The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

The Nature Conservancy in Utah
559 East South Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84102

tel [801] 531-0999
fax [801] 531-1003
nature.org/utah

March 22, 2013

Honorable Rob Bishop
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Fred.Ferguson@mail.house.gov

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter of February 15th inviting The Nature Conservancy's input regarding public lands designations and conservation initiatives in eastern Utah. We appreciate both the opportunity to comment, and your leadership in initiating a stakeholder process which will potentially lead to federal legislation.

The following narrative is intended to highlight general concepts and initiatives we would like to see enacted. This information is preliminary in nature and is not intended to capture all concepts and programs. Rather it offers an outline to serve as a basis for further discussions. Please also note that any formal endorsement from the Conservancy for specific legislation will require approvals from The Nature Conservancy's Utah Chapter Board of Trustees and our Executive Leadership Team in Washington. This said, we are pleased to offer initial comments focusing on four areas: l.) Priority Landscapes, 2.) Priority Programs, 3.) Stakeholder Process Design, and 4.) Other Congressional Priorities. We hope this information will be helpful in your deliberations, and we look forward to continuing to participate in the dialogue you have initiated.

Background Information

The Nature Conservancy has been active in eastern Utah for over two decades. Our major projects in the region have included the 900 acre Scott M. Matheson Wetlands Preserve near Moab, the 300,000 acre Dugout Ranch outside of Canyonlands National Park, over 4,000 acres of conservation easements and fee lands along the 30 mile stretch of the Colorado River Corridor in Grand County, and a major public/private conservation initiative in the Book Cliffs.

Beyond eastern Utah the Conservancy has experience in southwestern Utah that may be relevant to the process you are initiating. In Washington County we have helped to: a.) implement the Washington County HCP, b.) establish the 60,000 acre Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, c.) launch the Virgin River Headwaters project on the Kolob Plateau, d.) sponsor Envision Dixie establishing a grassroots vision for growth and conservation, and e.) assist in passing the Washington County Growth and Conservation Act of 2009.

Elsewhere our staff works closely and collaboratively with the Forest Service, the BLM, private landowners, local communities and other federal and state partners. We have experience in major science-based public lands planning efforts including Landscape Conservation Forecasting and Energy by Design. Our State Office is in Salt Lake City, we

have maintained a Moab Project Office since 1992. Our Utah efforts are supported by 20 staff, 400 volunteers, 6,000 Utah members and a 30 person Utah Board comprised of business and civic leaders statewide.

Priority Landscapes

Following, in order of priority, are four landscapes of interest to the Conservancy in eastern Utah. Guided by our science based work - we develop, analyze and use the best available conservation science and a science-based rigor to set priorities, make decisions, and take action - and our non-confrontational approach, we believe these are the places with the greatest opportunity to craft innovative solutions to complex problems at scales that matter and in ways that will endure.

Priority Landscape #1 – Eastern Canyonlands

Overview
Some of the most spectacular canyon country in America, the Eastern Canyonlands landscape stretches from the Dark Canyon Wilderness Area northward through the archaeological treasure troves of Fable Valley and Beef Basin, across the dramatic cliff-walled summits of Lavender and Bridger Jack Mesas, to the Colorado River in Canyonlands National Park. This rugged landscape is where Al Scorup craved out his cattle ranch in the early 1900's. Now owned by The Nature Conservancy, the 300,000 acre Dugout Ranch is the only large block of private land in the Eastern Canyonlands landscape, which spans over a million acres. The Dugout is now home to the Canyonlands Research Center, a collaborative partnership among scientists, public land managers and local land users to solve the issues that matter most to people who rely on Utah's public lands (see attached handout).

Importance to People & Nature
From redrock canyons and winding streams to snowcapped peaks, this region and its resources support communities, working ranches, businesses, and provide recreation opportunities for thousands. Each year, people flock to ride off-road vehicles, bike the remote dirt roads, hike the meandering canyons, climb the vertical Wingate cliffs, and find solitude in a place of rare natural beauty. The Eastern Canyonlands region also provides crucial habitat for seven vanishing wildlife species and eleven globally-rare plants. Perennial streams such as North Cottonwood Creek, Indian Creek and Salt Creek sustain remarkable freshwater environments as they descend from the Abajo Mountains to the Colorado River. Lining these streams are cottonwood and willow woodlands – prime examples of plant communities which are scarce in this arid region.

Need for Action
Southeastern Utah boasts a rich and proud heritage of ranching, farming, hunting, and native peoples connecting to and living off the land. The lands of the Eastern Canyonlands region still support these traditional ways of life, from active beef cattle operations to renowned elk, turkey and deer populations. Action is needed now to secure a sustainable future for the people who rely on this region's resources, and to safeguard our state's economy, which relies on the natural treasures that draw visitors from around the world.

Eastern Canyonlands Recommendations:
For the Eastern Canyonlands landscape the Conservancy proposes a combination of federal land designations that could yield important lasting solutions for both human and natural communities. Our recommendations for the Eastern Canyonlands region include:

- National Conservation Area (NCA) or similar designation for land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. National Forest (USFS), and National Park Service (NPS) incorporating the goals and lands of the Canyonlands Research Center. The focus of an NCA or similar designation would be threefold: 1) Enhanced protection for key species, natural features and natural communities, 2) A structure for new science and practical land-use solutions to sustain livelihoods, economies and natural resources, and 3) A framework for coordination and resource sharing among public land management agencies.

