



Olympic National Park, Washington

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## The Nature Crisis Requires Bold Action

### National Campaign to Protect 30% of U.S. Lands and Waters

The science is clear. Earth is at an ecological tipping point, driven by accelerating climate change and the rapid destruction of vast and vital ecosystems. Nearly one million animal and plant species, clean air and water, and sustainable food supplies are at risk.

The 30X30 movement is galvanizing people around the world to conserve 30 percent of earth's lands and waters by 2030 to avoid catastrophic consequences of climate change and the extinction crisis.

Although roughly one-quarter of U.S. oceans are protected, almost all of these waters are in the Pacific, leaving the East and Gulf Coasts open for more development.

The situation on land is even more challenging. Today, only 12.4 percent of U.S. lands—whether privately or publicly owned—are managed primarily to conserve nature.

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## Dear Public Lands Champion,

I hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

Despite these challenging times, our defense of America's wildlands has not wavered. And that's important, because the Trump administration is attacking public lands without pause. But with your support, we will prevail.

On page 4, you can read about our defense of the National Environmental Protection Act of 1970, a foundational environmental protection law, which is currently under assault by the Trump administration.

Our cover story reports on 30X30, the global movement to protect 30 percent of the earth's lands and waters by 2030, and examines The Wilderness Society's leadership role in achieving the 30X30 goal within the U.S.

Your support gives me confidence that we will prevail and advance our mission: Uniting people to protect America's wild places.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Jamie Williams  
President



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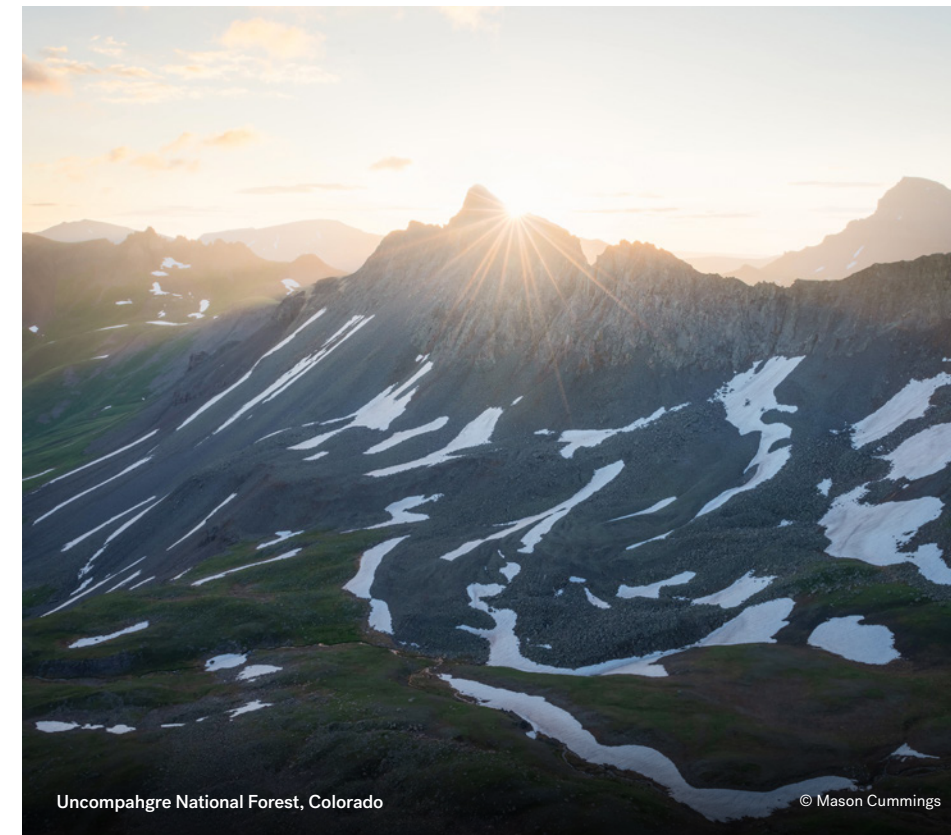
Questions or comments?  
Please contact  
Carolyn Stevens at  
[carolyn\\_stevens@tws.org](mailto:carolyn_stevens@tws.org)



