



E-News & Action Alert!

January, 2009

In This Issue

**New Wilderness
Close**

**Rocky Mountain
National Park**

**Dominguez-
Escalante**

**Volunteer Leaders
Needed**

New Rep Coffman

**Upcoming Hikes &
Events**

**What Happened
With?**

Quick Links

Get Involved

Support Our Work

Newsletter Archive

**About Wild
Connections**

About CCWC

Join Our List!

**Did someone
forward you this
email?**

**Sign up to
ensure you
always get this
monthly E-News**

CLICK HERE

Dear Michael,

Help us get two Wilderness Bills across the Congressional finish line! The Senate approved the bill 73-21, now we just need our House of Representatives to take action.

Add your voice now to support Colorado Wilderness. See below to find out how.

New CO Wilderness is close, we need your help! Take Action Now - Contact Your House Representative

The Rocky Mountain National Park and Dominguez Canyons wilderness proposals are **one major step closer to becoming reality!** Both proposals, as part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, were passed by the Senate by a vote of 73-21 on January 15th, 2009.



Rocky Mountain National Park, help ensure permanent protection!

These proposals represent years - even decades - of dedicated support from elected officials, local activists and citizens across the state. Achieving wilderness protection for these invaluable gems of Colorado would be an incredible and lasting victory!

The Bill now goes to the House of Representatives which might vote on the bill **as soon as next week!**

[Please act now.](#)

Please **ask your House Representative to pass the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (S.22) with no amendments** and help permanently protect these Colorado icons!

If you also live within Representative John Salazar's district, please also extend special thanks for his tireless work on the Dominguez Canyons wilderness proposal.

Sample Letter

Please add your own personal comments, experiences, or reflections to the suggested text below -- it will make your letter much more effective!

Dear [Representative]
Re: Support Omnibus Lands Bill



Included in the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 are the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Act and the Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Act.

Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Act will create a 211,000-acre National Conservation Area (NCA). Within the NCA will be the 66,000-acre Dominguez Canyons Wilderness Area. The NCA will provide the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with the opportunity to appropriately manage this land for a variety of multiple use trail systems. Recreational users will be able to enter the NCA and engage in activities from off-road vehicle use to hiking, from mountain biking to horseback riding.

The Dominguez Canyons Wilderness will be forever protected for hiking, hunting horseback riding and other forms of quiet recreation.

The Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Act will permanently protect the backcountry of Rocky Mountain National Park as wilderness. To the average park visitor, there will be no noticeable change in how the park is run, because the National Park Service manages the backcountry of the park as if it were wilderness. The lands involved have been recommended for wilderness for decades, so this designation is the final step in the wilderness designation process and will ensure they remain as they are today for future generations.

Please pass, without amendment, the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, and help protect these invaluable landscapes!

Sincerely,

Your Name
You Address

Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Proposal
Learn More

Rocky Mountain National Park, one of the crown jewels of the National Park System, provides tourists and residents a stunning introduction to the Rocky Mountains with access to peaks along the Continental Divide, breathtaking views and myriad opportunities for exploration and discovery.



Rocky Mountain National Park **has been a candidate for wilderness designation since the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964.** The park was established by Congress in 1915 with the help of naturalist Enos Mills and businessman F.O. Stanley. In 1974, President Richard Nixon recommended 239,835 park acres for wilderness designation. The area has been managed as wilderness since the 1960's, its wilderness qualities protected and celebrated by several generations of park managers and visitors.

Let's permanently protect Rocky Mountain National Park!

Rocky Mountain National Park adjacent to Indian Peaks Wilderness and Comanche Peaks Wilderness to the south and to Never Summer Wilderness to

the west, the park is also surrounded by Routt, Roosevelt and Arapaho national forests. Because of its unique location, wilderness designation for the park will protect wildlife habitat that extends beyond park boundaries, anchoring a continuous stretch of protected wild lands from the Wyoming border to Rollins Pass, near the Winter Park Ski Resort in Colorado.

The Path to Wilderness

Rocky Mountain National Park has been a candidate for wilderness designation since the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964. The park was established by Congress in 1915 with the help of naturalist Enos Mills and businessman F.O. Stanley. In 1974, President Richard Nixon recommended 239,835 park acres for wilderness designation. The area has been managed as wilderness since the 1960's, its wilderness qualities protected and celebrated by several generations of park managers and visitors.

