

November 19, 2019

Rep. Dianna DeGette
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Outdoor recreation community support for the Colorado Wilderness Act

Dear Representative DeGette:

On behalf of the outdoor recreation community and the outdoor industry, Outdoor Alliance, The Conservation Alliance, and the Outdoor Industry Association write to express our appreciation for your work with the outdoor recreation community and to endorse H.R. 2546, the Colorado Wilderness Act.

The Colorado Wilderness Act protects important landscapes in Colorado for their conservation and recreation values. The bill protects Handies Peak and Redcloud Peak, two 14ers with spectacular view of the San Juan Mountains. The Norwood Canyon area includes protections for paddlers on the San Miguel River, as well as the area's unique geology, and the bill provides important protections for paddlers through the Dolores River. The bill supports conservation values and many forms of human powered outdoor recreation to the benefit of the environment and Colorado's quality of life and outdoor recreation economy, which supports 229,000 direct jobs, \$28 billion in annual consumer spending, and \$2 billion in state and local tax revenue.

Importantly, our community supports this bill because of the efforts you have made to ensure that protection of conservation and recreation values move forward in harmony. Because some forms of sustainable outdoor recreation—including mountain biking and bolt-intensive climbing—are not compatible with a Wilderness designation, it is essential that Wilderness bills move forward with careful regard for important existing and prospective recreational values. We greatly appreciate your careful efforts to ensure the bill does not close or impair access for valued areas. We strongly support and appreciate, as well, your inclusion of language to ensure that fixed anchors for climbing are managed appropriately within Wilderness areas. Without these considerations we would not be able to offer our endorsement.

Through the process of vetting the proposed designations, we commend your efforts to consult with the outdoor recreation community, both local and national. We appreciated the opportunity to work with you to share GIS data concerning important recreational features of the landscape and to ground truth those concerns with a wide array of outdoor recreation stakeholders in Colorado and nationally. We believe these steps are essential to building widely-supported proposals that work to the benefit of conservation and recreation, now and into the future, and we hope that outreach to local stakeholders in Colorado will continue as the bill makes its way through Congress.

In general, we strongly prefer that important areas for activities like mountain biking be protected, including for their conservation value, through non-Wilderness designations rather than being left in multiple-use management. In light of the careful attention you have given, however, to avoiding undue impacts to recreation access—as well as the important conservation values and recreation opportunities supported by the proposed designations—we support the bill with the proposed amendments and look forward to seeing it advance. We hope to find opportunities to work with you in the future to develop appropriate recreation and conservation-focused solutions to protect landscapes where Wilderness designation is not a viable approach.

Thank you again for your ongoing efforts to support recreation and conservation values in Colorado.

