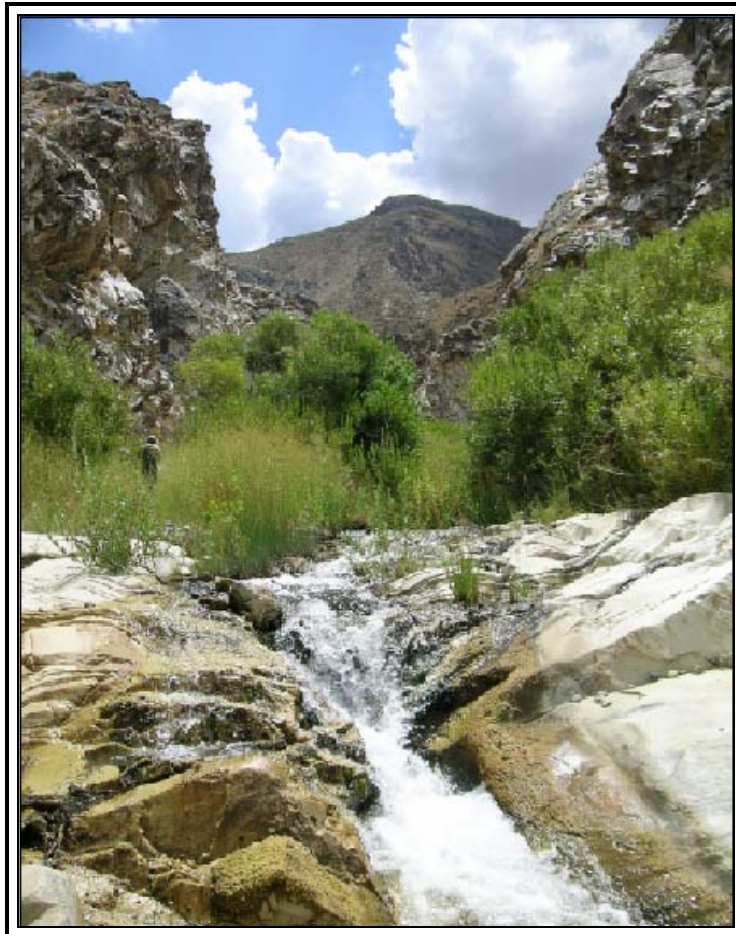


Stop the Public Lands Giveaway!
Support the Mark Udall Amendment
On Interior Appropriations



California's Surprise Canyon is threatened due to R.S. 22477

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Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado

(Managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service)

Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge surrounds a stretch of the Green River adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument in northwest Colorado. The 20-square-mile refuge was created to provide high-quality nesting and migration habitat for the 20,000 water birds that migrate through the refuge in spring and fall. In addition to the mallards, redheads, teal, canvasbacks, other ducks, and Canada geese that nest on the refuge, Browns Park's cottonwood forests provide critical migration habitat for hundreds of thousands of songbirds. Species that inhabit the area include golden and bald eagles, sand hill crane, sage grouse, and sage sparrow. The Green River attracts nesting osprey, river otters, beaver, and the endangered Colorado pike minnow, while in hard winters, several hundred elk and mule deer rely on the Refuge's open grasslands.



Because a boat was used on occasion to cross the Green River at this point, Moffat County claims a “constructed highway” here. In total, the county claims more than 53 miles of potential roadway within Browns Park National Wildlife refuge.

What’s at Stake at Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge?

