



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

RESOLUTION

ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF NORTHWEST COLORADO (AGNC) RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE "30 X 30" LAND PRESERVATION GOAL

WHEREAS, AGNC is the Association known as the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado and is composed of but not limited to the geographical area known as the State of Colorado Planning and Management Region 11; and

WHEREAS, the "Region" is comprised of Western Colorado Counties of Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt along with associate members Delta, Montrose, and Grand Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Association was created pursuant to Article XIV, Section 18 (2) of the Colorado Constitution and C.R.S., Chapter 88, Article 2, 1963 as amended, and shall exercise and discharge its powers and duties as provided by State law and accordingly shall provide legislative issue analysis of regional issues including but not limited to Federal/State Public lands, Wilderness, Air or Water Quality proposals and Colorado, White or Yampa River Basin water issues; and

WHEREAS, the federal government already owns approximately 36% of the land in the state of Colorado and approximately 27% of the land in the western part of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Colorado can only consume 1/3 of its annual amount of water produced by rain and snow, and the rest is regulated by the state water court; and

WHEREAS, designating lands as wilderness does not assure its preservation. Left in an undisturbed or natural state, these lands are highly susceptible to wildfires, insect infestation and disease, all of which exacerbate greenhouse emissions which adversely impact global climate change; and

WHEREAS, because of the predominance of federal land in Northwest Colorado, the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economic condition, and culture of the region, its businesses, and its citizens depend on the manner in which these lands and their resources are used and accessed; and

WHEREAS, many of Northwest Colorado's businesses and its citizens are involved in or otherwise depend on industries that utilize federal lands and their resources, including the forest products industry, livestock grazing, oil and gas exploration and production, mining and mineral development, recreational industries, hunting and other outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, these industries are important components of the Colorado economy, and are major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of Northwest Colorado and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., issued Executive Order 14008 entitled Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (86 Fed. Reg. 7,619); and

WHEREAS, in Section 216 of Executive Order 14008, President Biden directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture and other senior officials, to develop a program to conserve at least 30 percent of the lands and waters in the United States by 2030, which is called the “30 x 30” program; and

WHEREAS, under the 30 x 30 program, some 680 million acres of our Nation’s lands would be set aside and permanently preserved in its current state, preventing the productive use of these lands and their resources; and

WHEREAS, there is no constitutional or statutory authority for the President, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, or any other federal agency to set aside and permanently preserve 30 percent of all land and water in the United States, and no such authority is referenced in Executive Order 14008; and

WHEREAS, the 30 x 30 program, if implemented, is likely to cause significant harm to the economy of Northwest Colorado, and injure the Region’s businesses and its citizens by depriving them of access to public lands and national forest system lands and preventing the productive use of these lands’ resources; and

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of some 680 million acres of federal lands from multiple use and placement of such lands in permanent conservation status will cause dramatic and irreversible harm to the economies of many western states, including Colorado, and in particular rural counties whose citizens depend on access to federal lands for their livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 14008 at Sec. 216(a) directs the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other relevant federal agencies to “submit a report to the Task Force within 90 days of the date of this order recommending steps that the United States should take, working with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, agricultural and forest landowners, fishermen, and other key stakeholders, to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado, as follows:

1. The Board opposes the 30 x 30 program, including its objective of permanently preserving 30 percent of the Nation’s lands in its current state by 2030, or any similar program that will set aside and prevent the productive use of millions of acres of our lands.
2. The Board further opposes the designation of public lands and national forests in Northwest Colorado as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open spaces, or other conservation land, thereby restricting public access to such lands and preventing the development and productive use of the resources on or within such lands.
3. The Board supports the continued management of the public lands and the national forests under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, recognizing the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, energy, timber, food, and fiber.

4. The Board supports maintaining and enhancing public access to public lands and national forests and opposes road closures, road decommissioning, moratoria on road construction, and other limitations on public access for the purpose of fulfilling the 30 x 30 program's objectives.
5. The Board recognizes and supports the State of Colorado's water rights system, including the doctrine of prior appropriation and other state laws and programs governing water rights and water use, and opposes any federal designation of waters and watercourses within the County that would impair or restrict water diversions and uses authorized under Colorado law.
6. The Board supports reasonable national, regional, and global greenhouse gas emissions policies and goals that are comprehensive, practical, cost-effective, and do not unnecessarily single out specific industries or activities but opposes the use of global climate change as an excuse to set aside larger tracts of land as preserves or open space to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives.
7. The Board maintains that the designation of public lands and national forest lands as wilderness, wilderness study areas, wildlife preserves, open space, or other conservation land to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives may lawfully occur, if at all, only through the planning process mandated by the Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA) (for public lands) or the National Forest Management Act (for national forest lands), including public notice and an opportunity to comment, analysis and disclosure of the impacts of such land acquisition on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of the counties in Northwest Colorado, their businesses and their citizens, and careful coordination with our counties to ensure consistency with County land use plans and land management policies.
8. The Board also maintains that any non-federal lands or other rights that are acquired to fulfill the 30 x 30 program's objectives should be acquired only from willing landowners and for the payment of full and fair market value for all rights and interests acquired, and not through regulatory compulsion, and only after analyzing and considering the impacts of such land acquisitions on the well-being, health, safety, welfare, economy, and culture of Northwest Colorado, its businesses, and its citizens.

DATED this 17 day of March, 2021.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS OF
NORTHWEST COLORADO, STATE OF COLORADO

By: Mike Samson
Mike Samson, AGNC Chairman

From 247Wallst.com



Source: Gary Gray / Getty Images

9. Colorado

- > **Pct. of land owned by federal gov't:** 35.9%
- > **Federal land acreage:** 23.8 million of 66.5 million
- > **Leading agency:** Forest Service (14.5 million acres)
- > **Federal gov't as pct. of workforce:** 1.9%

From msn.com

The federal government owns 27.1% of all land in the United States, or 615.3 million of 2.27 billion acres. Federal lands are managed mostly for preservation, recreation, and the development of natural resources.

Much of the land that the federal government owns is concentrated in the western part of the country. In fact, the U.S. government owns about 47% of all land in the West. This is partly due to the fact that a lot of the territory in the western United States is either mountainous or dry and infertile, and wasn't readily snatched up by homesteaders.

From coloradoencyclopedia.org

Interstate Compacts and Supreme Court Decrees

US law requires the sharing of interstate stream water between upstream and downstream states. As a result, the state's water officials must also enforce compliance with nine interstate compacts and two US Supreme Court equitable apportionment decrees that limit the amount of water Colorado can consume from its streams and connected aquifers. Because water deliveries must be made to other states downstream, Colorado can consume approximately only one-third of the annual amount of water produced by Colorado **snow** and rain, even though the **South Platte, Republican, Arkansas, Rio Grande, and Colorado** Rivers originate within the state.

From waterknowledge.colostate.edu

1969 Water Right Determination & Administration Act (C.R.S. 37-92-101 to 602)

- Required surface water & tributary groundwater be integrated into a unitary adjudication & administration system
- Established seven water divisions based on the state's major basins, established division engineers in charge of water administration, & created a water court for each division to adjudicate water rights & settle disputes
- Established the authorization of augmentation plans to enable out-of-priority water use through replacement water
- Created explicit procedures for filing and pursuing applications and objections to applications for water rights, conditional water rights, changes of water rights, and augmentation plans