



Board of County Commissioners

970-328-8605

970-328-8629(f)

eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us

www.eaglecounty.us

February 17, 2023

Greg Larson, District Manager
BLM Upper Colorado River District
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

Re: Conservation of public lands in Eagle County in the Colorado River Valley Field Office and Grand Junction Field Office Supplemental EIS (DOI-BLM-CO-G020-2022-0001-RMP-EIS)

Dear Mr. Larson,

As you know, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently revising portions of the Resource Management Plan for public lands in Eagle County through the Colorado River Valley Field Office and Grand Junction Field Office Supplemental EIS (SEIS). Eagle County is a cooperator in the planning process and submitted scoping comments. This letter is intended to supplement those comments. While the SEIS is primarily focused on oil and gas allocations and climate impacts, we urge BLM to use this important land use planning opportunity to also analyze and consider land conservation designations and protections more broadly. Our public lands are facing unprecedented stresses from climate change, habitat loss, drought and increased visitation and recreational pressures, and strengthening conservation in the SEIS can be a form of mitigation to the negative impacts from oil and gas development allowed elsewhere in the planning area. As a cooperator, we believe our residents and stakeholders, and the public at large, deserve the opportunity to comment on alternatives that go beyond oil and gas allocations and contemplate additional conservation measures.

Conservation of our public lands is increasingly important to the residents and visitors of Eagle County. Protection of wildlands benefits wildlife, provides for more sustainable recreation and mitigates the impacts of climate change. Because Eagle County is home to so many federal public lands, the County relies on our federal land manager partners to manage for the integrity of these wildlands habitats and watersheds, using legislative and administrative designations and other tools at their disposal. While congressionally designated areas such as the Holy Cross and Eagle's Nest Wilderness areas are popular and cherished places, the County also benefits from lesser-known administrative management tools such as Colorado Roadless Rule areas on our national forests and BLM's wilderness study areas (WSAs), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Special Recreation Management Areas and managed Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC). These administrative tools provide durable protections and focused management to protect critical resources.



Board of County Commissioners

970-328-8605

970-328-8629(f)

eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us

www.eaglecounty.us

Eagle County commends the BLM as it seeks to increase conservation emphasis and balance management in furtherance of its important “multiple use and sustained yield” mission. We urge the BLM to utilize the opportunity of the SEIS to make progress on these important, aspirational goals and use its existing statutory authorities to consider additional conservation designations such as new or expanded ACECs, WSAs and increased management protections for LWC lands. As a cooperating agency, Eagle County appreciates the dialogue with BLM on how to make mutually beneficial progress in this and other planning processes.

Sincerely,

Kathy Chandler-Henry

Chair

Matt Scherr

Commissioner

Jeanne McQueeney

Commissioner