
PEOPLE FOR PRESERVING OUR WESTERN HERITAGE

S.1689 – Organ Mountains Desert Peaks Wilderness Act FACT SHEET

BRIEF HISTORY

Senators Bingaman and Udall introduced the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks Wilderness Act in September 2009.

Community concern caused the Senators to hold a field hearing in Las Cruces on 02/15/10, with testimony allowed from representatives the Senators selected. No representative of the law enforcement community was allowed to testify. Mr. John Hummer, as a representative of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, read a written testimony on behalf of the National Association of Retired Border Patrol Officers. Testimony from several participants, as well as other testimony mailed to the Senators, is available at www.PeopleForWesternHeritage.com.

In June of 2010, the Senators put forward a revised version of S.1689, with an additional 2 mile buffer along the southern border of the Potrillo Wilderness complex in southern Dona Ana County intended to “enhance” access for Border Patrol.

See the Stakeholder Meeting Summary at the end of this document for an enlightening bit of earlier history.

WHAT IS “WILDERNESS”?

Wilderness is not simply “open space”. Aldo Leopold, a key individual in the history of the original Wilderness Act, reflected the original intent of the Wilderness Act when he wrote “*A wilderness should be big enough to absorb a two-week pack trip without crossing your own tracks.*”

DEFINITION OF WILDERNESS

Federally designated Wilderness must meet a very specific and detailed legislative definition. The definition from the Wilderness Act specifies:

“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain”.

“An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value.” (Public Law 88-577 (16 U.S.C.1131-1136))

PROPOSED AREAS DO NOT MEET WILDERNESS CRITERIA

None of the proposed areas meet the criteria specified in the 1964 Wilderness Act. Man’s imprint is clearly evident throughout the areas proposed for Wilderness designation. There are hundreds of miles of roads, along with fences, windmills, storage tanks, pipelines, buildings, corrals, earthen reservoirs and other improvements.

Man's imprint can be seen in all of the proposed Wilderness areas. Man has been in this valley for 1000s of years; first the nomadic Indians; Onate settlements in 1598; and Anglo settlements following.

WILDERNESS – MANAGEMENT RESTRICTIONS

The Wilderness *ideal* that is discussed and promoted can sound appealing, but the *reality* can be quite another matter. Although it may or may not have been the original intent of the Wilderness Act, the management by Federal agencies of Wilderness areas centers around the reduction or complete elimination of the presence and impact of man from the land.

Wilderness designation goes far beyond simply eliminating the possibility of development within the designated area. When land is designated under the 1964 Wilderness Act, stringent prohibitions and management requirements are put in effect on the designated area:

- No permanent roads
- No temporary roads
- No use of motorized vehicles or equipment
- No form of mechanical transport (including bicycles)
- No mechanized equipment
- No landing of aircraft
- No permanent improvements or structures
- No appropriation of funding

Items such as bicycles, game carts to transport game, hang gliders, and chainsaws are prohibited.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) MANAGEMENT

Wilderness proponents often refer to WSAs as “temporary Wilderness” and state that the areas are “managed the same as Wilderness”. That is blatantly untrue.

WSAs are managed under the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1979. This policy quotes Section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) to “manage the study areas so as to not impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness.” The lands are to be managed under the “non-impairment concept”, which states that “existing facilities/uses which did not disqualify the area from wilderness inventory may remain.”

This means that activities which were occurring at the time of WSA designation, such as routine border patrol operations, use of current roads, and routines maintenance of improvements by ranchers, could continue to take place until Congress acts to place the area into a Wilderness designation or release the area from WSA status.

Currently Border Patrol and Law Enforcement officers can freely enter into the Wilderness Study Areas located in Dona Ana County because they are not yet designated as Wilderness. But if and when the areas are designated Wilderness by Congress, then the management prohibitions go into effect.

BORDER SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

Wilderness designation will have a significant impact on many aspects of border security.

NM LIVESTOCK INSPECTORS ESCORTED BY ARMED GUARDS

Beginning in 2010, New Mexico Department of Agriculture livestock inspectors are now accompanied by armed Sheriff's Deputies for security purposes, due to the increase in violence along the border.