There is an incredible amount of local support for the passage of Rocky Mountain National Park wilderness legislation. The towns of Grand Lake, Winter Park and Estes Park, along with Larimer, Boulder and Grand Counties, the League of Women Voters, Colorado Wilderness Network, Headwaters Trails Alliance and International Mountain Bicycling Association, all endorsed the bill and would like to see the bill passed.

Natural, Cultural and Recreational Values

The elevations in the proposed wilderness area range from 7,500 to 14,255 feet, encompassing green valleys and alpine tundra. Longs Peak is the highest peak, and is an extremely popular destination during the summer months; Mount Meeker, at 13,911 feet, rises to the south. The valleys below these high peaks are thick with lodgepole pine, juniper and spruce forests, and rich with wildlife – mountain lions, elk, moose, bighorn sheep and mule deer. Lakes and streams contribute valuable habitat to the area, further supporting the robust biodiversity of the region.

The Effects of Wilderness Designation in the Park

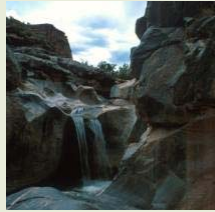
While permanently protecting the wild character of the park lands in perpetuity, wilderness designation will do little to change current park management and function. Park managers will continue to encourage hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, climbing, skiing, snowshoeing and sight-seeing with ample access to one of the nation's most awesome landscapes (and 355 miles of trails).

Trail Ridge Road and Fall River Road will continue to be maintained for motorized travel so that visitors of all ages and abilities can experience the majesty of the park lands and take with them a lasting and powerful impression of their natural legacy. Existing water storage and conveyance structures in and under the park will continue to operate

Wilderness designation will ensure that the park remains as it is today for future generations of visitors to enjoy and explore. Wilderness designation will clarify park management procedures and preserve opportunities for scientific research. Non-mechanized recreation and trail maintenance will continue, as will access for emergency vehicles. Wilderness designation will reaffirm the park's original mission to preserve vistas and wildlife, protecting the unscarred landscape from a criss-crossing of roads and from policies that could degrade the character of the park's forests and its quiet places. In addition, clean air, water and open spaces will be preserved to the benefit of public health in Colorado.

Dominguez-Escalante Wilderness Proposal

[Learn More](#)



Home to striking terrain and abundant wildlife, the proposed Dominguez Canyons Wilderness comprises approximately 66,280 acres of spectacular public land in Mesa and Delta Counties. Dominguez Canyons features magnificent canyons and ancient petroglyphs, with perennial streams elegantly carving their way through flower-studded meadows and pre-historic bedrock.

After spending well over two decades as a Wilderness Study Area, we have an opportunity to pass a bill that would permanently protect this spectacular wild place now. With your help we can ensure that this piece of priority legislation, so very important to Colorado, is passed by Congress this month!

Let's protect the Dominguez-Escalante Canyon Area!

[Take Action now – See Action Alert above...](#)

Volunteer Restoration Project Leaders Needed

Wild Connections is excited to launch our new program, "Reclaiming Wildways." We need your help for this program to be a success! We are currently recruiting Crew Leaders to attend training sessions in February and March to help us lead volunteers in restoration projects this summer. No prior experience is needed, just your time and passion for healthy ecosystems. Minimum age is 16. Wild Connections will pay all fees for leadership trainings!



For more details please contact Ellen at ellen@wildconnections.org or **719-375-8338**.

"Reclaiming Wildways" will be featured in detail in next month's E-News and can be found now in our [current Landscapes](#).

Congressman Mike Coffman Joins Colorado's Delegation

Representative Mike Coffman has joined the Colorado Congressional Delegation, representing the 6th district. Approximately the northern third of the Pike-San Isabel National Forest lies within his district. Wild Connections along with other conservation and recreation organizations attended a recent meeting with his staff to discuss a broad array of public lands topics.

Wild Connections **welcomes Rep. Coffman!**

What Happened With?

Roadless Rule

Governor Ritter asked federal officials for more time to develop the Colorado specific Roadless Rule, and his request was granted. 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!

[Click here for a sample letter to the Governor.](#)

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

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...](#)

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.

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.



Come snowshoe with us! Photo by Jean Smith.



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

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.