

RESOLUTION # 2015-33

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF RIO BLANCO COUNTY,
COLORADO OPPOSING THE COLORADO
WILDERNESS ACT OF 2015 (H.R. 3336) AND
CALLING ON CONGRESS TO RELEASE ALL
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS IN COLORADO

Whereas, the Colorado Wilderness Act of 2015 (H.R. 3336) (the "Wilderness Act") has been introduced into Congress as the latest annual attempt to create Wilderness Areas without the participation or endorsement of the communities in which the areas are located; and

Whereas, the Wilderness Act has been introduced by a Congressional Representative who does not reside in or represent the congressional districts that would be most impacted by this proposed legislation; and

Whereas, motorized and mechanized recreation are prohibited within Wilderness Areas; and

Whereas, motorized and mechanized recreation are areas of important and steady economic growth throughout Colorado and specifically in Rio Blanco County; and

Whereas, the Wilderness Act will close off approximately 715,000 acres across Colorado to all mechanized use, such as mountain bikes, chainsaws, ATV's/OHV's, snowmobiles, and motorcycles; and

Whereas, Colorado will face a potential firestorm with the tremendous buildup of natural fuels due to unprecedented beetle kill and the inability to lower fuel loads by mechanized thinning under Wilderness designation; and

Whereas, the Wilderness Act would place undue hardship on anyone who cannot walk or ride horseback to enjoy these areas of Colorado, such as the physically disabled or elderly, and would seem to violate the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act, if not the letter of the law; and

Whereas, Wilderness designation would place undue hardship on livestock growers trying to maintain fences and water resources within the Wilderness Areas; and

Whereas, once designated a Wilderness Area, an act of Congress is needed to take the area out of Wilderness; and

Whereas, the numerous "Wilderness Study Areas" identified within the Wilderness Act have been inventoried as such over the past several decades, are mandated to be managed as de facto Wilderness Areas, and can only be released from this designation by an act of Congress; and

Whereas, Rio Blanco County has acted in good faith through various memoranda of understanding and as a cooperating agency, as a partner in land use planning with the Bureau of Land Management, the U. S. Forest Service and other agencies regarding the long-term protection and management of special areas worthy of unique management; and

Whereas, Rio Blanco County intends to continue to coordinate cooperatively with the Bureau of Land Management, the U. S. Forest Service and other agencies on land management issues.

NOW, THEREFORE the Board of County Commissioners of Rio Blanco County, Colorado finds that:

1. The Colorado Wilderness Act of 2015 (HB 3336) is not in the best interest of the citizens of Rio Blanco County and the State of Colorado, and it would cause undue economic hardship on the surrounding communities.

2. Congress should release all Wilderness Study Areas in Rio Blanco County from such designation to allow for true multiple use of those lands that are unduly restricted from appropriate use as Wilderness Study Areas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Rio Blanco County, Colorado:

1. Stands opposed to the Colorado Wilderness Act of 2015 (HB 3336) in its current form; and
2. Further calls upon the Colorado Congressional delegation to introduce legislation to release all Wilderness Study Areas within Rio Blanco County from such designation.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 12 day of October 2015.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RIO BLANCO COUNTY, COLORADO

By: _____
Jeffrey D. Eskelson, Chairman

By: _____
Shawn J. Bolton, Commissioner

By: Jon D. Hill
Jon D. Hill, Commissioner



ATTEST:

Boots M. Campbell
Boots M. Campbell
Rio Blanco County Clerk