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Obama Great Outdoors Land Grab Alert – Comment, Vote Now!

You are in a race to vote with the greens. If they win, you lose.

The Comment and Vote information is below. You must vote.

The Obama national land use planning process is moving forward under the name of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

The Obama Administration is planning huge new National Monuments and large land lockup areas. Many millions of acres are at stake. Millions of acres of Federal land like those managed by BLM and the Forest Service are likely to be locked up in new Wilderness Areas unless you comment and vote.

**SEE THE ACTION ITEMS BELOW.**

The Obama Administration is holding a series of meetings and listening sessions around the country. They have largely only notified the green groups ahead of time. American Land Rights has worked hard to get the information about the meetings in advance and notify all those within reasonable driving distance of the meetings.

But you need to know that if you did not get a notice, or did not go to one of the meetings, you can still participate in the process. Below are the details and Website information so you can register your COMMENTS and VOTE on the issues you feel are important.

**YOU MUST OUT-VOTE THE GREENS. IF NOT, YOU WILL LOSE.**

Many of these ideas and proposals as well as comments are put forward by the environmental groups and will be used at the end of this process as justification for taking or regulating your land. But you can register your opposition by comments and voting.

You don't have much time so you must do this quickly.

You need to participate. It won't take you long to go on-line to comment and vote on all the issues. Please do not fail to do this. Your future is at stake.

If you fail to vote and comment, and they come for your land with new regulations or eminent domain, as they are now planning, you will have no one to blame but yourself. You have an opportunity to make a difference by voting and commenting now. Please do not fail to take advantage of this opportunity.

The Secret Obama Great Outdoors memo information is gradually coming out. You want to read the Great Falls Tribune (Montana) article below just published July 6th with more inside information.

These listening sessions are the beginning of the Obama Great Outdoors Initiative that will involve massive land use controls nationwide.

From previous Listening Sessions it is clear that an overarching goal is to connect all conservation areas (National Parks, National Forests, BLM and Fish and Wildlife Refuges so that wildlife can freely roam. If you are in the way, they will want your land and you could face eminent domain.

In Montana, for example, they want to set up a Free Roaming Bison area that means ranchers, farmers and landowners lose.

They want to Federalize conservation and put the Government in the listening meetings were designed to give the impression that the public clamor is for more Federal government with more environment jobs and more spending in spite of the huge economic hole the United States is in.

----If you value your land, your access to Federal land and your freedom, do not fail to attend this meeting. Your future depends on it.

COMMENTS, COMMENTS, COMMENTS. VOTE, VOTE, VOTE. Be sure to read below how you can monitor AND VOTE ON existing Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative comments and make your own comments. The website information is supplied.

This action is critical because the Obama Administration is going to use the comments, and VOTES, as justification for taking your land or regulating it.

-----COMMENTS – COMMENTS – COMMENTS You must send in public comments whether or not you attended the meeting. This is vital to protecting your future and the future of your property.

Don't fail to send your own comments even if you did not attend the meeting. The green and enviro groups are commenting like crazy on the Great Outdoors website. It is easy and you can vote on the comments made by the greens. They know that your future is in their hands unless you comment. So you better comment and vote.

Alert – Alert – Alert

You can fight the land grabbers now early or fight them later when they're on your doorstep. It is a lot cheaper to fight them early.

There is a concept in law called "laches" or "sleeping on your rights." If you fail to participate in a planning process, you may be prevented from asserting your rights in court later.

This section below was written by Randy Dutton:

-----A voice is powerful, only if it is spoken out loud. Such is the discussion started on the Great American Outdoors IdeaJam located at

<http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/ProductMostRecent?openview>

There, thousands of comments on hundreds of ideas are made. Many comments are ridiculous and unworkable but all help the Dept. of the Interior to reinforce its position of a stronger and larger government.

This IdeaJam website isn't just about ideas; it's about progressives acquiring ammunition to be used against property owners. If you believe government is abusing the Constitutional limits of government on its draconian land-use regulations, its acquisition of land that could otherwise be used to create private sector jobs, its locking up of American natural resources, then it is critical you take the time to go through the comments, and share your concerns.

But let it not stop there. You should ask your friends and neighbors who believe in property rights to also engage in this public debate.

-----First, click on the <http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/ProductMostRecent?openview> website.

-----We recommend next clicking on the "Popular" link. These are the ideas getting the most traction.