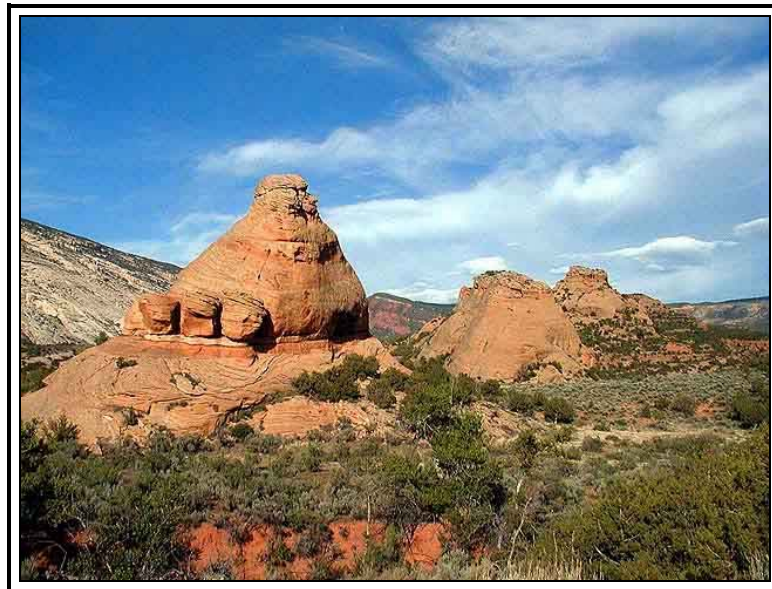
Moffat County’s Board of County Commissioners approved a resolution to claim more than 2,000 miles of routes in northwest Colorado, including 53 miles of potential roadway within the Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge. The county’s resolution admits that its right-of-way claims include hiking trails, cow paths, and horse trails. It includes paths that are not maintained, not currently used, and not even visible on the ground. In Browns Park, the county’s claims include a two-track through a sensitive marsh, cattle trails so faint that they are impossible to find, and a non-existent river crossing that was apparently once used by boats.

If these highway claims are approved, Moffat County could argue that each of these routes must be “maintained” as two-lane gravel roads for public highway use. In that case, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would have limited authority to deny bulldozing across pristine or sensitive lands that are now protected for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Dinosaur National Monument, Colorado

(Managed by the National Park Service)

Dinosaur National Monument was designated in 1915 to protect several hundred acres of a dinosaur fossil quarry and was greatly expanded two decades later to include the awe-inspiring canyons and plateaus that surround the site. The monument includes some of the wildest and most spectacular scenery in the American Southwest. It includes a large stretch of the Yampa River, the last free-flowing river in the Colorado River System. The areas are home to the imperiled peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and several endangered species. Black bears and mountain lions share the landscape with antelope, elk, mule deer, bighorn sheep, and beaver, while Native American rock art within the monument testify to the allure these canyons and rivers had for prehistoric people. The fantastic canyons of the Green and Yampa Rivers make the Monument a popular rafting area, while other recreationists seek out the peace and quiet of the Monument for hiking, camping, and backpacking. In 1978, the National Park Service recommended more than 200,000 acres of the monument for protection as wilderness based on the area's wild, roadless nature.



Colorado's Moffat County has claimed more than 240 miles of "highways" in Dinosaur National Monument.

What's at Stake at Dinosaur National Monument?

In 2003, the Moffat County Board of County Commissioners claimed more than 2,000 miles of routes in northwest Colorado, including 240 miles of claimed "constructed highways" within the national monument. Moffat County's resolution admits that the county's highway claims include hiking trails, cow paths, and horse trails. Based on field reviews of county maps, their Dinosaur National Monument assertions include numerous cattle trails so faint that they are difficult or impossible to find. Moffat County's RS 2477 claims hamper sound management by the National Park Service and threaten to undermine the wilderness quality of Dinosaur National Monument.

Vermillion Basin, Colorado

(Managed by the Bureau of Land Management)

The Vermillion Basin area of northwest Colorado includes expansive and colorful badlands, rugged canyons, and scenic vistas. Vermillion Canyon contains a spectacular collection of petroglyphs amid sculpted sandstone cliffs that rise up to 1,000 feet. Nearby Irish Canyon was identified by the Bureau of Land Management as an “Area of Critical Environmental Concern” because of its remarkable geologic and botanical resources, including some of the most notable rock art in western Colorado. Vermillion Basin also includes 77,000 acres of roadless wilderness-character lands.

