

Resolution #2015-014

**RESOLUTION
OF
THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Ouray County, Colorado**

**STATING THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LANDS TO OURAY COUNTY'S ECONOMY,
RECREATION, HERITAGE, AND QUALITY OF LIFE, AND SUPPORTING CONTINUED
FEDERAL OWNERSHIP OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS**

WHEREAS, Ouray County includes a unique wealth of scenic and wild natural landscapes, including mountains, rivers, forests, lakes, basins and plateaus; and

WHEREAS, most such natural landscapes within the county are federal public lands owned equally by all Americans; and

WHEREAS, public lands under the management of the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management comprise 46% of the land surface in Ouray County; and

WHEREAS, these federally administered public lands are essential to the quality of life in Ouray County, providing extensive public recreational opportunities for wildlife watching, hiking, hunting, fishing, backpacking, horseback riding, skiing, ice climbing, bicycling, sightseeing, and numerous other outdoor recreational activities, thereby improving the health of our community and its visitors; and

WHEREAS, these same federally administered public lands provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, fish and wildlife and the exceptionally scenic landscapes of Ouray County's federal public lands attract the outdoor recreation and tourism that are the dominant drivers of Ouray County's thriving economy; and

WHEREAS, the unified, experienced and consistent management of federally administered public lands by the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management across the nation best protects the national value and utility of the public lands for all Americans and the values on which the economy in Ouray County are dependent; and

WHEREAS, Ouray county's attraction to businesses, employers, quality employees, and the tourists who are a significant component of our economy overwhelmingly owes to the high quality of life arising from the expansive wild landscapes and outdoor recreational opportunities available on surrounding federally managed public lands; and

WHEREAS, Ouray County's agricultural industry has traditionally relied heavily on public-lands grazing of sheep and cattle; and

WHEREAS, we believe that management of our federal public lands and wildlife via long-established collaborative approaches in which federal public land management agencies cooperate with the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife, Colorado State Forest Service, Ouray County officials, and the community are more likely to produce effective landscape-wide management than would ownership or management of federal public lands by the state of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Ouray County residents actively collaborate among diverse interests and with public land managers to improve equitable public land management and public access; and

WHEREAS, federal public land management agencies directly and indirectly employ many full-time residents of Ouray County, contributing significantly to the fiscal and social health of the county; and

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WHEREAS, Americans from throughout the country value federal public lands as a distinctly pridelful part of our national heritage, no matter in which state we live; and

WHEREAS, owing to ongoing drought and insect infestations, forests in Ouray County are increasingly prone to wildfire, including periodic large-scale fires; and

WHEREAS, federal money, manpower, aircraft and other specialized fire prevention and firefighting assets are essential to protecting our communities, infrastructure and public lands are unavailable at the state and county levels; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that there may be certain circumstances in which the limited transfer of federal public lands under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act may be appropriate and beneficial to local communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, Be It Resolved by the Board of County Commissioners of Ouray County, Colorado, that:

1. The Ouray County Board of County Commissioners strongly supports continued federal land ownership and management in Ouray County, and the irreplaceable value these public lands bring our country's economy, recreation, heritage, and quality of life.
2. The Ouray County Board of County Commissioners enthusiastically commends the dedicated federal employees who manage America's public lands in Ouray County, as well as the dedicated employees of the State of Colorado that mänge the fish, wildlife and forests in Ouray County, in partnership with the federal public land managers.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 26 DAY OF May, 2015.

Voting for: Commissioners Batchelder, Padgett and Tisdel

Voting against:



[Handwritten signature of Michelle Nauer]

Michelle Nauer, Clerk and Recorder
By: Hannah Hollenbeck, Deputy Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO

[Handwritten signature of Don Batchelder]

Don Batchelder, Chair

[Handwritten signature of Lynn M. Padgett]

Lynn M. Padgett, Vice-Chair

[Handwritten signature of Ben Tisdel]

Ben Tisdel, Commissioner