

## **SUMMIT COUNTY PROPOSAL FOR THE PUBLIC LANDS INITIATIVE**

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Summit County has developed a proposal for the expansion of the High Uintas Wilderness, along with the creation of Watershed Management Areas and a Special Management Area, with the goal of improving the overall health and particularly the watershed of the north slope of the Uinta Mountains, and improving management of bighorn sheep. This proposal is the outcome of a stakeholder-driven process to thoroughly study the needs of the forest and potential effects of expanding the wilderness area. The map of the proposed area is the result of a consensus process with all parties supporting the final version. The Summit County Council supports this plan, and respectfully submits it for consideration as part of Congressman Bishop’s Public Lands Initiative.

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### **WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AREAS**

- Establish the Widdop Mountain Watershed Management Area, comprised of approximately 8,025 acres, and the East Fork Smiths Fork Watershed Management Area, comprised of approximately 3,178 acres, as generally shown on the map.
- The watershed management areas will be managed to protect water quality, while allowing people to continue to enjoy the area. Only such uses as are consistent with the purposes of the watershed management areas will be permitted.
- Fuel reduction and forest health management treatments to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects will be permitted only where necessary to protect or improve water quality or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure.
- Roads:
  - Construction of permanent roads will be prohibited.
  - Construction of temporary roads will be permitted if necessary for fuel reduction projects, but any temporary road must be decommissioned within three years of project completion.
- Federal lands within the watershed management areas will be withdrawn from disposal and mineral entry.
- Existing grazing will continue to be permitted, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.
- There will be no Federal reserved water rights, nor any impacts on existing water rights.

### **LITTLE WEST FORK BLACKS SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA**

- Reclassify the Little West Fork Blacks as a Special Management Area, comprised of approximately 8,231 acres, as generally shown on the map.
- The special management area will be managed to maintain and restore watershed and ecosystem function and aquatic habitat (consistent with the purposes and conditions set forth in 2003 Wasatch-Cache National Forest Plan Revision, or any future revision of that plan).
- Only such uses as are consistent with the purposes of the special management area will be permitted.
- Fuel reduction and forest health management treatments will be permitted within the special management area to (1) restore watershed and ecosystem function; (2) reduce hazardous fuels; and (3) protect property in the wildland urban interface.

### **LITTLE WEST FORK BLACKS SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA (CONTINUED)**

- Temporary road construction will be permitted where necessary to fulfill the purposes of the special management area, including for fuel reduction and forest health management treatments (including prescribed burns).
- Federal lands within the special management area will be withdrawn from disposal and mineral entry.
- Existing grazing will continue to be permitted, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.
- The special management area designation will not preclude road construction within the special management area to provide reasonable access to private land.
- There will be no Federal reserved water rights, nor any impacts on existing water rights.

### **WILDERNESS**

- An addition to the High Uintas Wilderness will be designated, totaling approximately 23,903 acres, as generally shown on the map.
- Spirit Lake Lodge and approximately 476 acres surrounding the Lodge will be excluded from the boundaries of the wilderness addition.
- Wilderness management will be in accordance with the Wilderness Act.
- The proposed wilderness was determined based on current and historic uses, natural boundaries such as streams, reservoirs, lakes and ridges, and need for additional watershed management in specified areas.
- There will be no Federal reserved water rights, nor any impacts on existing water rights.
- No reservoirs or canals are included in proposed wilderness. Wilderness boundaries are a minimum of 300 feet from any reservoir and 150 feet from any canal, diversion ditches or streams used for irrigation.
- No roads or motor vehicle routes are included in proposed wilderness. Wilderness boundaries are a minimum of 300 feet from the center line of the North Slope Road and Middle Beaver Road, and 30 feet from any other road.

### **BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT**

- Ranchers, conservation groups, and other involved stakeholders shall work cooperatively with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) and United States Forest Service to achieve bighorn sheep management in the Uinta Mountains that is consistent with the following principles:
  - Bighorn sheep populations east of the ridge running northeast from Gilbert Peak, as shown on the map, will be maintained.
  - Bighorn sheep will not be reintroduced west of the ridge.
  - If bighorn sheep migrate west of the ridge, UDWR will determine whether the sheep are threatened with disease transmission through interaction with domestic livestock. If no threat exists, the bighorn sheep will be permitted to remain west of the ridge, and if threat of disease transmission does exist, UDWR may relocate the bighorn sheep back to the east side of the ridge and/or issue depredation tag(s).

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Ranchers, conservation groups, and other involved stakeholders shall work cooperatively with the United States Forest Service to ensure that the agency is adequately clearing trails and authorizing the maintenance of fence lines and other facilities in the proposed and existing wilderness, including the use of chainsaws as appropriate and necessary.
- Ranchers, conservation groups, and other involved stakeholders shall work cooperatively with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and United States Forest Service to support the reintroduction of beavers in appropriate locations on the north slope of the Uinta Mountains.
- Ranchers, conservation groups, and other involved stakeholders shall work cooperatively with the United States Forest Service to ensure that the agency is adequately restoring watershed health in areas damaged or threatened by insects or disease.
- Summit County recognizes the importance of livestock grazing to local communities, and the states of Utah and Wyoming, and therefore supports continued livestock grazing in the Uinta Mountains at levels currently authorized by existing grazing permits. Summit County supports continuing the current allotments, grazing levels, and seasons of use. To the maximum extent practicable, Summit County recommends that conflicts between livestock and wildlife be resolved in a manner that maintains existing livestock grazing levels and does not result in cancellation of existing permits.

### **LAND EXCHANGE**

- Summit County requests the conveyance of BLM parcel located in the Snyderville Basin (NW ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 14, Township 1 South, Range 4 East of the Salt Lake Basin Meridian).
- Park City Municipal Corporation requests the conveyance of BLM parcel located within Park City Limits (Lot 28 of Section 15, Township 2 South, Range 4 East of the Salt Lake Basin Meridian).
- Park City Municipal Corporation requests the conveyance of BLM parcel located within Park City Limits (Lot 14 of Section 15, Township 2 South, Range 4 East of the Salt Lake Basin Meridian).
- Park City Municipal Corporation requests the conveyance of BLM parcel located within Park City Limits (Lot 29 of Section 22, Township 2 South, Range 4 East of the Salt Lake Basin Meridian).