



July 19, 2013

Congressman Rob Bishop
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop,

Thank you for your continued leadership on your initiative to craft a legislative solution to eastern Utah's longstanding public lands conflicts.

After discussions with your staff, we are providing information through maps for the lands proposed for protection within America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (ARRWA) within the six-county boundary that you have determined to fit within this initiative. (Map 1)

We are providing this information to ensure you and your staff have the full scope of information about these lands and their values to inform your process moving forward. This information is meant to provide the basis for further discussion and we are interested in meeting with you and your staff to present additional ideas on what should ultimately be included in a bill to address conservation and other public land issues in eastern Utah while you're in Utah during August recess. Please let us know what other information might be helpful to this process.

Wilderness Study Areas (Map 2)

Within the initiative boundary there are 1,545,000 acres of wilderness study areas (WSA), lands that, since the 1980s, have been managed so as not to impair wilderness values. These are areas that were protected as a result of the original inventories conducted under Sec. 603 of FLPMA – both the original inventory decisions as well as areas added as a result of appeals to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. There is also a small subset of WSAs protected under sec. 202 of FLPMA that were designated before the 2003 Norton-Leavitt Wilderness Settlement agreement.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (Map 4)

Within the initiative boundary there are 2,268,000 of lands with wilderness characteristics (LWC). The BLM took another look at lands proposed for wilderness protection in Utah resulting in the **1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory**. Additional areas have been found to contain wilderness character through various NEPA processes including the 2008 RMPs. In the six-county initiative area, BLM has inventoried 86 percent of lands in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act as WSAs, Natural Areas, or Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. (Map 7)

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Natural Areas (Map 3)

Within the initiative boundary there are 351,000 acres of “natural areas” (NA), which comprise approximately 16% of the LWC lands (2,268,000 acres) and are managed for the retention of their wilderness character under the 2008 RMPs.

Lands Available for disposal (Map 6)

Within the initiative boundary there are 70,000 acres of BLM available for disposal and sale under the 2008 RMPs. (Map 6 still to come pending receipt of GIS file.)

Open routes in America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act (Map 5)

Within the six-county area are 16,000 miles of designated routes which would remain open if all the lands within American’s Red Rock Wilderness Act were designated wilderness.

Unit-by-unit Information and Values

We have also submitted with this letter a table detailing, unit-by-unit, the status of lands in America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act. We have included links to “Wilderness at the Edge,” the Utah Wilderness Coalition’s description of the values of each unit, as well as the unit descriptions made by the Bureau of Land Management in the 1999 Utah Wilderness Inventory.

We have a considerable amount of information documenting the values of proposed wilderness units that we have not included because of the volume of these materials. We are more than happy of course to provide this type of information to your staff, but expect it will be most useful to have informal give and take about what information would be useful and in what form.

We look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss ideas on what should ultimately be included in a legislative proposal for the public lands in your initiative.

Sincerely,

Sharon Buccino
Director, Land and Wildlife Program
Natural Resources Defense Council

Scott Groene
Executive Director
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

Athan Manuel
Director, Lands Protection Program
Sierra Club

Melyssa Watson
Vice President for Conservation
The Wilderness Society

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[Enclosures \(9\):](#)

Map 1: America's Red Rock Wilderness Act

Map 2: BLM Wilderness Study Areas

Map 3: BLM Managed Natural Areas in RMPs

Map 4: BLM Identified Lands with Wilderness Character

Map 5: BLM Designated Motorized Travel Routes (BLM/SITLA only) and ARROWA

Map 6: BLM RMP Approved Land Disposal and ARROWA

Map 7: BLM Identified Wilderness Quality Lands and ARROWA

Table of Wilderness Units

1999 Utah BLM Wilderness Inventory

Cc: Sen. Orrin Hatch

Sen. Mike Lee

Sen. Dick Durbin

Rep. Jason Chaffetz

Rep. Jim Matheson

Rep. Chris Stewart

Rep. Rush Holt