- Of special interest to the Conservancy is the Canyonlands Research Center as mentioned above. We recommend that any federal land designation in the Eastern Canyonlands region promote the vision and work of the Center by codifying commitment of and funding to support to the Canyonlands Research Center. Further, we recommend that proposed legislation ensure the continued private ownership of the deeded lands owned by the Conservancy at the Dugout Ranch. In order to enhance research efforts at the Center we recommend the Conservancy maintain our existing federal grazing privileges in the area, while also allowing for special grazing considerations such as extended non-use or other grazing systems for science purposes without the risk of temporary or permanent use by other permittees.

- Specially designated Wilderness Areas embedded in the proposed NCA for portions of Lockhart Basin, Indian Creek, Bridger Jack Mesa, Beef Basin and Dark Canyon Plateau and other key sites adjacent to Canyonlands National Park.

- Exchange of all School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) surface parcels and mineral rights (with BLM) within the NCA (or similar designation). Further, the Conservancy recommends that the proposed legislation not result in new acquisition by SITLA of lands within the NCA or similar designation.

Priority Landscape #2 – Greater Green River: White River/West Tavaputs Plateau/Book Cliffs/Labyrinth and Stillwater Canyons

Overview
Desolation Canyon and adjacent highlands of the West Tavaputs Plateau and Book Cliffs are some of the most rugged and remote lands in the continental United States. Home to bison, elk, moose, and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, these lands also harbor one of the world's greatest collections of rock art and prehistoric sites – and through it all runs the Green River and its tributary the White River.

Importance to People & Nature
At more than one mile deep, Desolation Canyon is Utah's deepest canyon and habitat for seven native warm water fish species. Whitewater enthusiasts enjoy boating the rapids and

exploring Utah's famous outlaw hideouts, ancient dinosaur habitats, and Fremont Native American petroglyphs, all found in Desolation Canyon. Downstream, south of the town of Green River, are Labyrinth and Stillwater canyons, where the Green River meanders through a deeply incised canyon bounded by steep, sandstone cliffs. Explorer John Wesley Powell named the first canyon "Labyrinth" for its many intricate twists and turns, and the second "Stillwater" for its placid river flows. Completely different from that of Desolation Canyon, this stretch of river has no rapids, making it an excellent experience for canoe paddlers of all abilities. In this remote river stretch one can find nesting Mexican spotted owls, lambing areas for desert bighorn sheep and roosting areas for burrowing owls.

The White River, second largest tributary of the Green, cuts a rugged scenic trough into the high desert plains of the Uinta Basin. The White River is unusual in that it has nearly natural flow conditions and thus is an essential component of native fish conservation in the Upper Colorado River Basin, especially for the recovery of endangered Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker. Due to the river's mild rapids, the White provides a special river boating experience for families to view sights not often seen on most Western rivers.

Need for Action

The spectacular regions of Green and White Rivers includes areas that are widely recognized as supporting important cultural, biological and recreational values. Water demands, recreation and resource development are all on the rise in different places and at different paces within this region. The most vital elements of the Greater Green River landscape – those valued both by residents and visitors are not sustainable without a new protection plan that recognizes and links the entire system.

Greater Green River Recommendations:

The Conservancy proposes using federal land and water designations to complement existing recommendations, successfully protecting the "system" versus the "parts" of the Green River basin. Our recommendations for the Greater Green River include:

- Wilderness, Wild and Scenic River, National Conservation Area or similar designation or combination of designations for the lands adjacent to and waters of Desolation Canyon, including portions of the West Tavaputs Plateau (i.e. Range Creek, Rock Creek, Beckwith Plateau) and the Book Cliffs (i.e. Tusher Canyon, She Canyon).

- Wild and Scenic River, National Conservation Area or similar designation or combination of designations for the White River, the Green River from Little Hole to the Utah state line, and the reach of the Green River south of Ouray to Sand Wash.

- Natural Heritage Sites or some similar designation to protect nine rare plant species in the Uinta Basin (see page 8 below).

- Wild and Scenic River, Wilderness, National Conservation Area or similar designation or combination of designations for Labyrinth and Stillwater Canyons from the town of Green River to the confluence with the Colorado River in Canyonlands National Park (approximately 120 miles).

- Exchange of all SITLA surface parcels and mineral rights (with BLM) within the specially-designated areas. Further, the Conservancy recommends that the proposed legislation not result in new acquisition by SITLA of lands within the specially-designated areas.

Priority Landscape #3 – Colorado River Corridor

Overview
From Westwater Canyon – where the Colorado River enters Utah to – Canyonlands National Park, the Colorado River flows past some of the world's most stunning canyon landscapes with names such as Fisher Towers, the Priest and Nuns, and Castle Rock. Of special note is Westwater Canyon, one of the most scenic and pristine river reaches in the West. The oldest exposed rock in Utah forms Westwater's dramatic inner canyon. This extremely hard rock narrows the river canyon, resulting in rapids of international reputation.

