



“Voice of the Western Slope since 1953”
A coalition of counties, communities, businesses & individuals

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08 - 09 PL 1

DOMINGUEZ-ESCALANTE NCA/WILDERNESS DESIGNATION, SUPPORT FOR

WHEREAS Senator Ken Salazar, in consultation with Senator Wayne Allard, and Representative John Salazar have introduced legislation to establish the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area that includes approximately 210,677 acres of federally-owned land on the Uncompahgre Plateau, of which approximately 66,255 acres would be designated as the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Area, and

WHEREAS this legislation is based on formal recommendations from the Bureau of Land Management and incorporates certain findings and recommendations that emerged from a set of public meetings and discussions (involving local officials, businesses, recreation organizations, agricultural operators, and land protection advocates) under the leadership of the Mesa State College-Natural Resources and Land Policy Institute, the Public Lands Partnership, the Mesa, Montrose, and Delta county commissions, and members of Colorado’s congressional delegation, and

WHEREAS this legislation has been endorsed by, among others:

- Delta County Commissioners,
- Mesa County Commissioners,
- Montrose County Commissioners,
- local businesses,
- local and regional newspapers,
- Twenty-seven Colorado conservation organizations, and

WHEREAS language included in the legislation to protect existing water rights while ensuring a natural flow of water in the wilderness has been endorsed by:

- Colorado River Water Conservation District, in consultation with local water districts and water rights holders,
- The State of Colorado (Governor Bill Ritter, Department of Natural Resources, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Lake & Stream Protection Program),
- The Wilderness Society, in behalf of the Colorado Wilderness Network,
- CLUB 20’s Water Subcommittee, and

WHEREAS the legislation will protect select lands as wilderness, within a larger, multiple-purpose national conservation area, ensuring continued livestock grazing throughout the area, continued motor and mechanical recreation in authorized portions of the national conservation area, ensuring continued use of water for beneficial uses, and providing for an inclusive public process to prepare a management plan for the area, and

WHEREAS private landowners deserve and require unrestricted access to their private lands within the boundaries of the proposed NCA and wilderness area, and

WHEREAS the 5th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution directs that private property shall not be taken for public use, without just compensation, and

WHEREAS stock water developments provide benefits to range health, livestock and wildlife, and

WHEREAS the NCA and proposed wilderness offer outstanding hunting opportunities for elk, mule deer and desert bighorn sheep, and

WHEREAS the County Commissioners from Mesa, Delta and Montrose Counties have worked diligently to resolve all legitimate property rights concerns associated with the NCA/Wilderness designation in a reasonable and fair manner;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CLUB 20 endorses establishing the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness as described in S.3065 as introduced, and urges the US Congress to pass legislation to this effect in 2008 pending resolution of private property rights concerns, including such issues as boundaries, access, range improvements and recreation opportunities.

Adopted 9/5/08