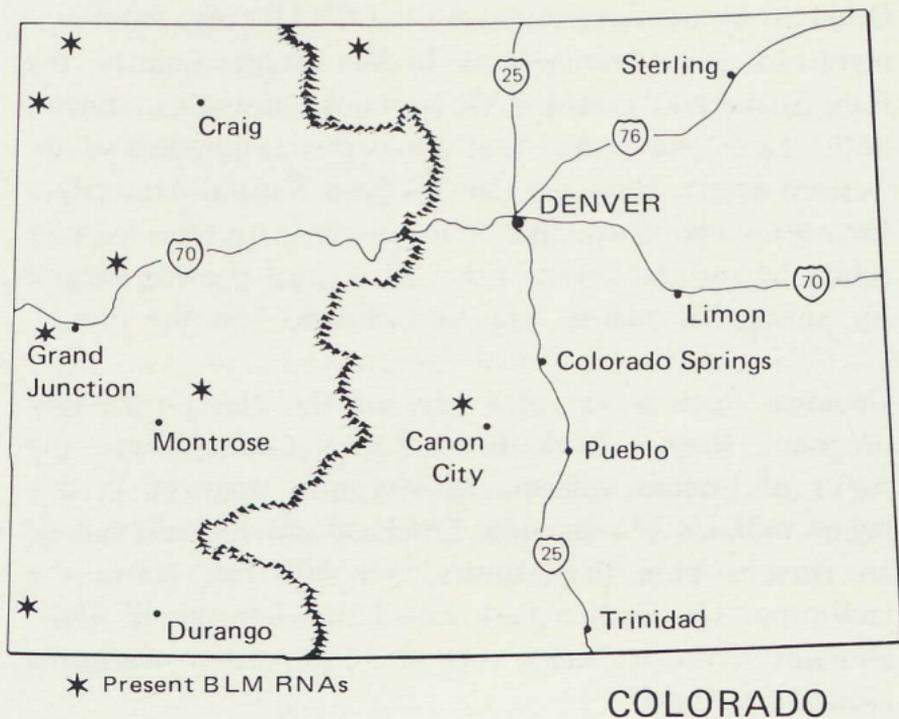
BLM carries out these responsibilities through its Natural History Resource Management Program that provides systematic cost-effective selection, establishment and management of special public land sites that constitute BLM's system of Research Natural Areas (RNA), Outstanding Natural Areas (ONA) and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