PROACTIVE SECURITY MEASURES RESTRICTED

Wilderness restrictions do not allow for the Border Patrol or Sheriff's Office to do routine (proactive) patrols in designated Wilderness areas. Sensors, radio transmitters, relays and microwave towers are not allowed. They may travel in Wilderness areas only on foot or on horseback, unless it is deemed an emergency affecting the health and safety of persons within the Wilderness. Even then, use of motorized equipment requires significant levels of authorization, creating delays that can be life threatening.

THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

There is a Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture that will allow non-emergency entry. A copy of this document is available on our website. However, this document has not been tested in New Mexico because there is not any designated Wilderness along the border.

It is important to understand that a MOU is not a binding document, and does not supersede the law. If an environmental group ever challenges the MOU for any reason, a judge would likely throw the MOU out.

In reference to the MOU: *"The Department of Interior provided us with a memorandum of understanding between itself; the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), of which CBP (Border Patrol) is a component; and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) documenting the agreed approach to protecting federal lands along U.S. borders. Although CBP is ultimately responsible for protecting these areas, officials told us that certain legal, environmental, and cultural considerations limit options for enforcement. Our observations on the southern border showed a significant disparity between the large law enforcement presence on state lands in one state and what seemed to be a lack of law enforcement presence on federally managed lands."* U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, 9/27/2007 titled "Security Vulnerabilities at Unmanned and Unmonitored U.S. Border Locations"

STATEMENTS BY BORDER SECURITY AUTHORITIES

Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, stated the following in a letter dated October 2, 2009 to the Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands:

"While the USBP recognized the importance and value of wilderness area designations, they can have a significant impact on USBP operations..."

"...along the southwest border it [Wilderness designation] can be detrimental to the most effective accomplishment of the [USBP] mission."

Commissioner Alan Bersin, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, stated ***"...when wilderness designations are in enforcement areas, they can substantially affect the ability to conduct necessary daily operations and limit the construction of infrastructure."***

T.J. Bonner, president of the National Border Council, the union for Border Patrol agents, stated ***"Obviously, the impact of that policy [denial of access in federal land designations such as Wilderness] is severe on our operations. When you can't drive in those areas, it makes it impossible to patrol and enforce the law, and it transforms it into a sanctuary for illegal aliens."***

STATEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS, LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATIONS & OTHERS

“The international border with Mexico is becoming of increasing concern to the U.S. Government due to an increase in dangerous illegal activities and an escalating trend in border violence.”

Press release from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) titled “BLM Cautions Public Regarding Border Violence”, 4/9/2009

“National Park Service officers are 12 times more likely to be killed or injured as a result of an assault than FBI agents.” Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

“Congress has designated areas within some federal lands as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964 and subsequent legislation, while the Fish and Wildlife Service has designated certain areas as critical habitat for endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Federal law enforcement officers told us that these designations can hinder their efforts. For example, motorized vehicles must generally remain on designated roads in wilderness areas, and the Wilderness Act generally prohibits construction of permanent structures such as communications towers in wilderness areas.” 2004 U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO) report titled “Border Security – Agencies Need to Better Coordinate Their Strategies and Operations on Federal Lands”

“The current effort to create Wilderness along the border in Dona Ana County and ultimately the expansion of such activities along the extended border is dangerous and ill conceived.” Richard Hays, retired Chief of Air Operations for the Border Patrol.

“The smuggling organizations are very aware of where the protected lands are. They’re aware of where the [Border Patrol’s access] restrictions are, and tend to take advantage of them. They exploit the Wilderness areas.” David Bemiller, Border Patrol Tucson Sector public-lands liaison

“Our southern border is today more vulnerable to terrorist activities than at any other time in our National history. This is not the time to consider additional designations as ‘wilderness’. It may be appropriate at this time for our Country to repeal some previously approved Wilderness designations to insure the best possible chance for success in ongoing security activities.” National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers testimony submitted via the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce at the 2/15/10 Las Cruces Field Hearing on S.1689

Much more is available on our website: www.PeopleForWesternHeritage.com

DRUG & SMUGGLING CARTELS

Cartel activity and violence is rapidly increasing. As of July 2010, at least 28,000 drug related murders have been reported in Mexico since 2006. July 2010 was the deadliest month yet, with a reported 1,234 killed.

