



# NEWS RELEASE

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## The Badlands Get Bigger – BLM Purchases Additional Land Within El Malpais National Conservation Area

Remember the 1940s Woodie Guthrie folk song “This Land is Your Land”? Well, more of it just became **your** land because the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently completed a purchase of multiple parcels of private land within New Mexico’s 266,100-acre El Malpais National Conservation Area (NCA) south of I-40, near Grants.

“This purchase will greatly improve the public’s access to outdoor recreation,” said Ed Singleton, Manager of the BLM’s Albuquerque Field Office. The recent 483-acre purchase, made up of 28 parcels ranging in size from 5 to 130 acres in an undeveloped area of the NCA occurred at the request of willing sellers, Singleton added. An additional 24 willing sellers are waiting for the BLM to purchase their properties.

Land purchases at El Malpais NCA are funded by Congressional appropriations through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since 1987, Congress has made nearly \$4 million available to the BLM, resulting in the purchase over 9,700 acres of private land within El Malpais, providing for public access and recreational use while reducing management costs. Supported by the New Mexico Congressional delegation, The Archeological Conservancy, the State of New Mexico, and Cibola County, the BLM received a \$700,000 LWCF appropriation in 2002 for El Malpais NCA.

Created by Congress in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funding to federal, state and local governments to purchase lands for open space and recreation purposes. Funds are utilized to create parks, protect pristine wetlands, wilderness, and wildlife habitat, protect archeological and historic sites, provide clean water, enhance scenic vistas, and provide for public recreational opportunities. Lands purchased through the Land and Water Conservation Fund preserve some of the best of America for future generations.

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In addition to these purchases, over the last 15 years, the BLM has acquired an additional 48,000 acres of El Malpais NCA inholdings through land exchange. Approximately 4,900 acres of private lands remain within the El Malpais NCA.

The El Malpais NCA protects a spectacular volcanic landscape. The Cebolla Wilderness, West Malpais Wilderness, a 29-mile segment of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and the “Chain of Craters” all lie within the El Malpais NCA boundary. El Malpais consists of four distinct lava flows which spewed over McCarty’s Valley at different times during the last 3 million years.

El Malpais or the “The Badlands” is the historic Spanish name given to the lava field because of the rugged terrain. Today, these cinder cones, sculptured sandstone formations, ponderosa pine forests, lava tubes, and ice caves offer scenic views, solitude, and numerous recreational opportunities. The El Malpais NCA combined with the El Malpais National Monument (managed by the National Park Service) hosts an estimated 250,000 annual visitors.

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Note to Editors: For further information, call Kathy Walter at (505) 761-8700.



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