-----You can easily vote to "Promote or Demote" on the button to the left of every topic. This is what makes the topic more or less popular, and is an important step. Please note that not all recommendations are anti-property rights. If you want to vote, you will need to register first. This registration link will come up when you hit the 'comment' button, and logging in will be required each time you visit the website..

-----Each topic has a partial explanation on the main page, but you can read the entire recommendation by clicking on the title of the recommendation. If you want to comment, you will need to register first. This registration link will come up when you hit the 'comment' button, and logging in will be required each time you visit the

website. Please go through as many of the recommendations as you can. The website will remember the ones you voted on so as to prevent voting on the same issue more than once. Since recommendations will be added over time, please return periodically to the website to vote on those awaiting your vote.

Our observation is that most recommendations don't consider the negative impact to our Constitutional rights or the fiscal impact to private industry, the taxpayer, our balance of trade, or our technology base. Comments for or against an idea should be made concisely but with concern about real issues.

And if you want to submit your own recommendation, please do so. Nobody knows better how great the Great Outdoors are than those who own land or make a living working the land. We have the knowledge, the best workable ideas, and the vested interest.

Remember: If not you, then who? If not now, then when? America's future is dependent upon your action.

Written by Randy Dutton.

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Action Items:

-----1. Please forward this message as widely as possible.

-----2. Please sign up for information on the Obama Great Outdoors process at:

<http://www.discovernw.org/ago-signup.htm>.

Their general website is:

[www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors](http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors).

-----3. Read the just published Great Falls Tribune (Montana) article about the secret Obama Administration Great Outdoors National Monument and Treasured Landscapes Memo.

-----4. COMMENTS, COMMENTS, COMMENTS. VOTE, VOTE, VOTE. Be sure to go to this section above and read how you can monitor AND VOTE ON existing comments and make your own comments. The website information is supplied. This action is critical because the Obama Administration is going to use the comments and VOTES as justification for taking your land or regulating it. You are in a vote race with the greens. You must outvote them on the issues that threaten you.

-----5. Please call or e-mail Chuck Cushman, Executive Director of American Land Rights, to tell him if you attended any of the listening sessions. Call him at (360) 687-3087. Or send an e-mail to

[ccushman@pacifier.com](mailto:ccushman@pacifier.com) We would really like to get an e-mail or call back telling your impression of how the meeting went.

-----6. Call your Senators to oppose the Obama America's Great Outdoors land grab. Any Senator may be called at (202) 224-3121.

It is likely that your Democrat Senators are involved in this huge land takeover. The meetings in Montana and Washington State were held hundreds of miles from the people these land grabs would most affect. Ranchers, miners, forestry advocates and others only got one days notice.

-----7. Call your Congressman to express opposition to how this planning process is being carried out . . . largely in secret. They notified all the green groups but not the people who actually live on and work on the land. They also did not notify those that use private and Federal lands for various forms of recreation. Any Congressman may be called at (202) 225-3121. You can call any Senator at (202) 224-3121.

-----8. Call your Congressman and both Senators -- Demand more meetings your area.

Background Information:

-----By JOHN S. ADAMS Great Falls Tribune Capitol Bureau • July 6, 2010

HELENA — When an internal U.S. Department of the Interior document identifying 14 new sites for possible national monument designation was leaked to congressional Republicans earlier this year, some folks across the West had flashbacks to President Bill Clinton's last days in office.

On Jan. 17, 2001 — three days before he officially left office — Clinton set aside 377,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management-administered public lands in north central Montana with the stroke of his pen.

Clinton's 11th-hour executive order, authorized by the Antiquities Act of 1906, created the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

It also created uproar.

The designation was cheered by conservationists who long sought to protect the unspoiled landscape, but opponents viewed it as a unilateral federal land grab that disregarded the rights and concerns of landowners inside and around the new national monument.

Just days before Clinton signed the order, the Montana Legislature overwhelmingly passed resolutions in the House and Senate opposing it, but to no avail.

Fast forward to February, nine years later.

When news broke that Interior officials were considering recommending up to 13 million acres of federal land for national monument designation, Western GOP lawmakers went on the offensive.

"This naked abuse of power is not only a misuse of the Antiquities Act, but an egregious affront to the will of Montanans," Montana Republican Congressman Denny Rehberg said in a statement shortly after the memo was leaked.