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“Conservation policy and practice must be transformed so **all people benefit equitably** from America's public lands”



Uncompahgre National Forest, Colorado

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New York City, New York

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## Federal Public Lands are the Key

Roughly 28 percent of the land in the United States is managed by the federal government—providing the best opportunities we have to achieve 30X30. However, resource extraction is the dominant use of these lands, two-thirds of which have no protection and are open to the coal, natural gas, oil, mining and timber industries. But if we shift the focus from resource extraction to conservation, public lands can serve as the foundation for a continental-scale network of wildlands connected and protected to allow wildlife and plants to migrate in order to adapt to the changing climate.

## Building a More Inclusive Conservation Movement

Thanks to you, The Wilderness Society has developed expertise in public lands policy, strength in working locally as well as nationally, and capacity to work with hundreds of partners to achieve national conservation victories. Expanding on these capabilities, we are setting out to shape a collective 30X30 campaign in the U.S. Our focus will be on protecting large landscapes that will sustain ecological integrity in the face of climate change, honor the rights of indigenous people and tribal nations, support the health of local communities, and provide equitable benefits for all.

Conservation policy and practice must be transformed so all people benefit equitably from America's public lands. It begins with your support, by helping us build a revitalized, inclusive conservation movement from the local level up, in a way that includes indigenous and frontline communities in prominent decision-making roles. Only when we work together can we ensure everyone's participation in the stewardship, advocacy and enjoyment of their public lands.



Clear-cutting  
in the Pacific  
Northwest

# The “Bill of Rights” for the Environment is Under Attack

The Trump administration is proposing changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that would put the interests of polluters ahead of the public.

For 50 years, NEPA has been a cornerstone of environmental protection. It is one of our nation’s most important laws protecting public health and the environment, including the water we drink and the air we breathe. NEPA also protects the rights of communities to participate in decisions that affect their health and quality of life. If an agency wants to dam a river, widen a highway or log a forest, it must formally consider how that project will affect the environment and seek public comments. This is critical to ensuring that nearby communities—the people who will have to live with the consequences—get a fair chance to weigh in on whether a proposal is a good idea.

NEPA was enacted in 1970 by President Richard Nixon against the backdrop of catastrophic environmental events, including Ohio’s famed Cuyahoga River fire. It has guided the federal government through intricate conservation problems in ecosystems that can’t withstand shortsighted development. Furthermore, it has been a critical tool for our democracy, ensuring transparency and accountability through an open, public process.

But while NEPA is a true bedrock conservation law, it is not immune to attack. On January 9, 2020, the White House Council on Environmental Quality proposed revised rules that would weaken the law and make it easier to keep the public in the dark about actions that might end up hurting their communities or shared public lands and waters.



© Bob Wick, Bureau of Land Management

Under the proposed rollback, federal agencies would have the ability to write their own environmental reviews—and in some cases, skip them altogether. They would no longer need to disclose conflicts of interest or financial stakes in the projects they are reviewing. Perhaps most alarming, they would receive permission to ignore how their own actions contribute to climate change.

On top of severely limiting when the environmental review process would apply, the Trump proposal allows federal agencies to ignore public comments on those projects. The result is that projects would be approved without adequate oversight, paving the way for an agency to force a road through delicate wildlife habitat, clear-cut old-growth forests that provide clean air and drinking water, or dump toxic waste next to the community park that provides a safe place for kids to play—all without the careful input of the public.