TERRORIST THREAT

Numerous reports have shown that a Hezbollah terrorist cell is operating among the drug cartels around the U.S.-Mexican border. OTM (Other Than Mexican) apprehensions along the southern border have been increasing, including hundreds from countries that sponsor terrorism. Government reports confirm that members of Hezbollah have crossed the southwest border.

THE POTRILLO CORRIDOR CHARACTERISTICS

WHAT IS A “CORRIDOR”?

Smuggling organizations are well equipped, and possess an intelligence network that rivals the Border Patrol. These organizations are very adept at moving their activities along the border in response to law enforcement activities. They constantly seek the path of least resistance. Smuggling corridors are

carefully chosen to provide the least chance of detection. Remote, isolated areas with minimal or no law enforcement presence are most desirable for smuggling operations. Smuggling organizations quickly scout, identify, occupy and utilize unguarded and unpatrolled border locations.

Anything that impedes the Border Patrol from proactively patrolling corridors automatically enables and enhances criminal activity.

Corridor characteristics include:

1. Restrictive federal land designations, such as Wilderness, that limit or prohibit effective law enforcement activities and provides safe havens for criminal operations.
2. East/west highway access to the north and the south of the area.
3. North/south mountain and drainage orientation to facilitate travel.
4. Mountains providing strategic points on both sides of lowland travel routes for posting lookouts and guards.
5. Immense, isolated and rural expanses of land.
6. Limited presence of American citizens with private property rights at risk.
7. Access to airports and railroads.

THE POTRILLO CORRIDOR

The Potrillo Mountains region contains all of the geographic corridor characteristics. Interstate Highway 10 provides east/west access north of the proposed Wilderness, and NM State Highway 9 provides east/west access south of the proposed Wilderness. County Road B007/A017 provides north/south access east of the proposed Wilderness, and County Road 11 provides north/south access west of the proposed Wilderness. There are many improved roads crossing the area. The vast majority of these roads would be closed to the public if S.1689 is passed. It is very unlikely that smuggling organizations would be deterred by the legislative closure of these roads. Law enforcement would have some "restricted" access.

There are currently 4 ranching families living in this region, constituting a very limited presence of resident American citizens.

Additionally, a transcontinental railroad runs along the eastern and northern edge of the proposed Wilderness area, with traffic of roughly 80 trains per day.

The Deming, Las Cruces, Santa Teresa and El Paso airports are all in this general area.

The testimony of the National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers states *"The issues of the Potrillo Mountains complex are too varied and dangerous to consider Wilderness designation. Protection, yes... but not Wilderness. The border buffer that has been placed in the current legislation [S.1689] has been discounted by experts in border security."*

If S.1689 is passed, the final characteristic of severely restrictive federal land management via federal Wilderness designation would be in place, creating a perfect smuggling corridor in the Potrillo Mountains area. Cartels would fight for control of these areas, and **we would be inviting the dangers, difficulties and tragedies currently experienced in Arizona into our own backyard.**

According to the National Drug Intelligence Center Situation Report, the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) are already actively operating in New Mexico. They indicate that Mexican DTOs are present and operating in Las Cruces, Deming, Columbus and El Paso. The report contains the following statements:

“Southwestern New Mexico--specifically Hidalgo, Luna, and Dona Ana Counties--shares a 180-mile border with Mexico. More than half the length of this border is desolate public land that contains innumerable footpaths, roads, and trails. These factors and minimal law enforcement coverage make the area an ideal smuggling corridor for drugs and other illicit goods and services...”

“Mexican DTOs that traditionally smuggle drugs through the El Paso/Juárez plaza will most likely seek alternative routes to avoid confrontations with Mexican Government counterdrug forces and rival DTOs by shifting some of their smuggling activities to the U.S.-Mexico border in New Mexico. As a result, it is quite likely that drug-related violence in U.S. communities along the border in New Mexico will increase as law enforcement officials and rival traffickers respond to the shifts in smuggling routes.”