Interior Department officials were quick to dismiss the leaked document as nothing more than a product of internal brainstorming sessions. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar assured a Senate panel that talk of new monument designations was "false rumors."

However, a Tribune review of internal Interior Department e-mails found that if that was the case, the rumors started at the top levels of Interior Department agencies.

According to the Tribune's review, high-ranking officials at the BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service have been working for nearly a year on a series of "vision documents" outlining Salazar's "Treasured Landscapes" public land conservation initiative. The leaked monument memo is a seven-page snippet from BLM's contribution to that initiative process.

The document, authored by BLM Director Robert Abbey and members of his staff, identifies 2.5 million acres in Montana for possible monument designation. Known as the Bitter Creek and Montana Glaciated Plains grasslands, the area in question stretches from the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge to the edges of Grasslands National Park at the Canadian border and takes in huge swaths of Phillips and Valley counties.

Abbey said the leaked document was taken out of context. Interior officials refused requests by lawmakers and members of the media to release the complete BLM vision paper.

The secrecy surrounding the full BLM vision paper has people such as Matt Knox worried about the agency's vision for Montana.

"It's troubling to me because we've been through this for 10 years," said Knox, a Winifred rancher and president of Missouri River Stewards.

Knox said some environmental groups have tried to ban grazing in the Breaks ever since it became a national monument, putting the future of his ranching operation in question.

"Our deeded land is mixed in with BLM land. If we lose the ability to use the BLM land, it affects our private lands," Knox said. "We're in a real complicated situation here. I suspect the people on the Hi-Line would be in the same boat. There's a lot of deeded land in that area."

Interior officials' claims that the department has no plans to designate new monuments in Montana are cold comfort for Knox.

"I'd like to take what they say at their word, but I don't trust them," Knox said. "I think where there's smoke, there's fire."

Other people see the brouhaha as nothing more than political gamesmanship on the part of GOP lawmakers.

"That document is not saying what Rehberg is telling everybody it says," said Dyrck Van Hyning, a volunteer member of Friends of the Missouri Breaks.

Van Hyning said he doesn't know of any conservation groups in Montana that support the idea of turning large swaths of Montana grasslands into national monuments or pushing ranchers off their land. In the case of the Breaks, Van Hyning said, ranchers are critical to the long-term protection of the landscape.

"We want to keep those ranchers on the land rather than have them sell that land to some developer who will carve it up," Van Hyning said. "That's the worse thing that could happen out there."

The backlash from Montanans in regard to the leaked memo prompted U.S. Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., to call on Salazar to answer questions about possible future monument designations in Montana.

According to e-mail records, shortly after the leaked document became public, a Tester staffer told Interior officials that the senator "is taking a lot of heat for the leaked monuments memo."

In a June 23 appropriations subcommittee hearing, Tester asked Salazar point-blank if there was any truth to the monument rumors, or whether the rumors were being spread by people who were "out there fanning the flames."

"I think it is just folks fanning the flames," Salazar responded, adding that the Interior Department has no plans to designate federal lands without engaging the public first.

Two days later Salazar put his pledge in writing.

In a June 25 letter to Tester, Salazar wrote that talks of possible monument designations were "false rumors."

"As long as I am Secretary of the Interior, there will be no recommendation for designation of national monuments in Montana unless there is significant public involvement, discussion, and debate over any such proposal," Salazar wrote.

Tester said this week that he is satisfied with Salazar's response.

"All these memos are running around. There are press releases running around the State of Montana. There are documents running around the state of Montana. I wanted to talk to the head guy, the horse's mouth so to speak, to see if there were any plans. Basically, he said no," Tester said in an interview earlier this week. "That's good enough for me. He's the guy who's going to be making the recommendation, regardless of what the people underneath him do."

Van Hyning doesn't take the leaked document too seriously either.

"For one thing, the document talks about buying out ranchers for \$300 per acre. Well there's not a rancher in Montana who would sell his land for that low of a price," Van Hyning said. "That tells me this thing was written by some folks back east who don't have a clue about Montana."

But critics remain skeptical, in part because Interior officials refuse to release the full BLM vision document. The leaked portion of the document, labeled "Internal Draft — Not For Release," contains pages 15 through 21.

In response to a request by members of the Congressional Western Caucus, the Interior Department released 383 pages of e-mails related to Salazar's "Treasured Landscapes Initiative," but not the full document.

Republican lawmakers aren't satisfied with the agency's response.