Importance to People & Nature
The Colorado River has shaped the landscape of eastern Utah as well as the human communities of the region. The river system is vital for agriculture and for the local tourist economy, boasting unparalleled recreational opportunities. Visitors from all over the world consider this river segment one of the most scenic resources in the United States. From Westwater to Moab, the Colorado River Corridor draws more than one half million people every year. The river corridor also sustains rare native wildlife and scarce plant communities including seven imperiled fish species endemic to the Upper Colorado River basin, cottonwood and willow riparian forests, Mexican spotted owls, peregrine falcons, desert bighorn sheep and bald eagles.

The Need for Action
Rural Utah communities dependent on the adjacent lands and healthy waters of the Colorado River face an unknown future from record drought and the realities of land uses such as recreation, mining, and grazing. With the Moab area growing in popularity as a second-home site and with the tourism industry booming, the urgency to protect the integrity of the Corridor landscapes is very real. The Colorado River from the Utah/Colorado border to Canyonlands National Park is one of the most important river reaches in the Colorado River Basin in terms of imperiled species and yet it is the only significant stretch on the Colorado Plateau that remains unprotected by federal designation.

Colorado River Corridor Recommendations:
The Conservancy believes the Colorado River Corridor is deserving of additional protection to permanently safeguard the scenic, biological, and recreational values of over 100 miles of river. Success in the Colorado River Corridor would mean a new future for the last significant unprotected stretch of the Colorado River by creating a continuous protected river corridor from the Grand Valley in Colorado to the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Our recommendations for the Colorado River Corridor include:

- National Conservation Area, Wild and Scenic River, or similar designation or combination of designations for lands and waters managed by the BLM from the Utah/Colorado state line to Canyonlands National Park.

- Wilderness designation for approximately 32,000 acres surrounding Westwater Canyon.

- Wilderness designation in the vicinity of Mill Creek, Negro Bill Canyon, Behind the Rocks, and Beaver Creek per Grand County's 1999 Wilderness Plan and BLM's Moab Field Office Resource Management Plan.

- Exchange of all SITLA surface parcels and mineral rights (with BLM) within the specially-designated areas not already included in the Utah Recreational Land Exchange Act of 2009. Further, the Conservancy recommends that the proposed legislation not result in new acquisition by SITLA of lands within the specially-designated areas.

Priority Landscape #4 – San Juan River Basin

Overview
The San Juan River, as it incises through the heart of the Colorado Plateau, evokes wonder, splendor and solitude like few places on Earth. The river's serenity offers visitors from all over the world a chance to relax and enjoy the natural wonders of Utah's red rock desert.

Importance to People & Nature
The San Juan River Basin has a long and rich human heritage. This is the rugged landscape that in 1879 challenged early Mormon settlers as they sought to establish new communities in southeast Utah. More recent communities of Bluff, Blanding, and Monticello have sustained themselves with remarkable self-reliance by depending on the wide diversity of natural resources. The river is a continual source of water in an arid region, a lifeblood for the quality of life and economy of people who live along its route.

The lands and waters of the San Juan River basin also harbor rich biological diversity, including endangered fish species, Southwest willow flycatcher, and Utah's only population of Gunnison sage-grouse. Lowland riparian areas represent less than 0.2% of the total area of Utah, rivers and streams less than 0.1%, but these systems support a significant portion of Utah's native species. This is the case for the San Juan River's riparian woodlands, an aquatic ribbon of life through a harsh but beautiful landscape.

Need for Action
Like many rivers in the West, the San Juan faces increasing impacts from pollution, water diversions and invasive species such as tamarisk and Russian olive. A healthy river and a healthy economy go hand in hand. With strategic protection now, communities along the San Juan, and all Utahns, will reap the benefits of a healthy, resilient river, which can continue to support local livelihoods, a recreation-based economy and a haven for endangered species.

San Juan River Basin Recommendations:
For the San Juan River basin the Conservancy suggests a combination of federal land and water designations and SITLA/BLM land exchanges in key areas that benefit the most imperiled wildlife species and enhance favorite recreational opportunities. Our recommendations for the San Juan River Basin include:

- Wild and Scenic River or similar designation for the San Juan River downstream of the town of Bluff.

- Wilderness designations or similar designation for Grand Gulch, Road and Fish Canyons.

- Transfer of two SITLA parcels within the core occupied habitat for Gunnison sage-grouse to Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to strengthen the case against listing for the San Juan County population by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

- Exchange of all SITLA mineral rights (with BLM) within the core occupied habitat for Gunnison sage-grouse to strengthen the case against listing for the San Juan County population by the USFWS.

- Exchange of all SITLA surface parcels and mineral rights (with BLM) within the specially-designated areas. Further, the Conservancy recommends that the proposed legislation not result in new acquisition by SITLA of lands within the specially-designated areas.

Priority Landscapes Conclusion

In conclusion, these four landscapes and suggested federal actions represent priorities for the Conservancy, based upon our long standing history of protecting plants, animals and natural communities by conserving the lands and waters important to nature and people. We recognize that in any federal legislation process, the exact boundaries of these designations will need additional thought, discussion, and refinement. Further, while the priority landscapes listed above focus on Utah's outstanding ecological features, the Conservancy is well aware of eastern Utah's cultural and archeological resources. Though cultural resource conservation is outside our area of focus, the Conservancy will support measures and designations which serve the twin goals of protecting archeological sites and ecological features at priority locations. One such designation would be a National Historic Trail or similar designation for the Hole-in-the-Rock Trail from Lake Powell to Bluff.