Best regards,



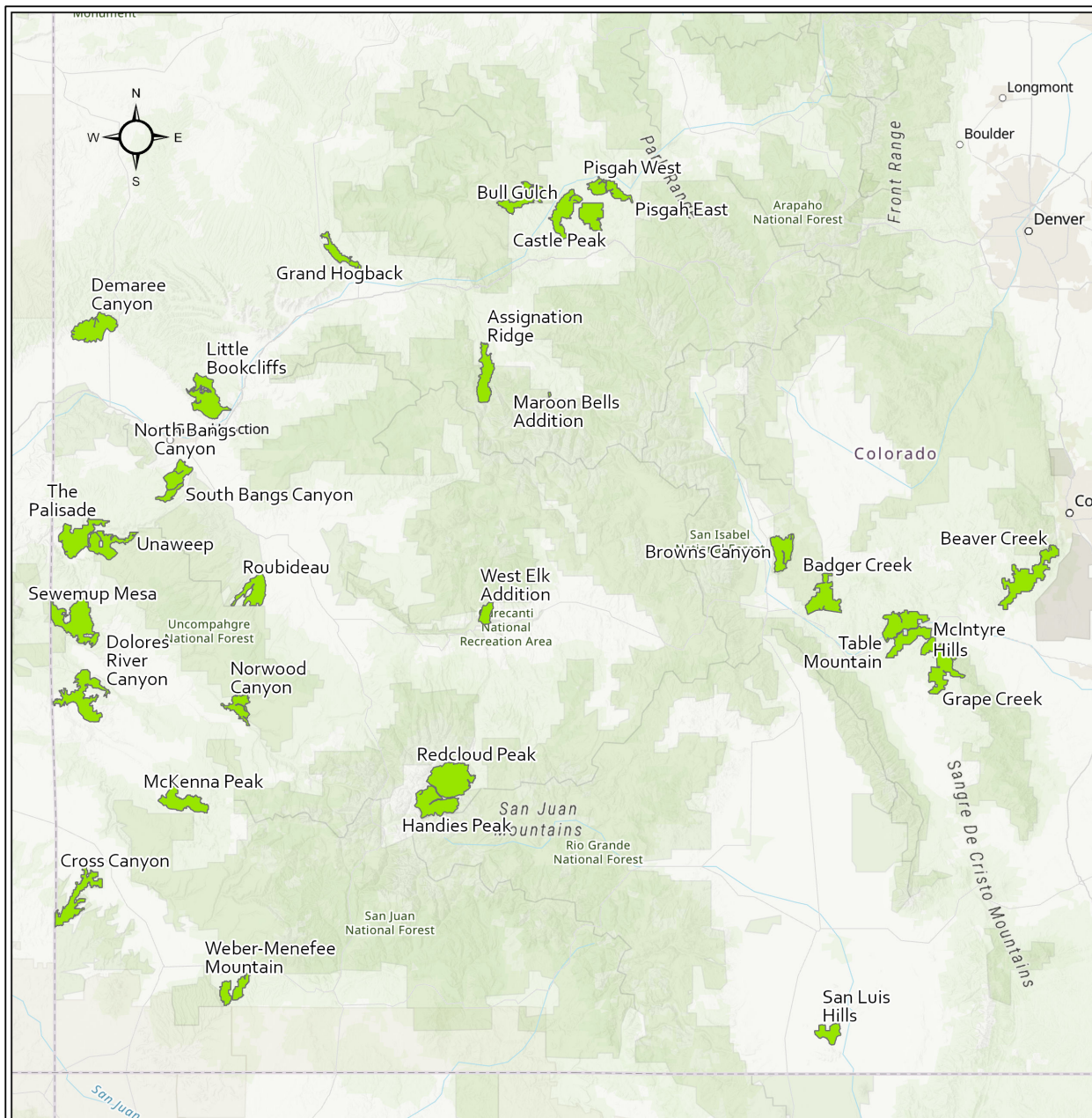
Louis Geltman
Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance



Kirsten Blackburn
Advocacy Manager
The Conservation Alliance




Patricia Rojas-Ungar
Vice President, Government Affairs
Outdoor Industry Association

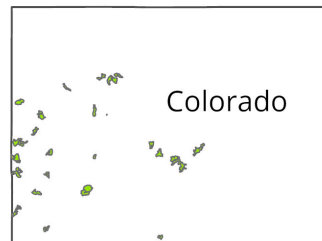


Colorado Wilderness Act - Overview Map

Colorado Wilderness Act (HR 2546)

 Proposed Wilderness Area

0 10 20 40 Miles




Our Organizations

Outdoor Alliance

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of ten member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

The Conservation Alliance

The Conservation Alliance is an organization of like-minded businesses whose collective contributions support grassroots environmental organizations and their efforts to protect wild places where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. Alliance funds have played a key role in protecting rivers, trails, wildlands and climbing areas. Membership in the Alliance is open to all companies who care about protecting our most threatened wild places for habitat and outdoor recreation. Since its inception in 1989, The Conservation Alliance has contributed more than \$21 million, helped to protect more than 51 million acres of wildlands; protect 3,107 miles of rivers; stop or remove 34 dams; designate five marine reserves; and purchase 14 climbing areas. For complete information on The Conservation Alliance, see www.conservationalliance.com.

Outdoor Industry Association

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) is the national trade association for the outdoor industry and is the title sponsor of Outdoor Retailer, the largest outdoor products tradeshow in North America. OIA serves over 1,300 manufacturers, suppliers, and retailers through a focus on international trade and public lands and recreation policy, sustainable business innovation and outdoor participation.