Of all the dangerous actions the Trump administration has taken to undermine public lands, the NEPA rollback proposal may be the most disturbing because it could potentially have long-lasting impacts. By making it easier to exploit resources and pollute, this action fits neatly

**By making it easier to exploit resources and pollute, this action fits neatly into an anti-transparency and anti-science “energy dominance” agenda that caters to private interests.**

into an anti-transparency and anti-science “energy dominance” agenda that caters to private interests. It leaves frontline communities—predominantly people of color, indigenous and low-income populations, those disproportionately impacted by environmental threats—exposed to harm.

At a time when our environmental challenges seem more dire and complex than ever, it is unacceptable that major decisions around public lands and waters would leave science and the public out of the equation. With your help, The Wilderness Society is fighting back—generating strong public opposition to the proposal and educating members of Congress on the importance of NEPA. Together, we’ll make sure this important law continues to protect our environment and our ability to make our voices heard.



## Wilderness and You



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## The Story of Public Lands—For All

You appreciate, protect and defend public lands. And you know that to galvanize a broader, stronger and more inclusive conservation movement, we must instill this commitment in others. To save the places we love and to create policies that are fair and equitable, it is important that we tell the full story of the wild landscapes in America's public lands system. With shared understanding, shared lands have the power to connect us as individuals and as communities, now and for generations to come.

Your generous support has allowed The Wilderness Society to develop a vitally important new resource, the “Public Lands in the United States” curriculum. This unique learning tool is designed to help people of all ages and identities understand how public lands came to be, how they are managed and how we can all help protect them.

The curriculum sets out to provide a more complete and accurate account of the history surrounding our nation's public lands, as well as the movement to protect them. In particular, it reinforces knowledge that the public lands beloved by millions of people today were Indigenous

lands long before the United States became a nation. Furthermore, the curriculum conveys that the actions taken to “conserve” public lands have sometimes been exclusionary, insensitive or engineered to benefit only a privileged few.

In just a few months, more than 1,300 people have downloaded the curriculum, at no cost, so they can learn and share the complex, unvarnished story of America's public lands. Educators, youth and outdoor program leaders, and staff from public lands and museums of natural and cultural history have all used the curriculum.

By telling a more inclusive story, the curriculum helps make public lands a welcoming place for us all—one we all should have the ability to enjoy and the power to protect.



You can learn more about the curriculum and register to receive it at [www.wilderness.org/plcurriculum](http://www.wilderness.org/plcurriculum).

## Your Support in Action

# Countering New Threats to National Monuments

In February, the Trump administration released their final management plans for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments—despite the fact that we are in the middle of a court battle challenging their unlawful reduction of these two monuments by more than two million acres.

Among other threats, the plans propose to open the national monuments to new roads and infrastructure, laying the groundwork to increase visitor traffic or otherwise damage cultural and natural resources. And it doesn't provide monitoring or security to protect irreplaceable cultural sites, like cliffside-dwellings and rock art panels, from looting and destruction. Off-road

vehicles would be allowed in broad swaths of both national monuments, including on formerly closed routes, within sensitive areas, and on some routes that cut through wilderness study areas.

With your help, we're fighting back against this outrageous move. Last year, we won a court ruling that requires the government to notify us 48 hours before beginning ground-disturbing activities anywhere within the original boundaries of both monuments. So, if the Trump administration tries to implement these premature plans, we will be prepared to stop them. Thanks to your support, we will work together to protect these special places, and others like them, all across the country.

Bears Ears National Monument, Utah



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The Wilderness Society  
1615 M St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
www.wilderness.org  
1-800-THE-WILD

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Denali National Park, Alaska

© Tim Rains, National Park Service

Sheenjek River Valley, Alaska



## Advocates for Wilderness

By making a gift of \$1,000 or more to The Wilderness Society, you join a team of conservation leaders in the fight to protect America's wild places for the benefit of all. To learn more about becoming an *Advocate for Wilderness*, including special member benefits, please visit [wilderness.org/benefits](http://wilderness.org/benefits).