Elk, antelope, mule deer, beaver, bobcat, and coyote are among the mammals that inhabit the basin. The area also provides habitat for numerous bird species, including golden eagle, peregrine falcon, burrowing owl, and the imperiled sage grouse.



**Colorado’s Moffat County has claimed more than 2,000 miles of “roads”
In Vermillion Basin, including a supposed “constructed highway” that
goes straight up the cliff in this photo.**

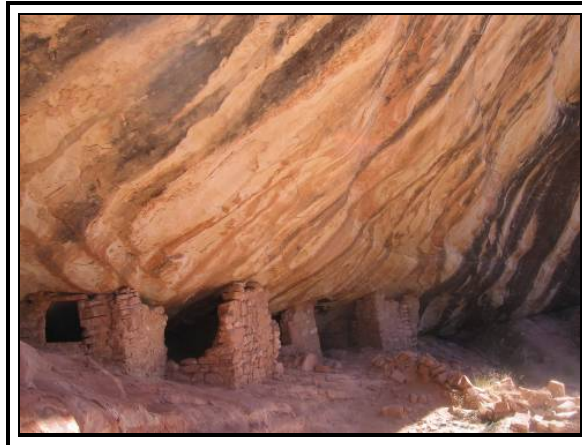
What’s at Stake at Vermillion Basin?

Colorado’s Moffat County has claimed more than 2,000 miles of routes, including over 230 miles of claimed “roads” within the 77,000 roadless wilderness-character acres in Vermillion Basin. Moffat County’s resolution admits that the county’s highway claims include hiking trails, cow paths, and horse trails. The claims include paths that are not maintained, not currently used, and not even visible on the ground. However, by claiming these routes under RS 2477, Moffat County is labeling the routes as “constructed highways.” If these claims are approved, Moffat County could “maintain” the routes as two-lane gravel roads for public highway use, leading to the degradation of the area’s ecology and pristine wilderness.

Arch Canyon, Utah

(Managed by the Bureau of Land Management)

The BLM Utah State Office is processing determinations for six R.S. 2477 claims. Many of these are roads and are the boundary routes for Wilderness Study Areas, Wilderness Inventoried Areas, and citizen proposed wilderness areas. Three of the six routes continue into national parks; one weaves in and out of private land; and two are renowned for archeological sites that lie directly adjacent to the routes. Arch Canyon is at risk if management and maintenance of the routes were put into county hands.



A cultural resource site near the route



Arch Canyon "Route"

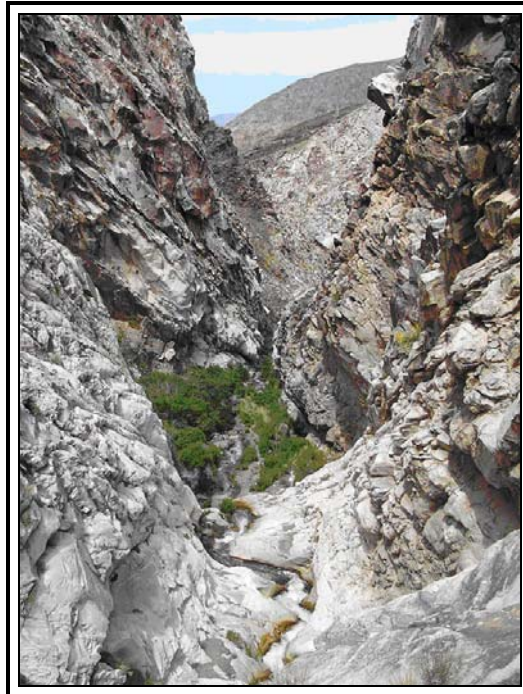
What's at Stake in Arch Canyon?