Priority Programs

Adopting specific land management protections within the landscapes described above is desirable, but so is the notion of properly mitigating ongoing energy development in the Uinta Basin and other energy-rich areas in eastern Utah. At this time, mitigation programs are not well coordinated and do not take into account the cumulative inpacts of energy development in the Uinta Basin as a whole. To the extent eastern Utah development provisions are included in the anticipated legislation, as they were in the Washington County Growth and Conservation Act, the following programs should be authorized and funded as well:

1. **Energy By Design** – Energy by Design (EBD) is a computer-modeling framework developed by the Conservancy in Wyoming, and now used globally, which seeks to achieve "no net loss" of sensitive wildlife habitat or plant species within energy development regions. Data sets are collected on natural features and wildlife (e.g.

sage-grouse strutting grounds, migration corridors, riparian areas etc.) and overlaid upon energy resources. Through a computer modeling analysis, recommendations result on how to avoid, minimize and/or offset the effects of energy development. A pilot EBD project has been completed with QEP Resources for a small portion of the Uinta Basin. The legislation proposed should require an EBD analysis for the entire Uinta Basin and other areas where energy potential is high. Again, the primary goal in using this modeling process is to achieve no net loss of biodiversity through avoidance, minimizing, and/or offsets.

2. **Utah Conservation Trust Fund –** Once an EBD analysis is completed, it will likely be evident that significant offsets are needed for energy development in eastern Utah. In Wyoming, faced with a similar situation, the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust was created with a +/- $50 million contribution from energy companies. Similarly, the legislation proposed should create a Utah Conservation Trust Fund (UCTF) in an amount at least similar to Wyoming's and likely considerably more. UCTF could be funded through contributions from energy companies, a small increase in royalty taxes and/or the sale of non-ecologically significant BLM land or mineral rights to the State or private interests. The Fund could be administered by a new commission similar to the Utah Reclamation, Mitigation and Conservation Commission (URMCC) - which was established to mitigate the impacts of the Central Utah Project - or could be transferred for management to URMCC itself. Another potential manager/recipient is the State sponsored Utah Quality Growth Commission.

3. **Eastern Utah Community Impact Fund** – Knowing that energy development also causes significant social and community impacts as well as environmental concerns, the Conservancy would also support the establishment of an Eastern Utah Community Impact Fund (EUCIF) modeled after the Conservation Trust Fund described above.

4. **Eastern Utah Natural Heritage Sites –** Because the goal of EBD is no net loss of sensitive wildlife habitat or plant species, legislated provisions are also needed to inventory and protect the several small sites in eastern Utah which support imperiled and endangered wildflower species. The Conservancy recommends that legislation authorize the establishment of relatively small "Natural Heritage Sites" to protect these areas as well as key habitat for the Greater Sage-grouse.

Stakeholder Process Design

The Conservancy is aware of recommendations made by other conservation groups calling for a facilitated stakeholder process to help develop legislation. We would be willing to participate in such a process if it is implemented. This said, with or without a formal process, we are still interested in providing input and comments on proposed legislation. In this regard, we also have the following observations/requests:

1. **Congressional Delegation Involvement –** Any stakeholder process must have your full involvement and participation along with interested members of the Utah Delegation. A process which is conducted independently from your involvement

and/or does not have the support of the Utah Delegation is not likely to be successful.

2. **Early Disclosure of Development Provisions –** We assume that, whatever its geographic scope, the legislation you are considering would be based on the model of prior public lands bills in Nevada and the Washington County Growth and Conservation Act here in Utah. As you may know, the Conservancy worked closely with Senator Bennett, the Washington County Commission, and others to advance this measure. Accordingly, rather than a "pure wilderness bill," we assume the measure you envision sponsoring would seek to balance "conservation provisions" and designations with "development provisions" requested by county governments and industry. Again, assuming this is the case, it is vital that the "development provisions" requested by the counties and others be shared openly at the outset, and at the same time as the "conservation provisions". The reason is simple: If the "development provisions" requested are viewed by the conservation community as extreme and unacceptable – and vice versa, this applies to how the conservation provisions are viewed by the counties/industry as well – the chance for consensus may appear a long ways off, and thus not a good use of your time nor of ours.

3. **Early Disclosure of Land Tenure Provisions –** Similar to #2 above, it would be helpful to know early on if you envision the large-scale transfer of federal lands to state ownership, as envisioned by Governor Herbert and the Utah Legislature (HB 148), to be an important component of the legislation you are considering.

Other Congressional Priorities

While working towards a successful lands bill "sequel" to the Washington County Growth and Conservation Act, it is worth mentioning the Conservancy's interest in several other areas where your leadership has been, and could be, key (a partial list):

1. **Colorado River Endangered Fishes Recovery Programs –** Thank you for your support of these initiatives, also strongly supported by water users, which have resulted in significant habitat and conservation gains for the Colorado River and its tributaries.

2. **Federal Lands Management Facilitation Act (FLMFA)** – Your support of renewing this legislation, which currently has lapsed, is much appreciated. If re-authorized, it is conceivable FLMFA could play a role in supporting conservation goals for the landscapes described above.