"Any one of these questions could be answered very quickly if they would just go ahead and release the memo, and all of the documents and e-mails that were going back and forth," Rehberg said. "I don't understand the lack of transparency. If they've got nothing to hide, then hide nothing."

Rehberg sponsored a bill earlier this year to basically exempt Montana from the Antiquities Act, and last week he signed on to a bill with other Western lawmakers that would require congressional approval of any national monument designation.

A Tribune review of the 383 pages of e-mails dating back to July 2009 found that top-level agency officials were engaged in lengthy



discussions that included talk of the grasslands region in northeastern Montana.

E-mails and memos between high-ranking officials at the BLM, FWS and NPS show they held multiple meetings with Salazar's chief of staff and Salazar to discuss the Treasured Landscapes.

In a Sept. 25, 2009, e-mail, Salazar's chief of staff, Tom Strickland, notified top Interior Department officials of an Oct. 2, 2009, meeting in which agency officials were to present specific initiatives for the Treasured Landscapes agenda. According to the e-mail, officials with the National Park Service planned to provide ideas "for the creation of new national parks and/or monuments. ..."

In an interview last week, BLM Director Robert Abbey confirmed that the leaked monument memo was a portion of a vision document that he, along with key BLM staffers, prepared over the course of last summer and fall at Salazar's request.

"When I became the director of the Bureau of Land Management, the secretary asked me to put together a vision that I would have for the public lands that are managed by the Bureau of Land Management," Abbey said. "I put together what I believed to be some specific directions where I think the public lands can be recognized for the values that they really hold."

Abbey said the document stemmed from a series of internal brainstorming sessions among top BLM staffers and was never intended for public consumption.

"A lot of times people look at these public lands and they think they're being managed for just grazing or mining or oil and gas development. What I wanted to demonstrate was that, while we value all these uses, and they're important to the nation's economy, there are other values on the public lands that we also manage these lands for," Abbey said. "Part of that vision we put together included a wide array of those values and how we could possibly manage for those values and multiple uses in the future."

Abbey said the leaked memo was taken out of context and "has been blown way out of proportion for what the document was intended to do."

"We do not have a strategy in place to implement any of the ideas that were generated through our own vision document," Abbey said. "What seems to have gotten lost in all the rhetoric and criticism is the fact that I also said before any designation of a national monument, that we would need to go out and assess the support we might have from Congress and certainly members of the public."

Abbey said the Interior Department is in the process of engaging Americans on public lands issues through a series of listening

sessions, called America's Great Outdoors. The first such listening session was held June 2 in Bozeman.

"We said, 'let's go out and open up a dialogue with the American public and hear directly from them what's important to them,'" Abbey said.

However, department e-mails show that some high-level Interior agency officials met with conservationists from Montana much earlier in the process.

According to Interior Department records, two representatives of the World Wildlife Fund met with Will Shafroth, deputy assistant secretary for the department's Fish and Wildlife and Parks division, in late July to talk about BLM lands in Montana.

Weeks later, the same two WWF officials met with Ned Farquhar, deputy assistant secretary of Land and Minerals Management, to talk about "ongoing efforts to promote conservation of wildlife species that cross the border from the Grasslands National Park in Canada to the adjacent BLM lands in the U.S., and opportunities to improve wildlife habitat on the U.S. side," the records indicate.

An e-mail from Gina DeFerrari, WWF's senior policy advisor, states that the American Prairie Foundation has acquired ranches north of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge "with a vision of creating a large prairie-based wildlife reserve."

DeFerrari was on leave and unavailable for comment last week, but Steve Forrest, WWF's manager of restoration science for the Northern Great Plains program, said it's no secret that WWF and other conservation groups have worked with federal agencies for years on ways to protect Montana's northern prairie for wildlife conservation.

However, Forrest said the goal of the conservation group was never to create a new national monument in Montana.

"The idea is not necessarily to preserve (Montana's northern prairie), but to look at what the combination of factors are that are affecting (wildlife) population trends, and then recommend various activities to reverse those or stop them," Forrest said.

He added that his group has worked with the Interior Department on ways to improve wildlife and habitat management strategies in the region as far back as the days of the Bush administration. He said conservation groups also have worked with state and provincial governments and private land owners throughout the region with the goal of unifying management strategies to preserve diminishing wildlife species.

"The idea is to get Interior agencies like the BLM, Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service ... to collaborate more effectively about managing larger landscapes," Forrest said.