A 5 MILE BUFFER IS INADEQUATE

The National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers testimony submitted to Senators Bingaman and Udall via the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce contains the following statements:

“Designated federal Wilderness ... is causative in the establishment and expansion of entry corridors.”

“The Potrillo Mountains complex has the same characteristic of threat potential to the U.S. as does Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, the most dangerous park in the system.”

“CBP cannot be expected to interdict and apprehend illegals within the narrow strip from the border north to Highway 9, nor can they be expected to do the same thing in the same narrow corridor being considered north of Highway 9”.

NAFBPO states “The sponsors of S.1689 determined that it was appropriate to only provide for a small fraction of enforcement capabilities on public lands, compared to those afforded by federal statute on private lands.” By federal law, the Border Patrol has the legal authority to enter PRIVATE lands anywhere within 25 miles of the border. The buffer zone in S.1689 amounts to only 20% of the authority currently deemed appropriate by Congress for the protection of private lands.

THE ARIZONA EXPERIENCE

A large portion of the Arizona border is federally controlled land. Portions of five federally managed areas in Arizona, including Wilderness and National Monuments, continue to post travel warnings or to be closed to Americans because of the dangers of human and drug trafficking along the Mexican Border. Roughly 3,500 acres of Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge have been closed since October of 2006. Federal officials indicate they have no plans to reopen the area. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, which shares a 32-mile stretch of the border with Mexico, has a warning on their website.

Below are some of the current warnings for these federally managed areas.

“Due to an increase in illegal border activity, all backcountry areas are closed indefinitely to both hiking and overnight camping.” National Park Service (NPS) website for Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Arizona

“Smuggling and/or illegal entry is common in this area due to the proximity of the international border. Please be aware of your surroundings at all times and do not travel alone in remote areas.” National Park Service warning sign at Coronado National Forest, Arizona

“Unit 36B is a corridor for the trafficking of undocumented aliens (UDAs) and drugs. Hunters will see the trails and trash left by these people. Hunters are urged to use caution when hunting and camping in 36B or any of the other border units. It is advisable to use some sort of visible anti-theft device on your vehicle, for vehicle thefts have increased the past two years. Having a group of UDAs walk through a hunting area may negatively impact your hunt.” Arizona Game & Fish website for Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona

The correlation between federal land management policy and the devastation and dangers our Arizona neighbors are experiencing is undeniable. It would be foolish to establish the same conditions in New Mexico that have been a major factor in creating the lawless environment they are facing in Arizona.

FLOOD CONTROL, WATER MANAGEMENT, WATER CAPTURE

Managing water resources in the arid southwest is a significant concern for all residents of this area. Federal Wilderness designation restricts structures, including dams, diversions, and water holding facilities. Prohibition of mechanized and motorized equipment will hamper maintenance of existing dams in the designated Wilderness/NCA, as well as construction of new structures.

Management of flood waters involves maintenance of existing dams and control structures, implementation and maintenance of water monitoring equipment, and construction of new dams, diversions and water holding facilities. Federal Wilderness designation prohibits these activities, unless waivers and concessions are clearly stipulated. Even then, conducting these activities is frequently burdened with significant and time consuming additional red tape in the form of studies, permits, inspections and other administrative activity.

Mr. Gary Esslinger, Treasurer/Manager of Elephant Butte Irrigation District states *“We urge everyone to take into consideration the dynamics of protecting future watershed resources without imposing such restrictions in these designated Wilderness areas that the water resources cannot be used appropriately.”* Additionally, Mr. Esslinger said *“The need to plan for future flood control and appurtenances in our watershed during the summer monsoon season could have a great impact on future wilderness designated sites and we could miss the opportunity to reuse storm runoff as a vital resource to recharge our aquifers and diminish the need to drain down our reservoir. ... it would be to everyone's advantage to find a way to preserve and protect our water resources rather than to deny access to areas where such flood control improvements could be very beneficial.”* In testimony submitted at the Las Cruces Field Hearing, Mr. Esslinger stated *“...flood control is not a stagnant process. It is clear that as southern New Mexico continues to grow, we will need more flood control structures...”*