3. **Department of Agriculture Conservation Provisions –** Though outside of your committee, we would appreciate your support as a member of the Western Caucus for conservation provisions in the Farm Bill, such as the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program and the Grassland Reserve Program, which help ranchers and farmers. This would apply as well to the NRCS and its efforts to create dedicated funding for a new NRCS Initiative committed to the Colorado River Basin.

Note on Conservancy Staff

While several of our staff will be involved in any stakeholder based process you may plan to sponsor, I would like to highlight the participation of Chris Montague, Director of Conservation Programs; Joel Tuhy, Utah Science Director; Sue Bellagamba, Canyonlands Regional Director; Joan Degiorgio, Northern Mountains Regional Director; and Dr. Barry Baker, Canyonlands Research Center Director.

The Conservancy's lead on federal land designations and county lands bills is Sue Bellagamba. Sue would be happy to meet with you and discuss our priorities. She can be reached as follows:

Sue Bellagamba
TNC Moab Project Office
P.O. Box 1329
Moab, UT 84532
435-259-2551
sbellagamba@tnc.org

Physical address for packages:
820 West Kane Creek Blvd
Moab, UT 84532

Summary

Utah is one of our nation's most scenic and biologically rich states. It is also a popular tourist destination with historic local communities seeking a brighter future. Building on the success of past wilderness and land legislation such as the Washington County Growth and Conservation Act of 2009, the Conservancy hopes similar legislative initiatives can address both growth and conservation needs in eastern Utah. The conservation of Utah's natural and human heritage will depend on multiple stakeholders working cooperatively. The Nature Conservancy looks forward to being part of this process and is pleased to offer the initial recommendations described here.

Sincerely,

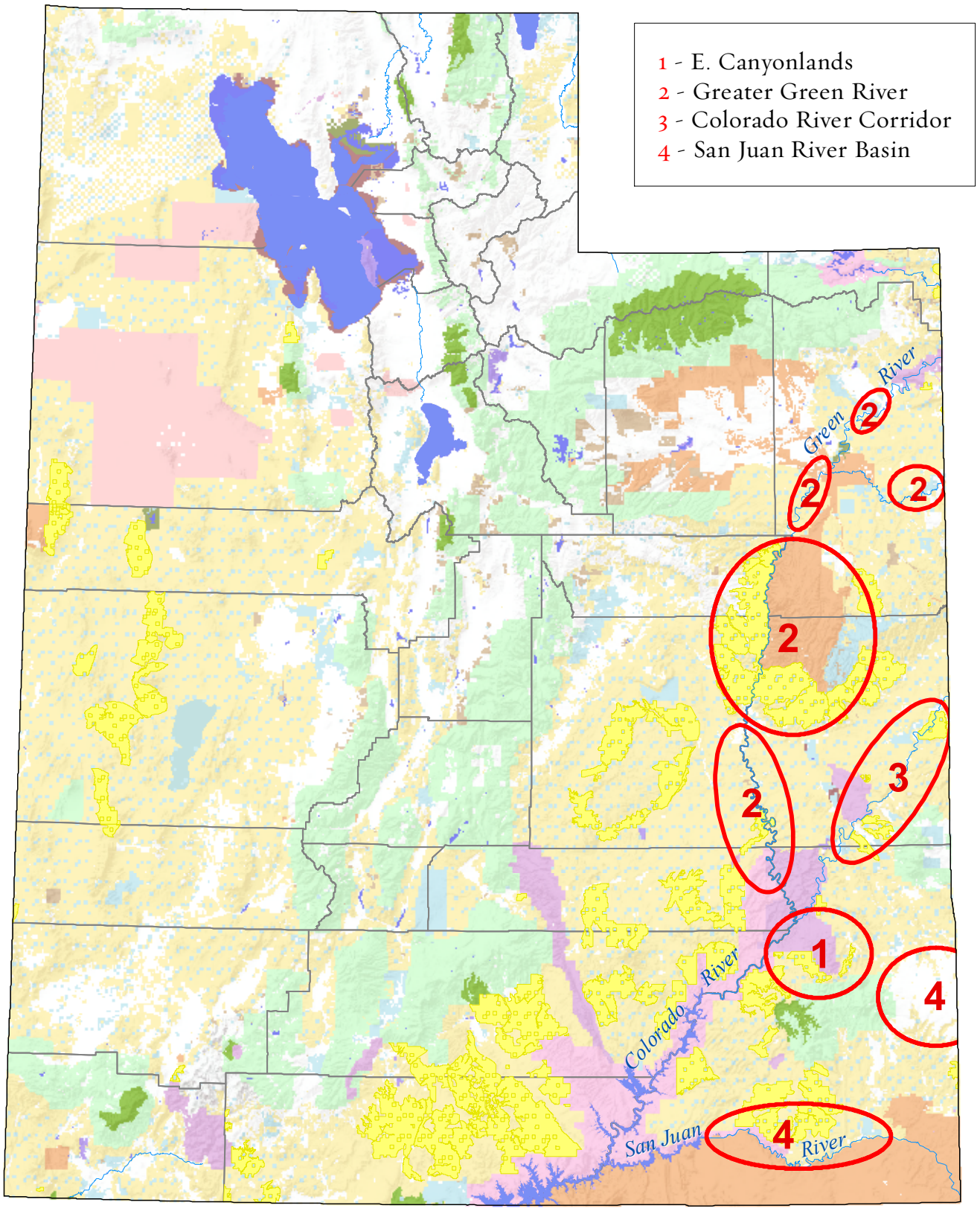
Dave Livermore
Utah State Director

cc: Governor Gary Herbert, Congressman Jim Matheson, Congressman Jason Chaffetz, Congressman Chris Stewart, Utah Chapter Board Executive Committee

att: Map of Priority Landscapes
Canyonlands Research Center brochure
Photographs

The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

Eastern Utah Priorities (Draft 03/22/2013)



