



America's Red Rock Wilderness Act – *Frequently Asked Questions*

Why doesn't the Utah delegation support America's Red Rock Wilderness Act?

- The first Utah wilderness bill was championed by a Utah Rep. The original version of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act was first introduced by Utah Congressman Wayne Owens in 1989 (the 101st Congress). The legislation was then passed on to Congressman Hinchey in the House when Rep. Owens retired.
- Public polling show statewide support for 9 million acre wilderness. A polling firm, Dan Jones and Associates, surveyed 410 Utah residents in October 1999 about wilderness issues and found residents strongly supported protecting Utah's wild desert lands.
 - 54 % of the respondents supported protecting 9 million acres as proposed America's Red Rock Wilderness Act.
 - 31% of respondents supported a proposal by the Utah delegation at the time that would have preserved only 2 million acres.
 - 8% wanted something between 9 million and 2 million acres of wilderness.
- Vast majority of Utahns support designating BLM lands as wilderness. Another statewide pole on Utah Wilderness issues conducted in 1997 by Wirthlin Worldwide, found that "Utah residents overwhelmingly feel that preservation of Utah's wilderness lands is very important... Seven in ten Utah residents **favor** designating undeveloped BLM lands as wilderness areas – four in ten **strongly** supported taking this action."
- Public polling show statewide support wilderness and concern over management of off-road vehicle use. Support for preserving Utah wilderness is strong throughout the state and across the country. A polling firm, Dan Jones and Associates surveyed 400 Utah residents in 2005 about wilderness and ORV issues and found residents strongly supported protecting Utah's wild desert lands.
 - 89 % of the respondents valued the serene environment of Southern Utah's wilderness areas, and over half of the respondents confirmed that it is important to them to keep all of Utah's remaining undeveloped lands in their wilderness state.
 - Nearly three-fourths of those interviewed (72%) confirm that they are very concerned or somewhat concerned about the impact of ORV use in Southern Utah's wilderness areas.
- Utah delegation supports wilderness – but still less than UWC proposal. It's not true that the Utah delegation opposes all wilderness. While it is true that we've seen them propose bad Utah wilderness legislation, even the most conservative members of the Utah delegation recognize that Utah has an abundance of wilderness. Though not a good bill by any stretch of imagination, the Utah delegation (including Hatch and Bennett) pushed a bill for 1.8 million acres of

wilderness in 1995. And over the last 9 years we've worked with the Utah delegation in protecting nearly 300,000 acres of wilderness quality land in the Cedar Mountains wilderness and Washington County's Zion-Mojave wilderness.

- Over the years, the Utah delegation has come to recognize more wilderness. In the early days (1970s and 80s) opponents of Utah wilderness swore that there would be "no more wilderness in Utah." Today, no one in the Utah delegation has such an extreme view. Local officials arguing against all wilderness are seen as very out of the main stream.

What about Congressman Matheson (D-UT-2)... most of these lands are in his district, does he care if other Members cosponsor?

- Members can contact Matheson. If an office wants to know what Congressman Matheson or other members of the delegation feel, you can say that we can't speak for them. Though the office can call Rep. Matheson, the office should also know that we've discussed this issue with Rep. Matheson over many years and he will not be surprised to hear that the bill has been introduced again.
- Matheson hears plenty of constituent support for wilderness. Matheson's district covers many millions of acres proposed for wilderness in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. SUWA members, constituents, and Utah wilderness supporters in his district actively voice their support for wilderness in the district.
- We do know that Rep. Matheson has told activists and other Members of Congress that it is of utmost importance that lands that are protected for their wilderness character have been officially reviewed and determined to have wilderness values by BLM itself, which is now the case with nearly 80% of the Red Rock bill (with most of the remaining lands still requiring thorough review).

What are the chances of passing America's Red Rock Wilderness Act in the 111th Congress?

- With the expanded Democratic majority in Congress, our chances are the best they've been in over a decade. Returning and new pro-wilderness Members of Congress are in position to move legislation that protects Utah wilderness. At the very least for the 111th Congress, our Utah wilderness champions have been discussing the possibility of Congressional hearings on this legislation in the relevant committees, and more Congressional support makes that important first step to a bill's movement even more likely.
- Cosponsors are important if Utah wilderness faces attack in Congress. Should legislation be introduced that proposed bad Utah wilderness or would otherwise threaten these lands, America's Red Rock Wilderness Act stands as the benchmark for Utah wilderness legislation that other proposals must measure up against. Those that fall well short of the kind of protection called for in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act need to be improved or defeated.
- Cosponsors reaffirms the national importance of America's Red Rock Wilderness, providing support for actions by the Obama administration to develop stronger management policy: By gaining support from Members of

Congress from throughout the country, we demonstrate that protecting wild Utah is indeed a national issue that deserves national attention. These supporters can then work together to urge the Obama administration's Interior Department to fix some of the policies, regulations, and guidelines that prevented wilderness-quality lands from receiving protection under President Bush, and to proactively pursue that protection from the administrative level. This is an important compliment to our legislative goals.

What progress has been made on Utah wilderness since this legislation was first introduced?

