

Resolution 2015 - 05

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SAN JUAN COUNTY, COLORADO, PUBLICLY STATING THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LANDS TO THE COUNTY'S ECONOMY, RECREATION, HERITAGE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE, AND OPPOSING ANY EFFORT TO CLAIM, TAKE OVER, LITIGATE FOR, OR SELL OFF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS WITHIN SAN JUAN COUNTY AND THE STATE OF COLORADO

WHEREAS, San Juan County includes a unique wealth of scenic and wild natural landscapes, including mountains, rivers, forests, lakes, basins and plateaus; and

WHEREAS, most such landscapes within the county are public lands owned equally by all Americans; and

WHEREAS, public lands under the management of the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management comprise approximately 87% of the land surface of San Juan County; and

WHEREAS, these federally administered public lands are essential to the quality of life in San Juan County, providing extensive public recreational opportunities for wildlife watching, hiking, hunting, fishing, backpacking, horseback riding, skiing, bicycling, sightseeing, and numerous other outdoor recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, these same federally administered public lands provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, fish and wildlife and the exceptionally scenic landscapes of San Juan County's federal public lands attract the outdoor recreation and tourism that are the dominant drivers of San Juan County's thriving tourist economy; and

WHEREAS, the unified, deeply experienced, and consistent management of federally administered public lands by the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management across the nation best protects the national value and utility of the public lands for all Americans and the values on which the economy in San Juan County are dependent; and

WHEREAS, San Juan County business owners attract employees in large part because of the iconic landscape and recreational opportunities on federal public lands; and

WHEREAS, there is a broad consensus in San Juan County that management of our federal public lands and wildlife via long-established collaborative approaches in which federal public land management agencies cooperate with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, San Juan County officials, and the community are far more likely to produce effective landscape-wide management than would ownership or management of federal public lands by the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, San Juan County residents are actively collaborating among diverse interests and with public land managers to improve public land management and public access (witness for example the broad-based coalition that forged the successful Hermosa Creek Wilderness legislation); and

WHEREAS, federal public land management agencies employ residents of San Juan County who are passionate and expert at their jobs, despite lack of adequate federal funding, pay taxes, and contribute to our community; and

WHEREAS, Americans from throughout the country value these public lands as a part of our national heritage and as our inalienable birthright as Americans; and

WHEREAS, owing to ongoing drought and insect infestations, forests in San Juan County are increasingly prone to wildfire, including periodic large-scale fires; and

WHEREAS, federal money and expertise to suppress wildfires is essential to protecting our communities, infrastructure, and public lands.

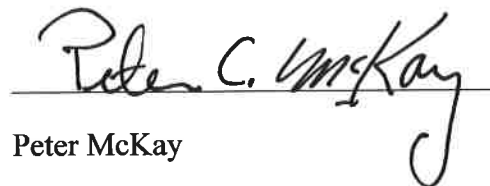
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of San Juan County, Colorado, opposes any effort to claim, take over, litigate for, or sell off federal public lands within San Juan County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of San Juan County, Colorado strongly supports continued federal land ownership and management in San Juan County, and the irreplaceable value these public lands bring to our county's economy, recreation, heritage, and quality of life.

READ, PASSED AND ADOPTED this 22nd day of April, 2015 by the Board of County Commissioners of San Juan County, Colorado.




Ernest Kuhlman, Chairman



Peter McKay

Attest:



Ladonna L. Jaramillo, Clerk & Recorder



Scott Fetchenhier