March 2013

BLM Wilderness Study Areas

Canyonlands Research Center


photo: Ted Wood

The Colorado Plateau, America's canyonlands region, is home to world-class natural treasures that support and attract millions of people.

Today, unprecedented human demands coupled with rising temperatures and prolonged droughts are impacting the lands, waters and communities of this region.

The Canyonlands Research Center brings together scientists, public land managers and local land users to develop science-based solutions that will protect resources and preserve the Plateau's unique quality of life.

What's at Stake

Spanning 76,000 square miles across portions of Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado, the Colorado Plateau is becoming one of our country's most popular and conflicted regions – a coveted remnant of American wilderness, a hotbed of growing human pressures and a home for unique species. Boasting some of the country's most popular national parks and a pathway for the West's largest river, the Colorado Plateau influences the health, economy and quality of life of millions of Americans. Utah's portion of the Colorado Plateau, including San Juan County, supports a rich and proud heritage of people connecting to and living off the land. The Colorado Plateau still supports traditional ways of life, as well as attracting millions of tourists and recreationalists from around the world.

The Challenge

Decades of change and use are taking their toll on the lands and waters of this special region. Invasive plants and animals as well as intense and sometimes inappropriate recreation, development and grazing are disrupting ecosystems, threatening water sources and devastating native species. As scientists predict rising temperatures and more severe droughts for this area, communities, public land managers and policy-makers are searching for practical and realistic solutions to sustain the resources and wonders of the Colorado Plateau.

Pressure on the West

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, the American West has warmed 70 percent more than the planet as a whole. The West's most pronounced temperature increase is in the Colorado River Basin, which has warmed more than twice as much as the global average.

Higher temperatures, combined with prolonged droughts, will reduce soil moisture causing a decrease in plant cover and soil stability on lands that are already compromised by activities such as grazing and recreation. Loose soils lead to more wind-deposited dust on western snowpacks, accelerating snowmelt and decreasing runoff—threatening the quality and quantity of Colorado River water. Decreased soil moisture will also lead to a loss of native vegetation and wildlife habitat, as well as an explosion of invasive species such as cheatgrass.

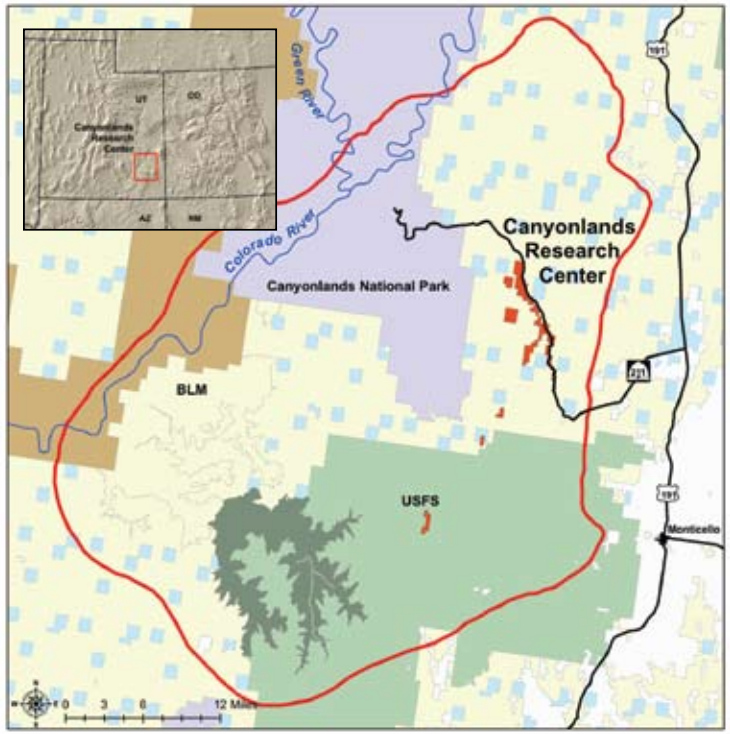
photo: ©Ted Wood

Hope & Action

The Canyonlands Research Center is a new collaborative effort to develop science-based strategies that will help people better live on and manage the natural resources of the Colorado Plateau. Backed by powerful private and public partners and situated in an ideal location for land and climate research, the Center is uniquely positioned to bring together scientists, land managers and land users to confront the region's most pressing land and water challenges.

What Makes this Center Work?

• **Ideal Location & Facilities:** With The Nature Conservancy's Dugout Ranch at its core, the Canyonlands Research Center site spans lands managed by the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Canyonlands National Park, giving scientists the opportunity to study wide gradients of elevation, ecology and land-use histories. The Center is also situated along the boundary of the Southwestern monsoon climate zone, making it particularly sensitive to climatic variation. A newly constructed field station now provides scientists a year-round space to live, study and collaborate. Future construction phases will expand the field station's capacity and capabilities.