The negative impacts of a Wilderness designation on the ability to appropriately manage our water resources are a significant concern for everyone in our community.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Wilderness advocates imply that the proposed Wilderness designations in Dona Ana County would improve the local economic situation. They refer to a 2006 study conducted by the Sonoran Institute from Tucson, Arizona titled *“The Potential Economic Impacts of Wilderness in Dona Ana County”*. The study reported that when Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) were designated in Dona Ana County in 1980 that employment, per capita income, personal income and population all increased. The study attempted to correlate these factors to the designation of WSAs. However, careful reading of the findings states that the correlation does not guarantee any economic prosperity in Dona Ana County automatically resulting from a designation of Wilderness. The fact that the WSAs were designated in 1980 had nothing to do with the improved economic activity of the past 30 years. One could just as easily correlate that in 1980 Ronald Reagan was elected president, New Mexico penitentiary riots took place, Mt. Saint Helens erupted and the National Enquirer reported that the Roswell UFO incident really took place.

If economic prosperity results from Wilderness designation, then cities like Reserve and Silver City would be thriving, since they are so near the Gila Wilderness, the first Wilderness designated in the U.S. In fact, the counties and towns surrounding the Gila Wilderness are struggling to survive economically.

STATE LAND

Sections of state land exist within the areas slated for Wilderness designation. This land currently is producing revenue for the State Land Trust, which provides funding for education in New Mexico.

If the ability of the state land to produce revenue is negatively affected by Wilderness designation, it will have a direct impact on schools and education.

PRESERVING ACCESS

Currently, access is limited on 54% of the lands in Dona Ana County – U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State of New Mexico, NMSU, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. National Park Service and private land.

The proposed Wilderness would limit access on over 562 square miles of BLM land. If Wilderness designation is placed on the proposed areas, only 31% of the land in the county will be available for unrestricted access by the public.

Under S.1689, nine of the twelve mountain ranges in Dona Ana County would have restricted access:

- Organ Mountains – Wilderness
- Dona Ana Mountains – NCA
- Robledos – Wilderness
- Las Uvas – Wilderness
- East Potrillo Mountains – Wilderness
- West Potrillo Mountains – Wilderness/Restricted Access Area
- Franklin Mountains (north end) – NCA/Restricted Access
- Rough and Ready Mountains – Wilderness
- San Andres – DOD, USFWS, USDA and NMSU

The 3 mountain ranges not affected are:

- MassacrePeak /Lazy E
- The Sleeping Lady Hills
- Aden Hills

Severely restricted access in most of the mountain areas will result in increased pressure on the other areas, with negative impacts on the resources there.

ALTERNATIVES

Most people living in our community cherish our open space, and are in agreement that they would like to see protection of some of the open space in our county from development. The logical question is “What is the best tool to appropriately protect and manage these areas?” There are opposing views on how to best accomplish this worthwhile goal.

It is important to note that some of the areas proposed for Wilderness designation are currently identified as WSAs, which guarantees they cannot be sold for development. It is also important to

note that the East Potrillo Mountains, the entire Broad Canyon area, the Robledo Mountains and the Las Uvas Mountains were not recommended for Wilderness designation by the U.S. Department of Interior.

There are numerous administrative and legislative alternatives that can be utilized to protect the open space and appropriately manage specific resources, while protecting existing property rights, providing unencumbered access for law enforcement activities, providing reasonable flexibility to land management agencies and the ranchers operating in these areas, as well as preserving access for the general public for recreation and enjoyment.

Wilderness organizations are in the business of advocating and lobbying for federal Wilderness designation in new areas. They have been very successful. There are currently nearly 109.5 MILLION acres of land in 756 federally designated Wilderness areas in the U.S. The existing Wilderness acreage in the U.S. is one million acres *larger* than the states of California, Maryland and Delaware *combined*. The current federal Wilderness acreage is larger than every state except Texas and Alaska.

