

THE
PEW
CHARITABLE TRUSTS

Utah Public Lands Initiative

**Marcia Argust
The Pew Charitable Trusts
U.S. Public Lands Program**

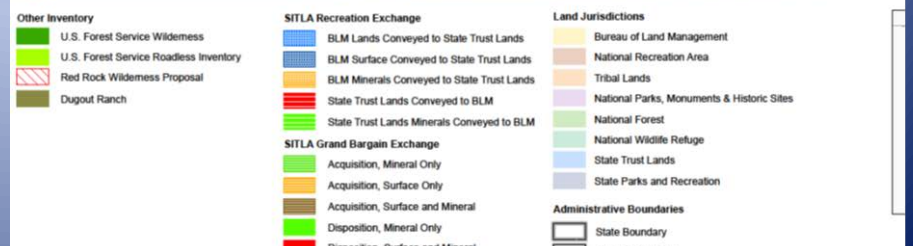
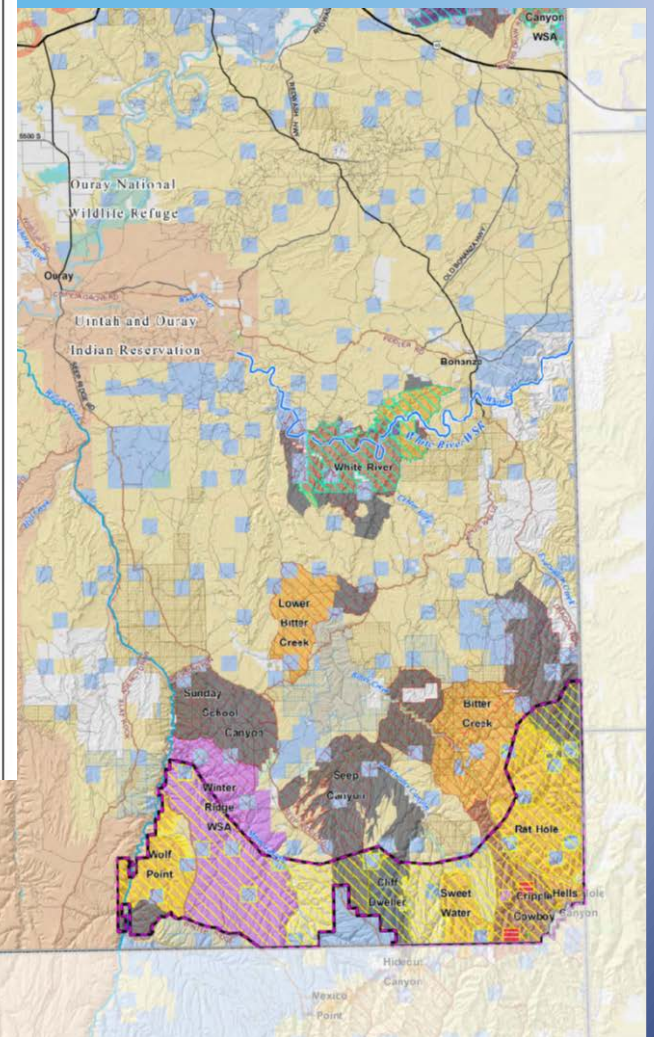
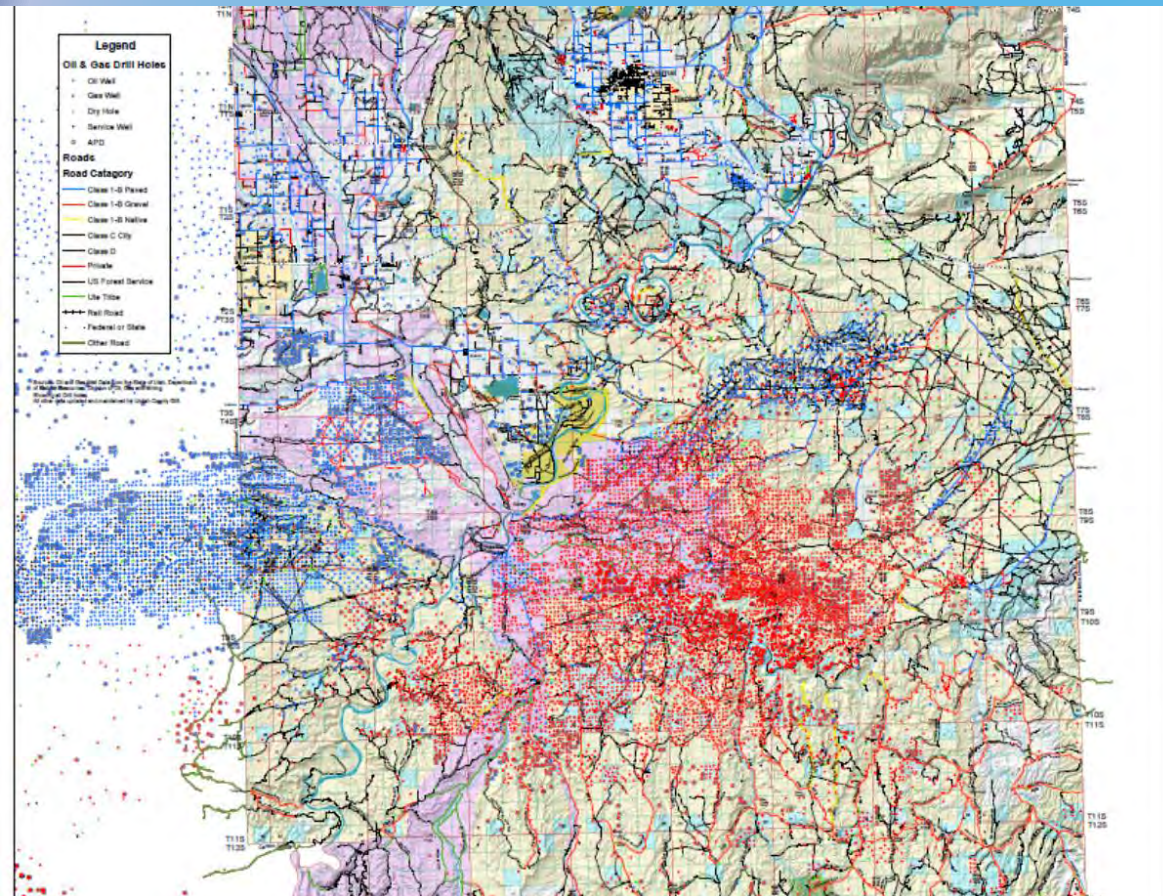
**Uintah Basin Energy Summit
September 10, 2015**