• **Powerful Partnerships:** The Center is formed by a suite of diverse partners who support the importance of its mission and research. Founding partners and participating organizations include: The Nature Conservancy, Utah State University, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Indian Creek Cattle Company, as well as University of Colorado, NOAA, and NASA.

science that improves lives

photo: ©Ted Wood

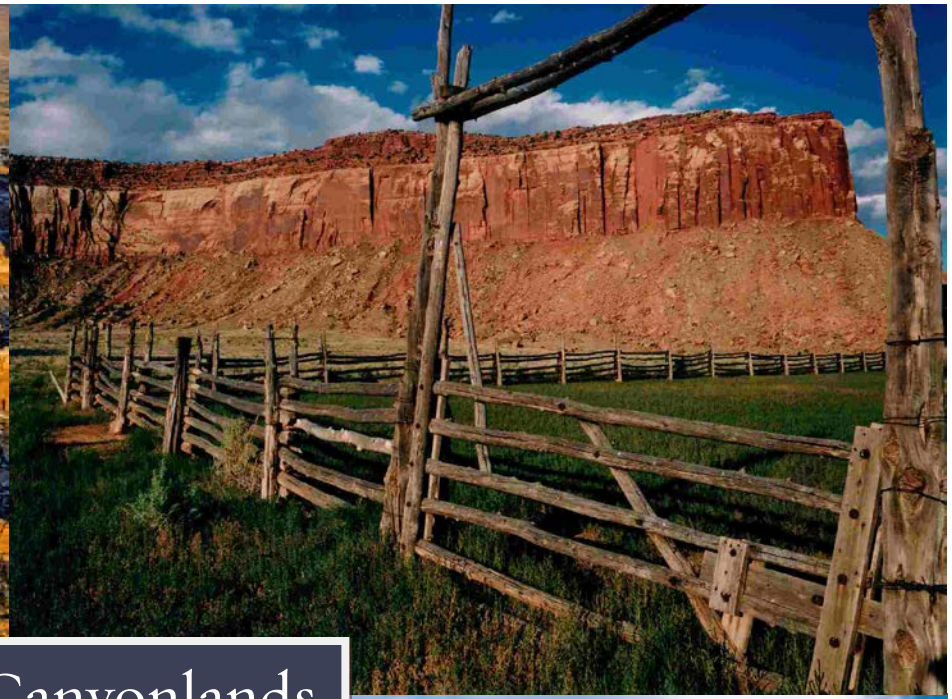
Guided by a diverse group of stakeholders and partners, the Canyonlands Research Center pursues science that translates into practical solutions to help sustain the region's human and natural communities. Current efforts underway include research projects on water quality, snowpack and dust, sustainable grazing, carbon sequestration, recreation impacts and endangered species.

"There's always been research going on at the Dugout Ranch, but never before have we been able to apply that to our daily lives, as we work cattle and manage land. So to be working hand in hand now with the scientists, being able to tell them what changes we're seeing on the land, them telling us what they're finding, and maybe together, finding some remedies... it's just so exciting to me."

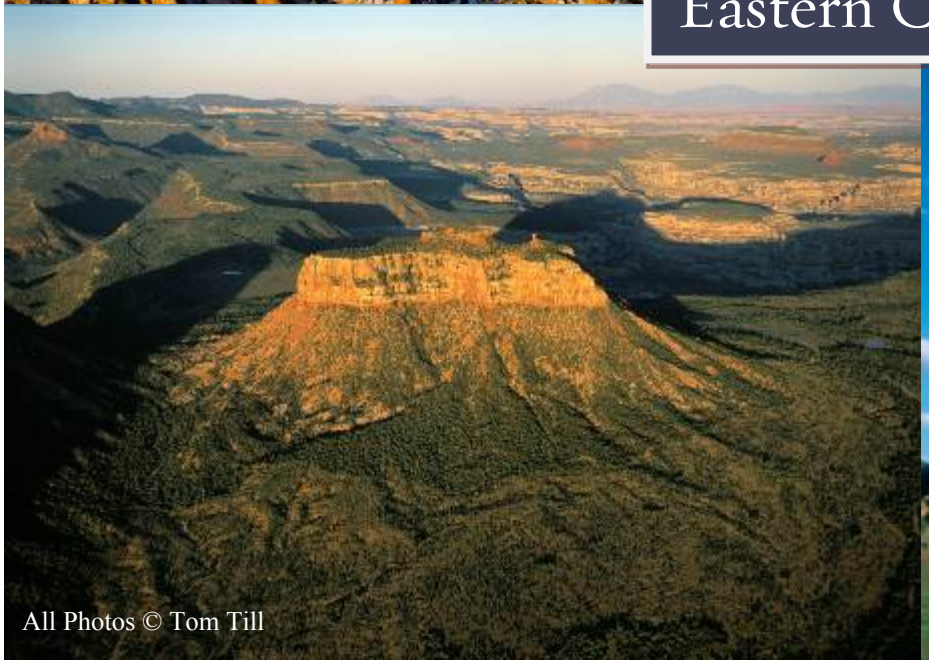
—Heidi Redd, Indian Creek Cattle Company

