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Dear Wild Connections Supporter,

These last two months have brought about some amazing changes which we pass on in this issue of E-News. From the incoming new presidential administration, to cabinet post selections which will guide the management of our beloved public lands, to a enormous shift in the Colorado Roadless Rule development, we know you will share our enthusiasm for positive things to come!

**Colorado Roadless Rule Given More Time
Governor Ritter speaks out to Washington on behalf of Coloradans**

Governor Ritter asked federal officials for more time to develop the Colorado specific Roadless Rule, and his request was granted. Please thank Governor Ritter for honoring Colorado's wishes!



Hiking in Chipeta Roadless Area.

The current presidential administration was working hard to finalize the flawed draft Colorado Roadless Rule before it leaves office in January. However, the Governor and the Director of Colorado's Department of Natural Resources informed the US Forest Service on December 4th that additional time was needed "to address the concerns of impacted industries and thousands of Colorado sportsmen, conservationists and recreational enthusiasts before completing the state's recommendations."

What can you do?

Please take a moment to contact Governor Ritter and thank him for giving Coloradans the time to ensure our Roadless Areas are protected for future generations. The Governor is asking the Obama administration for an expedited review of the Colorado Rule with the expectation that it will be issued within the first three to six months of 2009.

While the additional time prevents the flawed draft rule from being finalized now, it does not ensure that any of the issues will be solved! Please help us ensure that we get the rule right! [See below for a sample letter to the Governor.](#)

Sample Letter

The Honorable Bill Ritter
Governor of Colorado
136 State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203-1792

Dear Governor Ritter:

I want to applaud you and the Director of Natural Resources Harris Sherman for ensuring the flawed Colorado-specific roadless rule did not get rushed into finalization. The draft Colorado rule in no way reflected, nor respected, what Coloradans have repeatedly asked for over the last decade – strong protections for our remaining undeveloped lands.

As a Coloradan that loves our public lands heritage, I urge you to continue to work with conservation, recreation, hunting, angling and wildlife officials to fulfill your promise that any Colorado Roadless rule must be 93 to 95% consistent with the protections afforded under the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, and that if the Colorado Rule was weaker than the 2001 rule, you would withdraw the petition.

Roadless areas are the backbone of our public lands. These natural, undeveloped public lands help bring in tourism, bolster recreation, and support businesses. They provide critical habitat for our wildlife and they ensure our water quality. These benefits directly increase the quality of life Coloradan's enjoy.

Please help ensure Colorado's Roadless areas are protected. The following are some of the key issues that must be resolved in order for any Colorado Rule to be effective:

- **Roadless Area Inventory:** The draft rule was created with an incomplete inventory of Roadless areas. Many boundaries were reduced inappropriately, and many areas that qualify for roadless area protection were not included at all. It is vital to have an accurate inventory for the rule to be effective.
- **Long-Term Temporary Roads:** The draft rule created this new agency road classification which essentially allows roads in Roadless areas! This provision must be removed.
- **Vague Exceptions:** The draft rule is riddled with many vague exceptions such as; access for grazing, utility and infrastructure corridors; logging for 'wildlife,' and most problematic the exceptionally vague 'forest treatment' exception. These issues must be resolved if the Colorado Rule is to have any meaningful protection for our undeveloped lands. It is possible to address these issues and preserve the Roadless character.

Thank you,

Your name
Address
City, State

Senator Salazar Appointed to Secretary of Interior A strong choice and voice for Western public lands issues

President-elect Obama has appointed **Colorado Senator Ken Salazar** to lead the **US Department of Interior**. As Interior Secretary, Salazar will oversee the federal agency in charge of the Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey. Interior is responsible for managing 500 million acres in the U.S. - about one-fifth of the nation's total land.

Obama said of his choice, "It's time for a new kind of leadership in Washington that's committed to using our lands in a responsible way to benefit all our families. That means ensuring that even as we are promoting development where it makes sense, we are also fulfilling our obligation to protect our national treasures."



Table Mountain, along the Arkansas River corridor, will be one of the critical BLM lands under Salazar's jurisdiction.

Senator Salazar, a fifth-generation rancher from the San Luis Valley in Colorado, is renowned for his agile ability to listen to all sides of the argument and facilitate meaningful dialogue towards solutions that will work. If Salazar is confirmed for the post, Governor Bill Ritter would name his replacement to finish his Senatorial term.

