

**RESOLUTION
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OURAY COUNTY**

Re: Sneffels Wilderness Expansion

WHEREAS, the Sneffels range of the San Juan Mountains in Ouray County is an area of extraordinary scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational value; and

WHEREAS, the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries do not protect in perpetuity adjacent public lands in the Sneffels range which are capable and deserving of permanent Wilderness designation; and

WHEREAS, a proposal to expand the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness boundaries to include these public lands has been presented to the Ouray County Board of Commissioners as represented in a map entitled "Whitehouse Expansion Of The Mount Sneffels Wilderness"; and

WHEREAS, visitors and residents of Ouray County today enjoy these public lands for hiking, camping, photography, mountain climbing, hunting, skiing, scenic enjoyment and other wilderness uses; and

WHEREAS, recreation and other uses of the public lands of Ouray County are a vital part of the local economy; and

WHEREAS, these public lands provide important mid-elevation habitat for game and non-game wildlife and help connect wildlife habitat in the existing Mount Sneffels Wilderness Area to the west with habitat in the Big Blue Wilderness Area to the east; and

WHEREAS, these public lands include important watershed areas for domestic and agricultural water sources including Beaver Creek, the Town of Ridgway's only source of potable water; and

WHEREAS, preservation of these public lands as designated Wilderness would better protect their scenic, environmental, economic, and recreational values in perpetuity from the adverse effects of future development; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area does not include the Dallas Trail System so that mountain bikers can continue to enjoy this beautiful and challenging trail; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area likewise does not include any roads currently open to motorized use; and

WHEREAS, ranching is an important part of the history and economy of Ouray County and portions of the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area are currently used for livestock grazing; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area is already managed by the US Forest Service in substantial measure as wilderness; and

WHEREAS, the designation as wilderness of the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area will make this special place part of a system of places wild and free for the permanent good of all.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO, AS FOLLOWS:

- That Congress enact legislation to designate the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as permanent wilderness,
- That the legislation includes appropriate language to protect existing water rights including those of the Town of Ridgway, as well as reasonable motorized access to maintain such rights,
- That the legislation includes appropriate language to permit livestock grazing to continue in the Whitehouse Expansion of the Sneffels Wilderness Area as provided under current law, including reasonable motorized access to facilitate use of livestock grazing.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 5th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2007.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO

Attest:

Don Batchelder, Chair

Michelle Nauer, Clerk and Recorder
By: Linda Munson-Haley, Deputy Clerk of the Board