Learn More

Barry Baker, PhD
Director, Canyonlands Research Center
The Nature Conservancy
(435) 259-4183
bbaker@tnc.org



Eastern Canyonlands



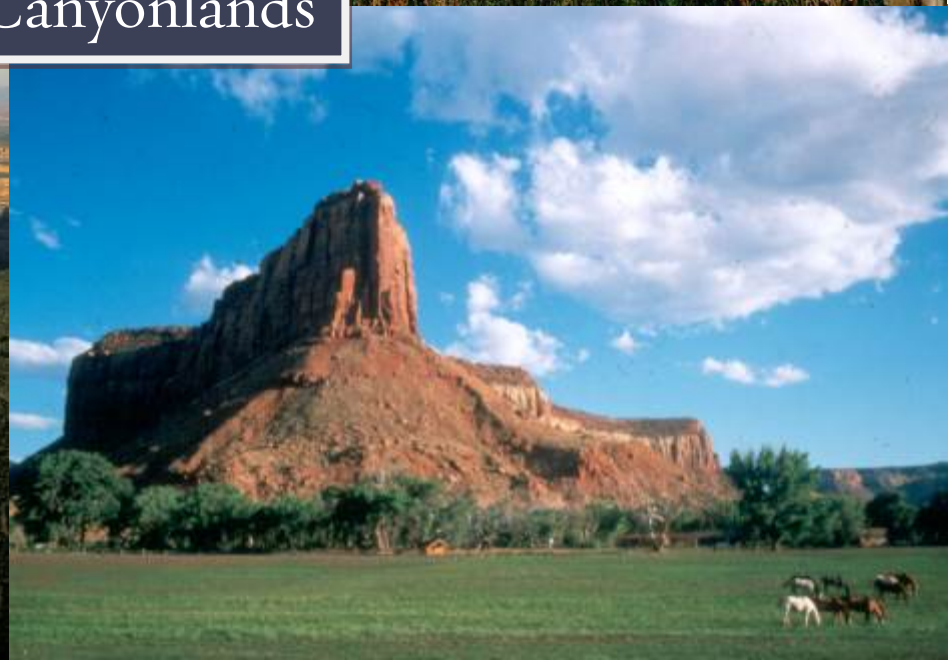



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Photo © Brent Stettler

Greater Green River


Photo © James Kay

Colorado River Corridor

Photo © Paul Berquist

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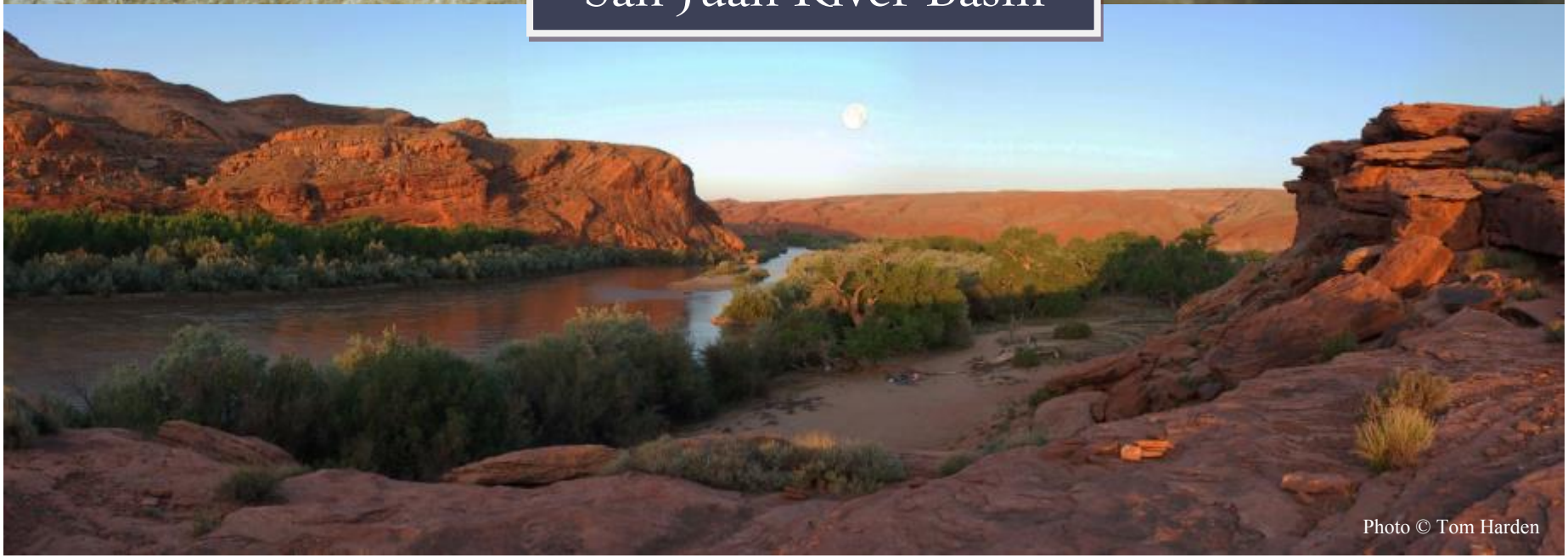
Photo © Lance Beeny

San Juan River Basin



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