



Rep. Bishop
Attn: Fred Ferguson, Wayne Bradshaw
123 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

July 1st, 2013

Dear Rep. Bishop

My name is Chris Benson and I am the Southwest Program Director of the Colorado Outward Bound School. The Colorado Outward Bound School is a non-profit organization that has utilized the wild lands of the west to strengthen character, develop leaders, and impel people to be of service to others. Our mission is to change lives through challenge and discovery. As an industry pioneer, the Colorado Outward Bound School began in 1962 and initiated a nation wide Outward Bound movement that has resulted in a community of more than 1 million people.

The Southwest Program has been operating in Utah since 1968, and currently serves roughly 300 students annually through 4,500 user days. Of critical importance to the efficacy of our programming are our course areas. Currently, we operate within the following Agencies and Field Offices:

USFS: Manti-La Sal Ranger District, Ashley National Forest
NPS: Canyonlands National Park, Dinosaur National Monument
BLM: Moab, Monticello, Price and Hanksville Field Offices
State of Utah: State and Trust Lands

Our programming consists of multi-day trips from 5- 50 days in length that traverses some of the most breathtaking landscapes of Utah. During spring and fall, we offer canyon backpacking and canyoneering courses and occasionally river trips. In the summer time, we transition to largely river based program offering courses on the following rivers and sections: Green- Gates of Lodore, Desolation Canyon, Stillwater and Labyrinth Canyons. On the Colorado, we offer courses that go through Cataract Canyon, and we also operate on the Yampa and San Juan Rivers. Additionally, during summer months, we operate in the La Sal and Henry Mountains. Please see the attached appendix of maps for more specific information.



As stated above, our course areas are of critical importance to the success of our mission. I am urging you to consider the Colorado Outward Bound School as a stake holder in the issue of public lands policy in southeastern Utah. Our course areas have been and could continue to be effected by the following specific proposals:

- 1) Increased resource extraction in the vicinity of Canyonlands National Park- This is most notable in the form of the night lights from drill rigs. This development diminishes our student's experience by putting industrial features within a view shed.
- 2) Proposed Nuclear Power plant near Green River Utah- This proposed plant would ostensibly deter public tourism for the entire region, and specifically, it would stress the already limited water resource of the Green River- a course area that nearly 30% of our current operations utilize.
- 3) A purposed National Monument around the current Canyonlands National Park- Although this proposal may provide certain protections or conservations, our current understanding of the policy of this proposed monument is vague and inconclusive. We would ask to be a part of the planning process- as important constraints such as vehicle access, group size limits, and trip length limits etc. can have, and have had substantial impacts to our ability to operate effectively. (i.e. when Canyonlands National Park rewrote its Land use Plan the maximum group size was limited to 6 people, which effectively shut down our operations for land-based programming in the park, due to the non-viability and relative inefficacy of this group size for our programming and mission)

In conclusion, I urge your office and fellow decision makers to consider our organization as a stake holder in public lands policy in Utah. Specifically in terms of decisions regarding resource extraction in and around Moab, Utah as well as possible Federal Land Designations or changes to current land designations. Although we are just one affected party, our contribution to the local Moab economy is not insignificant; with on average 1 million in revenue and 25-50 employees based in our Moab offices, we are an important voice in this discussion. Thank you for your continued efforts, ideas, input seeking in order to hold a vision for a diverse set of needs, people, and landscapes.

Best Regards,

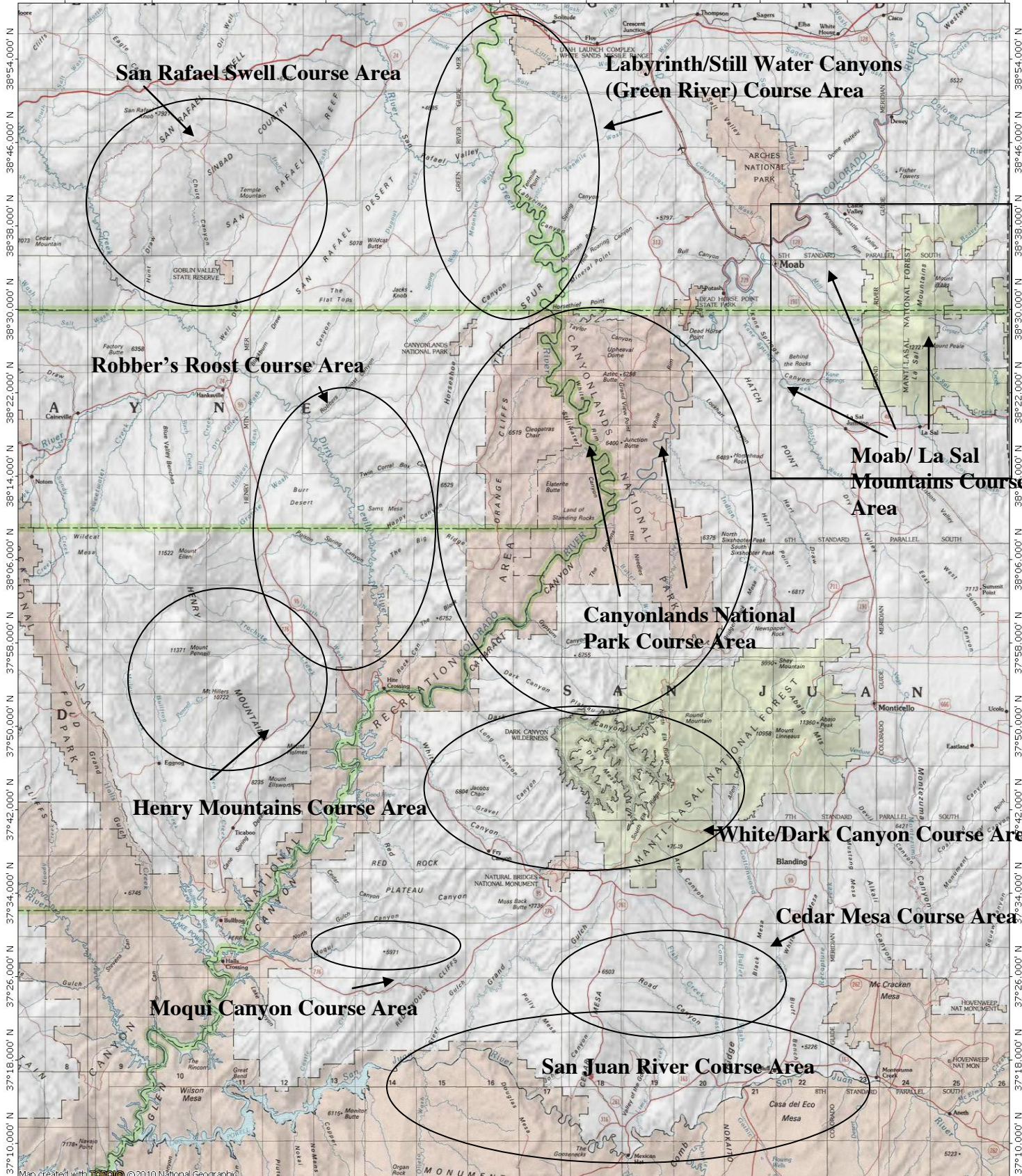
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Colorado Outward Bound School Course areas South of I-70

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Map created with TOPO! ©2010 National Geographic





Colorado Outward Bound School Course Areas north of I-70

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