



RESOLUTION #21

TITLE: The Need to Recognize Additional Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) on Public Lands in Utah, USA

WHEREAS

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Utah manages approximately 23 million acres in Utah, approximately 300,000 acres of which are Wilderness and approximately 3 million acres of which are WSAs as per the Federal Land and Policy Management Act of 1976
- Diverse groups of citizens of Utah were dissatisfied with Utah BLM's lack of recognition of large, connected ecosystems and entire watersheds that today maintain Wilderness character according to the Wilderness Act of 1964
- Utah citizens executed a formal survey and produced a nationally recognized proposal, now in the form of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, originally introduced by Utah Representative Wayne Owens in 1989, and currently cosponsored by 152 Representatives and 22 Senators
- In the late 1990s, the BLM commendably completed on select lands the "Utah Wilderness Inventory," comparable to inventories in other states, but was unable to take action to designate these areas of "wilderness character" as WSAs
- In 2009, approximately 70% of Utahns who have developed an opinion support more Wilderness than the BLM currently proposes
- The fragile desert ecosystems and archeological sites are threatened by illegal motorized travel, extensive mining and drilling, and other excessive soil disturbances
- Local communities' health and livelihoods are actively threatened by land degradation

THEREFORE

WILD9 calls upon local communities and federal representatives to recognize the value of wild places such as those in Utah—and the need to protect them for all who are connected to their ecosystems. By combining local and federal goals, conservation legislation can help to maintain a healthy livelihood and a healthy landscape for the rural and urban families of Utah.

RESOLVED

The 9th World Wilderness Congress urges the United States government to recognize the omission of WSAs and WSA designation in prior inventories and resource management plans by the Utah BLM, rescind any rules preventing the designation of additional WSAs for consideration by Congress, and complete a comprehensive inventory as was begun in the late 1990s.

PROPOSER

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