- Cosponsors numbers have grown since original. When Representative Wayne Owens first introduced America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, the legislation had 106 cosponsors. In the 110th Congress, cosponsor numbers grew to 161. America's Red Rock Wilderness Act has cosponsors from 36 of the 50 states across America.
- Legislative proposal has grown from 5.7 million acres of Utah wilderness to 9.5 million acres. As new inventory work has been conducted and additional mapping information has been produced, America's Red Rock Wilderness Act has been updated to reflect the latest finding on Utah wilderness.
- Utah wilderness supporters beat back anti-wilderness legislation in 104th and 109th and 110th Congress. In the 104th Congress (1995-1996), Utah Senator Hatch and Rep. Hansen launched an all out assault on Utah wilderness with anti-wilderness legislation that would have designated less than 2 million acres of wilderness through the state. Senator Bill Bradley led a heroic and successful filibuster against the legislation. In 2006 and also last year, our Senate champions helped stop a wilderness bill for Washington County, Utah, that was short on wilderness but long on the sell-off of valuable public land. Having survived these threats, Utah wilderness continues to stand as one of the nation's greatest public lands priorities.
- Incremental and regional public lands bills for Utah have been influenced by America's Red Rock Wilderness. Since 2004, we've seen three bills from members of the Utah delegation that have helped advance Utah wilderness. One was the Cedar Mountains bill introduced by Rep. Bishop which in 2005 designated nearly 100,000 acres of Utah wilderness in the west desert near Salt Lake City. Bishop's maps followed closely the boundaries set in America's Red Rock Wilderness Act. Similarly, since 2004, both Senator Bennett and Rep. Matheson have introduced lands exchange legislation along the Colorado River near Moab that benefits Utah wilderness by granting the BLM ownership of lands in proposed wilderness that currently owned by the State of Utah – perennially under threat of sale or development by the State. Importantly the land exchange legislation seeks to provide BLM ownership of lands both in congressionally-protected wilderness study areas and lands the Utah Wilderness Coalition have recommended for protection. And finally, support for the Red Rock bill in Congress played the vital role of stopping bad versions of Washington County legislation and eventually creating strong and lasting

protections for vulnerable areas in the Red Rock bill in the version that passed Congress earlier this year. Now, several local communities around the state are looking at possibilities to reach agreement over wilderness designations.

What is different about this legislation compared with the version introduced in the 110th Congress?

- Nothing, at the moment. The acreage of the bill is still roughly 9.4 million. Now that the Washington County Wilderness Bill has passed, our sponsors will soon amend the Red Rock legislation to remove the protected lands in that smaller bill. While doing that, they will make a few other changes to reflect a small amount of wilderness quality land that has been lost specifically because of intrusion by oil and gas development over the last two years.
- Core proposal still the same. The core of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act remains the same. It still proposes to designate wilderness for BLM public lands in Utah. The areas for protection are:
 - Great Basin Wilderness Areas ~ 2,240,827 acres
 - Zion/Mojave Desert Wilderness Areas ~ 160,000 acres
 - Grand Staircase-Escalante Wilderness Areas ~ 1,771,717
 - Moab-LaSal Canyons Wilderness Areas ~ 256,815 acres
 - Henry Mountains Wilderness Areas ~ 444,204 acres
 - Glen Canyon Wilderness Areas ~ 906,446 acres
 - San Juan-Anasazi Wilderness Areas ~ 520,606 acres
 - Canyonlands Basin Wilderness Areas ~ 689,884 acres
 - San Rafael Swell Wilderness Areas ~ 1,098,773 acres
 - Book Cliffs/Uinta Basin Wilderness Areas ~ 1,015,821 acres

What do the authorizing Committees (Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and House Natural Resources Committee) think about America's Red Rock Wilderness Act?

- Subcommittee Chair Raul Grijalva is supportive and would like to give the bill a legislative hearing. Comments from the relevant House subcommittee chair during interactions last year and earlier this year were very positive. He supports the bill and thinks it deserves consideration in his committee. Furthermore, Hinchey sits on his subcommittee along with many other cosponsors, and he has requested a legislative hearing in this Congress.
- In hearings and mark-ups since 2004, committee Chairmen Rahall and Bingaman and subcommittee Chairmen Grijalva and Wyden have praised incremental Utah wilderness bills. The House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committees have considered the Cedar Mountains bill, the Washington County bill, and the Grand-Uintah Land Exchange on several occasions over the last five years, and all committee Chairmen have had encouraging comments about finding resolution in the debate over Utah wilderness.
- Senator Bennett is a new Member of the Public Lands Subcommittee in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The Senate is much more willing than

the House to abide by the wishes of home state representatives, so Bennett's new appointment may have a negative impact in Durbin's ability to hold a hearing on the Red Rock bill this Congress. Nevertheless, this appointment will only increase his interest in doing another regional bill, which we'll try to ensure is a good bill.

How can the Obama Administration help protect Utah's public lands, and does the Red Rock bill help the Interior Department in that task?

- Oversight Letters. Over the past two years, six Congressional oversight letters on Utah wilderness issues have been sent to the administration seeking better management and protection for Utah's wilderness quality lands. We're already seen, with the recent Utah lease sale decision by Secretary Salazar, that the new administration will be more open to recommendations from Red Rock supporters than the last, so this form of oversight will only increase in importance over the next few years. Having committed cosponsors is an important start to any oversight process.
- Salazar, No More Wild, RMPs. Urgent action is required from Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and the new BLM leaders to forestall damage from the worst aspects of Utah's recently completed land use plans until the land can be designated as Wilderness. The new administration should take three immediate steps to address the protection of Utah's wilderness-quality BLM lands and the recent planning decisions that threaten them:
 - ❖ BLM should abandon the 'No-More Wilderness' settlement, a flawed deal reached by the Bush administration that ignores the agency's obligation to provide interim protection for unprotected public lands with wilderness character by preventing the BLM from newly designating Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).
 - ❖ After revoking this settlement, BLM should consider a more balanced approach to land management that would safeguard these public treasures for the long term. BLM should revise the six recently completed land-use plans and consider extending WSA protection to the nearly 3 million acres of recently identified but unprotected BLM roadless areas.
 - ❖ In the interim, while these lands are being considered for statutory WSA protection, BLM should implement a moratorium on oil and gas leasing in Utah's BLM identified roadless areas, and should not produce maps for motorized use that include route designations within BLM roadless areas.