Protecting the land and natural resources does NOT require a designation of Wilderness.

People for Preserving Our Western Heritage supports a meaningful balance between environmental protection, conservation, recreation, community development, water resource management, law enforcement and respect for private property rights.

GREATER LAS CRUCES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE POSITION

The Chamber supports complete protection of the Organ Mountains WSAs and NCA as detailed in S.1689.

After an extensive investigation into the issues, the Chamber concludes there are two factors that must be recognized as being fundamental to the community. Those are national security and the freedom to grow the local community.

The Chamber supports S.1689 *with the following exceptions:*

1. Add language in the legislation that states flood control devices in the Organ Mountains NCA are allowed to be accessed, installed and modified as the City of Las Cruces growth demands.
2. The entire Potrillo Mountains Complex be removed from Wilderness consideration and be designated an NCA with the need to incorporate management strategy that considers input from all public agencies and private property owners. The GLCCC STRONGLY believes that National Security concerns prevail beyond any other rationale when it comes to assessing areas adjacent to or in close proximity to the border. The importance of the national security issue must be elevated into the management plan for the area that allows for full and unencumbered access by the Border Patrol and other law enforcement. This includes the Aden Lava Flow Area, the Cinder Cone Area, the Whitethorn Area and the East and West Potrillos.
3. The removal of the entire Broad Canyon area from any alternative designation status. This is consistent with the DOI recommendation. GLCCC has reviewed this portion of the legislation in great detail and the impact of permanent withdrawal of this area poses great risk to the long term well being of the area. BROAD CANYON IS TOO IMPORTANT TO THE ECONOMIC WELL BEING OF THE COUNTY AND THE REGION TO IMPOSE ACCESS AND PLANNING RESTRICTIONS.
4. The Grazing language in section 4 of S.1689 will do great damage to the ranching industry. The GLCCC has reviewed and endorses the language presented as Exhibit D in Dr.

Schickedanz's testimony. We do not want to lose these historical, family owned ranches which have meant so much to the Mesilla Valley. We must all be aware that in 2007 the United States produced less than half of its food supply for the first time. Congressional action cannot be imposed that accelerates that alarming statistic.

The **BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN NM, LAS CRUCES ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS (LCAR), NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FORMER BORDER PATROL OFFICERS (NAFBPO), ELEPHANT BUTTE IRRIGATION DISTRICT (EBID), DONA ANA COUNTY FARM & LIVESTOCK BUREAU AND THE HISPANIC FARMERS & RANCHERS OF AMERICA** have all announced support for the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce proposal.

PFPOWH SUPPORTERS – OUR COALITION

ORGANIZATIONS (ALPHABETICALLY):

- Americans for Preservation of Western Environment
- Building Industry Association of Southern NM
- Citizens for Balanced Use
- Coalition of Arizona/New Mexico Counties for Stable Economic Growth
- Desert Mountain 4 Wheel Drive Club
- Dona Ana County Farm & Livestock Bureau
- Dona Ana Soil and Water Conservation District
- Elephant Butte Irrigation District
- Farm Credit of New Mexico
- Gila Livestock Growers
- Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
- Hatch Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers of America
- Las Cruces Association of Realtors (LCAR)
- Las Cruces Four Wheel Drive Club
- Mesilla Valley Cow Belles
- Mesilla Valley Sportsmen's Alliance
- National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers
- New Mexico Cattle Growers Association
- New Mexico Department of Agriculture
- New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau
- New Mexico Federal Lands Council
- New Mexico Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc.
- Paragon Foundation, Inc.
- People for Prosperity
- Village of Hatch (Resolution 732)

PROFESSIONAL ENDORSEMENTS:

P. Robert Alexander	Rangeland Management Specialist, BLM New Mexico State Office (1992-2005); Area Manager, BLM Las Cruces, New Mexico District (1986-1992)
Christopher Allison	Ph.D., Texas A&M; NMSU, Department Head, Extension Animal Sciences & Natural Resources, Range Management Specialist, Range Improvement Task Force
William B. Conroy	Ph.D., Syracuse University; NMSU, President Emeritus
Frank DuBois	New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture 1987-2003; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior for Land & Water 1981-1983; Legislative Assistant

	to U.S. Senator Pete V. Domenici 1974-1979
John Fowler	Ph.D., Iowa State University; NMSU, Coordinator, Range Improvement Task Force
Larry Foster	Ph.D., Colorado State University ; NMSU, Professor and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist (Retired), Cattle Rancher
I. Miley Gonzales	Ph.D., Penn State University; NM Secretary of Agriculture
Jerry Holechek	Ph.D., Oregon State University; NMSU, Professor, Animal & Range Science, Western Range Consultant
Grant Kinzer	Ph.D., Oklahoma State University ; NMSU, Former Department Head, Entomology & Plant Pathology, Cattle Rancher
Bobby J. Rankin	Ph.D., Oklahoma State University; NMSU, Emeritus Department Head, Animal & Range Science
William L. Rice	Deputy Chief US Forest Service, Retired; Deputy Chief of US Natural Resources Conservation Services, Retired
Jerry G. Schickedanz	Ph.D., University of Arizona ; NMSU, Dean Emeritus, College of Agriculture and Home Economics, Range Management Specialist
Gerald W. Thomas	Ph.D., Texas A&M; NMSU, President Emeritus
Dr. John Wenzel, DVM	DVM Kansas State University, NMSU Extension Veterinarian and private practitioner

BUSINESSES:

See our website for a list of all 800+ businesses and organizations supporting an alternative to federal Wilderness designation.

STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARY

In 2006, at the suggestion of Senator Domenici to provide evidence of consensus for the “Citizens Proposal” prior to moving forward with legislation, Dona Ana County and the City of Las Cruces established “Regional Land Management: A Community Response”. The effort was led by a city employee, and included meetings with each of 8 Stakeholder groups, and 3 public meetings, followed by a Stakeholder Committee process. The Stakeholder Committee met twice each week for 3 months, with the City employee serving as moderator. The announced purpose was to reach consensus for the “Citizens Proposal”. In February 2007, the moderator announced that the process was discontinued, that “it had become obvious no consensus would be reached”.

The entire focus of the Stakeholder Committee process was the “Citizens Proposal”. At the conclusion of the process, the moderator requested that each of the 8 groups write a position paper setting forth its recommendations for each of the 10 areas proposed for Wilderness and the two areas proposed for NCAs in the “Citizens Proposal”. The position papers were requested without the individual Ranchers having an opportunity to discuss each area and their concerns as to the impacts of Wilderness on their operations, which the moderator had indicated was to be the last area of discussion prior to the conclusion of the Stakeholder Committee process.

The “Stakeholder Position Summary” from the “Findings, April 2007”, as reflected on the City of Las Cruces website, can be summarized as follows:

Areas Proposed for Wilderness	Votes for Wilderness	Votes Against Wilderness	Votes for NCA	Votes Against NCA
WSAs				
3 Organ Mountains WSAs	21	3		
Aden Lava Flow WSA	5	3		
Mt. Riley WSA	5	3		
W. Potrillo Mts. WSA	4	4		
Robledo Mts. WSA	3	5		
Las Uvas Mts. WSA	2	6		
Areas Currently in Multiple Use				
Broad Canyon Area	2	6		
E. Potrillo Mts. Area	2	6		
Areas Proposed for NCAs				
Organ S. Unit			4	WD-3; NP-1
Organ N. Unit			3	WD-3; NP-2
Acreages – Areas Proposed for Wilderness				
5 areas receiving positive votes	54,184			
5 areas not receiving positive votes		302,879		

WD – Withdrawal only, NP – No position

The 8 Stakeholder group, represented by 2 persons for each group, were designated by the City. They included Community and Neighborhood Associations; Conservationists; Developers and Homebuilders; Mechanized Recreationalists; Non-mechanized Recreationalists; Ranchers and Farmers, Business; Economic Development and Realtors; and Sportsmen.