President-elect Obama also tapped **Tom Vilsack**, the former Iowa governor, to be **Secretary of Agriculture**, the agency overseeing the US Forest Service amongst others. He said both Salazar and Vilsack have the responsibility to balance the protection of farms and public lands against the need to find new sources of energy.

Stay tuned to future E-News for more information, including additional appointments which will shape the way our public lands are managed.

Landscapes is in the Mail How does Landscapes differ from our E-News?

Landscapes, Wild Connections semi-annual newsletter, hit the mail this week. Landscapes is full of in-depth articles describing the current work of Wild Connections, changes and opportunities for you to get involved. **Landscapes** is only a periodic publication, so we created this **E-News** tool to deliver brief information to you in a timely and cost effective manner. As we do not have accurate postal addresses for some of you, [click here to read the current Landscapes issue](#).

What Happened With?

Colorado Wilderness Bills in 2008?

Several congressional bills which would permanently protect some of Colorado's wonderful wildlands as Wilderness were put on hold until the next Congress. While the delay is disappointing, it is obvious that the

economic troubles facing our country were of tantamount priority for Congress and all Americans. We hope that Congress will take fast action on the following bills in early of 2009.

- The **Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Bill** would formally designate just over 90% of the park as Wilderness, implementing the wilderness protections recommended by the Park Service since 1974.
- Legislation to designate the **Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area** and Wilderness was introduced in May of 2008 by Rep. John Salazar and Sen. Ken Salazar. This bill would formally designate the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Study Area as Wilderness and create a National Conservation Area south of Grand Junction.
- **Browns Canyon Wilderness**, part BLM designated Wilderness Study Area and part US Forest Service lands that will potentially be recommended for wilderness in the upcoming forest plan revision, lies along the tourism magnate Arkansas River and continues as a high priority for Congressional passage in 2009.
- The Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition's "**Wild-10**" package is also working towards future Congressional introduction. Visit www.cwcwilderness.org for more information.

Stay tuned to E-News for updates on Wilderness and how to help!

Please Support Wild Connections

'Tis the season for helping ensure the future of non-profits

Wild Connections is growing to better serve you; the conservation, recreation and wildlife enthusiasts in South-Central Colorado. Our goal is to **raise \$100,000 in 2009**. The funds will be critical in launching our new program, "Reclaiming Wildways," which will engage volunteers in on-the-ground restoration projects in three critical areas next summer! Are you curious to learn more? Check out the [current Landscapes](#), and [please help by donating here](#).

Upcoming Hikes & Events

Come Join Us!

Saturday, January 24 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Grape Creek Proposed Wilderness Winter Walk

Experience the quiet solitude of a wildland winter with Pikes Peak Sierra Club, Wild Connections, and Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition. In the (usually) sunny, dry "banana belt" southwest of Royal Gorge lies the pinon- juniper studded Sunset City Gulch. Our five-mile, easy to moderate hike, gaining a maximum of 400 feet, will be mostly on trail, occasionally through shallow snow.

For more information [click here...](#)



Pinon-Juniper woodlands. Photo by Jean Smith.

Sunday, February 22 8:30 AM - Late Afternoon

Pikes Peak West Beginner Snowshoe

This will be an easy, 2-3 mile snowshoe trip to the best available snow on the west side of Pikes Peak. This hike, hosted by Pikes Peak Sierra Club, Wild Connections, and the Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition, will be an all-day trip with emphasis on learning and practicing basic snowshoe techniques while enjoying the great out-of-doors in one of our protected National Forests.



Come snowshoe with us! Photo by Jean Smith.

For more information [click here...](#)

Saturday, March 14 8:00 am to 5:30 pm
Wildcat Canyon Wilderness Quality Survey Hike

The first in a series of exploratory hikes to wilderness candidates beyond the Wild Ten. Wildcat Canyon encompasses rugged portions of Tarryall Creek and the South Platte River. Come help determine if the areas wild values are worth preserving on this moderately strenuous 6-mile hike with 750-foot elevation gain, sponsored by Pikes Peak Sierra Club, Wild Connections, and Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition.



Wildcat Canyon (pre-Hayman). Photo by Jean Smith.

For more information [click here...](#)

In Closing:

Thank you for your passion for Colorado's public lands! If you have comments or questions about our new *E-News* or the topics above, please email Michael Rogers at Michael@WildConnections.org.

Sincerely,

Michael Rogers

Director of Policy, Programs & Outreach
Wild Connections

Wild Connections is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Our mission is to identify, protect and restore lands of the Upper Arkansas and South Platte watersheds to ensure the survival of native species and ecological richness.