Arch Canyon, in archeologically rich Cedar Mesa, contains not only astounding Ancestral Puebloan artifacts, but a rare desert riparian area. The "route" crosses a stream 120 times for each round-trip up and down the canyon. In addition, Arch Canyon is estimated to contain approximately 100 cultural sites, with less than one-fourth having been recorded. Hopi and Navajo Tribal leaders, archaeology, riparian and biology experts, conservationists, and local business owners recently asked BLM to close the route to damaging off-road vehicle use, including a planned "Jeep Jamboree." Despite its values, the Canyon is at risk of having a permanent jeep trail through the streambed if the BLM determines it is a valid R.S. 2477 claim.

Death Valley National Park, California

(Managed by the National Park Service)

Death Valley, which lies in the arid Mojave Desert of southeastern California, was originally designated in 1933, as a national monument, and as much larger national park, by Congress in 1994 with passage of the California Desert Protection Act. It is a land of extremes, including the lowest, hottest, and driest points in North America. It contains colorful badlands, snow-covered peaks, beautiful sand dunes, and rugged canyons. Death Valley also is home to more than one thousand kinds of plants and rare wildlife – some found nowhere else in the world. Desert bighorn and the desert tortoise, a species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, make their home here. Death Valley contains evidence of human habitation stretching back thousands of years, including pictographs and petroglyphs. It has been described as a vast geological museum, containing examples of most of the earth’s geologic eras, and a plethora of geologic features including alluvial fans, faults, dunes, salt pans, and volcanoes. The California Desert Protection Act designated more than 3.1 million acres of wilderness within the Park.



Off-road vehicle groups claim the steep streambed of Surprise Canyon – one of the only streams in arid Death Valley National Park – is a constructed highway that flows through the Park and onto adjacent Bureau of Land Management lands (shown here).

What’s at Stake in Death Valley National Park?

California’s Inyo County has claimed scores of routes inside Death Valley National Park, and has sued to prove its rights of way on about 30 miles of routes that cut through lands set aside as wilderness by Congress in 1994. Inyo County admits that its highway claims may include “trails, horse and foot paths”. Off-road vehicle groups have made similar claims. The claims include paths that are not maintained, not currently used by vehicles, and barely visible on the ground. However, by claiming these routes under R.S. 2477, Inyo County is labeling the routes “constructed highways.” If these claims are approved, Inyo County could open closed routes in wilderness and through threatened desert tortoise habitat to motor vehicles, and “maintain” the routes as two-lane gravel roads for public highway use, leading to the degradation of the area’s ecology and pristine wilderness.

Salt Creek in Canyonlands National Park

(Managed by the National Park Service)

Utah's national parks and national monuments are the target of thousands of R.S. 2477 highway claims. Among the areas threatened by those claims that an ecologically-sensitive creek in Canyonlands National Park. Utah's largest national park, Canyonlands covers a vast area of rock wilderness in southeast Utah, centered near the confluence of the Green and Colorado rivers.

In June 2004, the National Park Service closed Salt Creek inside Canyonlands to motor vehicles, noting that the creek "supports one of the most important [waterway] ecosystems in the park." Since then, San Juan County and the State of Utah have claimed the Creek as a "constructed highway" under R.S. 2477, threatening not only a sensitive water source but also the area with the highest recorded density of archeological sites in the park.



Part of alleged highway that sits on the banks of Salt Creek

What's at Stake in the Canyonlands?

Canyonlands National Park protects prehistoric petroglyphs, ruins, and 340,000 breathtaking acres of the Colorado Plateau, where the Green and Colorado rivers meet to form one of North America's most biologically diverse eco-regions. Extensive trails lead visitors to sandstone spires and mesas with 100-mile views of the desert landscape. According to the National Park Service, Salt Creek "supports the richest assemblage of birds and other vertebrate wildlife outside the river corridors." The Park Service also found that vehicle use resulting in damage to Salt Creek would constitute "impairment of the park's resources and values."

Canyonlands isn't the only federal land in Utah threatened by R.S. 2477 highway claims. Dozens of National Parks and Monuments, including Zion National Park and Dinosaur and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments, could be opened to road-building and vehicle traffic in wild areas under this new policy.

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