



GRAND COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS
Elizabeth Tubbs (Chair) · Chris Baird (Vice Chair)
Ken Ballantyne · Jaylyn Hawks · A. Lynn Jackson
Mary McGann · Rory Paxman

April 9, 2015

Honorable Rob Bishop
c/o Fred Ferguson and Casey Snider
Fred.Ferguson@mail.house.gov
Casey.Snider@mail.house.gov

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you once again for the opportunity to resolve several long-standing public land use issues via your willingness to act as our congressional sponsor for a public lands bill.

On March 31st of this year the Grand County Council met in a Special Meeting to vote on the final recommendations for inclusion in your bill. The meeting was the culmination of many months of work by two different councils, public input, public hearings and an extensive public comment period. Over the past several weeks Grand County has submitted preliminary recommendations, based on outcomes and “straw” votes during our on-going workshops, so that our recommendations could be included in your draft map. Since your time-frame to publish the draft map has somewhat changed, we would now like you to consider only our final recommendations, approved by a majority vote of the council, for inclusion in the draft map. Note that our final vote included some amendments to previous “straw” votes. Grand County’s final overall map and specific shape files are downloadable from <http://grandcountyutah.net/866/Public-Lands-Recommendation-Mar-31>. And the final recommended management objectives, including designations outlined below, are attached (and also available online).

You may recall that, for purposes of efficiency, we divided the County into three regional areas (Bookcliffs Area North of I-70, Watershed and East Arches Area, and Greater Big Flat Area & Labyrinth Canyon Region). We have also established “Other Grand County Areas” that cross these regional areas. The regional map is again provided, and the recommended management objectives reference these regions.

Attached are management objectives (as illustrated on the map for the following:

- Bookcliffs Area North of I-70
 - Wilderness and roads

- Watershed and East Arches Area
 - Wilderness and roads
 - “Castle Valley” NCA designation
 - “Utah Rims” OHV SRMA expansion
 - Arches National Park expansion

- Greater Big Flat Area and Labyrinth Canyon Region
 - Wilderness
 - “Labyrinth Canyon” Special Management Area designation

- “Moab” Recreation Area designation to include six management zones (White Wash/Dee Pass; Monitor/Merrimac; Gemini Bridges South; Amasa Back/Gold Bar; Bar M/Klondike (Arches West); and Mineral Canyon)
- SITLA trade-in area
- Other Grand County Areas
 - Wild & Scenic River management objectives
 - Rights of ways & roads in wilderness
 - Canyonlands Field Airport expansion/request of federal lands


I would like to add that much of the work that went into developing the management objectives for the areas/designations listed above was accomplished by a multi-stakeholder group loosely referred to as the Big Flats Workgroup. This group, led by two Council Members during 2014, met numerous times to hash out solutions to issues in an area where many interests compete. The road to forwarding these recommendations would have been a lot longer and more difficult to navigate without that foundation. The newly seated Council involved in this process has participated in many meetings and has had to quickly become familiar with many complex issues to bring this to a conclusion. Although the Council and the community have not reached consensus, we hope that everyone will find the resulting compromise acceptable.

It is important to note that, at the beginning of this process in 2013, a Council study committee was designated who developed three alternatives initially to be considered for inclusion in the public lands bill. All three alternatives included a recommendation to set aside a swath of land for a potential “transportation corridor” through the Bookcliffs, from Uinta County/Grand County border to I-70. During subsequent workshops, however, this concept was not supported by a majority of the Council and, you will note, it is not a recommendation forwarded by Grand County. Likewise, language relating to the Antiquities Act was also not supported by a majority of the Grand County Council and is not included in our proposal, though we recognize that this may be incorporated regardless.

It is also important to note that the accuracy of the shape files are intended only to be illustrative of our intentions. However, where existing landmarks (such as roads, trails, property boundaries, political boundaries, etc.) exist it will be necessary to seek more authoritative data. While most of our boundaries will likely be self-evident, some may come from data that you may not have (local trail systems, watershed boundaries, etc.). Feel free to contact us with any questions as we would be happy to clarify.

Once again, thank you for championing a locally derived solution to federally owned land management in Grand County. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth A. Tubbs, Chair
Grand County Council

cc: Congressman Chaffetz, c/o Wade Garrett, Wade.Garrett@mail.house.gov
Grand County Council

Attachments: Recommended management objectives; map & .shp files (online)

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