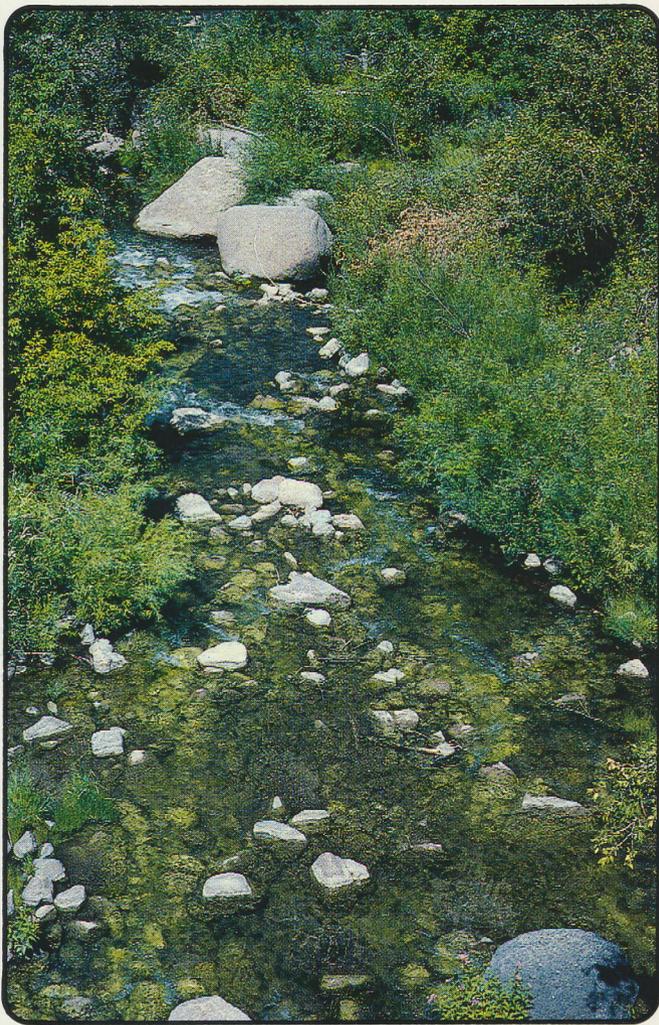


BLM's Natural History Program coordinates with national, state and local natural areas programs. In Colorado, BLM cooperates under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP), administered by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The CNAP identifies, evaluates, and protects natural areas in Colorado having exemplary or rare natural features. Areas are identified from a variety of sources including the CNAP's Natural Heritage Inventory, a comprehensive data base of Colorado's natural diversity. Areas are protected through a registry and designation process in cooperation with both public and private landowners. The Inventory helps BLM determine which areas should be included in its Natural History Program. CNAP also helps BLM identify the rarest and best examples of plant and animal communities and geologic features that may be potential RNAs, ONAs or ACECs.



As time goes on, the continual human modification of Colorado's environment will make RNAs and ACECs valuable outdoor laboratories for field research, helping scientists and students discover new resources and better understand natural processes. Toward this end, BLM-Colorado has formally established 3 Research Natural Areas that constitute an ongoing effort at both resource use and preservation. With BLM approval, CNAP has placed 8 BLM areas on the Program Registry and formally designated the High Mesa Grassland RNA (Fremont County), a quality example of a once common montane grassland community. This unusually diverse plant community is located atop a relatively undisturbed mesa.

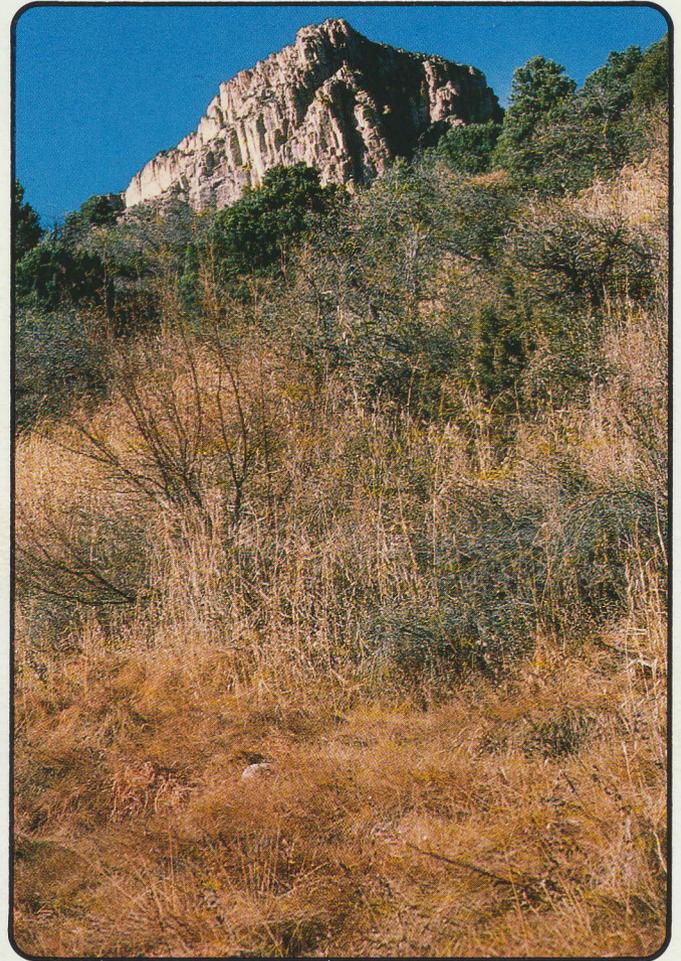




Other BLM areas registered by the CNAP range from rare plants to quality ecosystems. In Montezuma County, the Rare Snake and Lizard RNA contains unusual varieties of both lizards and snakes that are rare to Colorado's southwestern desert. Unaweep Canyon Seep Natural Area (Mesa County) is a good example of an aquatic ecosystem fed year round by springs. Several other BLM areas provide habitat for species of plants rare to Colorado and the nation.

Geologic features are also part of the Natural History program. Needle Rock RNA (Delta County) was the result of intense volcanic activity that occurred in this region millions of years ago. Erosional activity has exposed an igneous plug that towers over 800 feet above the landscape. The Garden Park Fossil site, a proposed RNA, contains dinosaur bones that are displayed in museums around the world.

The Bureau of Land Management-Colorado and the Colorado Natural Areas Program are working together to identify and protect significant areas that contain natural features of statewide or national significance so that future generations can view with wonder and delight what we ourselves now look upon as special.



Presented by:



*Colorado Natural Areas Program
Colorado Department of Natural Resources*

and



*Bureau of Land Management
Colorado*