



Figure 1. Umtanum Ridge Water Gap NNL, WA; photo by John Clement.

National Natural Landmarks Program (NNL) At a Glance

National Natural Landmarks are:

- natural areas that contain outstanding examples of biological or geological features
- owned by a variety of public and private land stewards
- located anywhere, including within city, state, county parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, tribal lands, nature preserves, “backyards” of private individuals, and other federally and privately-owned lands
- designated by the Secretary of the Interior
- often open to the public; however, some sites are not open for visitation
- 599 sites designated as of 2019, which collectively illustrate the story of America’s natural heritage

National Natural Landmark Designation:

- formally recognizes a site as possessing biological or geological features of national significance
- honors landowners for their dedicated stewardship and commitment to protecting and preserving a nationally significant site
- creates a partnership between the site owners and the National Park Service
- highlights the importance and location of these sites, which is valuable for land-use planning decisions
- elevates and brings national recognition to these sites
- does not provide regulatory protection
- does not change ownership of a site
- does not impose any new land-use restrictions or management requirements
- does not require public access

The National Natural Landmarks Program is:

- administered by the National Park Service
- voluntary for NNL landowners
- 55 years old and counting
- a way to engage and facilitate conversations with local communities across the country about shared values
- a mechanism by which the NPS can provide or broker assistance to landmark sites in support of conservation efforts
- an established platform from which to help raise public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the nation’s natural heritage
- a tool utilized to help advance collaborative conservation across the landscape
- one of many NPS community assistance programs that provides ongoing opportunities for organizations and the public to engage in the mission of the NPS