That goal could be undermined by the recent hubbub over possible new national monument designations.

"We never had any discussions about a national monument. ... In fact, we're not so sure that monument designation would be a very good thing," Forrest said. "We were as surprised — and to some degree dismayed — as anyone else when this came out."

Forrest said ranchers and farmers who might have been open to participating in incentive programs to protect their lands may now be suspicious that it could be a step toward monument designation.

Tester said ranchers have done a good job over the past century in managing the resource base in Eastern Montana, and he wants to see that continue. However, he said that doesn't mean sensitive grassland ecosystems shouldn't be protected if local communities support the idea.

"If maintaining the grasslands in Eastern Montana is important ... if it's ground-up collaboration and you get solid support on the ground, then let's look at opportunities, if that's the goal," Tester said. "That being said, I happen to farm ground that was once grass, and I'd like to keep farming it."

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-----Here is a recent Interior Department release:

#### NOTICE OF A PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION ON THE PRESIDENT'S AMERICA'S

#### GREAT OUTDOORS INITIATIVE

In April, at the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors, President Obama established the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to develop a conservation and recreation agenda worthy of the 21st century and to reconnect Americans with our great outdoors. The President understands that protecting and restoring the lands and waters that we love and reconnecting people to the outdoors must be community driven and supported.

The President directed the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality to lead this effort and to listen and learn from people all over the country. Please join senior representative of these agencies for a public listening session and

discussion on land conservation, recreation, and reconnecting Americans to the great outdoors.

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION ON THE  
PRESIDENT'S AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS INITIATIVE  
WITH A FOCUS ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In April, at the White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors, President Obama established the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to develop a conservation and recreation agenda worthy of the 21st century and to reconnect Americans with our great outdoors. The President understands that protecting and restoring the lands and waters that we love and reconnecting people to the outdoors must be community driven and supported. You can find more information on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and submit comments on-line at: [www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/](http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/)

For more information on this initiative, please visit [www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/](http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/).

New Information:

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More Background Information:

Obama launches America's Great Outdoors conservation initiative

By Juliet Eilperin and Scott Wilson  
Washington Post Staff Writers  
Saturday, April 17, 2010; A02

President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors initiative Friday, an attempt to reshape U.S. conservation policy at a time when the nation is facing new environmental threats but the government is hard-pressed to afford new spending programs.

In a brief speech at the Interior Department, Obama said he intends to build on "a breathtaking legacy of conservation that still enhances our lives." He said the tradition began with Theodore Roosevelt, whom he described as "one of my favorite presidents," although he added, "I will probably never shoot a bear."

Obama said the nation's growing population, pollution and other factors are "putting a rising strain on our lands." He said government cannot address conservation issues alone, and he urged private

industry, local communities, Native American leaders and volunteers to help protect the outdoors.

"Even in times of crisis, we're called to take the long view to preserve our national heritage, because in doing so, we fulfill one of the responsibilities that falls to all of us as Americans and as inhabitants of this same small planet," Obama said. "And that is the responsibility that we are rising to meet today."

Obama signed a memorandum sketching out broad goals that the administration hopes to pursue in the next few years: forming coalitions with state and local governments and the private sector; encouraging outdoor recreation by Americans; connecting wildlife migration corridors; and encouraging the sustainable use of private land.

Four administration officials -- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and Nancy Sutley, who chairs the White House Council on Environmental Quality -- will spearhead the effort.

"It's really about getting people to think about the great outdoors again and recognize what a tremendous asset it is to our country," Vilsack said in an interview.

American children are spending half as much time outside as their parents did, according to the Interior Department, and the country loses 2 million acres a year to development. Government officials worry about the effect of land conversion on natural resources: The Maryland Office of Planning projects that more land in the region surrounding the Chesapeake Bay will have been converted to housing between 1995 and 2020 than in the previous 3 1/2 centuries.

Sierra Club Chairman Carl Pope, who was among the environmental leaders attending Friday's day-long conference to launch the initiative, said he hoped a broad coalition of partners will be encouraged to reengage on public-lands issues.

It remains unclear how much the government can afford to spend on such programs in the future. The National Park Service alone estimates that it would need an extra \$9.5 billion to clear a backlog of repairs and improvements. View all comments that have been posted about this article on the Washington Post Company website.

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You can go to the America Outdoors website and post a comment.

[www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/](http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/)

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