

**Natural Resources Defense Council * Sierra Club * League of Conservation Voters *
Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * National Wildlife Federation * Republicans for Environmental
Protection * Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance * Alaska Wilderness League * Grand Canyon Trust *
Oregon Natural Desert Association * New Mexico Wilderness Alliance * California Wilderness Coalition
* Grand Canyon Wildlands Council * Arizona Wilderness Coalition * Colorado Environmental Coalition
* Idaho Conservation League * Wyoming Outdoor Council * Montana Wilderness Association *
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance * Californians for Western Wilderness**

October 21, 2010

Dear Secretary Salazar,

We are so pleased that President Obama recognized September as “National Wilderness Month.” Invoking the “majesty of our Nation’s wilderness” and a rich legacy of past wilderness legislation, the president declared that “we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America’s natural places.”

One year ago, we wrote to ask that you use your authority under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to protect the nation’s remaining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wilderness lands by inventorying them and then designating new wilderness study areas, or WSAs. Such designation would maintain the natural beauty and vast solitude offered by these special places until Congress protects them permanently under the Wilderness Act.

Since 2003, unprotected BLM lands worthy of designation as Wilderness Areas have faced increasing threats due to former Interior Secretary Gale Norton’s legally flawed renunciation of the BLM’s ongoing authority to designate and protect WSAs. Unfortunately, this destructive policy remains in place and many BLM lands remain in peril from industrial development and the ever-increasing spider web of off-road vehicle paths, including the magnificent Labyrinth Canyon of southern Utah; Bangs Canyon and South Shale Ridge in Colorado; Adobe Town in Wyoming; Owyhee Canyonlands in Oregon; Granite Range in Nevada; and Quayle Draw in Arizona..

We renew our request that you issue new wilderness guidance for BLM which would lead to the protection of deserving areas as wilderness study areas. Only about five percent of the entire United States is protected as wilderness, with over half that amount within Alaska alone. Only about 2.5% of BLM lands are managed as wilderness. That is not enough to ensure that future generations will have access to a true wilderness experience. Particularly in BLM Field Offices where Resource Management Plan revisions are being pursued, updated guidance could be a benefit to sound natural resources management.

As we promised last year, we stand ready to work with you to preserve these incomparable landscapes for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

(reverse)

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