Why the PLI?



What Does Collaboration Look Like?





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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4401

February 15, 2015

Dear County Commissioner:

I am writing to formally inform you of my intention to develop federal legislation of the issues that have plagued public land management in Utah for decades. A county that is interested in participating in this process is welcome. Likewise, I will respect a county that does not wish to participate in the process. I assure you that my legislation will affect your county only with your blessing and only on terms with which you are comfortable.

I fully understand efforts like this have been attempted before, and I realize why you may feel skeptical about federal lands legislation. A number of my predecessors have, in good-faith, started down this same path. Most of those efforts failed. Since many of these previous efforts did not succeed, I am not going to follow in the footsteps of previous attempts. In order for this effort to work, we need to think differently about these issues in a way that hasn't been attempted before.

After observing and participating in the public lands debate for many years, I believe we are at the cusp of a paradigm shift. We are entering a new era of public lands management with a growing consensus that a more reasonable, balanced use of the public lands can be achieved in Utah. For over a century, Utahns have sought realignment in the federal/state management of Utah's public lands. While virtually everyone agrees that Utah's public lands are a distinguishing feature of our great state, unsettled land-use designations have fostered distrust and acrimony. Parties on both sides of the debate recognize that all of these issues could, once and for all, be resolved. Because of this, I believe we have a window of opportunity to end the gridlock and bring resolution to some of the most contentious land disputes in the state. The time has come for a sensible reassessment of land ownership patterns in Utah.

Quid Pro Quo

COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
Chairman, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS
COMMITTEE ON RULES
CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS
Wildlands, Past Chairman
15th AMENDMENT TASKFORCE
Chairman

The key difference between today's effort and those of the past is that I believe that there is a growing consensus that comprehensive land bills can be a powerful vehicle to get other things done. In other words, wilderness, or other land designations, can act as a currency. If wilderness is designated in your county, you should receive some specific, tangible, benefit for it. This benefit could be the upgrade and control over one or many roads, designation of zones for energy, timber and other resource development, lands transferred to county control for a new park or airport, or a new dedicated revenue stream to the county generated by swapping school trust lands in your county into more energy rich lands in other counties.

In order for this new approach to work, you will also have to think differently. If we merely go back to the same proposals, the same lands as have been offered before, we will meet the same result. Conservation advocates will not achieve what they want, but county priorities will also remain unfulfilled.

If I am correct and wilderness really can be conceived of as a currency, the more land we're willing to designate as wilderness, the more we're able to purchase with that currency. I realize that this decades-long fight has ingrained in many local officials an inherent skepticism, even hostility towards restrictive federal land designations. I share that skepticism. But if we want to bring greater certainty to your county, if we want to end the debate, if we want to change the paradigm of management within your county, we will need to approach wilderness differently. Instead of instinctively pushing for as little wilderness as possible, I would hope you would approach it this time with a different mindset. The more we're willing to designate, the more we can expect on the other side of the ledger. We will have to give to get. If we give little, we will get little. Much can be gained if we're willing to look hard and make serious concessions. To reach consensus on public lands issues, all stakeholders must be at the table. Likewise, everyone must be willing to give something up. There is no other way to reach a deal.

If you choose to participate in this process, I ask that your county consider sharing with my office your thoughts and ideas about what public land designations, including but not limited to wilderness, you believe best suit your county. Your recommendations should not be limited to land designations; additional legislative proposals or priorities you would like to see addressed in the prospective bill may also be included. Given the significant scope of this process, it would be helpful if each individual recommendation that is submitted, whether it is wilderness or some other designation, had a unique overall ranking to help my office understand your priorities. I must also add, that all initial submissions and rankings will remain confidential.

My goal in all this is threefold: 1) to bring greater land management certainty to the counties who seek it 2) to provide counties with tangible benefits in exchange for a willingness to designate lands within their border as wilderness, and 3) to resolve land designations where a consensus can be reached.

Let me repeat: This will be a local, bottom-up, stakeholder driven process. I will do my utmost best to represent your interests in Washington, and to not represent Washington's interests to you. If you wish to be a part of this effort, please let me know. Once we've completed this process and have worked out a worthy land proposal, and that proposal has broad support by

Certainty

WSA release

energy zones

motorized routes

travel management plans

RS 2477

Land exchanges for development

conveyances

